



School Management Team strategies for effective parental involvement at secondary schools in Lesotho

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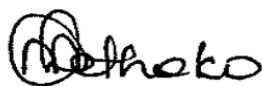
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DECLARATION

I the undersigned, hereby declare that the work contained in this dissertation / thesis is my own original work and that I have not previously in its entirety or in part submitted it at any university for a degree.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Methoko', is positioned above a horizontal line.

Signature

March 2019

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My heartfelt thanks to my lord and saviour for the strength and insight to complete this research study.

Dedication

I dedicate this thesis to my parents, my late father Mr Mahamo Matekane and my mother Mamichael Sosa Matekane. Also my two sons Rapelang George Lethoko, Tumelo Joseph Lethoko and my daughter Karabo Princess Lethoko.

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ABSTRACT

The importance of parental involvement (PI) has been acknowledged worldwide and the benefits of PI have been emphasized by literature. Although the benefits for PI are well known, it is not a given that PI is taking place effectively at all schools. There are different levels of PI and some parents at the same school can be intensely involved whereas other parents are just not involved in any activities. Parents' level of involvement differs from situation to situation, and there are certain factors that determine parental involvement. Although PI in children's education is crucial and seen as an essential component to ensure that effective teaching and learning takes place, it remains a major educational issue.

The focus of this research was on secondary schools in Lesotho. Research done on PI is scarce in Lesotho, especially when the focus falls on the role that the SMT has to play. In Lesotho the educators play a pivotal role in the children's education and parental involvement is not prominent. Parents do not fulfil a vital role in their children's education as most parents are illiterate and are too busy with everyday household chores to find the time to be involved in their children's school activities, especially in the Mafeteng district.

The effort of the SMT is extremely important as in most schools they determine the ethos of PI and lead the way to effective and sustained parental involvement. It is subsequently essential that SMTs should realise that they can aid in the process of actively involving parents by implementing appropriate context specific strategies and practices that will aid sustained and effective PI. Therefore, the purpose of this research was to develop strategies for School Management Teams (SMTs) to ensure effective parental involvement at secondary schools in Mafeteng district in Lesotho.

Purposive sampling was used to select parents and SMT members as participants from eight secondary schools in the Mafeteng district. Four large size schools (800 plus learners) and four medium size schools (between 300 and 800 learners) were selected. Qualitative design-based research methodology was deemed appropriate for this study. A total of sixteen focus group interviews were applied to determine the participant's perceptions regarding PI. The In-depth literature review and Epstein's (2001) model of parental involvement, which illuminates six types of PI, aided the research in the initial deductive analysis process. The deductive analysis and inductive data-analysis process allowed for categories and patterns to materialize from the data.

The study accentuated the importance and benefits of PI. Barriers specific to Lesotho, in particular the Mafeteng district, were identified. Emerging findings indicated the important role that the SMT must fulfil to ensure PI. The study resulted in proposed strategies which the SMT

can apply to ensure effective parental involvement at secondary schools in Mafeteng district in Lesotho.

Keywords: Education, Parental Involvement, Qualitative Research, School Management Team, Secondary Schools, Strategies

OPSOMMING

Die belangrikheid van ouerbetrokkenheid (PI) in skole is reeds wêreldwyd erken, en die voordele van ouerbetrokkenheid word deur literatuur bevestig en beklemtoon. Alhoewel rolspelers terdeë van hierdie voordele bewus is, spreek dit nie vanself dat ouerbetrokkenheid doeltreffend is by alle skole nie. Daar is verskillende vlakke van betrokkenheid, en by dieselfde skool kan sommige ouers intensief betrokke wees en andere glad nie belangstel in enige skoolaktiwiteite nie. Die vlak van betrokkenheid van ouers verskil van situasie tot situasie, en spesifieke faktore bepaal die betrokkenheid van ouers. Ouerbetrokkenheid is ongetwyfeld baie belangrik en word as 'n noodsaaklike komponent beskou om te verseker dat doeltreffende onderrig en leer plaasvind; nogtans bly dit 'n uitdaging in onderwys.

Hierdie ondersoek het gefokus op sekondêre skole in Lesotho. Min navorsing is nog in Lesotho oor ouerbetrokkenheid gedoen, veral oor die rol wat die skoolbestuurspan (SMT) speel. In Lesotho speel opvoeders 'n belangrike rol in die onderwys van leerders terwyl ouerbetrokkenheid glad nie prominent is nie. Die meeste ouers in Lesotho, veral in die Mafeteng distrik, is ongeletterd en te besig met daaglikse huishoudelike take om nog tyd te vind om betrokke te raak by hulle kinders se skoolaktiwiteite.

Die werk gedoen en pogings aangewend deur die skoolbestuurspan is belangrik aangesien hierdie span in die meeste skole die etos van ouerbetrokkenheid bepaal en die toon aangee vir doeltreffende en volgehoue ouerbetrokkenheid. Gevolglik is dit noodsaaklik dat skoolbestuurspanne besef dat hulle kan bydra tot die aktiewe betrokkenheid van ouers deurdat hulle gepaste strategieë en praktyke aanwend wat sodanige ouerbetrokkenheid sal aanhelp en ondersteun. Hierdie navorsing het dus ten doel gehad om strategieë vir skoolbestuurspanne te ontwikkel ten einde doeltreffende ouerbetrokkenheid by sekondêre skole in Mafeteng distrik te ontwikkel.

'n Doelgerigte steekproef is gebruik om ouers en lede van skool bestuurspanne van agt sekondêre skole in die Mafetengdistrik as deelnemers aan die navorsing te kies. Vier groot skole (meer as 800 leerders) en vier mediumgrootte skole (tussen 300 en 800 leerders) is gekies. Kwalitatiewe ontwerpgebaseerde navorsingsmetodologie is beskou as geskik vir die navorsing, en sestion fokusgroep-onderhoude is gevoer om die persepsies van die deelnemers oor ouerbetrokkenheid te bepaal. 'n In-diepte literatuuroorsig en Epstein se 2001 model oor ouerbetrokkenheid (hierdie model lig ses tipes ouerbetrokkenheid toe) het die navorser in die aanvanklike deduktiewe analiseproses gehelp. Deduktiewe en induktiewe analise-proses het gevolg gehad dat kategorieë en patrone uit die data materialiseer het.

Hierdie studie het die belangrikheid en voordele van ouerbetrokkenheid bevestig en beklemtoon. Hindernisse/probleme eie aan Lesotho, in besonder die Mafeteng distrik, is geïdentifiseer. Die bevindinge van die navorsing het die belangrike rol wat die skoolbestuurspan moet speel ten einde ouerbetrokkenheid te verseker uitgelig. Die studie het strategieë voorgestel wat die skoolbestuurspan kan aanwend om doeltreffende ouerbetrokkenheid in sekondêre skole in die Mafeteng distrik in Lesotho te verseker.

Sleutelwoorde: Onderwys, Ouerbetrokkenheid, Kwalitatiewe Navorsing, Skoolbestuurspan, Sekondêre Skole, Strategieë

LIST OF ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

AIDS	Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome
DoE	Department of Education
HOD	Head of Department
MOET	Ministry of Education & Training
NMDS	National Manpower Development Secretariat
PI	Parental Involvement
SASA	South African Schools Act
SGBs	School Governing Bodies
SMTs	School Management Teams
UNICEF	United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund

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CHAPTER ONE: ORIENTATION TO THIS STUDY

1.1 Introduction and background

The importance of parental involvement (PI) in learners' education has been accentuated by copious research on this topic and the positive relation between involvement and learner achievement (Blair, 2014; Hornby & Blackwell, 2018; Nojaja, 2009; Peters, 2012; Shute, Hansen, Underwood, & Razzouk, 2011). Parents are seen as important stakeholders when it comes to learners' education. The term *parent* refers to the "primary caregiver of the child" (Boult, 2006, p. xvi). Van Wyk and Lemmer (2009, p. 7) accentuate that a parent is a person who has legal or quasi-legal custodianship of the child and can also be the biological, adoptive or foster parent who is seen as the primary caregiver. In this study, the term *parent* refers to "anyone that in law or virtue of an order of a competent court has custody or control of learner" (Ministry of Education, 2010, p. 161).

Lemmer and Van Wyk (2004a, p. 259) emphasise that "comprehensive parent involvement is a prerequisite for improving the culture of teaching and learning in schools". Lemmer, Meier, and Van Wyk.(2006) emphasize that parental involvement has a positive effect on children's academic development and achievement, and when parents work together with teachers to support learning, the children tend to succeed not only in school, but throughout life. It may positively lead to a decrease in truancy, improved attitudes and motivation towards education, improved behaviour and discipline, as well as to a decrease in the dropout rate (Tlale, 2006; Van Wyk & Lemmer, 2009; Wong, 2008). Barge and Loges (2003) state that PI is an effective way of restoring mutual confidence and trust as well as establish cooperation between parents and teachers. This notion is supported by Nojaja (2009), saying that learner achievement and success in schools depend on a triangle of interaction of three elements, namely, the teacher, the parent and the learner. Teachers and parents are described as natural allies who share the common goal of wanting to assist learners to develop their full potential and achieve academic excellence (Lemmer, et al., 2006).

Involving parents in the education sphere, the teaching-and learning of their children is a major educational issue (Bojuwoye & Narain, 2008; Falconer-Stout, Kalimaposo, & Simuyaba, 2014; Hornby & Blackwell, 2018; Meier & Lemmer, 2015; Singh, Mbokodi, & Msila, 2004a) and the School Management Team (SMT) has an obligation to ensure that PI takes place effectively and is maintained (Van Deventer, 2016). SMT practices such as invitations to school events, activities, establishing a welcoming school climate, effective communication with parents on learners' progress, and invitations to participate in school activities are attributes that are directly associated with parental involvement (Green, Walker, Hoover-Dempsey, & Sandler, 2007; Peters,

Seeds, Goldstein, & Coleman, 2008). Research suggests that SMTs are to re-evaluate their existing parental involvement practices and emphasise the need to focus on in-service teacher training for parental involvement and to also concentrate on initiatives that will increase interactivity so as to overcome challenges posed by various contextual factors (Deslandes & Bertrand, 2005b; Green, et al., 2007; Van Deventer, 2016; Van Groningen, Hermans, & Van Der Zee, 2016; Wang, Deng, & Yang, 2016). Some parents seem to be unaware of how they can come involved in their children's education and therefore need guidelines as well as parenting training programmes (Hasley, 2010; Tlale, 2006; Van Wyk & Lemmer, 2009). It is not only parents that need training, but teachers and SMT-members also need to develop special skills for working effectively with parents and involving them in the educational processes, thus establishing effective collaborative actions between all stakeholders (Lemmer, et al., 2006). Teachers thus need to be supported by the SMT in training sessions to be able to work with parents in diverse, multicultural contexts, (Lemmer, et al., 2006). Kim (2009) as well as Van Wyk and Matumoloa (2012) emphasise that when schools have clear policies on learners' completion of homework, scheduled meeting, addressing individuals' needs and encouraging academic achievements, more parents will show interest in becoming involved. It is therefore important for SMTs to ensure effective parental involvement through the application of appropriate strategies that specifically focus on parental involvement (LaRocque, Kleiman, & Darling, 2011a; Van Deventer, 2016).

As a teacher in one of the schools for twelve years in the district of Lesotho, I have realised that parents in Mafeteng district are mostly uninvolved in their children's education and/or school activities. I also noticed that the SMT does not put much effort in getting the parents involved and have no parental involvement strategies, policies or programmes in place to improve the current situation of parents not being involved at schools. The teachers also seem to be reluctant and negative towards involving parents as they do not know how to work with diverse and illiterate parents (LaRocque, et al., 2011a). During my career, nobody ever gave me any guidelines on how to deal or effectively communicate with parents, nor was I provided with guidelines on how to ensure or deal with parental involvement (PI). Although the SMT members at my school state that they want the parents to be involved, it is not clear in their actions. Realising the importance of PI and the impact it can have on learners' education, I am of the opinion that parental involvement in schools in Lesotho is a very relevant topic that needs to be addressed since this is scantily addressed in a Lesotho context and PI. It has an inevitable impact at various layers of education and society at large. Besides improving their academic skills, PI also enhances children's social and interpersonal relations with the entire schooling system that includes their classmates and school personnel. However, it seems that stakeholders such as the SMT and educators at school do not make the necessary effort to ensure parents' sustained involvement (Gestwicki, 2010). This identified research gap is encapsulated in the proposed research topic,

and could add value to School Management Teams' (SMTs) management endeavours of establishing and improving parental involvement at schools in the Mafeteng district in Lesotho to add to conducive and effective teaching and learning environments for learners. It is therefore important for SMTs to ensure effective parent involvement through applying appropriate strategies (LaRocque, et al., 2011a).

1.2 Rationale of this study

Mafeteng is a district that is situated in the Mountain Kingdom of Lesotho. Lesotho is a small country found in the Southern part of Africa and consists of ten districts. In the Mafeteng district there is a noticeable difference between the various secondary schools according to factors such as learner enrolment and the areas where the schools are situated. In Lesotho the learners, parents and community rely on the teachers to ensure that the learners are educated. Parents do not fulfil a vital role in their children's education as most parents are illiterate and are too busy with household chores to find the time to be involved. Parents in Lesotho are more involved in the education of boys than girls because the parents are of the opinion that girls will be married into another family. This is confirmed through empirical research conducted by Holloway, Holloway, Yamamoto, Suzuki, and Mindnicich (2008) which elucidates that the sex of the child plays a role and is one of various determinants of parent involvement. Especially in the rural areas of Lesotho most households are poor and experience food shortages and therefore the parents are restricted to time at hand. Mafeteng is one of the highest affected areas where the United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund (UNICEF) care for orphans and other vulnerable children. These families are either labour constrained or comprise critically ill parents; or they are elderly and affected by health issues; or they are child headed households. These households receive some kind of social assistance; however the benefit amount is very low which cannot meet the food needs of these poverty and/or health stricken families (UNICEF, 2013b). In addition, Lesotho is one of the countries with the highest number people living with aids. and that poses a threat to the inhabitants' social, political and economic welfare (UNAIDS, 2004).

The provision and management of education plays a crucial part and in the context of Lesotho, the provision and management of education characterised as a formidable partnership between the government and churches. The churches own and operate more than 90% of the schools. The government pays the salaries of more than 95% of the teachers. The government through the Ministry of Education and Training (MOET), is responsible for the management, provision and regulation of education and training in the country. The community is represented through the School Governing Body (SGB) whose role is to provide advice concerning management of schools to SMTs (UNESCO, 2010). In Mafeteng, parents seem to be less informed about the roles that they can take on in schools, about what hampers a collaborative parental involvement

between parents. According to Tlale (2006), there is no clear policy on parental involvement in Lesotho schools that is directly associated with classroom instruction and other policies that bind parents to actively be involved their children's education. As the literature and the research emphasise the importance of parental involvement and the impact it can have on learners' education. It is important to research PI in secondary schools in Lesotho as well as the strategies that the SMT can apply to increase and maintain parental involvement. No evidence at all could be obtained on research done in Lesotho, specifically in the Mafeteng district.

Parents should be involved in the education of their children; teachers and parents must work together to form a collaborative partnership (Barge & Loges, 2003; Sy, Gottfried, & Gottfried, 2013). Many countries emphasise the importance of parental involvement in learners' education and have legislation to ensure the involvement of parents (Mavuso & Duku, 2014b). According to Epstein *et al* (2002), research has shown that the policy and practice of parental involvement as determined by SMTs is of greater importance than family background variables such as race, ethnicity, socio-economic level or marital status in determining the extent of parental involvement in children's education. It is important for SMTs to have in-service programmes for teachers to develop the necessary skills to communicate effectively with parents in order to build an effective relationship that is required for effective teaching-and-learning environments. Schools should therefore have appropriate strategies, goals and a policy relating to parental involvement in place to improve parental involvement (Moore, Gallagher, & Bagin, 2012). The value of parental involvement is widely accepted, but is difficult to promote and maintain as parents have different concerns and issues as well as different perspectives on the education of their children (LaRocque, et al., 2011a).

The need for effective parental involvement in Lesotho has not received the attention it deserves. The only study that has been done on parental involvement in Lesotho focused on the relationship between academic performance of learners and parental assistance in a Lesotho high school (Tlale, 2006). This case study focused solely on the impact that parental assistance has on the academic performance of learners. As highlighted in the preceding sections, Tlale (2006) asserts that the lack of policies in Lesotho education on parental involvement needs further attention as poor or no parental involvement hampers learners to optimally develop at various levels in their lives.

Two of the principles and general objectives of education in Lesotho highlights and recognise the importance of parental involvement. These include:

- Educational programmes should incorporate cultural values and activities that enhance individual and social development. The role of the family and communities in school activities should particularly be enhanced; and
- There should be an active, cooperative partnership in education administration and management and provision of education services between and among the churches, the government, the community and other non-governmental organisations (UNESCO, 2010, p. 2).

Although the importance of parental involvement in Lesotho is indicated in the above document, it is not evident in the actual involvement of parents. The only research on parental involvement done in Lesotho indicated that there was no clear evidence of the appropriate policies that assist in parental involvement and it seemed to use strategies that enforce parental involvement (Tlale, 2006). This notion is supported by a study at a school in Lesotho that forced or coerced parents to attend school meetings by imposing punishment on learners when their parents do not attend meetings, although this seems to be violation of learners' fundamental rights. Tlale (2006) indicates that this kind of method of imposing punishment has proved to be an effective strategy in ensuring that parents and guardians attend meetings. In Lesotho, as in any other country, parents are contextually bound and form part of their environments that are not hegemonic in nature. Deslandes and Bertrand (2005a) state that even though the benefits of parental involvement at the secondary level seem to be well understood, it is clear that parents and especially SMTs still know little about the factors leading to PI, and about which approaches and strategies to apply to get parents involved.

Based on the preceding problem statement and rationale for the study the following main research question was formulated:

What strategies can be developed for School Management Teams to ensure effective parental involvement at secondary schools in Mafeteng district in Lesotho?

1.3 Theoretical frame of reference for this study

A theoretical framework guides the researcher in the process of identifying a core set of connectors within a topic and showing how they fit together or relate to the subject (Borgatti, 1996). Merriam (1998) adds that a theoretical framework forms the structure or frame of a study. A theoretical framework synthesizes existing theories, models and related concepts and other empirical research, to develop a foundation for new theory development (Rocco & Plakhotnic, 2009).

The study was underpinned by Epstein's model (Epstein, 2001) utilised as a framework to determine the types of parental involvement as it is the most widely used and accepted model for parental involvement (Lemmer & Van Wyk, 2004c). Against this model as framework the strategies for PI could be determined within the six types of parental involvement in secondary schools in Lesotho. As Epstein's model (Epstein, 2001) provides six types of parental involvement (parenting, communicating, volunteering, learning at home, decision making and collaborating with community). As the development of a theoretical framework is not static but is an emergent activity and process, the researcher will elaborate and add other relevant strategies in Chapter Four as the data are analysed (§ 4.4.7).

1.4 Purpose, research questions and aims

The purpose is in accordance with the main research question formulated and indicated in the rationale of the study, and is: to develop strategies for School Management Teams to ensure effective parental involvement at secondary schools in Mafeteng district in Lesotho.

In order to apprehend the main purpose of this research, the overarching purpose is divided into more specific sub-research questions to demarcate the thematic focus of this study. Therefore the following sub-research questions are formulated:

- **Sub-question 1:** What is the nature and benefits of parental involvement in secondary schools in Mafeteng district in Lesotho?
- **Sub-question 2:** What are the barriers to parental involvement in secondary schools in Lesotho?
- **Sub-question 3:** What strategies can be developed for school management teams so as to ensure effective parental involvement at secondary schools in Mafeteng district in Lesotho?

In accordance to the main research question of the research, the researcher intended to formulate strategies that the SMT can follow to aid in effective parental involvement at secondary schools in Mafeteng district in Lesotho. In order to obtain the main aim of the research, the overarching aim was divided into more specific sub research aims to demarcate the thematic focus of this study with the following sub aims:

- explore, describe and explain the nature of parental involvement
- explore, describe and explain the importance and benefits of parental involvement
- determine the barriers to parental involvement

- explore and describe strategies for School Management Teams to aid in effective parental involvement at secondary schools in Mafeteng district in Lesotho.

The above questions and aims steered and influenced the researcher to ensure that the appropriate research design and methodology were established to be able to analyse participants' experiences and responses to the research questions. The above research questions were answered and aims realized through the solicitation of a predetermined research design.

1.5 Research design and methodology

A literature study assisted the researcher to consider the critical points of current knowledge including substantive findings, theoretical, methodological contributions (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016) and identify gaps in the knowledge of a particular research topic (Creswell, 2014b; Graziano & Michael, 2012). The key concepts (§ 1.8) to the study guided the literature study: parent, parental involvement, school management team (SMT), secondary schools and strategies.

The researcher opted for a qualitative research approach as qualitative research provides an in-depth and interpreted understanding of the social world of research participants by learning about their social and material circumstances, their experiences, perspectives and histories (Ritchie and Lewis (2003). The qualitative research approach was suitable for this study because the researcher was interested not only in understanding the meaning parents and SMT members have constructed regarding parental involvement in the school, but also to interpret their lived experiences of parental involvement at schools (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). In this qualitative research, the researcher was the primary instrument that collected, organized, interpreted and analysed the perceptions of the participants (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). The researcher was sensitive to issues concerning the generation of data; recorded the data as faithfully and correctly as possible; reacted on the hunches she had as researcher to be able to do quality and in-depth analysis of the research topic (McMillan & Schumacher, 2001a).

1.5.1 Study population and participants

In this research non-probability sampling was used for practical reasons; the researcher was unable to involve all the secondary schools and all the parents in the Mafeteng district. The non-probability sampling technique was applied, a combination of purposive sampling and convenience sampling was used in this study. Purposive sampling is used in situations where sampling is done with a specific purpose in mind, participants were selected because of some defining characteristic that made them the holders of the data needed (Berg, 2007; Nieuwenhuis, 2016c; Ritchie & Lewis, 2003). Purposive sampling had two principal aims: firstly, to ensure that all the key constituencies of relevance to the subject matter were covered; secondly to ensure

that, within each of the key criteria, some diversity was included. From each school from category A and category B the SMTs were selected as participants (Table 3.1). All of the SMT members were asked to voluntarily participate in this study. The SMT from category A and category B schools consisted of: a principal, deputy principal/s and heads of departments; subsequently four participants from each school's SMT were selected. The researcher ensured that at least the principal or a deputy principal was part of the focus group for SMTs.

As there are ten government schools and twenty-eight church schools in the Mafeteng district, the researcher purposively selected the secondary schools nearest to where the researcher teaches (convenience sampling) (Table 3.1). The researcher had eight focus group interviews with the SMT members from the eight secondary schools: two representing urban government schools, two representing rural government schools, two representing urban church schools and two representing rural church schools.

1.5.2 Data collection

As the Mafeteng district has 28 secondary schools (governed by church) and 10 secondary schools (government), they are too many to include all. The proposed data generation method was focus groups. Millward (2012, p. 413) refers to focus groups as "discussion-based interview[s]" that "produces verbal data" of individuals within a group setting, and Barbour (2009) posits that the research needs to actively [encourage] and [be] attentive to the group interaction. The researcher used focus groups as interviewing method and these served as principal source of data as it (the focus group interview) "creates a process of sharing and comparing among the participants" (Greeff, 2011, p. 362). This data collection method aided the researcher to attain the research objective of developing strategies for School Management Teams as to aid them in ensuring and maintaining effective parental involvement at secondary schools in Mafeteng district in Lesotho.

1.5.3 Data analysis

Data analysis is the process of making sense and meaning from the data that constitute the findings of the study with the goal of discovering useful information, suggesting conclusions and supporting decision making (Maree, 2007). Data analysis was the route and procedure that the researcher exploited to extract some explanation, understanding or interpretation from the qualitative data collected of the participants in their specific surroundings (Maree & Pietersen, 2016). Data analysis aided the researcher to make sense during the process and develop meaning from the data that constituted the findings of the study. Coding assisted the researcher in taking a thematic approach and breaking down the text into pieces in order to be able to compare and create a "coding scheme" (Boeije, 2010, p. 98). The conceptual codes obtained

from the collected data were associated with codes deducted from the literature review in chapter two where the focus was on the conceptual- and theoretical framework that assisted the researcher in the data analysis process. The researcher followed the following process: started to develop categories and themes utilizing a priori coding from the conceptual and theoretical framework, then developed some sub themes from the data (Chapter 4).

1.6 Ethical aspects

The researcher had to adhere to ethical aspects that guided the researcher in conducting the research in an ethical and moral acceptable way. Informed consent as well as permission to conduct the research was obtained from the following participants and relevant authorities:

- Ethical clearance from the North West University, Faculty of Education Sciences, and ethics committee
- Lesotho Ministry of Education and Training (MOET)
- Mafeteng district office of Education
- Principals of the selected schools
- All the participants of the SMT of the selected schools
- Parents as selected participants of selected schools

Punch and Qancea (2014) emphasise the importance of ethics in research and agree that researchers have to be constantly mindful of all ethical implications while doing research and must apply codes of ethical practice. Other ethical aspects were adhered to (§ 3.8).

1.7 Contribution of the study

The study developed strategies for SMT to aid them in the provision of effective parental involvement in secondary schools in the Mafeteng district. Through the research the researcher explored, described and explained the nature of parental involvement; explored, described and explained the importance and benefits of parental involvement in secondary schools in Mafeteng district in Lesotho. Determined the barriers to parental involvement. This important information aided to develop strategies for especially SMTs in secondary schools in the Mafeteng district of Lesotho.

Secondary schools in Lesotho are diverse organisational organisations and the SMTs must be made aware of strategies that they can apply to improve parental involvement in their specific diverse contexts.

The above questions and aims steered and influenced the researcher to ensure that the appropriate research design and methodology were established to be able to analyse participants' experiences and responses to the research questions. The above research questions were answered and aims realized through the solicitation of a predetermined research design.

1.8 Defining the concepts used in the study

The main concepts used in this study are provided in Table1-1 These definitions aim to clarify the concepts included in this study.

Table 1-1: Definition of concepts

Concept	Definition	Reference
Parent	Is a person who has legal or quasi-legal custodianship or control of the child and can also be the biological, adoptive or foster parent who is seen as the primary caregiver	(Lesotho Government Gazette, 2014; Van Wyk & Lemmer, 2009)
Parental involvement	Refers to willing behaviours or actions that show parents'/guardians' active involvement, interest as well as commitment in the child's school activities and learning processes	(Grolnick, Kurowski, Dunlap, & Hevey, 2000; Hoover-Dempsey & Sandler, 1997; Van Wyk & Lemmer, 2009)
School management team (SMT)	The structure in the school responsible for the proper running of the school. An SMT is made up of the principal, deputy principal and heads of departments. The SMT plans, organizes, leads and supervises school activities and manages school resources to ensure that the school functions effectively and efficiently	(Department of Education, 1996a; Hove, 2015; Khuluse, 2004)
Secondary schools	Secondary education usually extends over five years, comprising the three-year junior secondary and	(UNESCO, 2010)

Concept	Definition	Reference
	the two-year senior secondary cycles. English is medium of instruction throughout the secondary cycle. In Lesotho educationalists refer to grades as “Form A to Form E” (no grades). Secondary school education in Lesotho is non-compulsory and is usually attended by learners between the ages of 13-17	
Strategies	Are action plans designed to achieve a long-term or overall aim	(HarperCollins, 2001)

1.9 Outline of chapters

Chapter 1: Orientation to this study

Chapter 2: School management strategies for effective parental involvement: conceptual and theoretical framework

Chapter 3: Research design and methodology

Chapter 4: Data analysis and findings

Chapter 5: Conclusions and recommendations

CHAPTER TWO: SCHOOL MANAGEMENT STRATEGIES FOR EFFECTIVE PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT: CONCEPTUAL AND THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

2.1 Introduction

In the previous chapter a brief overview was given of the study and the specific context of the research. The purpose of this chapter is to scrutinize the literature regarding parental involvement (PI) and the school management teams' (SMTs) effort towards involving parents in the educational activities of their children. Literature review is important as it assists the researcher in becoming conversant in the research topic, allowing the researcher to think deeply and determine essential concepts that need to be elucidated to ensure that there is a mutual understanding (Delpont, Fouche, & Schurink, 2011). This chapter focuses on clarifying and conceptualising the relevant concepts as well as on describing and indicating the appropriate theoretical framework that underpins this research. According to Imenda (2014, p. 185), "the conceptual or theoretical framework is the soul of every research project." Punch and Qancea (2014, p. 110) state that a conceptual framework is a descriptive illustration of the fundamental concepts in the research and the association that the concepts have with one another. Determining and describing the conceptual and theoretical framework is crucial as it paves the way for the particular research and assists in determining how the research problem will be investigated, in the formulation of the research problem as well as the meaning that the researcher attaches to the data obtained from the research (Imenda, 2014). Determining the theory is important as it supports the researcher's understanding of the research phenomenon under investigation. This chapter therefore aided and steered the researcher to obtain the indicated aims by developing a structure for the proposed research and to indicate the interrelatedness of the various concepts. Various concepts regarding parental involvement and school management teams (SMTs) were clarified in this chapter.

Chapter two also highlights the relevant theoretical framework that underpinned the study. Epstein's (2001, pp. 409-411) model of PI which elucidates six types of parental involvement, which are focus parenting, communicating, volunteering, learning at home, decision-making and collaborating (§ 2.6). The theoretical framework assisted the researcher in defining central aspects regarding PI and also aided in determining appropriate SMT strategies towards effective parental involvement that were utilized and are discussed in the analysis of the findings (§ 4.5.3).

The importance of PI cannot be over-accentuated. Numerous studies have been done over the years that validate the importance of parental involvement in the education of learners and

highlight the positive relation between PI and learner achievement (Blair, 2014; Hornby & Blackwell, 2018; Peters, 2012; Shute, et al., 2011). Lemmer and Van Wyk (2004a, p. 259) emphasise that “comprehensive parent involvement is a prerequisite for improving the culture of teaching and learning in schools”. Although PI in children’s education sphere is an important aspect, and is seen as an essential component to ensure that effective teaching and learning takes place, it remains a major educational issue (Bojuwoye & Narain, 2008; Shute, et al., 2011; Singh, Mbokodi, & Msila, 2004b). Research shows that some parents seem to be unaware of how they can actually become involved in their children’s education and therefore need guidelines as well as training programmes to assist them in the aspects of effectively becoming actively involved parents (Harris & Goodall, 2008; Hasley, 2010; Tlale, 2006; Van Wyk & Lemmer, 2009). Larocque, Kleiman and Darling (2011b, p. 115) state that an increased level of PI in schools positively correlate with increased educational achievement, it is therefore imperative to develop ways to increase and maintain PI.

It is subsequently essential that SMTs should realise that they can aid in the process of actively involving parents by implementing appropriate context specific strategies and practices that will aid sustained and effective PI. Previous studies suggest that SMTs are to re-evaluate their existing parental involvement practices and emphasise the need to focus on in-service educator training for parental involvement as well as concentrate on initiatives that will increase interactivity to overcome challenges posed by various contextual factors (Deslandes & Bertrand, 2005a; Green, et al., 2007). SMT plays a leading role in promoting the relationship between the school and the parents (Setlhodi-Mohapi & Lebeloane, 2014). Educators also need support and training to be able to work with parents in diverse multicultural contexts, (Lemmer, et al., 2006). It is important for SMTs to ensure that effective PI occurs through the application of appropriate strategies that specifically focus on PI in a specific school context and keeping in mind the diversity of the parents themselves (Larocque, et al., 2011b).

Endeavouring to highlight the importance of parental involvement, the researcher deemed it necessary to do a literature review that focuses on various aspects that have to be taken into account in order for the SMT to establish appropriate, attainable and sustainable strategies for parental involvement. Parental involvement differs from school to school as there are numerous unique factors that will determine the extent to which parents will be involved. The focus of this research was on secondary schools in Lesotho. Research done on PI is scarce in Lesotho especially when the focus falls on the role that the SMT has to play. In Lesotho the educators play a pivotal role in the children’s education and parental involvement is not prominent. Parents do not fulfil a vital role in their children’s education as most parents are illiterate and are too busy with household chores to find the time to be involved in their children’s school activities, especially in the Mafeteng district.

In poverty stricken areas such as Mafeteng it is not easy to get parents involved, many parents are uninformed and this makes it complicated for them to strengthen learning at home (Kamper, 2008). In Lesotho, numerous children's parents have passed away owing to AIDS, children then have to stay with nearby family members or are in a situation where the older brother or sister has to take care of the younger children (UNAIDS, 2010). Mbokazi (2015) agrees with this and states that there are many children who have no parents, and families which are headed by grandparents or grown-up siblings.

One of the rare researches done on PI in Lesotho reports that there is no clear policy on parental involvement in Lesotho schools that is directly associated with classroom instruction, or other policies that bind and guide parents to be actively involved in their children's education (Tlale, 2006). Lack of policies regarding PI leaves SMT unsure what can be expected of parents and how to manage PI. Parents are also unsure on what areas they can be involved as there is no clear guidelines or policies. As the literature and the research emphasise the importance of parental involvement and the impact it can have on learners' education, it is important to research PI in secondary schools in Lesotho as well as the strategies that the SMT can apply to increase and maintain parental involvement. No evidence at all could be obtained on research done in Lesotho, specifically in the Mafeteng district.

Deslandes and Bertrand (2005a) state that even though the benefits of parental involvement at the secondary level seem to be well understood, it is clear that educators and especially SMTs still know little about the factors leading to PI and which approaches and strategies to apply to get parents involved. Parental involvement differs according to certain contexts (§ 2.4) and it is therefore important to have a look at PI in secondary schools in the Mafeteng district in Lesotho. The SMT has to ensure that certain aspects and strategies are in place to foster a community where parental involvement can flourish.

2.2 Parental involvement

Parents are seen as important stakeholders when it comes to learners' education. The term *parent* refers to the "primary caregiver of the child" (Boult, 2006, p. xvi). Van Wyk and Lemmer (2009, p. 7) accentuate that a parent is a person who has legal or quasi-legal custodianship of the child and can also be the biological, adoptive or foster parent who is seen as the primary caregiver. According to the Ministry of Education in the Lesotho Government Gazette (Ministry of Education, 2010, p. 161) *parent* refers to: "a person who is by law; or by virtue of an order of a competent court, has custody or control of a child, or legal guardian, the person with whom the learner resides and to whom the parent or guardian has entrusted the custody or control of such child, or if the child has no parent or legal guardian, the person with whom the child resides and

who has actual custody or control of such a child". The Department of Education (DoE) states that a parent is also perceived as a person who is responsible for the child's education (Department of Education, 1996a). In this study, the term *parent* refers to "anyone that in law or virtue of an order of a competent court has custody or control of learner" (Ministry of Education, 2010, p. 161).

Parental involvement is considered to play a vital role in a child's education (Blair, 2014; Camacho-Thompson, Gillen-O'Neel, & Gonzales, 2016; Grant & Ray, 2013; Hornby & Blackwell, 2018; Jafarov, 2015). Larocque, Kleiman and Darling (2011b) refer to PI as the parents or caregivers that invest in the education of their children. Blair (2014, p. 352) defines PI as "the interaction and assistance which parents provide to their children and to their children's schools in order to somehow enhance or benefit their children's success in the classroom". This means the school and parents should work together to achieve better results. Parental involvement requires parents to be committed, willing and active participants in their children's schooling through a wide range of home-based and school-based activities as well as learning processes (Van Wyk, 2010; Van Wyk & Lemmer, 2009; Zellman & Waterman, 2010). Hasley (2010) states that the traditional forms of parent involvement usually include parents that participate in organising events to raise funds, sponsor school activities, supply their services and resources, and/or attend school actions and sport events. PI can also include parents that partake in activities such as volunteer work at school; communication; discussions and building relationships with educators and principals; assisting with homework, as well as interacting with their children regarding school activities and experiences (Hill et al., 2004). Parents can be involved in numerous ways and participation is not restricted to a single activity or event and should be an ongoing action through the child's education process. Parental involvement is essentially intended to promote and support a child in his/her learning process, aid in improving school performance and see to the general well-being of the child in order for the child to reach its full potential (Gestwicki, 2010). Gestwicki (2010) differentiates between low level PI and high level of involvement. Low level involvement signifies that parents are kept at a distance through activities that do not contest the expertise of the educator or the decisions made by leadership and management. High level involvement creates the opportunity for educators to really have an impact and is perceived as a source that offers assistance and has a positive input in the child's education. Parents' level of involvement differs from situation to situation, and there are certain factors that determine parental involvement (§ 2.8).

Parents should be regarded as associates in the education of their children. Educators are the experts in education and the field that they teach, but parents are the experts on their children (Olsen & Fuller, 2008). To ensure high level parental involvement, parents and educators have to be regarded as experts that both have decision-making rights concerning the education of the

learners (Gestwicki, 2010). According to Barge and Loges (2003), when educators and parents improve the quality of their relationship and it becomes part of the school practice, parents tend to have a better understanding of what is happening in school and become more involved in their children's education. It is therefore important that there must be a partnership between the parents and the school to ensure that every child optimally benefits from the educational opportunities given to him/her. Barge and Loges (2003) state that PI is an effective way of creating mutual confidence and trust between parents and educators and working together as co-partners in the education of the children. The significance of PI was accentuated when the government indicated that parents should also be involved in decisions regarding learners' education (Republic of South Africa, 1996). Including parents in the school governance is a global practice (Mafora, 2013) and creates the opportunity for parents to give their input to ensure that effective teaching and learning takes place (Ndebele, 2015). This action provides parents the opportunity to articulate their needs, apprehensions and aspirations for the school (Duma, 2014). Although PI in School Governing Bodies (SGBs) is crucial, it is not the focus of this research; the researcher's emphasis was on the SMT and the implementation of strategies to involve parents in the education of their children in secondary schools.

Duma (2014) states that parents have the right to play an active role in their children's education; parents may alleviate situations that children find stressful and assist educators to deal with learners who face problems. To be most effective, PI needs to be rooted at home, in an environment that fosters care and learning at home, as this has been shown to be most positively related to the children's achievement (Goodall & Montgomery, 2014). Fan and Chen (2001) claim that PI has a positive influence on children's academic achievement and that parents have to realize the important role they have to fulfil in their children's education. It is important that educators and parents work together as a team to have a positive supportive impact on the child's academic achievement and not consider this be the sole responsibility of the educators. Kabir (2014) accentuates that PI in children's learning at home and at school helps in motivating children to study regularly, and to improve as well as maintain good academic results. The importance of PI is also emphasized by Mmotlane, Winnar and Kivulu (2009) who indicate that children obtain better scores and improve in academic achievement when their parents work hand-in-hand with the school. Besides improving their academic skills, PI also enhances children's social and interpersonal relations with the entire schooling system that includes their classmates and school personnel. However, it seems that stakeholders such as the SMT and educators at school do not make the necessary effort to ensure parents' sustained involvement (Gestwicki, 2010). Deslandes and Bertrand (2005a) state that, even though the benefits of PI at the secondary level seem to be well understood, educators and especially SMTs still know little about the factors leading to PI and what approaches and strategies to apply to get parents

involved. Some educators admit that they have little training in strategies working with parents; the educators report that they do not know how to cooperate and incorporate parents in the education of the learners (Larocque, et al., 2011b). PI differs according to certain contexts (§ 2.4), and it is therefore important to have a look at PI in secondary schools in the Mafeteng district in Lesotho. The SMT has to be knowledgeable concerning the different areas that parents can be involved in, to ensure that certain strategies are in place to foster a community where PI can flourish.

2.3 Importance and areas of parental involvement

The importance of PI in learners' education has been accentuated by numerous researches which emphasise the positive relation between PI and learner achievement (Friedman, 2011; Nojaja, 2009; Peters, 2012; Sy, et al., 2013). Lemmer et al.(2006) agree that PI has a positive effect on children's academic development and achievement, and state that when parents work together with educators to support learning, the children tend to be successful not only in school, but also in other aspects of life. PI usually has positive effects such as decrease in truancy, improved attitudes and motivation towards education, improved acceptable behaviour and discipline, as well as decrease in the dropout rate (Tlale, 2006; Van Wyk & Lemmer, 2009; Wong, 2008). Barge and Loges (2003) opine that PI in schools is substantially related to improved academic performance, improved school attendance and increased community support for schools, including financial and material resources. Although PI is extremely important and linked to learner performance, Feiler (2010, p. 19) points out that PI is "multi-faceted and complex" as PI can take place in a wide variety of activities at home or the school. Boulton (2006) accentuates that any type or area of PI is important, whether it is to be involved with supporting the child's academic progress from home, being involved in decision-making at school, attending an activity at school or even just doing volunteer work for the school.

2.3.1 Home-based involvement

Parents do not have to be at school to be involved in their children's education. Parents can be involved from their homes. Kurtulmus (2016, p. 1150) states that home-based PI "includes practices related to children's education that take place outside school, usually within their homes". Parents can assist children in their academic lives by providing a positive and supportive home learning environment; especially those from disadvantaged backgrounds (Hunt, Virgo, Klett-Davies, Page, & Apps, 2011). Washington (2011) indicates that home-based involvement gives parents the opportunity to utilize their resources towards academic success of the learners at home. Home-based involvement focuses on interaction between the parent and child outside the school and may include activities such as helping with homework, preparing for a test,

monitoring progress and motivating for improved and sustained academic results. It is essential that children receive the necessary support and assistance from home, and that parents do not solely rely on the educators to educate their children; PI from the home is essential for every child's educational success (Larocque, et al., 2011b). Kimu and Steyn (2013) confirm that parents can be part of numerous activities from home and may incorporate several different actions such as teaching children educational skills, reading to or with children, discussing school activities and problems as well as indicating certain expectations to their children. Yotyodying (2012) states that most parents are involved behind the scenes at home. Parents can contribute a lot towards their children academic excellence through home-based activities, and establish positive attitudes by creating certain expectations, setting good examples, chatting about the school, creating working habits and a positive approach to learning, writing or reading (Falconer-Stout, et al., 2014). Barge and Loges (2003) emphasise that parents can also show their involvement by just continually checking their children's homework and ensuring that it is complete. This type of PI will also encourage and motivate students to keep up with their homework. Nojaja (2009) confirms that parents should make it a habit to continuously monitor their children's work. Although homework can be beneficial to the learners, Grant and Ray (2013) point out that age appropriate activities should be given; homework must serve a purpose; the time allocated must fit the age of the child, and must cater for individualized needs. Parents have the opportunity to not only be involved in activities at home regarding their children's education, but also to become more involved in activities and programmes presented at school.

2.3.2 School-based involvement

School-based involvement occurs when parents get in touch with the school and take account of activities such as participating in school meetings and conferences, communicating with educators and principal, attending sport- and cultural events, and doing volunteer work at school (Karim, 2010; Kurtulmus, 2016; Larocque, et al., 2011b). There are various ways that parents can be involved in school-based activities, and the most obvious is when there is interaction between the educator and the parent (Sheldon, 2002). Parents play a very important role in their children's education because children become motivated and feel a sense of pride when they see their parents are involved in activities at their school. Jeynes (2005b) points out that when parents are involved in school-based activities, children are more committed to their school work and absenteeism seems to drop. Learners also gain confidence when their parents volunteer at school. This permits educators to work with volunteers who support the learners and the school (Epstein, 2002). This means it creates good relations among parents, learners and educators, hence the results of the school can be improved. Larocque et al. (2011b) further indicate that school and parents need to have a shared notion of what constitutes a good relationship. It is extremely important to get parents involved in school-based activities, and there are numerous

activities that the SMT can ensure most parents are involved in. It is important to give some background information on PI in schools in Lesotho in order to understand why PI is not what it is supposed to be, in especially in the Mafeteng district.

2.4 Parental involvement in schools in Lesotho

All schools in Lesotho have parent representatives in the SGB and they all have their parent meetings, where parents are expected to give input concerning the running of the school. The everyday running is the same in the church school as in the government schools and there is no difference regarding parents, learners, SMT and the principal's role. The government through the Ministry of Education & Training, Government of the Kingdom of Lesotho (MOET), is responsible for the management, provision and regulation of education and training in the country. The parents are represented through School Governing Body (SGB) whose role is to provide advice concerning management of schools to SMTs (UNESCO, 2010). In Mafeteng, parents do not seem to be informed about the roles that they can fulfil in schools, they do not know when and how they can be involved. On the other hand, educators appear to make the minimum effort to interact with parents regarding the children's educational development, and that hampers the collaborative PI that is supposed to be between parents and educators.

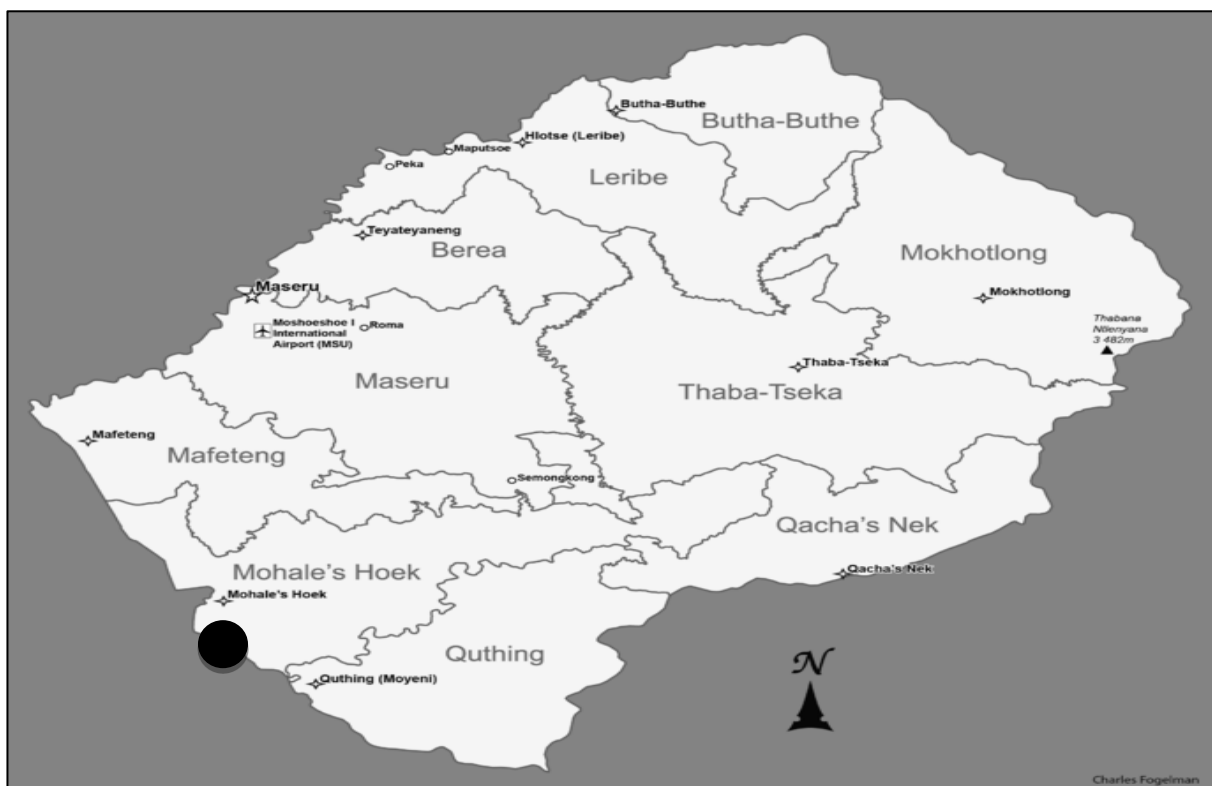


Figure 2-1: Districts in Lesotho

Most parents in Lesotho especially in the rural areas are not educated due to the fact that their parents were too poor to pay for their school fees, therefore they ended up going to the initiation schools to learn about the Basotho culture. Some parents still consider their children to be only partially educated if they did not go to initiation school. They then take them out of the school to attend initiation school before they can continue their education. Most parents support male education as they know males will go and seek for employment in the neighbouring country (South Africa) so that they help the family with food, clothes and school fees for the younger ones. Some parents, especially in the rural areas, believe that to educate a girl is of no use because they will be married to another family. The sex of the child plays a role and is one of various determinants of parent involvement especially in Lesotho. The other problem that hinders PI in their children's education is when children have only one parent. In Lesotho, all learners pay school fees for their education; in most cases the single mothers struggle to pay for their children and buy other learning materials. They have to work most of the time and cannot afford to take any time off to partake in any school activities or help with the children's homework. Most of them do not have enough money to pay fees, therefore the government through National Manpower Development Secretariat (NMDS) gives such learners the money in the form of a bursary, to pay fees, buy uniform and books. The Ministry of Education (Ministry of Education, 2010) expects the government to ensure that a learner is provided with opportunities and facilities to enable him or her to develop physically, mentally, morally, spiritually and socially in a healthy, normal manner, and in the conditions of freedom and dignity. The older mothers, through the support of their husbands, have more experience in parenting and are self-sufficient in making their own decisions, and can assist their children in home-based activities (Mmotlane, et al., 2009). Another issue I picked up while teaching concerns the climate of the school and attitude of some educators towards the parents. The educators do not make a lot of effort to communicate with the parents; sometimes months go by without any communication and educators only realise there is a problem at home when the child does not go to school or when there are serious problems at school. Larocque, Kleiman and Darling (2011b) point out that schools and parents need to have a shared notion of what constitutes a good relationship in order to ensure that the child is supported in the schooling process. Owing to AIDS, most learners do not have parents; children are orphaned and their guardians are not fully involved in the child's education. Children often have to be independent when it comes to issues concerning their education (Mmotlane, et al., 2009).

In most Mafeteng secondary schools are extramural activities (sports such as athletics and football) and some cultural activities. In these activities, parents do not volunteer to attend or support their children; the children usually are on their own and have no parent on the side-line to motivate or encourage. In cultural activities, parents are asked to come and help learners with

the songs, dances and cultural dishes as they are believed to know a lot more than the educators about cultural issues. However, as there are diverse cultural groups in every school, parents are hesitant, and typically it will be the same group of parents attending these activities. School principals and educators are progressively needed to address cultural variety, for example, with learners who are from different traditions, religious and educational backgrounds (Mavimbela & Van Niekerk, 2015). Parents in Lesotho rarely attend school gatherings or give their support by attending sport or cultural activities.

The main type of correspondence between parents and educators in Lesotho is by means of cell phones and letters. If parents are needed urgently in Lesotho, cell phones are used so that the parents can get the message quickly, but in the cases where there is still time, learners are given letters. Also in most districts of Lesotho there are community radios where the local announcements are made; schools also use them to communicate with parents when there is a need. For church schools, normally some announcements are made in the churches and the message will spread to the nearby villages when the schools are closed or when there are parent evenings. In Lesotho parent meetings are held on Saturdays in most schools, because most parents are working. In rural areas parents look after animals so that their children (boys) can go to school during the week and on weekends boys look after the animals so that parents can rest and do other duties. Meetings are held four times a year, in most schools in the first meeting, SMT and educators discuss the school policies and everything that is expected from learners and their parents. In the second and the third meetings, the progress of the learners during the year is discussed and sometimes when there are school trips, the parents are called to be told the fares. And finally, at the end of the year, SMTs, educators and parents are expected to discuss what improvement can be made in the coming year, based on what has happened during the year. In some cases when things are not going well, an urgent meeting is called. Even though, parents are called, in most cases, they do not have the self-confidence to discuss issues regarding their children. Parents are reluctant to come to the meetings; only few of them attend, although these meetings are extremely important, because in some cases they are called and are advised on how to pay for their children if they cannot afford the trip in cash. In most cases the parents fail to attend, they send their neighbours to listen and to inform them at a later stage, and in most cases incorrect information is carried over. The names of learners and the parents who do attend are kept in a register. If parents fail to show up, owing to certain reasons, or fail to send some of their relatives, they have to give their children a letter stating the reasons. The letter is supposed to have the chief's stamp to prove that the reasons are valid. The chief is a leader who is in charge of the certain village; all people report to him, he is expected to promote cooperation and address different aspects of village life. He is also expected to ensure that there is prevailing peace among the members of the village. This is practised in most schools in the

Mafeteng district, to avoid the learners writing letters themselves. If parents fail to do this, the learners are sent the following day to go and call their parents or guardians so that they can be told what has been discussed. In other cases the learners give the parents the book with minutes to read the discussion and conclusions made during the meeting. Some parents in rural areas do not know how to read and the child is required to read for the parent; meanwhile learning continues for the other learners.

In most schools, the SMT has an open door policy and parents are welcome to visit the school, but when parents go to school, the SMT and educators are very busy and have no time to attend to the parents. In some cases when parents go to school, they are given chairs to sit outside under the tree to wait for the required person. Sometimes, if they are looking for the principal, and the principal is in class for a double period, they will wait for the whole 80 minutes unattended until the principal has time to see the parent. Due to the limited funds in most schools in Lesotho, there is no secretary and the principal is also responsible for administration of the school, so when she/he is in class, the office is closed.

The school and the parents communicate with letters, learners are given letters to give to their parents. However, this particular type of communication is not very successful, as some learners do not deliver the letters, they forget to give their parents the letters; some do this deliberately. From time to time they communicate with cell phones when there is an urgent issue, for example, if the learner was in an accident at school. In Lesotho, learners do receive homework. Not all learners do their homework, it depends mostly on whether the parents are involved in their child's learning activities at home. There are some topics in Sesotho subject that educators instruct learners to go and enquire some of the cultural aspects and tradition from their parents, hoping that they have better knowledge. The language that is used in teaching and learning is English in all learning areas except for Sesotho. Parents in Lesotho speak the Sesotho language. The policies of the schools are written in English, but when they are given to parents, are translated in Sesotho so that all parents can understand. Some parents do help their children with school work, but most of the time language becomes a barrier when the homework is in English. Most parents do discipline their children, and if there are any behaviour problems at school, the parents are summoned.

I was an educator in one of the schools in the Mafeteng district of Lesotho for fourteen years. I realised that parents in the Mafeteng district are mostly uninvolved in their children's education and school activities. Although the SMT was responsible for the management of most of the activities at school it seemed that the SMT did not put much effort in getting the parents involved and had no PI strategies, policies or programmes in place to improve the current situation of parent (un)involvement. During my teaching career nobody ever gave me any guidelines on how

to deal or effectively communicate with parents, nor was I supported by the SMT on how to deal with parents that represented diverse culture groups. Although the SMT at my school stated that they wanted the parents to be involved, it was not clear in their actions as sometimes they made decisions without consulting parents about issues that related to the education of their children. The SMT did not make any attempts to increase PI and never discussed PI with the educators, such as how to improve or deal professionally with the learner's parents. Realising the importance of PI and the inevitable impact it has on countless aspects of children's education and society at large. I deemed it important to do this study on PI in Secondary schools in Mafeteng. I reflected on the various situations at school concerning PI and came to the conclusion that PI in schools in Lesotho is a very relevant topic that needs to be addressed, since this is scantily addressed in the Lesotho context. There is no document indicating that parents should be involved in education. At some stage the Ministry of Education recognised the need for parents to be involved in the education of their children. Laws were amended, stating that a parent should be involved in the development of the disciplinary policies of the school (Ministry of Education, 2010, p. 165). The Ministry of Education has only one document that briefly mentions PI and that is the Lesotho Government Gazette (Ministry of Education, 2010). UNESCO (2010) states that all educational programmes should incorporate cultural values and activities that enhance individual and social development; in particular, the role of the family and communities in the school activities should be enhanced. According to Tlale (2006), there is no clear policy on PI in Lesotho schools that is directly associated with classroom instruction and other policies that bind parents to be actively involved in their children's education. This notion is supported by a study at a school in Lesotho that forced or coerced parents to attend school meetings by imposing punishment on learners when their parents do not attend meetings. Although this seems to be a violation of learners' fundamental rights (Tlale, 2006), this method of imposing punishment is proven to be an effective strategy in ensuring that parents and guardians attend meetings in Lesotho. There are no official documents that focus specifically on PI in Lesotho, while in South Africa there are numerous documents regarding PI.

2.5 Parental involvement in schools in South Africa

PI in South Africa has been given much attention from 1994. PI before 1994 was not regarded as very important except for the financial input that parents could make. Parents were seen as clients who had little say in school management and functioning (Heystek & Louw, 1999). Parent responsibilities were perceived in terms of payment of school fees, attendance of school events and fundraising, the main purpose was to ensure parental financial involvement. In many communities parent involvement was virtually non-existent due to political turbulence, poor socio-economic conditions, educator reluctance and parent apathy (Van Wyk, 2004). Apartheid and previous history had a great influence on PI in South Africa and especially black PI was

discouraged as they had limited rights in 1970 and 1980 (Matshe, 2014). Since the democratic elections in 1994, legislation has introduced important reforms which impacted on parent involvement. Numerous Acts and White Papers have been developed to encourage PI and encourage schools to ensure PI.

The first important official document in the new South Africa on PI was the White Paper on Education and Training: *Education and Training in Democratic South Africa* in March 1995 (Department of Education, 1995b, pp. 21-23). The purpose of this document was to reform the idea of PI and accentuate the importance of parents and community being involved in the education of their children. The next document that was of importance was *The Hunter Report* (Department of Education, 1995a). Parents started to receive some rights and it was accentuated in this report “parents have the right and the responsibility to participate in the education of their children and to formulate and adopt school policy” (Department of Education, 1995a, p. 51). This report endorsed PI and suggested that schools establish a governance structure where selected parents can represent other parents and community members when important decisions regarding education are taken. After the Hunter Report *The White Paper no. 2* followed: *The Organisation, Governance and Funding of Schools* was available in February 1996 (Department of Education, 1996b). This white paper stipulated that all public schools had to have a school governing body (SGB) by January 1997. Later in 1996 *The South African Schools Act of 1996* (SASA) followed (Republic of South Africa, 1996). The South African Schools Act, 1996 (Act 84 of 1996) (Republic of South Africa, 1996) goes further, defining the concept of parent; describing basic parental duties; setting requirements for schools related to parents' right to information; and providing for parent and community representation in mandatory school governing bodies. SASA (Republic of South Africa, 1996) recognises all primary caregivers as parents. A parent is defined as “the biological parent or legal guardian; the person legally entitled to custody of a learner; or any person who fulfils the obligation towards the learner's schooling” (Republic of South Africa, 1996, p. 5) In this Act (Republic of South Africa, 1996) the state's expectations regarding parental responsibilities are formulated. Parents must ensure school attendance of every learner for whom he or she is responsible, from age seven until fifteen years or the ninth grade, whichever comes first; and pay school fees as determined by the school governing body in consultation with the parent body, unless the parent has been exempted from such payment, according to due procedure (Republic of South Africa, 1996). Although the various Acts and White Papers have created an environment more conducive to parent involvement in schools and put certain procedures in place to involve parents, actual parent involvement in South African schools remains weak (Heystek & Louw, 1999; Taylor, 2015). A brief background information regarding PI in South African and the core official documents regarding parental is given, as the research is not based on South African context but on the Mafeteng district in Lesotho. This research on

PI is based on Epstein's model of PI that assisted the researcher in the data collection and data analysis process (Epstein, 2001).

2.6 Theoretical framework

The researcher utilised Epstein's model of PI for this research which aided the researcher to identify and explore PI in Lesotho. Epstein's model of PI which illuminates six types of PI (Epstein, 2001, pp. 409-411) (§ 2.5.3). Epstein's model is used frequently to determine the types of PI (Nojaja, 2009). This model was applied in this research to determine various types of PI and establish the type of PI if any in the Lesotho schools as specified in the Epstein's model. Epstein's model consists of six types of PI, namely parenting, communicating, volunteering, learning at home, decision-making and collaboration with the community (§ 2.5.3). In the six types of PI, strategies were identified that the SMT can implement to ensure effective PI.

2.6.1 Epstein's model of parental involvement

Epstein (2001) indicates six types of involvement whereby parents get opportunities for interaction with learners as well as educators. These different forms of PI can vary, depending upon the household, parental, school, and community characteristics of the child (Epstein, 2001, pp. 409-411). The types are described briefly:

Type 1: Parenting: The home environment must be conducive to support learning at each development stage and grade level of the child. The parent should create opportunity to assist and show interest in the child's educational activities as well as homework. The home setting must be supportive and not hamper the child's attempt to work on school activities.

Type 2: Communication: There should be open two-way communication between the school and the home. Various means of communication must be available to ensure that all stakeholders are informed of any school- and learner activities. Communication channels must be in place so that continuous discussions regarding the child's academic progress and behaviour can take place.

Type 3: Volunteering: It is important to involve parents by utilizing their expertise and their knowledge to volunteer in certain activities and duties at school. There are numerous parents who are available and who can assist educators and alleviate the myriad of tasks that need to be completed at school. There are ample opportunities where parents can volunteer to become involved, such as improving the garden and surroundings, elaborating on traditions and certain customs, and coaching sport and cultural activities.

Type 4: Learning at home: It is essential for parents to get involved in the academic learning of their children by showing interest in the tasks, activities and homework that learners have to do at home.

Type 5: Decision-making: It is important to include parents in the decision-making process, and to include some parent representatives on the SGB to assist in the governance of the school. Parents can be involved in decision-making by collaborating with educators and the SMT to plan school activities, workshops, fundraising events and educational trips.

Type 6: Collaboration with the community: This means the school must join forces and have good relationships with different stakeholders such as families, learners, institutions and the businesses around the area where the school is situated, so that the school can benefit from such places in case there should be a need. There should be positive community involvement, and the school ought to utilize all possible resources to strengthen educational opportunities, family involvement and learning progress.

It is essential to reflect on the benefits of PI in order to accentuate the importance of PI for various stakeholders.

2.7 Importance and benefits of parental involvement

PI establishes a partnership between the school and the home of the child and makes education of children advantageous to all stakeholders involved in the education of the children (Hornby & Blackwell, 2018; Jafarov, 2015; Mmotlane, et al., 2009). Continuous PI in the child's education tends to have a long-lasting positive effective on the child (Grant & Ray, 2013; Henderson & Mapp, 2002). PI can have copious benefits for the learners, educators and school as well as for the parents themselves. Parents' attitudes towards the school are inclined to be more positive as the parents better understand the school structures, programmes, leadership and even their own children (Grant & Ray, 2013). PI helps parents to become better informed about educators' objectives and also about the needs of their children (Larocque, et al., 2011b).

Grant and Ray (2013) indicate that schools where parents and educators work together have a positive effect on children in terms of educational accomplishment as well as their psychological and emotional development. Higher levels of PI have been associated with better school attendance, improved academic performance and social skills, decline in negative behaviour patterns, higher qualifications attained, and fewer grade retentions (Grant & Ray, 2013; Larocque, et al., 2011b). Barge and Loges (2003) confirms that parents who are actively involved and view education positively carries over the positive attitude to the child and experience education as meaningful and purposeful. Henderson and Mapp (2002) reviewed several studies on PI in their

children's education found that it had enormous effect on the learner's general well-being, behaviour, social skills, adaptability and academic performance. Lemmer *et al.* (2006) confirm that PI leads to decreased truancy, improved attitudes of learners towards education, improved behaviour, and a decrease in dropout rate. Learner's academic performance also tends to improve.

2.7.1 Academic performance

One very important aspect in education is learners' academic performance. The main focus of educators is on ensuring that learners perform according to their potential and that high academic standards are met. SMTs usually have certain approaches and strategies to ensure that academic standards are met as required by the Department of Education, and parents also have some expectations towards their children's performance. Research has proven that PI increases the likelihood for learners to perform academically and meet their potential (Jeynes, 2005a; Smolkowski *et al.*, 2017; Thompson, 2002). Lemmer, Meier and Van Wyk (2006) state that PI has a positive effect on learners' academic achievement. Especially when there is collaboration between parents and educators that supports the learning process, the children tend to succeed in school and also throughout their lives. Kim (2002) confirms that parental contribution, in terms of time spent interacting with educators and assisting the school in school-based activities, has shown to enhance children's academic success. According to Gutman and Feinstein (2010), PI has a greater impact on children's well-being and achievement than other factors. Parents are instrumental to their children's academic success and have a positive impact on learners' achievement (Kimu & Steyn, 2013; Parcel & Dufur, 2001). Larocque (2011b) maintains that PI also adds to the quality of education the children receives, not only on academic level but also on social and attitude levels. PI can have a lasting effect upon children's performance, and can even positively influence school attendance and levels of educational attainment (Fan, 2001). In order to improve learner's academic achievement, parents and educators need to join in a partnership to assist and support the teaching and learning process by ensuring that children are disciplined and display appropriate behaviour.

2.7.2 Behaviour and discipline

Behaviour and discipline seem to be a huge problem in schools especially with the abolishment of corporal punishment. Educators do not seem to have appropriate strategies in place to ensure that discipline is maintained in classrooms. Lack of discipline in secondary schools is a problem that is faced by the educators on a daily basis (Ndamani, 2008). Parents and educators need to work together towards disciplining the children; parents cannot make this the sole responsibility of the educators. Harris and Goodall (2008) and Smolkowski *et al.* (2017) emphasise that

learners spend most of their time with their parents, and parental engagement has a direct influence on learner behaviour. The authors further state that if the children were aware that there was no home based consequence to bad behaviour at school, such behaviour would continue, hence there should be effective communication between the parents and educators on acceptable behaviour (Harris & Goodall, 2008). Wong (2008) claims that PI is related to controlling undesirable behaviour, which in turn leads to less disruptive classroom behaviour. Ndebele (2015) states that it is important for parents to role model positive attitudes, discipline and behaviours towards school so that these can be learned and observed by the child. Mavimbela and van Niekerk (2015, p. 568) point out that “some learners behave in a manner which is morally questionable”. It is not only the parents that have an influence on the behaviour of learners, but also the community where the learners live (Ndamani, 2008). Mmotlane et al. (2009) indicate that the behaviour the children learn at home from parents comes to the surface when they partake in social activities and school activities, as well as when they socialise. PI can help to increase the self-discipline that learners need to demonstrate in order to ensure that they attend school and decrease the rate at which learners drop out from school.

2.7.3 School attendance and dropouts

For learners to perform well at school, they need to attend school regularly. Especially learners in secondary schools tend to have poor attendance. Sometimes children decide not to attend school without valid reason. This implies that there should be effective communication between the parents and educators. Majola (2008, p. 34) indicates that “the child will know that the parents and educators never meet and may use that opportunity not to attend school, knowing that parents think that they have gone to school”. School dropouts may have different causes; these include teenage pregnancies, bad discipline, poverty and not being treated well by educators. In some cases educators alienate the learners by belittling them in front of the others, and these learners end up dropping out of school because of being alienated, shouted at and ridiculed in front of their friends (Majola, 2008). Wolf, McCoy and Godfrey (2016) illustrate in their findings that there should be several types of interventions to ensure the general well-being of each child, and strategies should be in place to safeguard against poor attendance or school dropout. Strickland (2015) states that learners with involved parents are more likely to attend school regularly, and this implies that the learners may have positive attitudes towards learning and feel motivated to attend school.

2.7.4 Attitude and motivation

PI in the child's school life can positively influence the attitudes of learners and parents towards the school (Gwiazdowska, 2014). Educators can also motivate the parents to be active

participants in the child's education in the home environment (Loughran, 2008). Hoover-Dempsey and Sandler (2005) claim that personal motivation for involvement is the parental belief that they have an obligation as parents to assist their children. Parents will help with homework or attend school activities only if they believe they will make a difference for the child (Strickland, 2015). When educators make PI part of their teaching practice, parents become more interactive with their children's learning at home, and this in turn leads to learners' improved attitude and achievement (Epstein, 2001). When parents are motivated, they work even harder to be more involved and have a positive attitude towards the school and its leadership (Larocque, et al., 2011b). When the SMT shows parents that their voice and opinion matter, it motivates parents to be involved in decision-making activities and to assist the SMT to develop successful strategies to ensure that effective teaching and learning takes place. This implies that the positive attitude of parents will be beneficial for educators as well as for the school.

2.7.5 Educators and school

PI does not only benefit the learners, but also the educators and the school. The additional support that the parents give their children through their involvement in various activities can alleviate the educators' workload and build a partnership to ensure that educational standards are met (Grant & Ray, 2013). Barge and Loges (2003) also state that PI is an effective way of restoring mutual confidence and trust and create a sense of positive interdependence between parents and educators. PI can give insight to educators that will assist them in meeting the needs of the learners, as parents have important information regarding their children that can help educators to set appropriate goals and plan suitable activities for each individual child (Larocque, et al., 2011b). Gwiazdowska (2014) confirms that parents have the important task of providing educators with information about their children in order to make it easier for the educators to identify the learners' strengths, weaknesses and areas of interest. When parents are involved with their children's education, it does not only enrich the learners, but has an enriching and inspiring effect on the parents themselves and family members as well. Even though most parents acknowledge the important role they have to fulfil in their children's education, there are still numerous barriers that prevent parents from being involved.

2.8 Barriers to parental involvement

Although research has indicated the importance of PI in a child's education, many schools reflect that PI at their school is either low or not there at all, and parents do not participate meaningfully in their children's education and would like to see an improvement (Grant & Ray, 2013; Mestry, 2004). Singh, et al. (2004b) reflect on PI and exclaim that PI is difficult to achieve and maintain as there are numerous factors that can influence and hamper PI. The barriers will differ

depending on various contextual and social factors that impact negatively on PI. Barriers to PI in this research study are seen as factors that prevent parents from being involved in the various activities related to the education of their children.

Mmotlane et al. (2009) state that especially black schools in rural areas show very low PI and experience an influx of contextual and social barriers. Although there are several barriers to PI (Hornby & Blackwell, 2018), the researcher only focused on those barriers that would most likely be a barrier in the Mafeteng district. Schools in Lesotho experience numerous social and contextual barriers and the SMT must plan and strategize to ensure effective and appropriate approaches are followed to improve PI. A factor that has to be considered when dealing with parents is to be open-minded towards their involvement, as some of them may have had previous unpleasant experiences and these can have an influence on their forthcoming interactions with the school.

2.8.1 Parents' experience

Parents' own experience with education can determine the level of PI (Larocque, et al., 2011b). According to Lemmer et al. (2006), parents who had hostile or unpleasant school experiences build up negative attitudes which prevent them from taking an interest in the school and in their children's work. Negative attitudes that a parent might hold are also easily conveyed to the child, which can demotivate the child as well as have an undesirable effect on the child's educational and social performance. Some parents are embarrassed as they perceive themselves as failures because they did not perform in school, or dropped out of school. Subsequently they resist any involvement in school activities; these previous bad memories can slow down their future involvement (Grant, 2009). Hornby and Lafaele (2011) confirm that when parents perceive that educators are not open to involving parents, this acts as a major barrier to PI. Jafarov (2015) points out that parents often do not feel welcome at school and develop a hostile feeling towards the school or avoid involvement as they had a previous negative experience with an educator or principal. Some parents feel inferior and regard that which they can offer as unimportant and irrelevant; this is especially appropriate when the parent may not have a great deal of education, or parents experience that they are incompetent as parents and withdraw (Toole & de Abrey, 2005). These negative experiences and reflections may become significant obstacles for parents to overcome. Owing to the past experiences that some parents had in the Mafeteng district, the involvement of parents is not what it should be. Some parents are afraid to interfere with the school's activities thinking that there is no way they can contribute as they themselves are not educated; they think the school is a place for people who have qualifications. Most parents are not working, they depend on farming for living, they think that only parents with money can be involved in school activities. Hornby and Lafaele (2011, p. 40) confirm: "lack of confidence may

also come from them having had negative experiences with their child's previous schools, or through them experiencing either learning or behavioural difficulties during their own schooling". It is not only previous experience that can cause a negative attitude and make parents feel inferior but also if parents are not able to communicate effectively because of poor language skills.

2.8.2 Literacy- and educational level

A barrier that especially rural schools experience is the lack of effective communication between parents and the school. Parents may be illiterate or unable to speak fluent English, therefore, parents may not want to attend meetings and partake in school-based activities, especially where the communication is not in their mother tongue and they feel embarrassed to attend (Van Wyk & Lemmer, 2009). "Parents do not understand the legislation and policies and may even make their own interpretation or they depend on the principal for the interpretation, but if there is not a good relationship between them, this creates problems" (Heystek, 1999, p. 482). Parents' participation can be hampered by factors that create negative attitudes and inferior feelings such as lack of self-confidence to speak, not being knowledgeable, moving outside their comfort zone because of poor language skills and inability to communicate effectively (Larocque, et al., 2011b). Heystek (1999) confirms that parents, especially in rural areas, who are illiterate or semi-literate and cannot read or write feel inferior to the educators who have better qualifications. This inhibits effective PI.

The education level of parents is an important variable that has to be taken in consideration and can be a barrier to PI (Jafarov, 2015). Tlale (2006) confirms that parents who have got an higher educational status are likely to have a positive influence and outlook on the child's educational achievement, and are more likely to generate encouraging learning surroundings and be actively involved in home-based as well as school-based activities. Low levels of formal schooling make it extremely difficult for parents to assist their children with homework (Mavimbela & Van Niekerk, 2015), and uneducated parents are less involved in certain types of involvement activities (Deslandes & Bertrand, 2005a). Eccles (2005) also agrees that well educated parents and those who do not work outside home are more likely to be involved at school. Hornby and Lafaele (2011) emphasize that parents without university degrees may feel in some ways inferior to educators who they know are better qualified than they are, and therefore be unwilling to work closely with educators. In the Mafeteng district there are numerous learner who are not staying with their biological parents, as their parents died owing to AIDS.

2.8.3 Prevalence of AIDS

Lesotho is one of the countries with the highest number people living with aids. This poses a threat to the inhabitants' social, political and economic welfare (UNAIDS, 2010). Mafeteng is one

of the highest affected areas where the United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund (UNICEF) cares for orphans and other vulnerable children (UNICEF, 2013a). These families are either labour constrained or comprise critically ill parents, or the elderly that are affected by health issues; or child headed households. AIDS has a major impact and numerous parents do not work and do not fully partake in the education of their children. Mmotlane et al. (2009) emphasize that there is a correlation between poverty, illness and PI; it is extremely difficult for parents that have AIDS to assist in their children's education. Especially in Lesotho numerous children have lost their parents through AIDS and many children are cared for by older children who have the same responsibilities as parents. Larocque et al. (2011b) explain that working with the school, parents, relatives and caregivers can promote involvement and assist in creating a collaborative partnerships that supports those families that need more support than others. However, Hoover-Dempsey and Sandler (2005) point out that some educators have a negative attitude towards care givers or relatives and do not want to involve them in the child's education. It is important that the educators have empathy with children whose parents cannot be supportive or involved because parents are unhealthy. The unfortunate parents in Mafeteng do not only have to cope with the prevalence of AIDS, but and the social economic status of the family also has a big influence on PI.

2.8.4 Family- and socio economic status

Single parents find it challenging to fulfil their duty partaking in school- and home-based activities. They have much more responsibility to provide for the family and have very little time on their hands to be involved in their children's education. Deslandes and Bertrand (2005a) confirm that single parents are less involved in their children's educational activities, as working and providing for the family becomes top priority. According to Jafarov (2015), children who grow up with single parent are less likely to complete high school or attend college than children who grow up with both parents. Single parent children often lack parental support, interest and involvement. Kim (2009) states that most African countries are experiencing high numbers of mothers who have children at a young age, and do not want to fulfil the parental duties and become involved in their children's education as they are still children themselves. Compared to their older counterparts who see it as their responsibility to participate in the education processes of their children (Mmotlane, et al., 2009), such young mothers experience great difficulty to support their children with their schoolwork and -activities. Older mothers, with the support of their husbands, have more experience in parenting and are usually self-sufficient in making their own decisions and becoming more involved (Kim, 2009; Mmotlane, et al., 2009).

Ratcliff and Hunt (2009) indicate that another very important barrier which has a relatively strong impact on PI is socio-economic status. Some parents work long and strenuous hours, most of

the school's activities take place in the afternoon which makes it difficult for a parents to become involved (Larocque, et al., 2011b). Parents from lower income groups often do not get involved in school activities because of inability to buy books and other learning materials (Lemmer, et al., 2006). Desimone (1999) also agrees that low income and ethnic minority parents are the least likely to participate in the school activities of their child. Some researchers show that the socio-economic status of families is a leading factor in explaining PI since it has more influence on parent participation than other variables (Heystek, 2003; Lareau, 2011; Mmotlane, et al., 2009). For example, part time employed mothers generally have the highest levels of involvement in their children's learning activities; however "single-parent families are more likely to live in poverty" (Grant & Ray, 2013, p. 87). During their free time, they allocate their time in such a way that they help their children with their academic work. Certain changes in the family structure can also impede on parent involvement. If there has been a divorce or death in the family, there probably has been a change in the financial standing of the family and this state of change can cause confusion and insecurity (Grant & Ray, 2013). In previous years, people from this country depended on mines for their income, but of late Basotho men were retrenched and their only means of surviving is agriculture. Some girls and boys are forced to drop out of school and work as housemaids, or work in the Chinese factories in the capital town of Lesotho, Maseru. Some go to neighbouring countries to sell fruit and clothes so that their family members can survive. The unemployment rate in Lesotho is very high. Most families are very poor. School staff must understand that lack of participation by parents does not necessarily mean they are neglecting their responsibility (Hornby & Lafaele, 2011; Matshe, 2014). Sometimes parents don't foresee economic problems, death in the family, divorce or being retrenched, and all these will definitely have an impact on PI. Research has indicated that the sex of the child can also determine the level of PI.

2.8.5 Sex of the child

According to UNICEF, in Lesotho, parents are more interested in educating boys than girls because they say that girls will be married to another family and won't be their responsibility (UNICEF, 2013a). This is confirmed through empirical research conducted by Holloway et al (2008) which confirms the fact that the sex of the child plays a role and is one of the determinants of parent involvement. Especially in the rural areas of Lesotho most households are poor and cannot afford to send all their children to school. They sometimes keep the girls at home to help with the household chores. However, Dlangamandla (2005) shows that 50.6% of girls are educated in Lesotho as compared to 49.4% of boys. Parents may regard daughters as a better investment and daughters are given preferential support (financial) by parents, as it is believed that daughters will have a stronger commitment to supporting their parents as they grow older (Arguillas & Williams, 2010; Medina, 2001). According to the above, the perceptions of parents

can differ and parents can decide which of their children (male or female) will be most beneficial for them to support and receive formal education. Regrettably one of the barriers to PI can sometimes be the educators themselves.

2.8.6 Educators

It is not all educators who are positive towards involving parents in the learner's education. Some educators' attitudes towards parents determine to what extent parents will be involved. Relationships between educators and parents are usually complex and not stress-free (Ellis, Morgan, & Reid, 2013). There are educators who do not trust the parents' knowledge, experience, motives and parental skills and avoid interacting with parents (Grant & Ray, 2013). Larocque et al.(2011b, p. 118) accentuate that "educators' attitudes and actions will greatly influence how all parents perceive schools' interest in their families and their level of involvement with the school." Most educators have learners in their class that represent vast diversity in terms of discipline, values, religion and social upbringing, and this may be experienced by educators as threatening and frightening (Gestwicki, 2010). Larocque, Kleiman and Darling (2011b) claim that some educators (especially novice educators) seem to be reluctant and negative towards involving parents because they are uncertain how to deal with parents that are so diverse (Graham-Gray, 2002) and in cross-cultural situations (Guo, 2010). Peters, Seeds, Goldstein and Coleman (2008) suggest that educators should not be influenced by parents' appearance or socio-economic status. The authors state that parents, whether they are middle-income, single parents, physical or mentally challenged, are all interested in the success and well-being of their children, and educators should not hesitate to offer every parent the opportunity to participate in activities (Peters, et al., 2008). Educators have a responsibility to ensure they are knowledgeable on the different cultures, religions, norms and values that are represented by the diverse group of learners in their class.

2.8.7 Different cultural, religion, norms and values

In most classes educators have learners that represent different families who have diverse cultural norms and values that they follow in their homes. Grant and Ray (2013, p. 113) claim that culture "is a lens through which people view the world based on their backgrounds and experiences". Grant and Ray (2013, p. 122) further point out that "religion shapes culture and cultural practices often reflect religious beliefs." In most cases the home culture differs from the school's culture. School culture focuses on the unstated beliefs, values, attitudes, and various forms of interaction among learners, educators and principal (Welsh, Jenkins, & Greene, 2001). Some parents still uphold many family traditions and it becomes very difficult for educators to deal with and respect parents whose norms and culture differ from those they uphold in the school

(Ndebele, 2015). Grant (2009) confirms that learning at school is increasingly becoming detached from the children's lives, cultures and learning experiences at home and outside school, and it is difficult for parents and learners to associate with such different school culture, especially for children whose cultures differ significantly from the school culture. Cultural differences have the potential to create misunderstanding and conflict, especially when educators interact insensitively with parents who have different cultural backgrounds from their own. This may have a negative effect on PI (Larocque, et al., 2011b). Different religious activities can create a lot of confusion for educators and the learners, as the learners have the right to express their religious views in discussions. It is therefore essential that recognition and the necessary respect be given to the different cultures, religion and beliefs of the learners who represent different families (Boult, 2006). The SMT is an important management structure and the effort that they put in to establish PI will to a great extent determine the level of PI.

2.8.8 Effort of School Management Team

The effort of the SMT is extremely important as in most schools they determine the ethos of PI and lead the way to effective and sustained PI. Ndou (2008) emphasizes that the SMT is expected to align the current practices and plan strategies of how parents should be involved. Involving parents in the education sphere, the teaching-and learning of their children is a major educational issue (Bojuwoye & Narain, 2008; Singh, et al., 2004b) and the SMT should implement appropriate orientation and training programmes for parents that address PI. SMT practices such as invitations to school events, activities, establishing a welcoming school climate, effective communication with parents on learners' progress and invitations to participate in school activities are attributes that are directly associated with PI (Green, et al., 2007; Peters, et al., 2008). It is important for SMTs to have in-service programmes for educators to develop the necessary skills to communicate effectively with parents in order to build an effective relationship that is required for a conducive teaching-and-learning environment. The SMT should also ensure that there is specific PI strategies and programme. Feiler (2010) accentuates that it is extremely important to develop PI programmes tailored for the specific group of parents in their community. Schools should therefore have appropriate strategies, goals and policy relating to PI in place to improve PI (Moore, et al., 2012). The SMT has influential power and can assist in establishing an inviting and conducive learning and teaching climate.

2.8.9 School climate and educational system

School climate is associated with healthy relationships, corporative working environment, caring and safe environment, engaged learning and teaching, and school improvement efforts (Thapa, Cohen, Guffey, & Higgins-D'Alessandro, 2013). School climate is seen as multifaceted because

it " reflects students', school personnel's, and parents' experiences of school life socially, emotionally, civically, and ethically as well as academically" (Thapa, et al., 2013, p. 13). Research indicates that there is a connection between school climate and the level parents are involved in their children's education (Azzam, 2007; Epstein & Sheldon, 2005; Ferguson, 2008). Galvez, Gruz and Dias (2015) point out that a welcoming school climate fosters respect and parents tend to be more involved as they are valued and their opinions are considered to be important. Lemmer and Van Wyk (2004b, p. 268) state: "... families, particularly low income or ethnically diverse families do not feel welcome in school". Smit and Liebenberg (2003) report that although parents want to be actively involved in the schooling of their children, many find the educational systems inaccessible and intimidating, making it very difficult to interact. The SMT has a fundamental role to fulfil that will ensure that parents are involved in their children's education

2.9 School Management Teams

Building a partnership with the learner's parent cannot be taken for granted. The partnership does not happen automatically it requires commitment, dedication, specialized knowledge and skills from the educator, principal and SMT as well as the parent to build an effective partnership (Grant & Ray, 2013). Parents are diverse because of various aspects such as family context, culture, language and perceptions, all of which make it extremely difficult for most educators to deal with parents (Gestwicki, 2010). Although educators and parents acknowledge the importance of PI, some parents still need guidance, need encouragement for sustained active participation and assist those who would not be involved on their own (Boult, 2006; Lemmer, 2012). The principal should advocate PI, and with the assistance of the SMT must implement all the necessary strategies to ensure optimal PI (Grant & Ray, 2013). The SMT should take the lead and ensure that parents are involved in the education of their children.

The SMT is usually made up of the principal, deputy principal and heads of departments (Hove, 2015; Mestry & Bodalina, 2015; Ndou, 2008). According to Heystek (2006), the size of the SMT is not prescribed according to legislation but it usually includes all the educators that have been promoted and placed in a managing position. The SMT should assist the principal in leading as well as managing the school; this should not be the sole responsibility of the principal (Singh, et al., 2004b). The SMT has an immense responsibility towards ensuring that effective teaching and learning takes place (Hove, 2015). As management team they are actively involved in decision-making, have an impact on the school climate and environment as well as the ability to influence parents, educators and learners (Doiz & Lasagabaster, 2017). According to Khuluse (2004) the SMT is the structure in the school responsible for the proper running of the school and should plan, lead and control all activities relating to education at a particular school. Van Deventer (2016) posits that the SMT's primary task is planning with regard to all activities regarding the

education of learners. Van der Voort and Wood (2014) state that the SMT has a responsibility, is accountable for school related activities and must always aim to improve the school by utilising data to understand situations, be able to identify root causes of problems, give possible solutions and ensure that continuous monitoring takes place.

Schools require a management team that is able to steer all stakeholders and so to ensure that educators teach, learners learn and parents provide the necessary support so that the school's performance should be good. School Management teams should play an active role in decision making processes taking place in schools, and it is important that they consider how to optimally involve the parents in the children's education to ensure that effective teaching and learning takes place (Department of Education, 2001; OECD, 2014). The SMT must assume the responsibility for the day to day running of the school and for the implementation of the school policies. SMTs are required to build relationships with parents based on trust, cooperation, honesty, accountability, effective communication, shared visions, values and solutions (Owens, 2010). Everard, Morris and Wilson (2004, p. 34) state that "the key to effective management is the ability to get results from other people through other people and in conjunction with other people. If the underlying psychology is wrong, the most carefully constructed system and techniques will fail." It cannot be taken for granted that the SMT is knowledgeable, experienced and have the necessary skills to communicate well with parents to establish a parent-educator relationship that will enhance and promote parent involvement. SMTs need capacity-building to manage their schools effectively (Van der Voort & Wood, 2016). Milondzo and Nsimbini (2013) agree that SMTs need to be trained in managerial skills so as to ensure that practices and strategies are in place in order to improve the quality of education. The SMT of each school has to determine its own actions towards PI and focus on the specific context of the school, parents and their involvement in order to plan appropriate strategies for that specific school. Although educators and parents acknowledge the importance of PI some parents still need guidance, should encourage sustained active participation and aid those who will not be involved on their own (Lemmer, 2012). Bush (2007) confirms that each school situation, context, event and system is unique and therefore requires unique plans and strategies. It is therefore necessary to have a closer look at the SMT in Lesotho.

2.9.1 School Management Teams in Lesotho

In Lesotho, the SMT is composed of the principal, deputy and the heads of the departments. In schools where there is no deputy or HOD due to the number of learners in the school, some educators are elected by the principals to become HODs so that the management of the school is easier. The schools are governed by the Ministry of Education Act, and each school is run by its own policies which are expected to be in line with the specific Act (Ministry of Education, 2010).

Formal education in Lesotho functions through a strong partnership between the Government, school proprietors (church groups) and the local communities (parents) (Polaki & Khoeli, 2005). The SMT in Lesotho's main focus is to ensure that the basic requirements of teaching and learning take place, and not a lot of attention is given to strategies or practices to improve parent involvement. The SMT's role in this partnership is to make sure that education takes place appropriately in the country. According to Polaki and Khoeli (2005) eighty percent of secondary schools in Lesotho are legally owned by churches. The church schools are run by churches as proprietors, while government schools are sponsored by government in all their activities. SMTs for Government schools and church schools operate in the same way, but the difference is that the principal from the church school is the person who belongs to that particular church and has suitable qualifications while in government schools it can be any person who has suitable qualifications, regardless of the religion. In the Ministry of Education Act (Ministry of Education, 2010) the duties of the principal (who is the part of SMT) are shown and it is stated that the principal is responsible for the school management and the leadership of the school. The Education Act shows that the main responsibility of the principal is to make sure that meaningful teaching and learning takes place, maintain management records of the school, prepare annual budgets of the school and perform other duties as may be prescribed by the Minister of Education that are delegated to him or her by the school board. The tasks and responsibilities of the principal are shared by deputy principals and heads of department. SMTs in church- and government schools that are not trained or who experience lack of knowledge have to take the responsibility themselves to attain the required knowledge by meeting with other principals or SMT members. The SMT of each school has therefore the responsibility to ensure that strategies are implemented to optimize teaching and learning opportunities for each learner. Although there are numerous official documents available in South Africa that indicate the importance of PI, there are no official documents that indicate strategies that the SMT can follow to improve PI.

2.9.2 School Management Teams in South Africa

A SMT in South Africa is composed of the principal, deputy principal and heads of the departments. In South Africa, the conformation of SMTs is determined by the provincial department, which decides how many deputy principals (if any) and heads of departments (HODs) each school should have, based on a specific formula (Bush & Glover, 2013). Heystek (2004, p. 308) confirms: "the professional management in the school is the responsibility of the principal and the SMT is responsible for the teaching and learning activities". Ndou (2008) insists that it is the responsibility of the SMT to ensure that the school delivers with regard to academic goals, teaching and learning and action plans to attain the predetermined educational goals. In order for education to be effective, there should be a good relationship among the management team and educators. This implies that if SMT members do not work hand in hand with one

another, the learning and teaching will be negatively affected. Milondzo and Nsimbine (2013, p. 90) show that recent changes in the Department of Education (DoE) have compelled educators, members of school management teams and government officials to change their ways of doing things, so as to improve the standard of education in the new democratic South Africa. According to the Department of Education approximately 50% of SMTs lack management skills, and this is associated with the poor implementation of programmes which is central to poor performance levels and lack of accountability (Department of Education, 2002, p. 17). This is confirmed by Ndamane (2005, p. 4) who reports that members of SMTs do not know what is expected of them, especially when there is no clearly defined job description. The author further insists that some SMTs members are guilty of not inviting parents to participate in developing policies and assisting in decisions that would affect learners. The DoE requires SMTs to make the necessary changes in the way they function at school in order to improve the standard of education (Milondzo & Nsimbini, 2013, p. 90). (Department of Education, 2002, p. 17). There is a dire need to empower SMTs so that they become effective in compiling appropriate strategies to improve PI in their school.

2.9.3 Empowerment of School Management Teams

For SMT members to perform their duties well and develop strategies for PI they should be empowered. Gestwicki (2010) states that it is important to remember that every family is unique in its own way with its own strengths and challenges and should be treated accordingly. Educators and especially the SMT, need to be trained how to deal with and understand the uniqueness of every family in order to ensure that an effective partnership between the school and parents is created (Larocque, et al., 2011b). In Lesotho, especially in the Mafeteng district, there is no official training for SMTs, there is only the training for educators in their specific subjects they are teaching, and training for other activities including the invigilation of learners during the year end exams. This training is conducted by the Examination Council of Lesotho. For any strategy in PI to be effective, a positive attitude of the SMT towards PI is essential.

2.9.4 Attitude of School Management Teams towards parental involvement

The attitude of the SMT towards PI is very important as it will determine the level of effort they would put in to ensure maximum PI. In order for parents to take part at school, the SMT, in their leadership position, should concentrate on the principles that seek to support stakeholders in ensuring that teaching and learning takes place in a supportive environment. According to Ndimani (2005), the SMT should be supportive to all parents and have a positive attitude to ensure that parents partake in school activities, develop policies and assist in decisions that will affect learners. The success of education in this context depends on effective collaboration between

the parents, the SMT and educators. Lee, Hebaishi and Hope (2015) state that the SMT should value the input of others, they should not see themselves as the people in charge but as the instigators of action towards PI. SMTs should also be aware of their duties and responsibilities as managers of the school towards involving parents in the teaching and learning process.

2.9.5 Duties and responsibilities of school management team towards parental involvement

Parents need to be involved in the education of their children. The SMT has an immense responsibility to ensure that parents are involved in the teaching and learning process (Fan & Chen, 2001). SMT is part of the management of the school and should be involved in activities such as planning, organising, monitoring, correspondence, cooperation and communication (Van der Westhuizen, 2010; Van Deventer & Kruger, 2009). Heystek (2006) states that the SMT is especially responsible for the management of teaching and learning activities, and should use all means necessary to ensure that it takes place effectively, by including parents in a partnership with the school. Hove (2015, p. 30) agrees by stating that SMTs are “the custodians and guarantors of all learning activities that take place within their institutional jurisdictions”. Arrangements that are made in the school are the responsibility of the SMTs; they should give support to educators, create a conducive learning and teaching environment and ensure that parents are involved (Hove, 2015). Larocque, et al. (2011b) posit that parents play an important role in creating a school that meets their child’s needs and the SMT should assist educators and parents on how to get involved in the education of their children. Parents need to understand that they are an essential component in the learning process of their children, and it has to be communicated effectively to them that they also have a shared responsibility towards their children’s education (Boult, 2006).

The SMT should take a leading role in reviewing its current programmes and ensure that policy and strategies are developed as well as communicated throughout the school (McLarty, Highley, & Anderson, 2010). The SMT can aid in this communication process and help to ensure that parents understand that they are needed, and indicate how and when they can be involved. To improve practice, schools should regularly appraise the effectiveness of their parent-educator activities (Lemmer, 2012) and the SMT can take responsibility and the necessary action to appraise current PI practices.

“Current school reform efforts have placed principals as part of the SMT, at the forefront of the work required for schools to improve” (Larsen & Rieckhoff, 2014, p. 304). However, the author further states that principals are not able to effect such changes alone; therefore, continued emphasis has been placed on developing structures for sharing leadership and allowing others

to be part of the decision-making process - such as the SMT. Shared leadership means shared accountability, to suggest possible solutions and activities together, to be able to achieve set goals together. Management of the school should work with parents for the better performance because Van der Voort (2013, p. 1) emphasises that “low levels of learner achievement can be linked to the general state of dysfunctionality that many schools find themselves in as result of poor management and leadership”. The provision of appropriate support services by the SMT is of paramount importance in the education process, and such support helps to boost the confidence of both the educators and the parents in their teaching of children. Goodall and Montgomery (2014) report that parents are aware of the importance of engaging with their children’s learning, yet have decreasing confidence in undertaking this role. It is important for SMTs to have in-service programmes for educators to develop the necessary skills to communicate effectively with parents in order to build an effective relationship (Setlhodi-Mohapi & Lebeloane, 2014). According to Tiale (2006), management should ensure that parenting education programmes such as family centred curriculum and instruction are enshrined in the school programme, so that parents will be better parents and more supportive. The SMT can create a conducive environment for meaningful interaction and collaboration with parents. Van Wyk and Lemmer (2009) emphasize that the SMT should provide guidance to parents on how to take care of their children and support their children’s educational activities while they are at home. Setlhodi-Mohapi and Lebeloane (2014) emphasize that the SMT should steer the school in the right direction to ensure academic goals are reached and maintained. In schools where there is a lack of PI, the SMT should develop appropriate strategies, model or programmes specific for their context to ensure PI. Gestwicki (2010) states that there is no single PI model as each school’s context pertaining to parents, learners and educators is unique. Indicating various strategies will assist the SMT to choose the most suitable strategies to ensure that effective and sustainable PI takes place.

2.9.6 Approaches to improve parental involvement

It is crucial that the SMT is knowledgeable on strategies that would enhance PI and focuses on including certain factors that would encourage PI. Larocque et al. (2011b, p. 121) point out that “there is no one best way for PI”. Ellis, Morgan and Reid (2013) state that PI differs from primary school to secondary school, and different approaches are required to involve parents from primary and secondary schools. A study by Desforjes and Abouchaar (2003) indicates that PI diminishes as the child gets older, which makes it even more difficult to get parents involved in secondary schools. The aim of this study was to develop strategies for the SMTs in Lesotho, specifically the Mafeteng district, and to determine factors that would aid in improving PI in secondary schools. Factors that would enhance PI are aspects that would create a positive interpersonal relationship between educators and parents. The openness of the school environment, caring and

understanding attitude of educators, friendly gestures and mutual respect are mere examples of factors that can encourage parents to become partners in the challenging task of educating their children (Jafarov, 2015; Kim, 2009). To ensure that PI evolves, parents should be encouraged to become part of the culture of the school, and it is essential that PI should be viewed as a process rather than a one-time event (Larocque, et al., 2011b). One way of ensuring that parents are involved is to ensure that the lines of communication are always open and that communication as well as correspondence is effective.

2.9.6.1 Communication and correspondence

Communication is very important as it is the structure that keeps everything together and determines the interrelationship between all the stakeholders (Prinsloo, 2016). Communication can be defined as “a message conveying information from one person to another person, either verbally or non-verbally, with regard to activities, management tasks, and/or relationships between staff, parents and learners and the school” (Smit, Cronje, Brevis, & Vrba, 2011, p. 411). Regular and effective communication between the school and parents can enhance PI and can lead to improved teaching and learning. Goodall and Montgomery (2014) open and direct communication creates favourable conditions for good cooperation and interaction between parents and educators. Most educators utilize one way communication and do not give the parent the opportunity to respond to the one way communication; it is imperative that educators encourage parental input and ensure that shared dialogue takes place (Grant & Ray, 2013). Larocque (2011b, p. 117) emphasizes that the ongoing two-way communication can help to build trust between parents and educators as it “allows parents and educators to be on the same page regarding the child’s educational progress”. Lemmer (2012), Feiler (2010) and Boulton (2006) agree that parents and educators need to share important information regarding the child by communicating regularly via two-way communication. Harris and Goodall (2008) state that schools can help bring parents on board by improving communication. This will include returning phone calls and emails quickly, scheduling activities and events at flexible times for working parents and encouraging active discussion about school progress. According to Mfundiso (2004), communication plays an important part in the life of an organisation like a school. Communication includes formal and informal communication. Formal communication with parents may be through interviews, report cards, parent-educator conferences and meetings. Informal communication occurs when the principal, educators and parents communicate via phone calls and messages, contact or incidental meetings during school functions (Mfundiso, 2004). Kabir (2014) shows that in most cases educators only communicate with parents in order to deal with learners’ problems and school improvement. Most schools operate mainly on a foundation of what Henderson, Mapp, Johnson and Davies (2007, p. 25) term “come if we call”. Larocque, Kleiman and Darling (2011b) emphasize that two-way communication allows parents and educators to be on the same

page regarding the children's education progress. Van der Westhuizen (2010) also reveals that in the teaching and education partnership between the school and parents, regular two-way communication is necessary for exchanging important information. Regular home-school communication is fundamental to effective parent involvement in schooling. Lemmer (2012) also supports that parents and educators need to share valuable information regarding the child through open two-way communication in the interest of the child, especially at parent-educator conferences and meetings. In a number of instances, parents may feel intimidated by the professional jargon used in the school (Larocque, et al., 2011b), and they need to be assisted to understand. The SMT and educators should not presume that the parents understand what is meant. There are various ways that educators can involve parents and ensure that they understand the message that is carried over. Educators can invite those parents with particular knowledge and experience to come into the classroom and share their expertise with the learners (Van Wyk & Lemmer, 2009). According to Naidoo (2005), educators can use translators in two way communication to facilitate communication, and to translate newsletter or written communication; using pictures or videos is another option. Oral communication is the most preferred way as it allows for immediate clarification and answers.

The SMT must establish clear levels of communication and procedures. The SMT must ensure that educators and correspondence from the school use a variety of communication strategies which emphasise communication of positive feedback and not only when there are problems with learners (Lemmer, 2012). Epstein, Coates, Salinas, Sanders and Simon (1997) emphasize that schools should implement effective forms of communication about the school's activities and the child's progress. It is very important that the SMT ensures there is a link with parents to prevent absenteeism among learners by having an effective communication line in place. This can be done through communication by exchanging letters or emails. For example, when a child has an appointment to see a doctor, parents and educators should communicate, because if there is no communication, sometimes learners may leave home in the morning but not arrive at school. Prinsloo (2016, p. 199) highlights the importance of communication and points out that "effective communication is a prerequisite for the leadership and management functions of the school". Effective communication is necessary, especially when school activities and certain programmes at school are planned.

2.9.6.2 Planning of activities and programmes

Planning is the primary management function that the SMT has to perform (Van Deventer & Kruger, 2009). It is important to plan with parents, because according to DoE (2007), it is essential to monitor and evaluate how plans are working because the SMT can be held responsible for the activities they have planned. Parents should be an integral part of the process when planning

activities and programmes as well as receive praise and acknowledgment for their contribution (Harris & Goodall, 2008) . Parents can contribute to developing a school in many ways and it is important to plan activities carefully and to strive for a common vision and goals that the parents and the school want to achieve (Gwiazdowska, 2014; Harris & Goodall, 2008). Schools enhance their connection to families by encouraging them to volunteer in school activities and attend school events. Families who volunteer grow more familiar and comfortable with their children's schools and educators. Volunteering efforts that utilize parental talents enrich schools' programmes and, particularly in upper grades, facilitate individualized learning. The use of volunteer talent and time with educator and student needs becomes increasingly complex (Gestwicki, 2010).

The SMT can ensure that planned activities are optimized when the parents are involved in the decision-making of the activities and criteria are determined beforehand. Quan-Blaffour (2006) reveals that parents are beginning to see themselves as equal partners in the education of their children and therefore should have co-responsibility; they should be provided the opportunity to voice their opinion and get involved. To ensure that PI takes place successfully and continuously the SMT needs to plan for parental and educator training to take place through workshops or training sessions.

2.9.6.3 Parental and educator training

For educators to perform their duties well and to communicate appropriately and professionally with parents, they need to be empowered to ensure that PI takes place. Sister (2004) indicates that empowerment can equip the educators with capacities to deal with transformation and change, foster participation in school decisions and communicate in such a way that will foster PI. Lemmer (2012, p. 83) points out that "educators are seldom trained to interact with parents, and both parents and educators often find such encounters stressful and ineffective". This is confirmed by a statement made by Larocque et al (2011b, p. 116) that "educators admit that they have little training in strategies for working with parents". The authors also mention that the focus is usually on managing difficult parents, and few strategies are given to develop meaningful PI (Larocque, et al., 2011b, p. 116). Gestwicki (2010) agrees that it is essential to develop and capacitate educators to effectively interact and communicate with parents to ensure mutual partnership in the child's education. Kimu and Steyn (2013) state that a contributing factor for poor educator-parent relationship is the fact that educators are not trained to involve parents effectively in schools. The SMT should provide educators with at least some guidelines to enhance parent-educator relationships by holding regular professional development meetings that focus on home-school communication.

Some parents seem unaware of how they can become involved in their children's education and therefore need guidelines as well as parent training programmes (Harris & Goodall, 2008; Hasley, 2010; Tlale, 2006; Van Wyk & Lemmer, 2009). Deslandes and Bertrand (2005a) concur that parents need to understand their roles, because that understanding identifies the activities that they believe are necessary and part of their responsibilities as parents. This indicates that parents are more likely to become involved if they are aware of their involvement as a requirement of parenting and being helpful. Hasley (2010) says that parents should be provided with guidance for each activity in which they participate. These efforts include sharing expectations and providing resources for the parents to accomplish their goals. Boulton (2006) accentuates the necessity to develop parents' capacity for PI, such as providing opportunities for parents to be trained, explaining the use of academic jargon and being workshopped. Conducting workshops is the perfect setting to promote PI and for parents to realize the importance of being involved, sharing experiences. Some parents also need guidance on how to get involved in their children's home-based activities (Ndebele, 2015). Most parental participation in children's education occurs in the home. Schools must capitalize upon what parents are already doing by helping them to assist and interact with their children on home learning activities that reinforce what is being taught in school. Schools should aim to increase parents' understanding of the curriculum and the skills their children need to develop at each stage in their schooling. It is very important that the SMT does not capacitate only educators but also parents by providing opportunities and workshops as well as creating occasions for parents to become involved in certain decision-making aspects regarding the education of their children. The SMT must not only make sure that appropriate training takes place for educators and parents, they should foster a school culture and climate that is inviting for parents to become involved

2.9.6.4 School culture and climate

The school culture and climate is an important determining factor for PI. The terms *culture* and *climate* are sometimes understood as overlapping concepts and are mostly used interchangeable to usually conceptualize the way the stakeholders experience and describe the school environment (Van Wyk, Ogina, & Mampane, 2016). However, MacNeil, Prater and Busch (2009) indicate that there is some distinction. Climate is described as shared perceptions and culture as shared norms (MacNeil, et al., 2009, p. 75). Culture is explained as "assumptions that are taken for granted and operate unconsciously and unexamined in the minds of people" (Van Wyk, et al., 2016, p. 62). The school climate is multidimensional and refers to the social interaction between the different shareholders in the school and their perceptions of shared beliefs, principles and attitudes (Galvez, et al., 2015; Koth, Bradshaw, & Leaf, 2008). Van Wyk, Ogina and Mampane (2016, p. 65) point out that culture does not develop overnight, it takes time for the specific school and community to develop "shared attitudes, beliefs, customs, written and unwritten rules".

School culture can be defined as: “different activities, ways of doing things” and climate as “current spirit and ethos of a school that has resulted from the prevailing school culture” (Van Wyk, et al., 2016, p. 77). A positive and sustained climate focuses on aspects such as safety, development, relationships, academic achievement and school reform (National School Climate Center, August 2012). Parents are much more likely to become involved when they feel welcomed and valued (Grant & Ray, 2013; Larocque, et al., 2011b).

Deslandes and Bertrand (2005a) confirm that educators who create opportunity to involve parents coupled with an inviting school, are related significantly to the level of parent involvement. Mmotlane et al. (2009) report that when parents feel at home, they have self-confidence, and such parents are more likely to believe that they have the skills and knowledge to help their children. Parents become involved if they believe that their actions will improve the learning and academic performance of their children. To ensure that effective PI takes place requires that a climate of PI and mutual trust as well as respect must be created and sustained (Boult, 2006). However, Kimu and Steyn (2013) indicate that the initiative of creating a welcoming and supportive school climate and culture remains with the individual school, especially with the SMT. According to (Doiz & Lasagabaster, 2017) the SMTs have various tasks and responsibilities and their role as leaders can influence the school climate. Khuluse (2004) says that the SMT should aim at creating an organisational climate that is a learning climate which supports continuous improvement and which provides each educator, learner and parent the opportunity to become a partner in creating a success. Mavimbela and Van Niekerk (2015, p. 570) also proclaim that “there should also be a consensus amongst the SMT of the school to apply core democratic values of fairness, openness, equity as well as the basic moral principles of honesty, accountability and integrity an enabling culture and ethos of wellbeing”. In a study done by Van Wyk and Lemmer (2004a) they conclude in their findings that PI should be part of the culture of the school, and schools must have a warm-hearted climate which recognises the parents’ strengths and potential. Khuluse (2004) points out that the school climate is in fact the result of the interaction between the SMT, educators, learners and parents and that the school climate also results from the extent to which the SMT fulfil their duties and responsibilities to involve parents. Galvez, Cruz and Diaz (2015) accentuate the importance that parents, educators and learners must collaborate in establishing coexisting rules at school to ensure that a stable and positive school climate exists. SMT must ensure that a school culture exist that promotes teaching and learning (Department of Education, 2001, p. 2). The SMT therefore has a responsibility towards creating a positive school culture and climate that is not only conducive to teaching and learning but also a climate that will welcome parents to be part of the school. The SMT also has an obligation towards the parents, educators and learners to ensure that a policy on PI is in place to ensure that certain guidelines are followed when it comes to PI.

2.9.6.5 Policy on parental involvement

Schools must have a definite policy and strong practices about involving parents at school and at home in activities related to learning. Van Deventer (2016, p. 146) states: “a school policy serves as a guide for making management, functional and administrative decisions, and reflects the school’s value system”. The SMT is “responsible for drafting the school policy that regulates the professional obligations at the school” (Van Deventer, 2016, p. 146). The draft must then be submitted to other stakeholders for any changes, recommendations and approval (Van Deventer, 2016). The SMT should introduce a policy to make parents aware about the benefits of their involvement in education (Kabir, 2014). Peters, et al. (2008) state that one of the crucial elements to get parents involved is to start with a policy that legitimizes the importance of PI. Kokemuller (2016) confirms that written policies and procedures provide the framework for an organisation’s entire operation, which means they can provide a clear direction on how parents and educators can work together. Taylor (2015) accentuates that there should be policy which outlines the roles played by parents in their children’s learning. Kim (2009) states that when schools have a clear policy on completing homework, parental meetings and academic achievements, more parents will be willing to become involved. Written policy on PI must be compiled and evaluated by parents and SMT (Gestwicki, 2010; Lemmer, et al., 2006). This is underscored by Kimu and Steyn (2013, p. 608) saying that “each school must implement all education policies, including those pertaining to PI”. The boundaries of the parents should be clearly stipulated in the policy of PI, and a simple and easy language should be used so that parents can easily understand easily (Majola, 2008). Kurtulmus (2016) confirms that when compiling a policy it is essential to have the parents involved; that will give them a sense of ownership and responsibility towards their involvement and supporting their children. When the the SMT thinks about programmes to increase PI, it should first ensure that a policy that legitimizes the importance of PI is established (Plevyak, 2003). When compiling a policy on PI, community involvement should also be considered.

2.9.6.6 Community involvement

Epstein (2002) shows that collaborating with the community activities encourages the cooperation of schools, families, and community groups; also organisations, agencies and individuals. To build such partnership effectively, it is necessary to truly understand one another (Nojaja, 2009). For the school, to work effectively, there is a need to involve all the parties concerned. It is important for the SMT to involve the community in the activities that take place at school because they have a certain role that they can play in the improvement of the school. Decker and Decker (2003) confirm that if the community support schools, families and children, they can have an enormous encouraging and beneficial effect. This may include good results at the end of the

year, and also the behaviour of learners may improve. Gestwicki (2010) points out that the child is part of the community that also has an input on each and every child's development. Therefore there is a need for the SMT to involve the community so that they can feel they are part of the education in their environment and context. Olsen and Fuller (2010) show that community members can provide the school with materials, people, and natural resources, therefore this can improve the quality of education. As Larocque, et al. (2011b, p. 115) point out: "families, community groups, and educators each have a role to play in the educational achievement and success of learners."

2.10 Summary

The focus of this chapter was to indicate and illuminate the conceptual and theoretical framework that underpins the research. The literature review assisted the researcher to conceptualize the key concepts, realizing the relevance of and interrelatedness between the concepts that lead to a solid conceptual framework for PI that illuminates the importance and areas of PI. The nature of PI in Lesotho was elaborated on and PI in South Africa was briefly indicated.

The theoretical framework that reinforced the study were specified. In order to gain further understanding of the benefits and barriers of PI, views of different authors were discussed to give a comprehensive understanding of the numerous benefits of PI and abundant barriers that can prevent PI in their children's education. Different authors have accentuated that PI has great benefits to various stakeholders.

This chapter also explored the nature of SMTs in Lesotho and South Africa schools and scrutinized possible strategies to assist SMTs with successful and maintained PI. The literature review overall explored and indicated the importance of PI and the valuable role that the SMT has to play to ensure effective and sustained PI.

The next chapter will discuss the research design and methodology. A comprehensive explanation of the reasons behind choosing the research design and methodology appropriate for this specific research will be presented. The next chapter will illuminate various aspects concerning the research path followed that assisted the researcher in the process of collecting truthful data to enable the researcher to analyse and answer the research question.

CHAPTER THREE: RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

In the previous chapter the researcher did an in-depth literature review on various concepts that formed the foundation for this research. The term *parental involvement* was deliberated and scrutinised, the importance of parental involvement (PI) in learners' education was accentuated by numerous research on this topic and the positive relation between PI and learner achievement emphasized (Goodall & Montgomery, 2014; Lemmer, 2013; Marshall & Jackman, 2015; Peters, 2012; Sivertsen, 2015; Smolkowski, et al., 2017). Higher levels of PI have been associated with better school attendance, improved academic performance and social skills, decline in negative behaviour patterns, higher qualification attained, and fewer grade retention (Grant & Ray, 2013; Kabir, 2014; Larocque, et al., 2011b; Ndebele, 2015; Sivertsen, 2015; Smolkowski, et al., 2017). Copious benefits of PI to various stakeholders were indicated (§ 2.7). As the research took place in Lesotho and not in South Africa only a brief section was spend on the South Africa context (§ 2.5). A more comprehensive section regarding education and PI in Lesotho was given (§ 2.4). The researcher directed the reader to the model that was exploited as theoretical framework (§ 2.6) for this research and assisted the researcher to identify and explore PI in Lesotho. The literature review also indicated an abundance of barriers to PI (§ 2.8). Finally the focus was on the school managing team (SMT) (§ 2.9) and the important role they have to fulfil in ensuring that parents are actively involved in the education of their children to ultimately ensure that effective teaching and learning takes place. The empowerment of SMT is essential in order to assure the SMT are able to effectively engage parents and keep them involved in school activities and educational performance of the learners.

The conceptual framework and the theoretical framework discussed in chapter two, together with the research design and methodology outlined in this chapter illustrate the manner in which the research questions were addressed (§ 2.4). In this chapter the researcher discussed the chosen research design, indicating the reasons for selecting the specific research approach. This chapter also indicated how the data was collected and analysed in order to answer the main research question and attainment of the research aims. It was important for the researcher to abide to the ethical considerations and ensure trustworthiness in conducting the research. Therefore aspects such as field notes, trustworthiness, data analysis and ethical considerations was deemed important to indicate in this chapter. The purpose of this research was: to formulate strategies that the SMT can follow to aid in effective PI at secondary schools in the Mafeteng district in Lesotho, as outlined in Chapter one. The research was grounded on specific research questions and aims.

3.2 Research questions and aims

Generally a research problem is primarily posed as a question, which serves as the focus of the researcher's investigation (Fraenkel & Norman, 2008). Developing research questions is significant and central to any research as the questions give direction, helps the researcher to focus on what is essential and not to become bemused and overloaded with information (Nieuwenhuis, 2016a; Punch & Qancea, 2014). Saldana (2013) confirms that focusing on the expressed research questions, purpose and aims of the research while analysing the data will keep the researcher on the pathway of the research in progress and elucidate that the research questions are embed in the research design and methodology. The purpose of this research was in accordance with the main research question:

What strategies can be developed for School Management Teams to ensure effective parental involvement at secondary schools in Mafeteng district in Lesotho?

- In order to achieve the purpose and add structure to the research, the main question had been divided into more specific sub-research questions. The following sub-questions were formulated:
- **Sub-question 1:** What is the nature and benefits of parental involvement in secondary schools in Mafeteng district in Lesotho?
- **Sub-question 2:** What are the barriers to parental involvement in secondary schools in Lesotho?
- **Sub-question 3:** What strategies can be developed for school management teams as to ensure effective parental involvement at secondary schools in Mafeteng district in Lesotho?

In accordance to the main research question of the research the researcher intended to formulate strategies that the SMT can follow to aid in effective PI at secondary schools in Mafeteng district in Lesotho. In order to obtain the main aim of the research, the overarching aim was divided into more specific sub research aims to demarcate the thematic focus of this study with the following sub aims:

- explore, describe and explain the nature of parental involvement
- explore, describe and explain the importance and benefits of parental involvement
- determine the barriers to parental involvement

- explore and describe strategies for School Management Teams to aid in effective parental involvement at secondary schools in Mafeteng district in Lesotho.

The above questions and aims steered and influenced the researcher to ensure that the appropriate research design and methodology was established to be able to analyze participant's experiences and responses to the research questions. The above research questions were answered and aims realized through the solicitation of a predetermined research design.

3.3 Research design

The research design is an imperative component of any research as it is the researcher's plan of inquiry (Bogdan & Biklen, 2006; Nieuwenhuis, 2016a). According to Denzin and Lincoln (2013b, p. 29) "a research design describes a flexible set of guidelines that connect theoretical paradigms, first, to strategies of inquiry and, second, to methods for collecting empirical material". The research design refers to the general strategy that the researcher followed by applying different components of the study in a coherent and realistic way, to ensure that the researcher effectively addressed the research problem (De Vaus, 2001). Research design is therefore seen as a plan, structure and strategy of study to attain accurate and valid answers to the research questions and problems (Kumar, 2005; Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). The research design also supported the researcher in the development of research questions, decisions about research situations, the time frame for data collection methods, and guides the researcher to follow certain procedures to understand the phenomenon being researched (Ritchie & Lewis, 2003). The research design is a critical component in this research as it assisted and guided the researcher to constantly reflect and critically appraise the research process (Mason, 2002).

I followed an interpretative approach as the objective was to understand the participants' perceptions and experiences regarding PI in schools. "Interpretive approach is also called the phenomenological approach, that is an approach that aims to understand people" (Babbie & Mouton, 2001, p. 28). Guest, Namey and Mitchell (2013, p. 5) point out that the approach applies that researchers see knowledge as reality which is socially constructed by human actors and interprets it accordingly. Maree and Pieterse (2016, p. 32) mentions that interpretive can also be "subjective, spiritual or even transcendental, which might lead to a more subjective, participatory role, often rejecting the standard methods of natural science." I used the interpretative approach for the reason that (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016, p. 9) state that in interpretive approach, "the reality is socially constructed, that is, there is no single, observable reality, rather there are multiple realities, or interpretations of a single event". Babbie and Mouton (2001, p. 28) accentuate that "all human beings are engaged in the process of making sense of their worlds and continuously interpret, create, give meaning, define, justify and rationalize daily actions." This

implies that in this research, I was depended on the responses given by respondents on how they experienced PI and also reflect on the role the SMT have towards PI.

This indicates that the research was exploratory and descriptive in nature as it documented and described the nature of PI as well as the barriers and enablers of PI. Qualitative research is typically used to explore and describe new phenomena and to capture participant's perceptions (Shields & Rangarjan, 2013). Maree (2007, p. 55) exclaims that the qualitative researcher works from the viewpoint that "the world is made up of people with their own assumptions, intensions, attitudes, beliefs and values, and that way of knowing reality is by exploring the experiences of others regarding a specific phenomenon." The explanatory side of the research exploited the fundamental aspects that the SMT needs to consider in order to implement strategies to improve and ensure continuous PI. Therefore the overall purpose of the qualitative researcher is to understand how people make sense of their lives and their experiences (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016, p. 24). Focus group interviews were used to gain insight in the participants experiences regarding PI as focus groups can produce quality in-depth interactional data (Gibbs, 2012) and bring together people with varied opinion or representatives of different features (Cohen, et al., 2011).

Consequently for this research, a qualitative, phenomenological approach underpinned by an interpretive paradigm design was deemed appropriate to assist the researcher in determining the plan to gather the empirical evidence that was used to answer the research questions and attain the research aims. I addressed the research questions through the implementation of an appropriate and relevant research methodology.

3.4 Research methodology

Research methodology is the general research strategy that summarizes the way in which research is to be carried out and indicates the methods I used (Howell, 2013a). Creswell (2014b) agrees that research methodology gives structure to the intended research by providing the researcher with an outline on how to proceed with applying specific research methods. Research methodology also focuses on data collection techniques and analysis of the data (Leedy & Ormrod, 2013). In this study, qualitative research method was considered suitable as it presents an in-depth understanding of participant's experiences and perspectives regarding PI.

3.4.1 Phenomenology

I used a phenomenology mode of inquiry which focus on the meaning participants have in regard to their lived experiences and can provide an description regarding their experiences (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016; Nieuwenhuis, 2016c). The essence of any phenomenological research study, is therefore to transform the lived experiences of the participants into textual expressions that not

only describe the experience, but also the meaning derived from the experience (Creswell, 2007). According to Nieuwenhuis (2016c, pp. 77,78) the emphasis is on: "describing what all participants have in common as they experience a phenomenon" allowing the researcher to perceive the very essence of the "what and how of their experiences." This mode of inquiry assisted me to determine the participants' experiences regarding PI in schools. In order for me to understand the relationship of the participants to their environment and how they interact with it, the interpretative paradigm was employed to interpret the relationship and interaction and also how the participants create meaning out of it.

3.4.2 Interpretive paradigm

Qualitative interpretative researchers have certain beliefs and feelings that guide their actions, it is therefore essential for me to indicate in which interpretive paradigm the research will apply strategies of inquiry (Denzin & Lincoln, 2013b). Interpretivism is explained by Willis (2008) as a type of applied research, and are usually intended to aid individuals and groups in a particular context. The objectives are to comprehend the context better and to develop participants' lives or the lives of others. An interpretive paradigm is therefore concerned with understanding the essence of the everyday world (Cohen, Manion, & Morrison, 2007: 58). The interpretive paradigm is characterised by the concern for the individual, the main aim to understand the subjective world of human experience, focusing on their interpretations of the world around them (Cohen, et al., 2011). Interpretive research is more subjective than objective as it focuses on the lived experiences of the participants, and reality is approached from the participants' own experiences when interpretivism is applied (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). Keeping this in mind I was aware that there may be the probable threat that my own perception might influence the data analysis process. I took certain measures to ensure that her own perceptions did not affect the data by ensuring intensive and accurate listening to participants, making field notes and review audio recordings over and over (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016).

The focus of this research is on the parents' and SMT members' experiences and understanding of PI. This research will be imbedded in an interpretive paradigm as this study planned to discover, describe and explain the participants' experiences on PI. I worked directly with the participants in their natural setting and was determined to comprehend their interpretations and shared experiences and opinions of the world around them (De Vos, Strydom, Fouche, & Delport, 2011; Johnson & Christensen, 2008). The phenomenological approach to this study is based on the lived experiences of the participants and therefore interpretivism suits this approach as I will interpret the meaning that the participants ascribe to their experiences of the phenomena under investigation. An interpretivist paradigm implies that I will adhere to following:

- establish the meaning that the participants assign to their experiences;
- realise that intersubjective meanings are crucial in achieving understanding and meaning;
- no clear distinction is made between the subject (researcher) and object (event being studied);
- behaviour is constructed by social conventions which require analysis; and
- social context, conventions, norms and standards which form part of the particular participants will be crucial in understanding the human behaviour (Nieuwenhuis, 2016b, pp. 60-61).

Based on the previous explanation this study coincides with the interpretivist approach as it incorporates different experiences of parents and SMT members on how they develop, construct and understand their own reality (Howell, 2013a).

3.4.3 Qualitative research approach

Qualitative research gives me the opportunity to gain in-depth insight and understanding as well as rich information regarding the phenomenon under study (Nieuwenhuis, 2016c; Richards, 2015). Allowing me to construct a holistic picture according to the participants detailed perceptions on how they understand their situation and account for their behaviour in a natural setting (Creswell, 2007; Richards, 2015). Fraenkel and Norman (2008) defines qualitative research as a study that investigates the quality of relationships, activities and, situations. Qualitative research is an umbrella concept covering several forms of inquiry that helps me to understand and explain the meaning of social phenomenon with as little disruption of the natural setting as possible (Merriam, 1998) "Qualitative research is a way of knowing that assumes that the researcher gathers, organizes and interprets information with his or her eyes and ears as filter" (Lichtman, 2013, p. 9). The most acknowledged feature of qualitative research is that it is naturalistic and it encompasses the study of events, things and people in a natural setting (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). "Qualitative research is based on the belief that knowledge is constructed by people in an ongoing fashion as they engage in and make meaning of an activity, experience or phenomenon" (Punch & Qancea, 2014, p. 146). Qualitative research is used to gain an understanding of underlying reasons, opinions, and motivations and also it provides insights into the problem (Wyse, 2011). I was interested in understanding not only the meaning of what parents and SMT members have constructed regarding PI in the school but also how PI can be improved.

The following characteristics of qualitative research underpin the essence of qualitative research and made it the most appropriate approach for this research:

- Purpose was to describe, understand and interpret the participants experiences
- I made an interpretation of what she saw, heard and understood
- Collected data in the field at the site where participants experienced the phenomena under study.
- Researcher was the key instrument in the data collection and analysis process
- Researcher tried to develop a complex and holistic view of the multiple realities of the participants perspectives
- Emphasis was in words
- Data was collected through focus group interviews in a natural setting
- Small, non-random and purposeful sampling
- Data analysis was done by coding and themes
- Writing style was less formal and more personal
- I kept focus on learning the meaning that the participants hold about the research phenomena (Creswell, 2007, pp. 37-39; Lichtman, 2013, pp. 14-17)

Maree and Van der Westhuizen (2012) as well as Ritchie and Lewis (2003) point out that qualitative research have four distinctive characteristics; this research also adhered to the following four characteristics:

- Contextual: described and define the nature of the phenomena (PI) as experienced by the participants (parents and SMT members) in specific school contexts;
- Descriptive: described the barriers and enablers to PI;
- Explanatory: explained the context in which the phenomena occurred and the determinants for PI
- Generative: developed strategies for SMT in order to ensure effective PI.

Qualitative research is therefore an approach that enabled me to explore, understand, describe and explain social phenomena through the experiences of the participant's in a natural setting (Denzin & Lincoln, 2013b). Maree (2007) states that the benefits of the qualitative approach is

that, the information is richer and provides a deeper insight into the phenomenon under study. Qualitative research was a situated activity that allowed me in the world of the participants (Denzin & Lincoln, 2000; Leedy & Ormrod, 2005). The qualitative research approach was suitable for this study because I was interested in understanding the not only the meaning parents and SMT members have constructed regarding PI in the school but also to interpret their lived experiences of PI at schools (Merriam, 1998). I was the primary instrument to collect and analyse data as the one who is in close contact with the participants in the Mafeteng district in Lesotho. I used focus groups as a data generation strategy. Merriam (1998) indicates that the focus of qualitative inquiry is based on meaning in context that requires a data collection strategy such as interviewing that allowed me to be sensitive to underlying meaning when collecting data and interpretation. Phenomenology was employed to capture the participants' experiences and to define the phenomenon (PI) under investigation.

The sampling process assisted me to select appropriate participants that would provide applicable, relevant and rich data.

3.4.4 Sampling

Sampling is the process of selecting participants according to specific guidelines from a population to become the basis for gaining access to unknown information, situation or outcome regarding the population (Johnson & Christensen, 2008; Kumar, 2005). Sampling involves the selection of a number of study units from a defined study population (Boeije, 2010; Vijayalakshmi & Sivapragasam, 2009). Strydom and Delport (2011, p. 391) point out that there are no explicit rules for sample size as it depends on: "what we know, the purpose of inquiry, what is at stake, what will be useful, what will have credibility and the available time and resources." The study is carried out in schools in Mafeteng district, which is located in the southern part of Lesotho. The selection criterion is based on four government and four church schools. In this research non-probability sampling was used because for practical reasons I was unable to involve all the secondary schools and all the parents in the Mafeteng district. Non-probability sampling indicates that participants do not have an equal chance of being selected for a specific study (Strydom & Delport, 2011, p. 391). The non-probability sampling technique used in this study was purposive sampling.

3.4.4.1 Purposive sampling

Purposive sampling is used in situations where sampling is done with a specific purpose in mind, participants are selected because of some defining characteristic that makes them the holders of the data needed (Berg, 2007; Nieuwenhuis, 2010; Ritchie & Lewis, 2003). Purposive sampling can be useful in situations where you need to reach a targeted sample quickly and where

sampling for proportionality is not the primary concern (Trochim & Donnelly, 2006). Strydom and Delport (2011, p. 392) state that when doing purposive sampling “a particular case is chosen because it illustrates some feature or process that is of interest for a particular study.” The interviewer adhered to two important principals; the participants were selected on the basis that they represented a specific group (either SMT or parents from a school) and attention was given to the quality of the interview responses by selecting information rich data (Alvesson, 2011, pp. 49-50). Purposive sampling focused on two important aspects namely; that the participants represented the defined study population and that all the key constituencies of relevance to the subject matter were covered and, within each of the key criteria, some diversity was included. Primary consideration in purposive sampling is the judgement of the researcher as to who can provide the best information to achieve the objectives of the study. From each school from category A and category B the SMT was the selected as participants (See Table 3.1). All of the SMT members were asked to voluntarily participate in this study. The SMT from category A and category B schools consisted of: a principal, deputy principal/s and head of departments, therefore four participants from each school’s SMT were selected. I ensured that at least the principal or a deputy principal was part of the focus group for SMTs.

Schools in Lesotho are categorized into three categories:

- Category A: Large size school (800 plus learners);
- Category B: Medium size school (between 300 and 800 learners); and
- Category C: Small size schools (less than 300 learners).

No schools of category C were included in this study as they only have a principal in the schools management team, because of the low learner intake. As there are ten government schools and twenty-eight church schools in the Mafeteng district, I purposively selected the secondary schools nearest to where I taught (convenience sampling) and was compiled as follows (Table 3.1):

Table 3-1: Summary of schools, participants and codes

Interview	Location	Type	Category	Code	SMT member	Code	Parents	Code
1	Rural	Church	B	A	4	S1	4	P1
2	Urban	Government	A	B	4	S2	4	P2
3	Urban	Church	B	C	4	S3	4	P3
4	Rural	Government	A	D	4	S4	4	P4
5	Rural	Church	A	E	4	S4	4	P5
6	Urban	Church	A	F	4	S6	4	P6
7	Rural	Government	B	G	4	S7	4	P7
8	Urban	Government	B	H	4	S8	4	P8
TOTAL of focus groups					8		8	

I had eight focus group interviews with the SMT members from the above eight secondary schools: two representing urban and government schools, two representing rural and government schools, two representing urban and church schools and two representing rural and church schools. The interviews with the SMT were arranged with the help of the deputy principal and the school's secretary. The interviews took place in the afternoon that was convenient to all of the SMT members that took part in the research. The parents as participants were also selected through purposive sampling. I contacted the principal of each of the above schools to aid in the identification of a parent/guardian that represented at least two of the following criteria in their school:

- the willingness to participate in the research and availability at a specific time when focus group interviews were agreed upon;
- single parent;
- person who serves as the care giver to the learner as both parents are deceased;
- a parent (either father or mother) from learner who still has both the parents;
- parent/guardian that is very involved in school matters but is not part of the SGB;
- parent/guardian that is not involved in any activity at school.

At the same schools the first four willing parent participants with at least one of the above criteria was selected. In total there were also eight focus groups with parents. I experienced that the

data obtained from the parents were adequate to draw up conclusions, and therefore did not resort to additional focus group interviews with parents. Merriam (1998) suggests that if the purpose is to maximise information the sampling is terminated when no new information is forthcoming from the new sampled units, thus redundancy is the primary criterion.

Different schools were given codes so that it will be easy to analyse the data. The schools were given codes from A to H and parent participants were given P1 to P8 while the SMT participants groups were given codes from S1 to S8 consecutively. The interviews were conducted at a convenience time for both SMT and parents of the children attending the particular school. The arrangements were made to meet the parents with the help of the principal, the principals called me when there were parents meeting, and the focus group interviews took place at the school after parents meetings. The interviews were conducted in a warm and inviting climate as they were in familiar surroundings that were easily accessible. In total sixteen focus group interviews took place, eight with SMT and eight with parents. All the participants were assured of confidentiality and various ethical aspects were adhered to (§ 2.5). The focus group interviews with the SMT took place in English but the interviews with the parents took place in Sesotho as few parents could speak or understand English. The interviews with the parents had to be translated into English. The interviews were recorded with each participant's permission and was later transcribed verbatim. Accuracy and authenticity of was ensured as I had the participants check the transcribed data, with the SMT it was easy as they could read and understand English, it was more troublesome with the parents as the data was transcribed in Sesotho, as the transcribed interviews were first taken back to the parents for authenticity and then translated into English. Data collection enabled me to attain information from the participants.

3.5 Data collection

Qualitative inquiry, which focuses on meaning in context, requires data collection that is sensitive to underlying meaning when gathering and interpreting data. Humans are best suited for this task, especially because interviewing, observing, and analysing are activities central to qualitative research (Merriam, 1998). In qualitative research, I spend a substantial amount of time in the natural setting of the study, often in intense contact with the participants. Leedy and Ormrod (2005), state that interviews provide opportunities for gathering data through direct verbal interaction between individuals, gaining in-depth understanding of participants and following up where necessary for clarity purposes, fostering mutual respect and sharing information with participants, which in this case I did focus group interviews with both parents and SMT members of selected schools in Mafeteng district in Lesotho. Punch and Qancea (2014, p. 184) state: "the interview is a data collection tool of great flexibility, which can be adapted to suit a wide variety of research situations." The focus group interviews were guided by a set of predetermined questions

and possible prompts that initiated discussion, but were flexible so that I could adapt to the specific context and particular participants (Punch & Qancea, 2014). I made sure to allocate enough time before and after the focus group interviews to make sure that she debriefed the participants before regarding the intended research and after the interview to give the participants some time to raise any concerns (Barbour, 2009). I made use of focus group interviews to collect the data concerning PI.

3.5.1 Focus group interview

I used focus groups as interviewing method and served as principal source of data as it “creates a process of sharing and comparing among the participants” (Greeff, 2011, p. 362). Focus group interviews was utilized as data gathering method as it gave me opportunity to understand how the participants felt, thought and experienced PI in the school where they were either parents or SMT members. This data collection method aided me to attain the research objective of developing strategies for School Management Teams as to aid them in ensuring and maintaining effective PI at secondary schools in Mafeteng district in Lesotho.

The number of participants in focus groups can differ from three to eight depending on the experience and skill of the interviewer, topic that is discussed and the size of the area or layout of the room (Barbour, 2009; Creswell, 2014b). Lichtman (2013, p. 208) on the other hand state that if the participants are less than six there maybe “insufficient interaction” the ideal number of participant should be six to twelve in a group. The number of participants were four in each group as I did not have a lot of experience and skill in doing focus groups interviews, four participants were ideal to connect and interact with the participants and gain information rich data. Focus groups took place with SMT members from each identified school to get their input on PI and to inquire about the nature of PI, the barriers to PI they experienced as SMT members and to hear what strategies, if any they had in place to ensure PI. The other focus groups were with the parents from the identified school to get feedback from them about their involvement with the school, the barriers they experienced and to hear what they think the SMT can do to get parents involved. The data from the focus groups enabled me to formulate strategies for SMT to increase effective PI.

This method allowed me to obtain various viewpoints and large amount of data from the participants on PI in a shorter period of time that individual interviews would have taken place. Participants were selected according to certain commonalities that related to PI (Barbour, 2009) (§ 3.4.3). Lichtman (2013, p. 189) points out that focus group interview “involves a group of people at one time. It provides opportunities for members of a group to interact with each other and stimulate each other’s thinking. It is not desirable or necessary for the group to reach

consensus in their discussion.” The format that was used for the focus groups was a “funnel structure” (Nieuwenhuis, 2012). I started with broad and less structured questions to hear their general perspectives and ease participation into the situation. As the interaction developed more structured questions pertaining to the study was asked to generate in-depth data and strive for full participation and interaction (Nieuwenhuis, 2012).

I was flexible with regard to the context and chose a setting for the focus group that would be suitable to all participants and where the participants were comfortable as well as relaxed in order to maximize participation (Barbour, 2009). There were numerous advantages of utilizing focus group interviews.

3.5.1.1 Advantages of focus group interviews

One of the strengths of focus group interviews is that it allows for open and free discussion that leads to different ideas being generated and present a wealth of information from the group of participants (Okeke & Van Wyk, 2016). Focus groups allow for interaction and synergy between the participants in a stimulating and secure setting where they feel relaxed and have no fear of being humiliated or discriminated against (Greeff, 2011). Focus group interviews have the potential of providing me with the insights and understanding of perceptions and interaction that can come only from a dynamic, interactive discussion method (Punch & Qancea, 2014; Roller & Laurakas, 2015). Focus groups generate a lot of information and allows the participants to reflect, refine and discuss a specific topic (Punch & Qancea, 2014; Ritchie & Lewis, 2003). Focus groups can produce quality in-depth interactional data (Gibbs, 2012) and bring together people with varied opinion or representatives of different features (Cohen, et al., 2011). However there are disadvantages in utilizing focus group interviews.

3.5.1.2 Disadvantages of focus group interviews

Some people may be uncomfortable in a group setting and nervous about speaking in front of others and not everyone may contribute (Dawson, 2009). Greeff (2011) emphasises that I had to be extremely well trained and possess the necessary skills to facilitate focus group interviews as only certain participants who have a strong personality and not shy will voice their opinion the others will merely comply; thereby not giving a true reflection of their feelings and thoughts. Cohen, Manion and Morrison (2007) confirms that outspoken participants might skew the results and a shy participant might never reveal important insights or perceptions regarding the topic and some participants might not be able to express their honest and personal opinions about the topic at hand. Flik (2009, p. 205) point out that another drawback to focus group interviews is the fact that it is extremely difficult to differentiate between individual speakers and statements made by several “parallel speakers”. Unfortunately I was a novice researcher did find it difficult to keep on

probing to ensure that in-depth information regarding PI was obtained, although I received training her shyness made it challenging to attain the depth, although it improved and she attained more confidence with the increase of the focus group interviews. I took some aspects in cognisance to address the disadvantages.

3.5.1.3 Aspects to address disadvantages

For the focus groups to be effective I played a critical role in the outcomes of the interviews payed attention to the following aspects to help in addressing the disadvantages:

- the interaction of the group was monitored and handled discretely, I intervened appropriately to ensure that not too much conflict between participants arise that may escalate to a problematic situation;
- I was mindful of the status and power of the group dynamics of the SMT participants;
- I received some training and practice to require appropriate skills in conducting focus group interviews and acquire techniques to ensure rich, in-depth and quality data is obtained;
- I ensured that all participants were relaxed and conducted the interviews in such a manner as no participant felt threatened or discriminated against;
- I kept in mind that the focus was on a collective group responses and how the individual member responded to other opinions and ensuring that no individual was blamed for having a different opinion;
- I was aware of the participants' different cultural backgrounds and was sensitive to any related issues;
- the venue was pre-determined, a suitable venue convenient for all participants was selected;
- the timing of the focus group was essential and special care was taken to find a suitable time that all intended participants were present;
- to aid the process of the interviews I made use of interview guide but kept in mind that it may deviate;
- I kept in mind the experiences expressed in the group as part of the argument of that specific group;
- I kept field notes of each focus group interview and did some preliminary fieldwork about the group being interviewed;

- the focus groups with SMT was conducted in English; as all could understand and communicate effectively in English;
- the focus groups with parents was conducted in Sesotho, the medium of communication in Lesotho, all parents was able to understand the conversation and partake in the discussions;
- as from the first focus group I applied gained experience and knowledge on interview techniques that enhanced the focus group interviews to follow
- the interviews were audio recorded with permission from the participants for analysis purposes (Barbour, 2009; Cohen, et al., 2011; Gibbs, 2012; Nieuwenhuis, 2016c).

Although I applied the above strategies to assist her in the focus interview process some aspects were recognized as limitations of this research (§ 5.4.3).

- A pilot interview or trailing of the process and situation should have taken place
- Inexperience of the interviewer, I did not have the necessary interview skills to generate additional questions and information from the answers from the participants. Yin confirms that focus groups have their own dynamics that require a skill that a researcher is likely to develop only with experience (Yin, 2016).
- The interviews of the parents had to be translated from Sesotho to English; not exactly the same dialect and some meaning could have been lost in translation.

Before and during the focus group interviews I took some field notes as another means of data collection and shed some light on the specific contextual aspects and group dynamics.

3.5.2 Field notes

Fraenkel and Norman (2008) indicates that in educational research, field notes are taken when I was in the field, they observe the context and general surroundings they find themselves while interviewing the participants. Field notes are informal notes made by me before, during or after the setting was visited to collect data from the participants (Greeff, 2011; Lichtman, 2013). Ary, Jacobs and Razavieh (2002, p. 431) indicate that field notes have two features; “the descriptive part which includes a complete description of the setting, the people and their reactions and interpersonal relationships, and accounts of events”, and the: “reflective part which includes the observer’s personal feelings or impressions about the events, comments on the research method, decisions and problems, records of ethical issues, and speculations about data analysis.” I made field notes especially focusing on the focus groups, noting down observations made during the

interviews with regard to group dynamics, facial expressions, awkward silences, laughter, tone, gestures (Barbour, 2009; Richards, 2015). Field notes were made before during and after the focus group interviews and through the whole data collection period the data was continuously checked and findings were compared. I made sure the field notes contained the date, time, location and details of the participants and that the field notes were written soon after observation was made in order to ensure that the info was not distorted (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). I kept the field notes in mind in the analysis process to provide understanding of the research setting, as well as the reflection of myself of the participants (§ 3.6.1). I was viewed as a research instrument as she was responsible for the data gathering and analysis process.

3.5.3 The role of the researcher

In qualitative research I had a primary role to fulfil as the main research instrument and was part of the research process (Graziano & Michael, 2012). I served as an instrument for this research and conducted all the focus group interviews. I also ensured that responses from all the participants were collected, recorded and analysed. I attended various workshops, received mentoring from supervisors and knowledgeable colleagues on acquiring the required skills, capacity and competencies needed to conduct research to avoid researcher bias. The acquisition of skills, capacity and competencies helped in reducing researcher personal views and perspectives to avoid contaminating the collected data, interpretation and analysis (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). The focus group interviews were conducted according to the interview schedule to ensure uniformity of questioning and maintain neutrality the interview process, which I upheld throughout the interview process (Creswell, 2014a). As mentioned by Thomas (2017a), I did my utmost best to be professional when administering the focus group interviews, paid attention to participant's feelings and where observant to their reactions and body language as well as maintained objectivity by allowing the participants to respond to questions without any influence from myself. Having the welfare of all participants at heart, I made sure the data was accurately transcribed and was validated by the participants for accurately reflecting the participant's perceptions regarding PI. In so doing, I worked towards the trustworthiness, reliability and validity of the research.

3.6 Trustworthiness, reliability and validity

According to Maree and Pietersen (2016) in qualitative research, the researcher is the data gathering instrument and in qualitative research the focus should be on trustworthiness. Validity and reliability will contribute to the study's trustworthiness. Merriam (1998) states that regardless of the type of research, reliability and validity are concerns that can be approached through careful attention to a study's conceptualization and the way in which I collected, analysed and interpreted

the data as well as the manner in which the findings were presented. Trustworthiness is also known as validity and reliability of qualitative research data (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016).

3.6.1 Reliability

Reliability refers to: “consistency with which a measuring instrument yields a certain, consistent result when the entity being measured hasn’t changed” (Leedy & Ormrod, 2013, p. 91). Manoharan (2010) agrees that reliability is the degree of consistency that the instrument or procedure demonstrates, in whatever it is measuring, it does so in a consist manner. Reliability is therefore the extent in which the research produced accurate results and is concerned with the extent to which research findings are replicable utilizing the same or similar methods (Bloor & Wood, 2006; Cohen, et al., 2007; Trochim & Donnelly, 2006). A research tool should be reliable, dependable, consistent and stable in order to be predictable and accurate (Kumar, 2005). Reliability also refers to the consistency of these inferences over time, location, and circumstances (Fraenkel & Norman, 2008; Vijayalakshmi & Sivapragasam, 2009). Reliability is about precision and accuracy (Cohen et al, 2011). I utilized the following strategies to aid in ensuring reliability:

Standardization took place by administering the focus group interviews in a consistent manner, I did not deviate from the interview- guide and structure. I insured that the same basic questions in the same order were asked for the parent participants and the SMT participants regarding PI. I was the only interviewer in the data collecting proses which ensured uniformity and consistency.

The research was conducted with multiple participants until data saturation was reached

I explained her position as researcher and declared her biases relating to the data collection and analyses

I established trust among herself and the participants in order to ensure that the participants share information that is accurate and reliable. I also ensured that the participants would stay anonymous and should not be afraid to voice their honest opinions. I remained professional at all times and guarded against becoming too familiar with the participants. I was also aware that the participants were not very confident in voicing their opinion and tried to probe respectfully to obtain the perceptions regarding PI.

The focus group interviews were audio recorded and transcribed. The interviews were subsequently presented to the participants as part of member checking to verify the accuracy of the interview. Field notes were made before, during and after the interviews that aided me in the verification of interview data.

I consulted with University lecturers who are proficient in the field of qualitative data analysis to check the codes and coding system was correct. The first draft of coding was given to the lecturers to receive the required feedback and suggestions to enable me to proceed acceptably and accurately with the coding process. The coding took place over a long and intense period of time to ensure that I applied the coding processes and techniques consistently. Through the whole data collection period the data was continuously checked and findings was compared.

I kept an audit trail throughout the research, explained the procedures that were followed during the research and the transcribed data is available as an integrated dataset in (Addendum 3.1) (Ary, et al., 2002; Creswell, 2014b; Leedy & Ormrod, 2013; Merriam, 1998; Thomas, 2017b)

In order for me to ensure further trustworthiness, he also paid attention to the validity of the research.

3.6.2 Validity

Fraenkel and Norman (2008) define validity as the correctness, meaningfulness, and usefulness of the interpretation I made, based on the data collected. Validity refers to methodological soundness or appropriateness of the data collected (Graziano & Michael, 2012). Trochim and Donnelly (2006) state that validity refers to capturing the nearest to the truth of a given experience, perception, or conclusion. Validity is that quality gathering method that enables it to measure what is supposed to measure (Manoharan, 2010).

I applied the following strategies to enhance validity of the research:

- The research was conducted in the participant's natural setting that promoted the reality of the respondents' experiences more accurately. Interim data analysis and validation enhanced the validity of data collected over a period of time.
- I unremittingly checked and compared the findings. Feedback from colleagues and lecturers from the University were obtained to ensure that the correct interpretations and valid conclusions were made.
- I applied triangulation to confirm and enhance the findings such as utilizing various sources regarding PI in the data collection phase.
- The participants' direct words are used in quotations and it does not leave room for assumptions as the focus group interviews were recorded. I spoke Sesotho with the parents and English with the SMT members that made the participants more relaxed and aided in ensuring to ensure maximum understanding and to avoid confusion.

- I made sure to capture precise, literal and detailed descriptions of respondents and situations to ensure *thick* descriptions.
- I audio recorded the focus group interviews that ensured that the data captured was accurate.
- After the interviews were transcribed I returned to the site and requested each participant to review the transcribed interview and check for accuracy. They all agreed to the accuracy of the text documents.
- I purposefully searched for, recorded, analysed, and reported negative cases or different information that related to exceptions that deviated from the sample found in the data (Ary, et al., 2002; Leedy & Ormrod, 2013; McMillan & Schumacher, 2001b; Thomas, 2017b).

Reliability and validity aided me in ensuring the study's trustworthiness. Data analysis assisted me of making sense and meaning from the data that constitute the findings of the study.

3.7 Data analysis

The qualitative data was collected through focus group interviews and the data was presented in the form of words. The aim of analysis was to search for commonalities among the various focus groups that would assist me to reach the aim of the research (Greeff, 2011) (§ 3.2). In accordance to the main research question the aim of the research was to formulate strategies that the SMT can follow to aid in effective PI at secondary schools in Mafeteng district in Lesotho. Punch and Qancea (2014, p. 219) exclaims that "qualitative analysis is a process of continuous search for patterns and explication of their meanings, through progressive focusing, reflexive iteration and grounded interpretation which aims to generate rich accounts of the phenomena studied and link them to literature." Boeije (2010, p. 76) confirms and adds: "to generate theoretical understanding of the social phenomenon under study in terms of the research questions." Data analysis was the route and procedure that I exploited to extract some explanation, understanding or interpretation from the qualitative data collected of the participants in their specific surroundings (Maree & Pietersen, 2016). Data analysis aided me to make sense during the process and develop meaning from the data that constituted the findings of the study. Making sense from the data involved consolidating, interpreting and reducing the selected data. I had to be "sensitive to extract only what is relevant" (Boeije, 2010, p. 13). In the data analysis of the focus group interviews I took care in the analysis procedure by gaining insight into the group process such as the setting as well as the group dynamic and did not solely focus on the outcome of the discussion (Barbour, 2009). I started the analysis process with deductive analysis which aided me to establish a priori themes in the data determined by the literature review (Maree, 2016). This process assisted me to keep the research questions in mind and reduce the data. I also made

use of the inductive data-analysis process which allowed for categories and patterns to materialize from the data. Segments of information was continuously compared to determine any links between the categories that would lead to the development of theory (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016).

The focus group interviews were transcribed and I had a lot of data that needed to be analyzed. I decided not to conduct analysis using a data analysis program, such as Atlas.ti™ as her computer skills were restricted and the analysis program became too complicated for her to use, but she did make use of the computer to organize the data. After I read the transcribed interviews and field notes she made during the focus group interviews she formally began the grounded theory analysis process. As the data was vast I started to decrease the data through predetermined identification and categorization of the data before the coding process actually started. I started the process by organizing and categorizing segments of the data into initial codes. Saldana (2013, p. 3) indicates that “a code in qualitative inquiry is most often a word or short phrase that symbolically assigns a summative, salient, essence-capturing, and/or evocative attribute for a portion of language based data. Codes enabled me to categorize and label the data, in order to give meaning and summarize the data, generate themes and recognize patterns (Punch & Qancea, 2014; Richards, 2015). Nieuwenhuis (2016a) confirms that coding process enables researchers to quickly retrieve and collect all data that I has associated with some thematic idea in order to compare and associate data. Coding assisted me in taking a thematic approach and break down the text into pieces in order to be able to compare and create a “coding scheme” (Boeije, 2010, p. 98). When all the interviews were coded I reviewed all the codes to check that there was no overlapping or codes that are redundant. Some of the codes were renamed to more suitable and appropriate codes. The codes were then arranged into themes and sub themes. Once again I scrutinized the categories and themes, revisit them to remove redundancies and identify crucial fundamentals to the research. Data analysis continued until data saturation had been reached, saturation indicated that I had “ covered the breadth of the data and nothing new is coming up” (Richards, 2015, p. 155).

The conceptual codes obtained from the collected data were associated with codes deducted from the literature review in chapter two were the focus was on the conceptual- and theoretical framework that would assist me in the data analysis process. Thus I made use of a priori coding. Stemler (2001, p. 3) indicates: “When dealing with a priori coding the categories are established prior to the analysis based on some theory.” I followed the following process: started to develop categories and themes utilizing a priori coding from the conceptual and theoretical framework, then sub themes were developed from the data (Chapter 4). The data was given to my supervisor who checked the categories and themes and together they checked the coding system and insured that there was inter- and intra-coder reliability.

In order to protect the identity of the schools and participants, individual codes were allocated to each participant (Table 3.1). The eight schools which were given codes from A to H and SMT members who participated in the research and were given codes numbered from S1 to S8 respectively. Parents were given P1 to P8 codes consecutively. When working with humans as participants of the research, is it extremely important to adhere to certain ethical aspects.

3.8 Ethical considerations

Johnson and Christensen (2008, p. 102) state that research ethics: “are a guiding set of principles that are to assist me in conducting ethical studies.” I had personal responsibility to conduct research in an ethical sound manner and in accordance to certain guidelines for humane treatment of participants (Graziano & Michael, 2012; Johnson & Christensen, 2008). Punch and Qancea (2014) emphasise the importance of ethics in research and agree that researchers have to be constantly mindful of all ethical implications while doing research and must apply codes of ethical practice. A good qualitative study is one that has been conducted in an ethical manner (Merriam, 2002). There are two standards that are applied to help protect the privacy of research participants which are anonymity and confidentiality. Trochim and Donnelly (2006) say almost all guarantees the participants confidentiality, they are assured that identifying information will not be made available to anyone who is not directly in the study and the stricter standard is the principle of anonymity, which essentially means that the participants will remain anonymous throughout the study, even to myself. Bloor and Wood (2006) show that professional ethics relate to the willingness of a profession to self-regulate the actions of its members so as to protect the interest of the public. I had a responsibility to adhere to ethical aspects that guided me in conducting the research in an ethical and moral acceptable way

I followed certain guidelines to ensure that the research adhered to the following ethical requirements (Johnson & Christensen, 2008; Leedy & Ormrod, 2013; Merriam & Tisdell, 2016; Strydom, 2011):

- **Informed and voluntary consent:** Informed consent and permission were obtained after an explanation of the procedures was provided. Ethical clearance and permission to conduct research was firstly obtained from the North West University, Faculty of Education Science and an ethical clearance number was allocated for this specific research (Addendum H). Consent was also obtained from Ministry of Education and Training in Mafeteng district (Addendum B), principals of the selected schools (Addendum D), participants of SMT of the selected schools (Addendum E) and parents as selected participants of selected schools (Addendum E), after informing them of the proposed study, risks, benefits, procedures involved, duration of the research and the confidentiality as well as ethical measurements.

- Voluntary participation: the participants were informed that they could withdraw from the research study at any time and no participant was pressurised or compelled to participate.
- Anonymity and confidentiality in collecting data: Anonymity and confidentiality was applied to ensure the privacy of every participant and no names of the schools were revealed. Confidentiality and anonymity was maintained by using pseudonyms, storing information in a safe place and agreement with participants that confidentiality will not be preached in the write up of the research report.
- Physical or mental harm: The principle which deals with do-no-harm to the research participants (non-maleficence), was followed. In the development stage and while collecting the data I paid special attention that no physical, emotional, and social or any other harm will come to the participants.
- Risk-free Interaction: The third principle of the research being beneficial would be addressed by myself, undertaking to do the research carefully and providing a copy to the school which could be read and reflected upon.
- Honesty and transparency: At no stage in the research did any form of deception take place, I did not mislead the participants and was honest and open about the research. Researcher reported the findings in complete and honest fashion without misinterpretation and misleading.
- Tape-recording of interviews: I obtained permission from each participant before each interview to use an audio-recorder to record the interview.
- Disseminating of findings: I also acknowledged the variety of sources utilized
- After data had been collected and analysed it was be taken back to participants to ensure it is a true version of what they stated and research findings were made available to all participants.

The summary concludes the discussion regarding the research design and methodology that I undertook in this study.

3.9 Summary

In chapter three, the aims of the research and research questions were recapped to accentuate the direction of the research. Research methods and the design of the study was acknowledged, and the reason as well as suitability for applying certain methodology was indicated. The sample size and sampling methods were also discussed. I also indicated the specific data collection

method that allowed me to understand the participant's experiences concerning PI. The focus group interviews were audio-recorded, and field notes were taken to ensure trustworthiness and was noted that validity and reliability were the pillars to ensure the trustworthiness of this research. The data analysis process was indicated and ethical considerations were outlined as well as the limitations to the study. Chapter four will give the detailed data analysis, discussion and findings from the focus group interviews from parents and SMT members of eight schools from selected schools in Mafeteng district in Lesotho.

CHAPTER FOUR: DATA FINDINGS AND INTERPRETATIONS

4.1 Introduction

The previous chapter focused on the research design and methodology as well as on the research questions and aims that guided this research. Chapter three also provided insight on the various aspects that underpinned the capturing of data and the appropriateness of the selected data collecting method. The purpose of this research was to develop strategies for SMTs to ensure effective PI at secondary schools in Mafeteng district in Lesotho. Parents play a significant part in the education of their children and the SMT has an important role to play to ensure that effective PI takes place. In chapter two the importance of PI was accentuated and aspects regarding SMT and PI were elaborated on. The focus group interviews with the SMTs and parents gave me the opportunity to gain knowledge regarding their experiences of PI and the role of the SMT. The qualitative research was aimed at understanding the participants' realities of their specific context. By analysing the data I could develop strategies for the SMT to ensure effective PI at secondary schools in Mafeteng district in Lesotho. Although the strategies are based on research done in the Mafeteng district in Lesotho, the strategies can be applicable to and utilized in other districts.

In this (the previous) chapter, the collected data which emerged from the focus groups interviews were presented and discussed; the purpose of this chapter was to report on the data findings and interpretations of this research. I had eight focus group interviews with the SMT members and parents from eight secondary schools: two representing urban government schools, two representing rural government schools, two representing urban church schools and two representing rural church schools. The schools were given codes from A to H and parent participants were given P1 to P8 while the SMT participant groups were given codes from S1 to S8 consecutively. (Table 3.1).

After I had reviewed the conceptual- and theoretical framework in chapter two, transcribed the focus group interviews and worked through the field notes, priori themes and codes were established for the initial deductive analysis. Establishing the preliminary codes assisted me in lessening the amount of data and determining initial primary patterns, and I was "sensitive to extract only what is relevant" (Boeije, 2010, p. 13). After the initial deductive analysis the inductive data-analysis process followed which allowed for categories and patterns to materialize from the data. Corresponding themes were grouped together into main- and subcategories to make the data more manageable (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). I then labelled the emerging themes under unique codes (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016, p. 223). Coding created the opportunity for me to scrutinize the data and identify category names and categorize to the topics as they emerged from the data (Johnston & Christensen, 2011). I used labels in passages and texts to show that

they belonged to specific themes and established certain patterns that occurred (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016, p. 223) .

The patterns and categories gave me a better understanding of the research phenomenon being studied and allowed me to determine strategies that need to be considered by the SMT to ensure effective PI. The data were divided into broad themes which were subdivided into categories and sub-categories which made it easy to converse and coincided with the sub-questions and aims that steered the research (§ 3.2). According to Merriam and Tisdell (2016, p. 202) the categories, themes or interpretations that emerge from the research are the answers to the research questions and should guide me in the data analysis process.

In order to understand PI in secondary schools in Mafeteng district in Lesotho, the main question was divided into more specific sub- questions. In this chapter I reported the interpretations of the findings of the data according to the formulated sub-questions:

- **Sub-question 1:** What is the nature and benefits of parental involvement in secondary schools in Mafeteng district in Lesotho?
- **Sub-question 2:** What are the barriers to parental involvement in secondary schools in Lesotho?
- **Sub-question 3:** What strategies can be developed for school management teams as to ensure effective parental involvement at secondary schools in Mafeteng district in Lesotho?

I structured the main themes and categories identified from the raw data to address the above research sub-questions as indicated in Table 4.1. The discussion of the interpretations and outlay of this chapter were done in corroboration with the three main themes and categories indicated in Table 4.1.

Table 4-1: Main themes and categories formed from the data findings

Nature and benefits of parental involvement in secondary schools in Mafeteng district in Lesotho (§ 4.2)	
Understanding of parental involvement (§ 4.2.1)	
Areas of parental involvement (§ 4.2.2)	
Importance and benefits of parental involvement (§ 4.2.3)	
Category 1	Attitude and motivation (§ 4.2.3.1)
Category 2	Behaviour and discipline (§ 4.2.3.2)
Category 3	Academic performance (§ 4.2.3.3)
Category 4	School attendance and dropout (§ 4.2.3.4)
Category 5	Educators and the school (§ 4.2.3.5)
Barriers to parental involvement in secondary schools in Lesotho (§ 4.3)	
Category 1	Parental experience and school climate (§ 4.3.1)
Category 2	Literacy and education level (§ 4.3.2)
Category 3	Prevalence of AIDS and guardians (§ 4.3.3)
Category 4	Poverty and school fees (§ 4.3.4)
Category 5	Transport and distance (§ 4.3.5)
Category 6	Learners and parents (§ 4.3.6)
Category 7	School Management Team (§ 4.3.6)
Strategies developed for school management teams to ensure effective parental involvement at secondary schools in Mafeteng district in Lesotho (§ 4.4)	
Category 1	Parenting (§ 4.4.1)
Category 2	Communication (§ 4.4.2)
Category 3	Volunteering (§ 4.4.3)
Category 4	Learning at home (§ 4.4.4)
Category 5	Decision making (§ 4.4.5)
Category 6	Collaboration with community (§ 4.4.6)
Category 7	Additional strategies (§ 4.4.7)

By addressing the above, I attempted to understand the significance of the phenomenon under study and to accentuate the importance of SMT to implement strategies to ensure effective PI. The interpretations furthermore revealed the nature of PI in the Mafeteng district in Lesotho.

4.2 The nature of parental involvement in secondary schools in Mafeteng

If parents can be involved in the education of their children, all stakeholders involved can benefit, the parents, community, learners as well as educators. Mmotlane, Winnar and Kivulu (2009)

accentuate that PI creates a partnership between the school and the home, and makes the education of children valuable to all stakeholders involved in the education of the children. Various research has been done on PI and emphasised the importance of PI and the influence it can have on learners' performance (Falconer-Stout, et al., 2014; Lemmer, 2013; Milne, 2016; Ministry of Education, 2015; Smolkowski, et al., 2017). Working with the school, parents and caregivers can help create collaborative partnerships that support all aspects of a child's achievement at school (Larocque, et al., 2011b). The authors further state that parents and educators have a specific role to play in the educational cycle and success of each child (Larocque, et al., 2011b). This is emphasized by Duma (2014) pointing out that parents play a pivotal role in the education landscape, as parents can voice their concerns and ideas in order to ensure effective teaching and learning takes place at school. Background was given in chapter two regarding the circumstance, context and PI in the Mafeteng district in Lesotho (§ 2.4). I noted that only three SMT focus groups agreed that they were satisfied with the PI at their school.

- The involvement is enough...(C: S3)
- Wonderful, because they are involved in the planning session... (D:S4)
- Very positive. Parents and teacher together with the management do meet and talk about the performance of the learners... (H:S8)

I noted that it was difficult for the SMT participants to admit that the parents at their school were not as involved as they would like; they hesitated in their responses. The majority of the schools SMT indicated that PI was lacking:

- Involvement is partially (A1:S1)
- Not effective, they do not come, they don't volunteer to come and see or ask what is happening with their children (B: S2)
- they are not fully involved (E:S5)
- It is not active because parents are not involved in most activities (F:S6)
- Not fully effective (G:S7)

The above statements to some extent contradicted the remarks made by the parents, as all the parents in their groups agreed that they were involved in one or other activity at school. I must note here, that the fact that all the parents in the group agreed to their involvement in school activities can be because the participants in the focus group volunteered their participation, and

they were most likely the group of parents who were involved in school activities. I explored the participants' understanding of PI.

4.2.1 Understanding of parental involvement

PI can be generally defined as the parents' or caregivers' involvement with the education of their children (Larocque, et al., 2011b, p. 116). Blair (2014, p. 352) gives a broader definition of PI: "the interaction and assistance which parents provide to their children and to their children's schools in order to somehow enhance or benefit their children's success in the classroom". Comments made by me in my field notes depicted that the parents did not always understand the questions and most of the questions had to be repeated and explained.

The parents understood that PI meant that they had to be involved in one way or other with the school and the child's activities. Parents gave the following as their responses to the concept of parental involvement:

- a parent must make sure that a child does school work and parent acts as a mediator between a teacher and a learner or child so that a child passes in the end (A: P1)
- I follow up on my child's school work (B:P2)
- When parents work hand in hand with the teachers (C:P3)
- When parents help with school work where necessary (D: P4)
- Helping with school work (E:P5)
- Help with homework (F:P6)
- Make sure child does school work correctly and in time, and also to check your child's book daily to make sure that he/she does go to school (G: P7)
- To make sure child does school work and passes and is neat as possible (H: P8).

SMT members accentuated the importance of PI which was not noted with the parents. The parents merely indicated their involvement in activities whereas the SMT gave a bit more detail to the level of involvement. One of the SMT members made a very significant statement:

- Education is the three legged pot and one of the legs is the parent, if the parent can't be involved or is less involved, it means now the pot will be broken at one end (D:S4).

The SMT stated the following:

- When parents take part in the learning of their children (A:S1)
- ...participation of parents to help the students (C:S3)
- Parents take part in the learning activities of the children, they make sure that they take part and intervene in the learning activities of the children (B: S2)
- When parents take part in the education of their children, working together with the school and management to see to it that their children realise their goal (E: S5)
- If the students are fully helped by their parents (F:S6)
- It is how parents can contribute towards the improvement of the school (G: S7)
- Combination of the commitment and active participation (H: S8).

Children need support from their parents especially in the area of learning in order to ensure that the child reaches his/her full academic potential and ensure good academic results (Gestwicki, 2010; Gwiazdowska, 2014). Parents are not all involved on the same level, some parents are more involved than others. Gestwicki (2010) distinguishes between low level PI and high level of involvement. Low level involvement implies that parents are kept at a distance through activities that do not require the parent to contest the proficiency of the educator or the decisions made by SMT. High level involvement creates the opportunity for parents to partake on a level that really has a positive impact on the child's education that can offer assistance when needed. Parents' level of involvement differs from situation to situation, and there are certain barriers that can influence PI (§ 4.3). High level involvement can help build trust between parents and professionals (Larocque, et al., 2011b). The SMT should value the input of parents, and not see themselves as the people in charge, but as the initiators of action to ensure high level PI (Lee, et al., 2015). Areas of parental involvement were identified.

4.2.2 Areas of parental involvement

PI can take place in various areas although the goal stays the same and that is to support the child in education. PI usually takes place when the parents assist the child with homework and other academic activities. Lemmer et al (2006) state that PI has a positive effect on children's academic development and achievement, when parents and educators work together the children tend to be successful not only in school, but also in other aspects of live. Boulton (2006) emphasizes that any type or area of PI is important, whether it is helping the child with homework, being involved in decision-making at school, attending an activity at school or even just doing volunteer

work for the school. PI is usually home- or school based. Kurtulmus (2016, p. 1150) states that home-based PI “includes practices related to children’s education that take place outside school, usually within their homes”. Participants from the focus groups indicated that PI takes place when parents assist their children with home-work activities.

- Check homework frequently (G: P7)
- Make sure child does homework (A: P1)
- When parents take part in the children’s homework (B: S2)
- Parents help learners in the assignments at home (E: S5)
- Helping student with homework (G: S75).

School-based involvement occurs when parents get in touch with the school and take account of activities such as participating in school meetings and conferences, communicating with educators, attending sport- and cultural events, and doing volunteer work at school

(Karim, 2010; Kurtulmus, 2016; Larocque, et al., 2011b). There are various ways that parents can be involved in school-based activities, and the most obvious is when there is interaction between the educator and the parent (Sheldon, 2002). The participants stated the following ways of school-based involvement:

- Present during meetings and when parents follow-up on their children’s education (A: P1)
- Being part of committees in the school. Where school action plan is drawn (C: P3)
- Parents assists the teacher with bettering the child’s future (B: P2)
- Serve on committees, manpower when school builds a new class (D: P4).
- Parents go to school and find out how the child is doing (G: P7)
- Being part of the school development planners and cultural days (E: P5)
- Attending child’s sporting events (H: P8)
- Involved in the SGB to take part in the plans of the school, extra mural activities (A: S1)
- I...parents come to the meetings (B: S2)
- Attending the parents meeting and also responding whenever needed (H: S8)

- When parents always come to school to come and enquire about their progress and motivate them (G:S7)
- Extramural activities, cultural activities and school activities (F: S6)
- SGB through their representative, decision making, extra mural activities, cultural activities (E: S5)
- When parents are involved in planning session, school development, sport activities, extra mural (D: S4)
- Participation of parents in schools, extra mural activities, sport activities, traditional feasts and even ask parents for working tools (C: S3).

Parents seem to play a vital role in education. I noted that Lesotho parents help a lot during cultural activities so that Basotho children will not forget their culture, even though some parents expect to be paid for helping and some think that educators want them to reveal the initiation secret, hence they refuse to be part of the group helping learners, but most of the parents are willing to assist in certain activities.

The education of secondary schools in Lesotho is mainly financed by parents; parents are responsible to pay school fees, buy books and the learners' uniforms. The financial aspect is very important as in some schools the learners are sent home if the parents do not pay the school fees. Sometimes the parents do not have the money and then they pay the school by contributing one of their livestock to the school. As school fees are extremely important for parents and SMTs, most of the participants of the focus groups indicated that when they pay their school fees it is seen as being involved in the school and therefore classified as an area of PI. Barge and Loges (2003) include financial and material contributions as a form of PI. The participants emphasized that if school fees are paid, they feel that the parents are involved:

- When parents pay school fees. Financially the school depends on parents, they pay for everything (D: P4)
- Make sure that the school needs of a child is met, school fees (G: P7)
- When parents pay school fees (A: P1)
- I help when my child is given an assignment (B: P2)
- When we buy needed books and pay school fees (E: P5)

- pay money for school fees (D: S4)
- We evaluate effectiveness by when they pay the fees for school (G: S7)
- pay school fees and exam fee, buying them all the necessary learning materials. We need money from them (H: S8).

Parents play an important role in assisting the school financially. In most secondary schools the parents are the only source of income. If they delay to pay the fees, the school spends a lot of time without feeding learners and not paying the non-academic staff. Parents and SMTs are aware of this. The school fees are paid quarterly in schools; if the parent delays in paying for that quarter, the learners are sent home to go and collect the money and may not go back to school unless the money has been paid. The expenses for learners to go on educational trips are also covered by parents. That is the reason why paying school fees is seen as an extremely important way of PI in Lesotho.

4.2.3 Importance and benefits of parental involvement

PI is not only imperative for the learner, it is also important to the schools and educators for especially academic success. PI creates opportunity for the school and the parent to work cooperatively in ensuring that effective teaching and learning takes place, creating an environment where the child can reach his/her full potential (Ginsburg et al., 2014; Mmotlane, et al., 2009). Blair (2014) agrees that PI ensures that parents interact, support and assist their children to enhance the development and success of their children. It is therefore essential that the parents and the school work cooperatively in order to reach the expected development from each child (Goodall & Montgomery, 2014). This means the school and parents should work together to achieve better results. Kimu and Steyn (2013) emphasize that parents can support their children in academic performance, establishment of positive values and discipline their children. Literature highlights the importance of PI, PI can have an effect of child's academic performance, motivation, discipline, well-being and attitude (Tarasawa & Waggoner, 2015; Washington, 2011; Zieger & Tan, 2012). The experiences of the parents and SMT accentuate the importance of PI and this was evident in various factors that they mentioned. The participants indicated that one of the benefits of PI is to have an impact on learner's attitude and motivation towards the school.

4.2.3.1 Attitude and motivation

PI in the child's school life can positively influence learner's attitude and motivation towards the school (Gwiazdowska, 2014). The parent can influence the child by motivating the child to do his/her best at school and sometimes it is extremely necessary for the parent to ensure that the

child has the right attitude towards the school (Hoover-Dempsey & Sandler, 2005; Strier & Katz, 2015). This positive attitude towards the school will motivate the child to do his/her best. The data was coded to fit with the priori themes.

Parents' and SMTs' response regarding attitude and motivation:

- When your child realises your interest in his/her school work, they are motivated to work hard at school. (G: P7)
- Motivates learners to take work seriously (F: P6)
- As a parent, I know my child's behaviour and attitude, I also have to visit my child's school and explain to teachers what my child's attitude is-be it good or bad. (E: P5)
- Make children proud when seeing parent at events (H: P8)
- Learners become motivated to see their parents partake (A: S1)
- Parents will encourage their children to be present at school and be more effective (G: S7)
- If parents are fully involved in the school activities the students will also be interested in the school activities (F: S6).

It can be concluded from the above statements that learners become proud and motivated when the experience that their parents are involved and this will have an impact on their attitude towards the school and doing their best. PI is furthermore an essential component when it comes to the behaviour and discipline of the child.

4.2.3.2 Behaviour and discipline

A lack of discipline in secondary schools is a problem that is faced by the educators on a daily basis (Ndamani, 2008). Most schools have discipline problems. It is essential for parents to work hand in hand with the educators to ensure that the learners' behaviour is acceptable, it cannot be the responsibility of the teacher only. Harris and Goodall (2008) and Smolkowski et al. (2017) emphasize that learners spend most of their time with their parents, and it is essential that parents engage with their children as they have a direct influence on their child's behaviour. PI helps control learners' undesirable behaviour which in turns leads to less disruptive classroom behaviour Wong (2008). Ndebele (2015) states that is important for parents to role model positive attitudes, discipline and behaviours towards school so that these can be learned and observed by the child. All the SMT participants indicated the importance of PI when it comes to the behaviour and discipline of learners. Here are some of their statements:

- help in the discipline (C: S3)
- Disciplining of their children (B: S2)
- involved in discipline matters (E: S5)
- Ensure that the children are disciplined. In most cases there is necessary information that parents can have, help us how to handle their children (D: S4)
- be disciplined (F: S6)
- Being called here when the children misbehaved (H: S8).

One of the focus groups clearly indicated the importance of parents being a role model:

- Check the behaviour of their children by modelling that child (E: S5).

Seven focus groups of the parents indicated the importance of PI in the behaviour and discipline of the learners:

- Discuss disciplinary problems with the teachers (A: P1)
- you must take responsibility on your children's behaviour. A child is not only a school's responsibility but also your responsibility as well as a parent (C: P3)
- Parents are responsible for children's behaviour (B: P2)
- Helps to better discipline (D: P4)
- Parents know their child's behaviour and attitude. Visit schools and explain this knowledge be it good or bad (E: P5)
- Parents helping teachers with disciplining their children (F: P6)
- can find out about behaviours. A disrespectful child seldom succeeds in education (H: P8).

It is evident that discipline for educators and parents in Lesotho is of major importance and the role the parents have to play to ensure acceptable behaviour and discipline takes place at school. As a practising teacher in Lesotho I experienced that some parents encourage educators to use corporal punishment as they believe it can help in the disciplining of learners; sometimes they beat their children in front of the educators and other learners. In most cases the parents are called in to assist with the discipline of the learners. It is believed that when a child behaves badly, there are no rules in such a family. Discipline is usually the responsibility of the SMT, as

learners with major discipline problems are discussed in SMT meetings. PI is a crucial element in the academic performance of the learners.

4.2.3.3 Academic performance

Academic performance is one of the most important issues in the education. The SMT have the overall responsibility that high academic standard is achieved. Research has proven that PI increases the likelihood for learners to perform academically and meet their potential (Jeynes, 2005a; Michael, Wolhuter, & Van Wyk, 2012; Smolkowski, et al., 2017; Thompson, 2002). PI has been linked to having a positive effect on learner's academic achievement. Especially when there is collaboration between parents and educators that supports the learning process, the children tend to succeed in school and also throughout their lives (Kurtulmus, 2016; Lemmer, et al., 2006). Kim (2002) emphasizes that parental contribution, in terms of time spent interacting with educators and assisting the school in school-based activities, has been shown to enhance children's academic success.

SMT responses on academic performance:

- if the learners pass well it is the results of effectiveness of parent's participation (C: S3)
- To involve them is important because it gives them the picture of how the school is run and how does the child perform at school (E: S5)
- If the results are good, that would be with the help of parents, that is, if parents give learners chance to study at home, they contribute (F: S6)
- When parents make the follow up on what their children doing at school, asking what the children have been taught and making appointments with teachers to discuss the progress on learner's performance (A: S1).

Parents gave the following responses concerning the academic performance:

- Parents' involvement is significant because a child will always be willing to do school work in time since the parent would always check the books (A: P1)
- When the parent makes a follow-up on their child's work (B: P2)
- When parents frequently check their child's school work (C: P3)
- When parents help their children in all subjects (D: P4)
- To make sure child does school work and passes (H: P8)

- Making sure school work is done in time (G: P7)
- ensures children do their homework on a daily basis (F: P6).

Two focus groups made the following comments when parents were not able to help with homework:

- parents gets help to help child with homework (D: P4)
- also get help when I happen not to understand (H: P3).

Although the parents indicated the importance of their involvement in their child's academic performance, many parents are not educated themselves and the level of support may not be what is expected. In most scenarios the parents only check if the learners have actually done their homework. Most parents were working in the mines for their survival due to lack of education. Some are street vendors and housekeepers, so they do not want to see their children in the same situation. Every parent wants to help his/her child to be successful in life, and parents know that this can happen through education. However, the only way that some parents can be involved is by checking if their child has done his/her homework. In most cases the parents ensure that the learners attend school.

4.2.3.4 School attendance and dropouts

For learners to have good academic results they need to attend school on a regular basis. Learners in especially secondary schools have a tendency of not attending school frequently. Sometimes learners take chances and decide not go to school without valid reasons. The SMT should ensure that they have measures in place to notify parents when their children continuously skip classes (Wolf, et al., 2016). Learners whose parents are involved are more likely to attend school regularly, and this implies that the learners may have good attitudes towards learning and feel motivated to attend school (Strickland, 2015). Parents should assist educators and ensure that their children do attend classes.

Some of the responses given by SMT and parents on school attendance and dropouts:

- Children attend school well when their parents are involved (A: S1)
- Make sure they come to school (F: S6)
- Check daily to see if he/she goes to school (G: P7)
- Parents must send their children to school (C: P3).

In Lesotho it is expected of the parents to pay school fees. If the parents do not pay, the learners are expelled; until the parents have made the necessary payments, the learners may not attend classes. The payment of school fees is a major concern as it influences the learner attendance (§ 2.5.3). Not many participants in the focus groups commented on school attendance and dropouts. Especially in the rural parts of Lesotho the parents require children to look after animals and move them around for greener fields. Some learners are absent from school even during the examinations, and if educators ask about their whereabouts, the learner merely answers: “the animals could not stay in the kraal for the whole day”. PI can aid the educators in alleviating some of their responsibilities towards certain activities.

4.2.3.5 Educators and the school

It is important for parents to assist educators in their tasks, not in the academic responsibility they have to teach and learn the learners, but in alleviating the educators’ responsibilities towards other school activities. There are various activities at school where the parents can support educators. Grant and Ray (2013) point out that parents are the most suitable to be involved in various activities and can alleviate the educators’ workload and build a partnership and cooperation.

- Involved in cultural days at school, to teach about different cultures (E: P5)
- Help at cultural days (B: P2)
- Parents are involved during the day to day activities of the school. Parents volunteer to help learners produce crops (G: S7)
- Parents are actively involved in those school activities (F: S6)
- Parents are involved in traditional feast, they help the learners (C: S3)
- If they can be involved we will form a good team which always win (H: S8)
- We are together in this process, they will be focus to know all the things that are involved in the education of their children (D: S4).

(Gwiazdowska, 2014) confirms that parents have the important task of providing educators with information about their child in order to make it easier for the educators to identify the learner’s strengths, weaknesses and areas of interest. This is confirmed by certain statements made by the focus group participants:

- Parents are with the learners most of the time and we need some information that is necessary for handling children at school (D: S4)
- Their knowledge may be very helpful regarding on what to do and what not to do (G: S7)
- Help teachers understand learners better (E: P5).

Although all the participants of the focus groups indicated the importance and value of PI, there are - especially in Lesotho - numerous barriers that prevent that effective PI from taking place.

4.3 Barriers to parental involvement

As indicated in chapter two the barriers will differ depending on various contextual and social factors that impact negatively on PI. Barriers specific to Lesotho, in particular the Mafeteng district, are mentioned by participants in this research study. Barriers to PI in this research study are seen as factors that prevent parents from being involved in the various activities related to the education of their children. Singh et al. (2004b) point out that PI is difficult to achieve and maintain as there are numerous factors that can influence and hamper PI, especially in black rural schools (Mmotlane, et al., 2009). Participants indicated that parents' experiences (4.3.1) had an influence on PI.

4.3.1 Parental experience and school climate

Some parents had negative experiences when previously visiting their child's school, and these have affected them negatively towards involvement in activities and meetings that are linked to the school. Lemmer et al (2006) points out that parents who had intimidating or unfriendly school experiences build up negative attitudes which prevent them from taking an interest in any activities associated with the school, regardless if it is in the best interest of the child. Participants from the parent focus groups indicated that educators did not treat them appropriately. This is emphasized by Jafarov (2015) that state that some parents do not feel welcomed and develop hostile feelings towards the school. Other parents lack confidence to be around the school premises because they feel they do not belong there; they feel that the school environment is only for certain educated parents. Hornby and Lafaele (2011) confirm that when parents perceive that educators are not open to involving parents, this acts as a major barrier to PI.

Participant's responses on parents' experiences:

- Unwelcoming educators and mood at school(C: P3)
- Harsh words of educators when replying to our questions. (E: P5)

- Inconsistent treatment of parents by the school. (B: P2)
- Rude teachers (H: P8)
- Impolite teachers (F: P6).
- Differences of opinions (C: P3)
- Educators do not care for our children (F: P8).

In return the participants of the SMT also had negative experiences regarding parents' behaviour at school:

- Some parents are bitter and ignorant they do not even want to come to our school (H: S8)
- parents undermine themselves, they are afraid to come to school. (C: S3).

School climate is when the learning environment is conducive for all stakeholders, that is, the parents, educators and learners (Guo, 2010). School climate is associated with positive relationships, cooperation, caring, friendly and safe environment, learning and teaching, and school development efforts (Berthelsen & Walker, 2008). If parents have good relationships with educators, they feel free to take part in school activities (Christenson & Sheridan, 2001). Azzam (2007) indicates that there is a connection between the school relationship and level of PI. This means that if the relationship is not good, the PI will also be negative. The experience of SMT and parents regarding one another will have an effect on their relationship and hamper the cooperation needed between teacher and parent. In one school, parents were afraid to speak about the treatment they received from the school, thinking that their children may be discriminated against. I also mentioned in the field notes that she heard one parent saying to principal, *"we have only said good things about our school"*.

The educational level and literacy level were also a major barrier experienced by the participants that influenced PI.

4.3.2 Literacy and educational level

In most schools, the parents are not educated up to matric, dropped out of school at an early age and cannot speak fluent English. This makes it extremely difficult for parents to be fully involved in the education of their children as they find it difficult to understand any correspondence via medium of English. Education level of parents is another important factor that should be taken seriously into consideration by the SMT when corresponding with parents, as it can be a barrier to PI (Jafarov, 2015; Larocque, et al., 2011b). Apart from not attending parents meetings, it is

also difficult for parents to help their children with homework especially when the medium of instruction is English. Parents who have an higher educational status are likely to have a positive influence and outlook on the child's educational achievement and more likely to generate encouraging learning surroundings and be actively involved in home-based as well as school-based activities (Tarasawa & Waggoner, 2015; Wang, et al., 2016).

Parents as participants responded as follows:

- Literacy rate among parents. Use of English language, when parents don't know English that well. (A: P1)
- Language, don't know English, difficult to help with homework. (F: P6)
- I do not know about other parents, but for me, I do not know English, this gives me a great problem when I try to assist my children with homework and I am afraid that makes me a bad parent because I cannot help my children (CP3)
- since I have not attended school well, I prefer if the subjects can be taught in Sesotho so that I can help my children with homework, subjects should not be all taught in English. (G: P7)
- Language used at schools (D: P4)
- Language, not knowing English (E: P5).

SMT responses on literacy and educational level of parents:

- Most parents are not educated, they feel they undermine themselves, they are afraid to come to school (C: S3)
- Most of them come from the background where most parents have little education (B: S2)
- Some parents regard school to be place for educated, when I am unlearned why should I go there, teachers are there. (D: S4)
- Because their educational background, some they don't even know English (H: S8).

Low levels of formal schooling make it extremely difficult for parents to assist their children with homework (Mavimbela & Van Niekerk, 2015), and uneducated parents are less involved educational activities (Deslandes & Bertrand, 2005a). Usually when educators or SMT communicate with parents it is in Sesotho but recently most of the young educators in Lesotho, in the Mafeteng district use a mixture of Sesotho and English when communicating, so parents

miss out on some of the communication. Lesotho is among one of the countries that have significant high number of people who are living with HIV/AIDS.

4.3.3 Prevalence of AIDS and guardians

Mafeteng is one of the highest affected areas where the United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund (UNICEF) cares for orphans and other vulnerable children (UNICEF, 2013a). This has affected most people in the country; since most learners are orphans, some learners are heads of the families and others are staying with their guardians. The guardians looking after the children usually don't think they have an obligation towards the child's education and don't put in much effort to be involved as would be expected from the parents. This was confirmed by participants' responses:

- HIV epidemic is a barrier (A: S1)
- Most parents that do not get involved, they are not their biological parents because of HIV. (D: S4)
- Child headed families due to this HIV, so sometimes you will see a very small child coming to the meeting who cannot understand the importance of the meeting. We do not allow children to come to meeting we are looking for parent (D: S4).
- Students are looked after by brother and sister who are outside the country working (E: S5).

Although the prevalence of AIDS is one factor that seems to be a barrier to PI in most secondary schools in Mafeteng district, the parents were reluctant to talk about it and did not want to discuss the issue of child-headed families or guardians. This may be caused by the fact that more and more parents are dying and leaving their children behind, and that it was a sensitive issue they preferred not to discuss. Most learners are not living with the parents due to the high rate of HIV/AIDS which has killed their parents and some are staying with the relatives because parents have gone to work outside the country or in the firms in Maseru, which is the capital town of Lesotho. Their guardians are their grandparents or siblings in most cases.

The participants gave the following comments:

- Most learners stay with guardians who do not actually care about learning. (A: S1)
- Some stay with grandparents who are very old (C: S3)
- Guardians are very old...grandfather who cannot walk or a grandmother who is sick and that becomes a very big problem (E: S5)

- They are left with grandmothers and some are staying with their uncle. The grandfather become the caregiver most of them were not even at school at their own age, no idea about things done at school, they are not interested (D: S4).

Once again the participants from the parent focus group did not mention or elaborate as it seems to be a very sensitive issue. In most cases the guardians do not care about what is happening at school, mainly because the children are not of their blood. Even if the learner failed at the end of year, it might not be as painful as it would be with their own children. For the grandparents, it is very difficult to be fully involved because they are very old, even if they are willing. Poverty in Lesotho is prevalent, and parents battle to pay the required school fees.

4.3.4 Poverty and school fees

Lesotho is the country that has a high unemployment rate, so most parents have to go and work in South Africa to provide for their family. As it is a developing country, girls become mothers at young age and therefore they lack interest to make a follow-up in the education of their children. Kim (2009) states that most African countries are experiencing high numbers of mothers who have children at a young age and do not want to fulfil the parental duties and become involved in their children's education as they are still children themselves. As noted previously, being able to pay the children school fees is a major factor and is seen as parents being involved in the education of their children (Camacho-Thompson, et al., 2016).

Participants from the parent focus groups responded as follows:

- Finances, lack of funds...(B: P2)
- *Absence of jobs.* In the rural area, the place is stricken with poverty (C: P3)
- Lack of money due to no jobs (C: P3).

SMT responded:

- Not all parents are involved due to poverty (A: S1)
- But due to poverty, they find they are struggling and financial constraint (E: S5)
- Some cases parents are looking for animals at home and they cannot leave and come to school (D: S4)
- Parents have a lot of work to do, they work on streets they are selling oranges and peaches (H: S8)

- Even crops from the fields and animals are being accepted to pay for school and book fees. Use sheep and goats to pay school fees (G: S7).

As it has been indicated above, parents do not have money for living, so they need to go and find jobs somewhere else so that their children survive; subsequently parents have little time to spend with the families, so their involvement in the education of their children is limited. They do not have enough time to see how their children are performing at school because they spend a lot of time away. Parents need to go to the neighbouring country to look for housekeeping work or selling at the streets because most of them are not educated. In Lesotho, there is no grant for children, and every parent needs to work for his/her family. Most families are dependent on farming; that is, they depend on food that they grow in the fields, but nowadays there is a problem because of climate change. The weather has changed and there is no rain, which has affected the amount of food that is produced for the families. On the other hand, the schools have looked at other options that parents can use in order to pay fees. In most schools' parents are allowed to pay fees by animals. Some schools cultivate land; if animals are used as payment, they feed the animals and slaughter them for a function at the end of the year. The crops grown are used for school feeding schemes.

Not all parents can pay fees, but most parents try their level best to work, even in farming, so that they can pay. During the year, if learners have not paid, they are expelled from school and they are expected to come back when they have fees. Sometimes learners stay away from school up to a month, waiting for their parents to get some money. This is extremely bad for the learners as they lose valuable teaching time which can never be replaced.

Parents responded:

- Unpaid school fees. Paying for resources in time but the school only giving it after an amount of time (e.g end of first quarter) (E: P7).

SMT responded:

- Most parents do not come to school thinking that we will need some money. (C: S3)
- Most parents do not pay school fees well, so we are expelling learners to collect fees every quarter (A: S1)
- they are supposed to pay school fees, it is the problem because most cases we end up expelling them from school in order to pay (B: S2)
- Expel children to collect the money (D: S4)

- Some are afraid to come to school because they have not paid the school fees (H: S8).

The responses from parents and SMT indicated that paying school fees in secondary schools in Lesotho is a huge problem owing to the poverty prevailing in the country, and influences PI. Also, transport to school is expensive for the poorer communities in Lesotho and distance is another barrier to PI.

4.3.5 Transport and distance

Some schools in Lesotho are far from the places where learners live and learners need to walk long distances before they arrive at school. Living in rural areas, there is no transport and parents do not have money to pay for transport. This means that even if parents are willing to take part in activities at school, parents find it difficult to get to the school as they don't have their own transport to move from one place to another. SMTs must understand that lack of participation by parents does not necessarily mean they are neglecting their responsibility (Hornby and Lafaele, 2011; Matshe 2014), but lack of transport and the immense distances that they have to cover make it extremely difficult for parents to participate in school activities or attend meetings (Arguillas & Williams, 2010).

Parents and SMT responded:

- Distance of workplace from school (E: P 5)
- Some learners stay too far from school and stay with grandparents who cannot travel long distances (C: S3)
- Parents are poor...do not have money for transport (A: S1)
- Parents are far from school (E: S5)
- Distance, they are old and cannot walk long distances. There is no taxi line or bus line (D: S4)
- Parents are from faraway place. There is no transport here so parents are lazy to come to school (G: S7)
- Poor families, therefore their parents do not have money to travel (F: S6)
- Most of the parents are working in South Africa, whenever they are called some of them are never available (H: S8).

The responses above indicate that due to the fact that most families in Lesotho are poor, they cannot afford travelling expenses. If parents are needed for some reasons at school, it becomes

a problem because only few can attend, those who are staying near the school premises or those who can afford to pay for transport.

4.3.6 Learners and parents

The participants of the SMT focus group indicated that the learners themselves can be the barrier to PI, the participants from the parent focus group did not mention this as a barrier. The learners seem to have different ways that they use to stop their parents to come to school when necessary:

- Sometimes it is not the parents it is the children. Sometimes they play us monkey tricks and say; their parents did not agree and when they get to the parents, they say a different story (D: S4)
- Learners seem to be forgetful, they misplace the letters and finally parents do not know about the letters (F: S6)
- Learners do not give the parents the letters especially if they have committed a crime or did something bad (H: S8)
- we are given the wrong cell phone number by the learners (B: S2)
- The students do not tell their parents to come when they are called, they hide letters to parents (G: S7)
- Parents fear their children more than anything (E: S5).

Some learners do not like when their parents have to come to school, they will do anything not to give their parents the necessary correspondence. In some instances the SMT participants indicated the parents themselves are just not interested:

- Even if the academic work of the child is bad they do not make follow up, they are not interested. They don't even want to know the progress of their children (B: S2)
- Parents do not see the value of education. They believe that when the child is in the hands of the teacher they do not have to play their role as parent (E: S5)
- Parents are more interested in seeing their children married and interested to see them going to initiation school (F: S6).

One parent stated: it is not easy to come to the meeting because we are living far and working also, I once asked my neighbour to go for the meeting on my behalf, I found out later that she had been to the

she been not to the parents meeting as I have requested, I was embarrassed when my child was expelled from school to come and collect me (E: P5).

It is essential for the learners and parents to fulfil their individual responsibility towards ensuring that effective teaching and learning takes place (Hasley, 2010). Parents and learners need to show commitment. The SMT also has a huge responsibility towards education and ensuring that PI takes place. Sometimes instead of enabling effective PI the SMT themselves and the way that activities, decisions and actions take place as well as unappropriated parental interaction can inhibit PI.

4.3.7 School Management Team

School itself play an important part in influencing parents to get involved. This can influence them negative or positive. The school may deprive the parents the right to get involved in the education of their children. This may be from styles and methods, topics and the behaviour of SMT or educators towards the parents and learners. Styles and methods of teaching keep on changing with time. So, parents become confused on how to get involved because changes become very difficult for some individuals. There are also sensitive topics that some parents cannot discuss with their children. Sometimes the educators give learners the sex related topics to go and ask their parents at home. It becomes difficult for Basotho to discuss such issues with their children. Therefore, such topics prevent parents to get involved because they tell their children that they should go back to educators to learn from them. Technology is another problem that is experienced by some participants. Some schools have internet and will allow learners to use the internet to do research on some topics and use technology, in most scenarios the parents are not educated on technology usage and can't assist their children. Parents also indicate that replacement and changing of educators is a barrier because just as soon as their children and parents get used to one teacher, she/he is replaced, so it takes time for the parents to be familiar with the way the educator handles their children. They also complained about bad management of school and lack of knowledge. There are some principals that expel learners for school fees and examination fees, in Lesotho when learners are in Grade 10 and Grade 12, they write national examinations, they are expected to pay examination fees at their respective schools. These are then sent to the Examination Council of Lesotho by schools. Some of the principals use the money for other purposes and when the results are published the results are withheld by the Council until the payment has been made. This annoys parents a lot. Parents indicated that they were not treated properly when visiting the school.

Parents mentioned the following:

- Educational topics such as sex. (D: P4)

- Technology. Changing styles and methods of teaching make it difficult to help our children, we should be informed of the changes (A: P1)
- SMT lack of knowledge (E:P5)
- Bad management of school (C: P3)
- We are not included in decision making or other plans for the year (F: S6)
- Some are bias towards certain families (G: S7).

The SMT should take note of all the barriers that prevent PI. As indicated, the important role of the SMT in chapter two (§ 2-9) is crucial. The SMT, after careful scrutiny of all the barriers experienced by SMT and parents to envisage appropriate and relevant strategies, should also take note.

4.4 Strategies for School Management Team

For parents to get involved, schools should implement strategies that attract parents to be always willing to give support when they are needed. Parents should feel welcomed at school and experience that they are important stakeholders in the education of their children. Parents should be an essential part of the procedures when planning activities, goals, programmes, and making important decisions; they should receive appropriate acknowledgement and recognition for their contribution (Holloway, et al., 2008; Hornby & Witte, 2010; Mavuso & Duku, 2014a). The SMT must ensure that they that parents partake in their children's education and want to be part of the school and everything associated with the school. The effort and attitude of the SMT will determine the ethos of PI and lead the way to effective and sustained PI. It is the responsibility of the SMT to align the current practices and plan strategies of how parents should be involved (Ndou, 2008). The SMT has an important role to ensure that they have the necessary strategies in place to ensure effective PI. The strategies of involving parents also depend on the different contexts. Epstein (2001) indicates six types of involvement whereby parents get opportunities to partake in the education of their children. In this study, the strategies from Epstein as indicated in chapter two (§ 2.6) were used as a framework and guided me in the findings of the data regarding strategies for PI. Epstein indicates six types of involvement whereby parents get opportunities to partake. These different forms of PI can vary, depending upon the household, parental, school, and community characteristics of the child (Epstein, 2001, pp. 409-411). The model specifies the forms of involvement as parenting, communication, volunteering, learning at home, decision making and collaboration with the community. During the findings, SMT and parents from the

focus groups identified some correlation to Epstein's forms pertaining to how SMTs can apply certain strategies in the different forms of involvement.

4.4.1 Parenting

The atmosphere at home should be supportive to allow the child to grow at every stage of development. The parent should show the necessary support in school activities and spend time with the child while doing his/her homework. The home environment should create opportunity to assist and show interest in the education of the child's activities as well as homework. The home setting must be supportive and not hamper the child's attempt to work on school activities. This is very difficult in some households in Lesotho as poverty, AIDS and other variables have an enormous impact on the child's home environment (see above barriers). Some parents indicated the parental responsibility towards the children:

- Parents report child's problems (A:P1)
- I assist my child, teach about culture and heritage. Parents are responsible for children's behaviour (C:P3)
- Parents make sure children are neat when going to school (B: P2)
- Parents take responsibility for their own child's education (D: P4)
- Making sure your child is neat, polished shoes, ironed and neat uniform (E: P5)
- Making sure child does school work and helping and explaining where child struggles (F: P6)
- Responsible for anything bad a child does outside the school premises and teach the child between good and bad (G: P7)
- Parents should assist teaching at home (G: P8)
- Parents take part in the learning of the child (A:S1)
- Involved in order to show that they are interested in the learning of their children (B:S2)
- Parents know their responsibility (E:S5)
- if the students are fully helped by their parents at home (F: S6).

Not all the learners are taken care of, some learners stay far away from their homes, they are renting rooms and some are staying at the boarding schools, therefore their parents are not

nearby to help them. Most learners are orphans, they stay with their relatives, their grandparents who are very old to look after them, and some are the household head and have to take care of their siblings. This makes learning to be difficult for themselves as they sometimes have no money to buy food. Some of them go to school with torn clothes, and they feel ashamed until they drop out from school. But regardless of some circumstances not being what they should, the SMT has to ensure that the school setting and educators are supportive to every child. Clear and effective communication channels have to be established.

4.4.2 Communication

There should be two-way communication between the school and the home. Prinsloo (2016) shows that communication is very important as it is the structure that keeps everything together and determines the interrelationship between all the stakeholders. There should be various means of communication between the school and the home. Various means of communication should be accessible to guarantee that all stakeholders are aware of and informed about any school and learner activities. Communication channels must be in place so that continuous discussions regarding the child's academic development and behaviour can take place. Open and direct communication creates favourable conditions for good cooperation and interaction between parents and educators (Goodall and Montgomery, 2014).

Parents responded:

- We are told the school action plan (A: P1)
- We receive letters about important matters at school (G:P7)
- Invite us to parent meetings and inform about how our children are coping in school (H: P8)
- Send us messages about how our children are doing (C:P3)
- We are told of our children's progress during parents meetings (B: P2)
- We receive letters informing us about what is happening, then we are called to the school to give our vies but it is not taken (D:P4)
- When parents know everything that happens in school, especially change (F:P6)
- we are called to school meetings to discuss matters of developments of the school (E: P5).

SMT responded:

- Knowing that not all parents can speak English, we try to speak our mother tongue which is Sesotho, so that they should be comfortable. Make appointments to discuss the progress on learners (A: S1)
- When there is direct communication between parents, teachers and also the learners (B:S2)
- We sent notices to neighboring churches and sometimes we sent them to the chief (D: S4)
- Parents have to be called in everything concerning disciplinary issues (E:S5)
- inform them about the policies and about activities, increase the fees. Inform them and everything we are expecting to be done (F: S6)
- we use letters for communication. We call parents and discuss issues like the performance of the learners. Whenever we communicate with parents we speak the language that they will understand (G: S7)
- We use suitable language which is Sesotho, we do not use English because other parents are not educated. The reports are written in Sesotho. Letters or cell phones or by means of the media in the community, we go to the radio and announce meetings (G:S8)
- community radio because we believe that most parents listen to radio for announcements (A: S1).

Parents did not talk much about the means of communication between SMT and themselves; they only mentioned letters and meetings they attend. The reason may be that even though SMTs indicate that they speak in Sesotho, not all of them speak so that the parents understand: some include English words, which means that parents cannot follow well what is being discussed. From some of the comments made by parent participants it became clear that there was not always two-way communication, it was one-sided. Words like: “told” and “did not listen” were mentioned. SMTs indicated that communication also took place when parents went to school to collect the reports, they discussed the performance of the learner and how it should be improved. Even when the schools are closed and the SMTs have something to say to parents, they send the message through church or over the local radio station. It is crucial that the SMTs use the most appropriate means of communication, it is important to communicate in the parents’ mother tongue, especially for those parents who are not language proficient in English. Usually in most schools in Mafeteng district in Lesotho, if parents are invited to the parents’ meeting, if they are unable to attend, they are advised by the SMT to write a letter indicating why they will be

absent from such meeting. The letter should be stamped at the chief's place, otherwise the learner will not be allowed to attend classes the next day, he/she will be asked to go and call the parents.

4.4.3 Volunteering

Volunteering is very important in education because it assists educators in other school activities. It also saves school money as parents provide assistance without being paid. It is important to involve parents by utilizing their expertise and their knowledge to volunteer in certain activities and duties at school (Epstein, 2001). There are many parents who can help educators and alleviate the tasks that need to be completed at school. There are numerous occasions where parents can volunteer to become involved in activities such as improving the garden and surroundings, elaborate on traditions and certain customs, and to coach sport and cultural activities.

Participants stated the following:

- as parents, we are involved in the sense that during cultural day at school, we come, to teach learners how to dance and traditional songs (E: P5).
- Manpower when the school builds a new class (:P4)
- Involved in cultural days at school, to teach about different cultures (G: P7)
- Help with school trips (F: P6)
- When management needs parents assistance (H:P8)
- Parents can be members of a project. They can volunteer (A:S1)
- Include them in programs such as feeding schemes and developmental fund (C: S3).
- Call them to come and watch their children whenever they have sport activities and assist (H: S8).

In some cases, if the schools decide to build more classrooms, parents are asked to collect the stones and sand from the river as their contribution. Parents in secondary schools in Mafeteng seem to volunteer mostly in cultural activities and sports. This is true because the most activities that take place are sports activities such as netball, soccer and athletics, and even if learners take trips to the neighbouring schools, parents join them and sing whenever their children's school wins. Parents also volunteer to assist in the very important feeding schemes at schools. PI also usually takes place at home when the parents assist the child with school activities such as homework.

4.4.4 Learning at home

It critical for parents to get involved in the academic learning of their children by showing interest in the tasks, activities and homework that learners have to do at home (Epstein,2001). Even though most parents are not educated, some can help their children, even if it is to check if the homework is done. Even though most parents are not educated, some can help their children with homework, and some may assign the sisters, brothers or neighbours to help (Epstein, 2001). Barge and Loges (2003) emphasise that parents can also show their involvement by just continually checking their children's homework and ensuring that it is complete. This type of PI will also encourage and motivate students to keep up with their homework.

Participants stated:

- Parents see to it that children do their homework (A: P1)
- we should eradicate this mentality that learners are only taught by teachers, no! even us parents can assist teachers with our children here at home (E: P5).
- Parents help with homework (C: P3)
- I put my signature at the end of my child's homework to prove to the teacher that I was monitoring the homework (B: P2)
- Check homework frequently (G: P7)
- Make sure child does schoolwork. And helping where child struggles (H: P8)
- Learners become motivated when the parents show interest in their homework (A: S1)
- Parents also help learners in the assignments at home (E: S5)
- Sometimes teachers. give learners homework about Sesotho subject or Geography related subject (D: S4)

Participants agreed that that PI can take place when parents support and monitor their children when doing homework and it is important that parents check that children actually do their homework. That way the parent can establish if children understand the subject and if they need further assistance. The parents can fulfil their role by ensuring that children take the necessary responsibility towards their schoolwork and that they are prepared for school the following day, having completed assignments and tasks. It is imperative that parents are included in the decision making of the school.

4.4.5 Decision making

Parents have to be included in planning of activities, and should be part of decision making. Parents should be an integral part of the process of planning school activities and improvements (DeMatthews & Mawhinney, 2014; Michael, et al., 2012). Parents and SMTs should plan together to achieve the objectives of the school as organisation. Parents can contribute to developing a school in many ways and it is important to plan activities carefully and to strive for a common vision and goals that the parents and teacher in the school want to achieve (Gwiazdowska, 2014; Harris & Goodall, 2008; Mavimbela & Van Niekerk, 2015). This is supported by Van der Voort and Wood (Van der Voort & Wood, 2014) saying that the SMT has to establish responsibility and accountability as well as ensure comprehensive planning by involving the parents whenever possible. Quan-Blaffour (2006) states that parents see themselves as equal partners in the education of their children and therefore should have co-responsibility; they should be provided the opportunity to voice their opinion and get involved.

The participants responded:

- part of committees in the school, where school action plan is drawn (C: P3)
- Call parents to meetings to discuss matters of the school (E: P5).
- Invite us to air our views on how school is run and when management needs parents' assistance (H: P8).
- Serve on committees (D: P4).
- When parents are allowed to air their views and give recommendations on improving the school education (E: P6)
- Involved in the School Governing Body (SGB) to take part in the plans of the school (A:S1)
- Involving parents in strategic structuring of the school development. When parents are involved in planning session (D: S4).
- Beginning of the year are invited to be given that the plan is for the year, what we will require from them, throughout the year (E: S5).
- They are free to make any input. Meeting regularly to discuss issues that take place and tell parents the importance of their involvement (F:S6)

- Parents should be considered and included in some committees. Hold meetings to discuss ahead with parents on how we expect our school to achieve the following years (vision) (G: S7)
- Parents are involved in the management of the school because they are members of the school board, that is normally where the planning is done (H: S8).

Parents are called to the meetings to discuss with the SMT their expectations during the year and they are also included in the committees such as SGB and developmental projects. In the school that I was teaching there was an agricultural project which was responsible for the production of food from the farming section, and there was a committee that was formed from parents, SMT and the educators. Since some of the parents are good farmers, their views are very important, and learners are being fed from the food that is produced with the help of their parents. The parents can contribute a lot to the success and well-being of the school. Parents are also part of SGB which forms part of the management of the school, and they get an opportunity to be part of informed decision making. The school is always part of the community and it is therefore very important to include the community and work in collaboration with the community for development and upliftment of the school.

4.4.6 Collaboration with community

Epstein (2002) shows that collaborating with the community activities encourages the cooperation of schools, families, and community groups; also organizations, agencies and individuals. This means the school must join forces and have good relationships with different stakeholders such as families, learners, institutions and the businesses around the area where the school is situated so that the school can benefit from such places in case there should be a need. There should be a positive attitude towards community involvement, and attention ought to be given to utilising all possible resources to strengthen educational opportunities, family involvement and learning progress (Epstein, 2001). Gestwicki (2010) emphasise that the child is part of the community that also has an impact on each and every child's development. The school is always part of the community and it is therefore very important to include the community and work in collaboration with the community for development and upliftment of the school.

Participants commented:

- it also means the community, it is the school within the community, participation of parents and community help the students (C:S3)
- Commitment and active participation of community and parents (E:S5)

- We share the achievements of the school together (D: S4)
- Bring the community to us. That way we are able to bring trained people and transfer the talent to our students (F: S6)
- They are involved because they have rented their house for us as teachers and I think that is how they take part G: S7)
- Parents and community as stakeholders in the education of their children, should join hands with school (H: S8).

It is important that all schools include the community in school activities and create the opportunity for the members of the community to actively participate. The community is an important stakeholder in the education spectrum. During the process I identified other important strategies that were not part of Epstein's (2001) types of involvement.

4.4.7 Additional strategies

During the focus group interviews and the data process I noted that there were other relevant strategies mentioned by the participants that was noteworthy to include and the SMT can apply the strategies when needed. The participants indicated that giving recognition was very important.

4.4.7.1 Recognition and school performance

From the data findings the research noted that the participants acknowledged the importance of giving the required recognition to learners who have performed well. The recognition will not only motivate other learners but will also motivate parents to be more involved in their children's activities. Giving recognition and sharing the school's achievement was seen as an important strategy to enhance effective PI.

Participants commented:

- Share the achievements of this school together (E: S5)
- *Reward top achievers with bursaries (B: P2)*
- *Hold school celebrations like farewells at the end of the year (A: P1)*
- *Award for students and parents are invited (E: P5)*
- *Awards when children perform well (D: P4)*

- *Awards for good performance in academics or sporting activities (F:P6)*
- *End of the year ceremonies whereby we award presents to best performer and different activities, we invite parents to be there. They see other people children performing well and given awards, they go and motivate their children to do well the following year (D: S4)*
- *End of the year ceremonies, for the students who performed well during the whole year, we reward them, give them recognition (A: S1)*
- *Give awards to the learners who have performed, academically or in extra mural activities that is a motivation (E: S5)*
- *Children who have obtained merit are given cash as motivation in the presence of their parents (G: S7)*
- *At the end of the year we normally have the farewell of our senior students, we normally involve the parents to come, we give presents to those who performed well. Parents are motivated even the parents of the students who are not doing well they do work hard with their students, so that their student can be awarded (H: S8).*

It is also important to announce the performance of the school on a regular basis, as it motivates parents more and helps with sustained PI.

Participants responded:

- *The performance of the school must be good (A: P1)*
- *Good grades motivate involvement (F: P6)*
- *The performance of the school motivate them a lot, that is the only thing I think because we are performing very well (G: S7)*
- *During parent meetings we mention children who have performed well and are successful, that encourages parents (B: S2).*

Even the SMT members are proud if the school academic performance is good. Good performance motivates not only parents for sustained PI, but also encourages the educators to maintain and improve academic results. The academic performance of the school is a very important factor that the SMTs have to consider and has to be part of their strategies to ensure that there is a positive and welcoming school climate.

4.4.7.2 School climate

Creating an inviting and friendly school climate is essential in order to ensure that PI takes place effectively and continuously. A favourable school climate is associated with healthy relationships, cooperation among stakeholders, compassionate and safe environment, focus on learning and teaching, and continuous school improvement (Bryk, Sebring, Allensworth, Luppescu, & Easton, 2010; Hasley, 2010; Thapa, et al., 2013). School climate is seen as multifaceted because it "reflects students', school personnel's, and parents' experiences of school life socially, emotionally, civically, and ethically as well as academically" (Thapa, et al., 2013, p. 13). Research indicates that there is a connection between school climate and the level of PI in their children's education (Azzam, 2007; Epstein & Sheldon, 2005; Ferguson, 2008; Galvez, et al., 2015; Hornby & Blackwell, 2018). Smit and Liebenberg (2003) report that although parents want to be actively involved in the schooling of their children, many find the educational systems inaccessible and intimidating, making it very difficult to interact. The SMT has to ensure that the parents feel welcome when visiting the school. This is confirmed by the participant comments:

- *Welcoming environment for parent (A: P1)*
- *Doors are open whenever you have a problem (G:P7)*
- *They are welcomed by a friendly environment (H: P8)*
- *Not to make them feel unwanted in our school (C: S3)*
- *We do tell them not to be afraid to come to school. School is approachable to all parents (H: S8)*
- *They are given the chance to meet administration in any time they wish (D: S4)*
- *Encourage them to come to school whenever they feel like. We are eager to meet them (B: S2)*
- *Welcoming all parents in the same way, we normally consider them as one. We are friendly and do not consider educational status (A:S1)*
- *Hospitality and friendly environment that we provide. We always smile when they come (F: S6)*
- *Given all parents a freedom to come and inquire about their children progress. Always welcome parents, create the conducive environment (G: S7).*

The above comments prove that a welcoming and friendly school climate is essential, and it seems that most schools have an open door policy. Another important strategy that emerged from the data was ensuring that parents and educators receive the necessary and appropriate training.

4.4.7.3 Training and policy development

The literature points out that it is necessary to train educators how to work with parents and there are some parents that need training on how to support the children best in their education. For educators to perform their duties well and to communicate appropriately and professionally with parents, they need to be empowered to ensure that PI takes place. Lemmer (2012, p. 83) points out that “educators are seldom trained to interact with parents, and both parents and educators often find such encounters stressful and ineffective”. This is confirmed by a statement made by Larocque et al (2011b, p. 116) that “educators admit that they have little training in strategies for working with parents”. Educators, and especially the SMTs, need training how to work effectively with parents to ensure continuous and effective PI as well as mutual understanding (Gestwicki, 2010; Sister, 2004). Kimu and Steyn (2013) state that a contributing factor to poor educator-parent relationship is the fact that educators are not trained to involve parents effectively in schools; therefore the strategies for PI involvement should include not only educator but also parental training. The above coincides with the following statements made by the participants:

- *Programmes held by school to train parents as to what the expectations of the teachers have for them. Development programs that involve parents (C: S3)*
- *Parents lack the knowledge of what they are expected, they are unable to fully support us as teachers (E: S5)*
- *At our school we are not trained (F: S6)*
- *Have quarterly sessions where parents are told how to approach their children with regards to school work (A: P1)*
- *Motivational speeches (C: P3).*

Educators and especially the SMT, need to be trained how to deal with and understand the uniqueness of every family in order to ensure that an effective partnership between the school and parents is created (Larocque, et al., 2011b). In Lesotho, especially in the Mafeteng district, there is no official training for SMTs. It is important for SMTs to have in-service programmes for educators to develop the necessary skills to communicate effectively with parents in order to build an effective relationship (Setlhodi-Mohapi & Lebeloane, 2014). It is not only the SMT that needs

training, but parents also need information sessions on how they can support their children and what is expected from them. Motivational speakers for SMT and parents can have a positive impact on increasing PI.

The SMT can aid in this communication process and help to ensure that parents understand that they are needed, and indicate how and when they can be involved. From some of the statements made from the participants it was evident that the parent participants were uncertain about *how* they could be involved.

The SMT must ensure that the school has a definite policy and strong practices about involving parents at school and at home in activities related to learning. Van Deventer (2016, p. 146) states: “a school policy serves as a guide for making management, functional and administrative decisions, and reflects the school’s value system”. The SMT is “responsible for drafting the school policy that regulates the professional obligations at the school” (Van Deventer, 2016, p. 146). The SMT should introduce a policy to make parents aware of the benefits of their involvement in education (Kabir, 2014). Peters, et al. (2008) state that one of the crucial elements to get parents involved is to start with a policy that legitimizes the importance of PI. Kokemuller (2016) confirms that written policies and procedures provide the framework for an organisation’s entire operation, which means they can provide a clear direction on how parents and educators can work together. The importance of a policy is clearly illustrated in the literature (Gestwicki, 2010; Kim, 2009; Kimu & Steyn, 2013; Kurtulmus, 2016; Peters, 2001; Taylor, 2015). When the SMT thinks about programmes to increase PI, it should first ensure that a policy that legitimizes the importance of PI is established (Plevyak, 2003). Not one of the participants indicated a policy that was in place with regard to PI; that was an area that is clearly lacking and needs the attention of the SMT. To ensure quality it is required for the SMT to evaluate their performance and PI throughout the year in order to make the required changes.

4.4.7.4 Performance evaluation

For any performance to be improved, it has to be evaluated. The SMT should take a leading role in reviewing its current programmes, and ensure that policy and strategies are developed as well as communicated throughout the school community (McLarty, et al., 2010). To improve practice, schools should regularly appraise the effectiveness of their parent-educator activities (Lemmer, 2012) and the SMT can take responsibility and the necessary action to appraise current PI practices. This was mentioned by some participants:

- *Evaluating the system as much as we involve them in concluding the year, to evaluate how do we perform, how did it fail and (C: S3)*

- *When we are from the parents meeting we evaluate ourselves whether the meeting was up to expectation (B: S2)*
- *We compare the number of parents in meeting to total of students we have (A: S1) and (D: S4).*

It is therefore important that The SMTs have processes in place that can assist them in evaluating current strategies they have and the effect these have on PI. Previous studies suggest that SMTs are to re-evaluate their existing PI practices and emphasise the need to focus on in-service educator training for PI as well as concentrate on initiatives that will increase interactivity to overcome challenges posed by various contextual factors (Deslandes & Bertrand, 2005a; Green, et al., 2007). It is advised that after every activity that requires PI, the aspect(s) regarding PI should be evaluated and revised. The data process has accentuated the importance of PI and in order to ensure affective and sustainable PI it is imperative that the SMTs emphasize collaboration between SMT and parents.

4.4.7.5 Collaboration with parents

The SMTs must ensure that they collaborate with parents and perform as partners of the parents of the learners. Educators are the experts in education and the field that they teach, but parents are the experts on their children (Olsen & Fuller, 2008). According to Barge and Loges (2003), when educators and parents improve the quality of their relationship and it becomes part of the school practice, parents tend to have a better understanding of what is happening in school and become more involved in their children's education.

- *We are together in this process. Parents work together with the school (D: S4)*
- *We will form a good team which always win (partnership) (G: S7)*
- *We can achieve all we want if we work hand in hand (H: S8)*
- *Since they know about the children at home then we will be or we are a team (collaborate) (B: S2)*
- *Good relations, we are humble in order to convince them about everything that needs to take place, because they are partners in the school (F: S6).*

SMTs should accentuate the importance of such a partnership in all their efforts to ensure collaboration. The partnership does not happen automatically it requires commitment, dedication, specialized knowledge and skills from the educator, principal and SMT as well as the parent to

build an effective partnership (Grant & Ray, 2013). Parents should be regarded as associates in the education of their children and collaboration between parents and SMT should be heightened in all PI activities.

4.5 Summary

In chapter four I presented the findings that was done from the data that were collected from the focus group interviews (SMT and parents). The data were deliberated on according to the four sub-questions (§ 4.1). This allowed me to expansively and systematically study strategies that can be used by School Management Teams to ensure effective PI at secondary schools in Mafeteng district in Lesotho. Comments made by me in my field notes depicted that the parents did not always understand the questions and most of the questions had to be repeated and explained.

The first sub question (§ 4.2) investigated the nature of PI; this consisted of determining the participants' understanding of PI (§ 4.2.1), the areas of PI (§ 4.2.2) and the importance as well as the benefits of PI (§ 4.2.3). I noted that it was especially difficult for the SMT participants to acknowledge that PI was not what it should be; they hesitated in their responses. Most of the SMT participants indicated that they were not satisfied with the PI and PI differed from school to school. Not all the schools were satisfied with their current PI and differed from school to school. The parents and SMT participants understood that PI meant that they had to be involved in one or other way with the school and the child's activities. SMT members accentuated the importance of PI, which was not noted with the parents. The parents merely indicated their involvement in activities whereas the SMT gave a bit more detail to the level of involvement. The various areas of PI were indicated. The participants indicated that there were mainly two broad categories in which they were involved namely: home- and school-based activities. The parent participants accentuated the home-based activities as assisting their children with homework or seeing to it that they actually do their homework. In the school environment the parents indicated a few areas of involvement. It should be noted that that paying school fees is an extremely important factor for parents and SMTs; most of the participants of the focus groups indicated that when they pay their school fees it is seen as being involved in the school and therefore classified as an area of PI. Another aspect that was indicated was the importance and benefits of PI. The experiences of the parents and SMT accentuated the importance and benefits of PI and were evident in various factors that they mentioned.

The second sub-question scrutinized the barriers to PI (§ 4.3). Barriers specific to Lesotho, in particular the Mafeteng district, are mentioned by participants in this research study. Barriers to PI in this research study are seen as factors that prevent parents from being involved in the

various activities related to the education of their children. Unfortunately numerous barriers were identified that hamper PI. Poverty, parental experience, school climate, AIDS and the language barrier were some of the more predominant barriers experienced by the participants. It is noteworthy that all the SMTs indicated that they communicated in parents' mother tongue (Ssesotho); this was contradicted as some parents indicated that language, especially when communication took place via English, was experienced as a barrier to PI.

The third sub-question identified strategies that the SMT can implement to ensure effective involvement at secondary schools in the Mafeteng district in Lesotho (§ 4.4). The SMT has an important role to ensure that they have the necessary strategies in place to ensure effective PI. Epstein's (2001) model specifies six forms of involvement namely parenting, communication, volunteering, learning at home, decision making and collaboration with the community. In the process the research was guided by the six forms of involvement to identify strategies in the six forms of involvement. Apart from the six forms identified by Epstein, additional strategies were identified. The literature review indicated the importance of compiling a policy for PI that would guide parents and SMT with regard to PI. It was quite disturbing that not one of the participants indicated a policy document for PI. The policy document has to be in place to guide the actions of parent, educators and SMT members towards effective and sustainable PI. Many parent participants indicated they are unsure what is expected of them and how they could be involved. It is the responsibility of the SMT to ensure that a policy document regarding PI is in place. The policy document will assist the SMT members to provide a clear direction on how parents and educators can work together. In Lesotho, especially in the Mafeteng district, there seems to be no official training for SMTs. It is crucial that the SMTs receive some form of training with regard to PI. It is important for SMTs to have in-service programmes for themselves and educators to develop the necessary skills to communicate effectively with parents in order to build an effective relationship. The SMTs have a crucial role to fulfil in effective PI, and in chapter five a synopsis of the key interpretations will be given with specific focus on conclusions for this study.

CHAPTER FIVE: CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Introduction

Education is extremely important to all the stakeholders; therefore, parents should take part in the teaching and learning of their children. Literature indicated the influence PI has on various aspects of a child's educational life (Gestwicki, 2010; Hill, Witherspoon, & Bartz, 2018; Kurtulmus, 2016; Peters, 2012; Sy, et al., 2013). Gestwicki (2010) shows that PI is essentially intended to promote and support a child in his/her learning process, to help in improving school performance and see to the general well-being of the of the child in order for the child to reach its full potential. Throughout the study the importance of PI was confirmed and emphasized. .

On the other hand, research indicates that parents seem to be unaware of how they can actually become involved in their children's education and need guidelines, workshops or some training to assist and guide them on the aspects of becoming actively involved (Harris & Chrispeels, 2006; Harris & Goodall, 2008; Hasley, 2010; Lemmer & Van Wyk, 2004a; Tlale, 2006). It is not only parents that need training, but also teachers and SMT members. Lemmer (2012, p. 83) points out that "educators are seldom trained to interact with parents, and both parents and educators often find such encounters stressful and ineffective". According to Barge and Loges (2003), when educators and parents improve the quality of their relationship and it becomes part of the school practice, parents tend to have a better understanding of what is happening in school and they become more involved in their children's education. The SMT has an immense responsibility to ensure that parents are involved in the teaching and learning process (Fan & Chen, 2001). SMT is part of the management of the school and should be involved in activities such as planning, organising, monitoring, correspondence, cooperation and communication (Van der Westhuizen, 2010; Van Deventer & Kruger, 2009). Previous studies suggest that SMTs are to re-evaluate their existing PI practices and emphasise the need to focus on in-service educator training for PI as well as concentrate on initiatives that will increase interactivity to overcome challenges posed by various contextual factors (Deslandes & Bertrand, 2005a; Green, et al., 2007). The SMT must ensure that appropriate strategies are in place to enable effective PI. Research done on PI is scarce in Lesotho, especially when the focus falls on the role that the SMT has to play. As the literature and research emphasize the importance of PI and the impact it can have on learners' education, it was important to research PI in secondary schools in Lesotho as well as the strategies that the SMT can apply to increase and maintain PI.

In this chapter a synoptic overview of the inquiry is provided, as well as summary of the key interpretations that emanated into strategies for SMTs to assist them in effective PI in the secondary schools in Mafeteng district in Lesotho.

5.2 Synoptic overview of the inquiry

In chapter 1 orientation to the study was given. Background was given and the rationale for the study was elucidated by indicating the importance of such a study in Lesotho, specifically in the Mafeteng district. The prominent role of the SMT was elaborated on, leading to the purpose, research questions and aims of the study. The formulated main research question was given: what strategies can be developed for School Management Teams to ensure effective PI at secondary schools in Mafeteng district in Lesotho? In order to answer the main research questions various sub questions were conveyed that focused on the nature and benefits of PI, the barriers to PI and ultimately to develop strategies that the SMT can implement for PI. A brief explanation of the research design and methodology as well as the ethical aspects was given as these sections were elaborated on intensively in Chapter 4. The contribution of the study was explained and the chapter was concluded by defining the main concepts used in this study and specifying the outline of the chapters.

In Chapter 2 the conceptual and theoretical framework that underpins the research was indicated and illuminated on. The literature review assisted me to conceptualize the key concepts, realizing the relevance of and interrelatedness between the concepts that lead to a solid conceptual framework for PI that illuminates the importance and areas of PI. The nature of PI in Lesotho was elaborated on and PI in South Africa was briefly indicated. The theoretical framework that reinforced the study was specified. In order to gain further understanding of the benefits and barriers of PI, views of different authors were discussed to give a comprehensive understanding of the numerous benefits of PI and the vast variety of barriers that can prevent PI in their children's education. The literature review explored and indicated the importance of PI and the valuable role that the SMT has to play to ensure effective and sustained PI.

In Chapter 3, research design and research methodology were explained. The aims of the research and research questions were recapped to accentuate the direction of the research. Research methods and the design of the study were acknowledged, and the reason for as well as suitability of applying certain methodology was indicated. The sample size and sampling methods were also discussed. I indicated the specific data collection method namely focus group interviews that allowed me to understand the participants' experiences concerning PI. The field notes gave me the opportunity to record her thoughts and comments while doing the research as well as to ensure trustworthiness. Validity and reliability were the pillars to ensure the trustworthiness of the research. The data process was indicated and ethical considerations were demarcated. The chapter was concluded by indicating certain limitations to the study.

Chapter 4 give the necessary information regarding the findings of the data. The meaning and interpretations of parents and SMT from the eight schools allowed me to explore and gain insight on the participants' experiences regarding PI. Data from the literature review, field notes, transcribed interviews and framework, were analysed. Determining themes and categories, I could make sense from the data. To get a better understanding, the main questions were divided into three sub questions. The sub questions helped by explaining and describing how parents are involved and the different strategies that are used by SMT members. Answering the sub questions gave me the opportunity to determine the interrelatedness between categories and themes as well as to attain the aims of the study.

5.3 Synopsis of key interpretations

In this section an account is provided of the primary interpretations from the findings grouped according to the sub-questions. I concluded the aspects regarding the nature of PI in secondary schools in Mafeteng.

The nature of PI in secondary schools in Mafeteng district in Lesotho

The first sub-question focused on the nature of PI which was composed of determining the school current PI and the participants' understanding of the concept of PI. Not all the schools SMT was satisfied with the current PI. The other SMT participants showed that the PI was not as they would want it to be and needs attention. This was a bit contradictory to what the parent participants indicated as they all indicated the parents were involved in one or other activity. The SMT participants who indicated that they were satisfied with the PI also contradicted themselves when they indicated later in the interviews where the PI lacked. In general the conclusion could be drawn from the SMT participants that PI was not what it should be. The second aspect that was determined was their understanding of PI. Unfortunately the parent participants did not always understand the questions and most of the questions had to be repeated and explained.

Eventually the parents understood and they all indicated that PI meant that they had to be involved in one way or another with the school and the child's activities. The SMT members indicated their understanding but also accentuated the importance of PI, which was not noted with the parents. The parents merely indicated their involvement in activities whereas the SMT gave a bit more detail as to the level of involvement.

The different areas of PI were explored. The participants indicated that PI at schools took place in different areas, depending on certain factors. Most participants indicated that parents were mostly involved in home-based activities like helping their children with homework, assignments and preparations for school activities. The involvement in school-based activities was usually

when parents attended meetings or when they were called to discuss the progress of the child. Some parents also attended sport events, extra-mural activities and helped with cultural days and some planning required at school. It was noted that Lesotho parents helped a lot during cultural and traditional activities as their culture and traditions were of great importance. Education in secondary schools in Lesotho is mainly financed by parents; parents are responsible to pay school fees, buy books and the learners' uniforms. As school fees are an extremely important factor for parents and SMT, most of the participants of the focus groups indicated that when they pay their school fees it is seen as being involved in the school and therefore classified as an area of PI. The financial aspect is crucially important and sometimes seem to be a barrier as well because of the poverty in Lesotho.

The importance and benefits were established. The experiences of the parents and SMT accentuated the importance of PI and this was evident in various factors that they mentioned:

- **Attitude and motivation:** It was clear that learners become proud and motivated when they experience that their parents are involved, and this will have an impact on their attitude towards the school and encourage them to do their best.
- **Behaviour and discipline:** All the SMT participants indicated the importance of PI when it comes to the behaviour and discipline of learners. It is evident that discipline is of major importance for educators and parents in Lesotho, as is the role the parents have to play to ensure acceptable and disciplined behaviour takes place at school. SMTs accentuated that parents are called in to assist them with the discipline of their children.
- **Academic performance:** One of the roles the SMT has to fulfil is to ensure that a high academic standard is achieved and maintained. Although the parents indicated the importance of their involvement in their children's academic performance, many parents are not educated themselves and the level of support may not be what is expected. In most scenarios the parents only check if the learners have actually done homework.
- **School attendance and dropout:** Another responsibility of the SMT is to ensure that there are measures in place to notify parents when their children continuously skip class. The participants indicated that the parents do check that the children go to school. But there was some incongruity in the fact that the SMT must ensure that the learners attend their classes and don't waste valuable learning time, but it was mentioned regularly that learners are sent home because the parents have not paid, and learners may not return until the school fees have been paid.

- **Educators and the school:** It is important for parents to assist educators in their tasks, not in the academic responsibility they have to teach and learn the learners, but to alleviate the educator's responsibility towards other school activities. There are various activities at school where the parents can support educators to the benefit of the school. It is also very important that the parents work with the teachers to ensure that the learners' strengths are maximized and their weaknesses worked on. This can only be done if teachers allow parents to give assistance in the form of supplying information regarding their children's behaviour.

5.3.1 The barriers to parental involvement in secondary schools in Mafeteng

Even though parental involvement is vital to teaching and learning, participants indicated that there were numerous barriers that prevented PI. From the data findings and interpretations I established the barriers that the participants experienced; from the participants' responses I suggested some strategies that might alleviate some of the barriers.

5.3.1.1 Parental experience and school climate

Some parents had previous negative experiences when visiting their children's school. This affected them negatively towards involvement in activities and meetings that are linked to the school. Some participants from the parent focus groups indicated that educators did not treat them appropriately. Some parents lack confidence to be around the school premises because they feel they do not belong there, they feel that school environment is for certain educated parents. It was not only the parents that felt that they were not treated appropriately but also the SMT members. SMT also had negative experiences regarding parents' behaviour at school. Parents and teachers have to have mutual respect for one another and there should be a conducive climate in which cooperation can occur

Strategies that can improve parental experience and school climate:

- Prevent hostile environment; ensure parents feel welcome
- Treat parents as equals, irrespective of their education level or financial status
- Treat parents consistent
- Always be polite and friendly; be professional
- SMT should ensure that teachers are protected against rude parents and should be present in meetings with difficult parents

- Make parents and teachers aware that cooperation is essential and they need to work hand in hand to ensure their children receive the best education.

5.3.1.2 Literacy and education levels

In most schools, the parents are not educated up to matric, drop out of school at an early age and cannot speak fluent English. This makes it extremely difficult for parents to be fully involved in the education of their children as they find it difficult to understand any correspondence via English as medium. Most parents are not educated and feel embarrassed when educators speak some of the English words that they cannot understand. They also have difficulties in helping their children with homework because all the subjects are taught in English except for Sesotho. Usually when educators or SMTs communicate with parents it is in Sesotho, but recently most of the young educators in Lesotho, in the Mafeteng district use a mixture of Sesotho and English when communicating, so parents miss out on some of the communication.

Strategies that can improve literacy and educational level:

- SMT must ensure that educators stop using English words whenever they are communicating with parents
- SMT can motivate PI irrespective of parents' educational level; there are other areas that parents can be involved where being literate is not required
- All the meetings should be held in a language that all the parents understand, otherwise a translator should be used
- SMT must talk to parents that their contribution is important. They should be helped with the study methods so that they can see if their children are really doing school work while they are at home. If they cannot understand they can check that the child is actually doing homework, or ask for assistance
- SMT must ensure that there is no discrimination between educated and non-educated parents
- SMT must talk to parents to encourage their children to use group study while at school so that learners may help one another where difficulties are encountered.

5.3.1.3 Prevalence of AIDS and guardians

Mafeteng is one of the highest affected areas where the United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund (UNICEF) cares for orphans and other vulnerable children (UNICEF, 2013a). These families are either labour constrained or comprise critically ill parents, or the elderly who

are affected by health issues; or they are child headed households. AIDS has a major impact and numerous parents do not work and do not fully partake in the education of their children. HIV/AIDS has apparently affected more families in the country as most of the learners are orphans and are cared for by guardians. The guardians looking after the children usually do not think they have an obligation towards the child's education and subsequently do not put in much effort to be involved as would be expected from the parents. Some learners are heads of the families; there are no adults.

Strategies that can assist families that experience parents with AIDS and who have guardians or grandparents who look after them:

- Have sympathy and understanding with the children who are part of such a family
- SMT must make educators aware of children who have lost their parent, have a guardian or where the learner heads the family, in order to involve the community
- SMT should encourage neighbouring parents to help orphan learners and help them with issues related to school
- SMT ought to ensure that every child is represented by someone when discussing results and progress if the parent, grandparent or the guardian cannot attend
- Initiate regular meetings for child headed families and guardians as well as grandparents to inform them how important their participation is and in which areas they can actually be involved
- In the school meetings SMT should sometimes organize people from the health department to come and talk to parents on how to look after themselves once they know their status so that they can live longer and look after their children.

5.3.1.4 Poverty and school fees

There are challenges that affect most families. Lesotho is the country that take care has high an unemployment rate, so most parents have to go and work in South Africa to provide for their family. Many people are not working in Lesotho, so most parents need to go to the capital city of Lesotho to go and work in the firms or go to South Africa to work in the kitchens. In Lesotho, there is no grant for children, and every parent needs to work for his/her families. Not all parents can pay fees, and during the year, if learners have not paid, they are expelled from school and they are expected to come back when they have fees. Sometimes learners stay away from school up to a month, waiting for their parents to get some money. This is extremely detrimental for the learners as they lose valuable teaching time which can never be replaced.

Strategies that can alleviate some poverty and payment of school fees

- SMT should encourage parents to be devoted in their farming so that they have enough food to provide for their children, this may help them stay in their homes and support their children in education
- SMT can organize events to raise funds for poorer families
- Involve the community in projects to donate money
- Feeding schemes
- A certain amount of books can be kept in the classrooms for learners who cannot afford book fees
- SMT should ensure that no learner is sent home to go and fetch money as valuable teaching time is wasted that cannot be replaced
- The SMT can give the names of such families that cannot pay school fees and the SGB can give permission that those families may pay less, or as some schools are doing, contribute towards the school fees by giving livestock or crops from the field
- SMT should tell parents on time if they want them to come to school so that they organize the transport or leave their places early for the meeting
- SMT should discuss with parents how the money is spent and also what can be done to alleviate some families from paying the full amount. Alternatives should be considered for their payment of school fees
- SMT should not expel learners from school if their parents owe fees; they should discuss issue relating to fees with parents.

5.3.1.5 Transport and distance

Some schools in Lesotho are far from the places where learners stay and learners need to walk long distances before they can arrive at school. Living in rural areas, there is no transport and parents do not have money to pay for transport. This means that even if parents are willing to take part in activities at school, parents find it difficult to get to the school as they don't have their own transport to move from one place to another.

Strategies that can assist with transport

- Meetings have to be scheduled long before the time so that the parents can make the necessary arrangements
- Schedule various meetings together for a Saturday: parents' meetings, SGB meetings, etc.
- Involve the community and arrange that parents travel together

5.3.1.6 Learners and parents

Learners sometimes do not like their parents to come to school because they know that then their parents will know of their misbehaviour and offences in school. . The learners themselves can thus be a barrier to PI. Sometimes the parents are just not interested to attend. Parents as well as learners need to show commitment.

- SMT should devise other means to directly communicate with parents. A system should be in place to ensure that correspondence between the school and parents does occur and has taken place. Learners must get into the habit of having their parents sign their books. This can also be the way correspondence takes place
- Technology should be used in the areas where there is a signal. However, in Lesotho there are many areas where there is no signal.
- Make use of community- and church events to communicate important events, meetings and announcements

5.3.1.7 School Management Team

Schools require a management team that is able to steer all stakeholders and so to ensure that educators teach, learners learn and parents provide the necessary support so that the school can perform well. SMTs are required to build relationships with parents based on trust, cooperation, honesty, accountability, effective communication, shared visions, values and solutions (Owens, 2010). Everard, Morris and Wilson (2004, p. 34) state that “the key to effective management is the ability to get results from other people through other people and in conjunction with other people. If the underlying psychology is wrong, the most carefully constructed system and techniques will fail.” It cannot be taken for granted that the SMT is knowledgeable, experienced and have the necessary skills to communicate well with parents to establish a parent-educator relationship that will enhance and promote parent involvement. SMTs need capacity-building to manage their schools effectively (Van der Voort & Wood, 2016). Styles and methods of teaching confuse parents and hinder them from getting involved.

- The principal must take note of all the barriers that prevent PI and make sure it is discussed in SMT meetings
- The principal has a huge responsibility to ensure that the SMT fulfil their responsibility and ensure that SMT members are motivated and have a positive attitude towards PI
- SMT must take their role as managers and leaders seriously and ensure that PI is what it should: be a permanent topic on the agenda for discussion
- There should be opportunity for parents to voice their opinions when any changes are made or important decisions are made.

The SMT of each school has to determine its own actions towards PI and focus on the specific context of the school, parents and their involvement in order to plan appropriate strategies for that specific school.

5.3.2 School Management Team strategies for effective parental involvement in secondary schools in Mafeteng district in Lesotho

The effort of the SMT is extremely important as in most schools they determine the ethos of PI and lead the way to effective and sustained PI. Ndou (2008) emphasizes that the SMT is expected to align the current practices and plan strategies of how parents should be involved. The effort and attitude of the SMT will determine the ethos of PI and lead the way to effective and sustained PI. I applied Epstein's (2001) six types of involvement whereby parents get opportunities to partake in the education of their children. In each of the six types of involvement I proposed strategies that the SMT can implement.

5.3.2.1 Parenting

The parent should create opportunity to assist and show interest in the child's educational activities as well as homework.

- Inform parents on how they can assist their child with their homework and how they can give the necessary support and motivation to the child so ensure that a positive attitude towards education is part of the household
- Inform the parents what exactly is expected from them as parents
- Parents must be made aware of their responsibility as parents and assist the school in areas such as discipline and commitment towards the school

- Ensure that the parents are aware that it is important for the children to attend school regularly
- The SMT must be aware of problems at home that can have a devastating effect on the child's education. The parents must feel that they can inform the school and ask for assistance. Most schools have feeding schemes and the community as well as the church can be contacted for assistance.

5.3.2.2 Communication

Communication is the best tool to ensure that stakeholders are informed of any school activities. SMT must ensure that various means of communication are accessible to guarantee that all stakeholders are aware of any school and learner activities. Communication channels must be in place so that continuous discussions regarding the child's academic development and behaviour can take place. Effective communication is essential to ensure PI.

- Communication with parents must take place in the mother tongue so that all the parents can understand
- SMT must determine if current communication channels are utilized effectively; if not the appropriate changes have to be made
- Have alternative means of communication in place
- Use communication to inform parents of meetings, activities, learners progress, disciplinary actions, changes and planning
- Get the parents' opinion on how to improve communication
- Make use of direct communication; if possible, do not depend solely on the learner to inform parents
- Ensure that there is two-way communication, not one sided; parents must have the opportunity to voice their opinion
- Ensure that contact information regarding parents is captured at school and is easily accessible.

5.3.2.3 Volunteering

Volunteering is another area where the SMT can ensure that PI takes place. Some of the parents are specialists who can help with other topics that may be difficult to educators, especially in the urban areas. This may establish harmonious relationships between the school and parents.

- Inform parents of activities where they can volunteer to assist, especially when expertise is needed in certain projects
- Inform parents ahead of time of any school trips and projects
- Have a list available at school of parents who are available to volunteer, and indicate their area of expertise
- Use volunteers, particularly in feeding schemes and development funding.

5.3.2.4 Learning at home

Participants agreed that that PI can take place when parents support and monitor their children when doing homework, and that it is important for parents to check that children actually do their homework.

- Inform parents what is expected from them with regard to assisting with learners' homework
- Establish a system that can assist parents to check learners' homework on a regular basis
- Advise parents how can they motivate and encourage their children to remain positive towards their school work
- Notify parents that there are other areas they can assist in developing every child to his/her full potential
- Ensure that there is cooperation and mutual understanding among the teachers and parents with regard to the education of each child.

5.3.2.5 Decision making

Planning must form the building block for any form of improvement. Parents should be a fundamental part of the process when planning school activities and improvement. Even if parents are not educated, they are intelligent and their contributions can be helpful. Parents can contribute much to the success and well-being of the school.

- Establish committees where there are parent representatives
- Invite parents to air their views on how the school is run and when management needs parents' assistance
- Involve parents in the School Governing Body (SGB) to take part in the plans of the school
- Involve parents in strategic structuring of the school development
- At the beginning of the year invite parents to hear what the plans are for the year and what will be required from them throughout the year
- Meet regularly to discuss issues that take place and make parents aware of the importance of their involvement
- Plan well, hold meetings ahead to discuss with parents on what the school is expected to achieve in the following years, establish the vision
- Parents must be free to make any input. Meetings must occur regularly to discuss issues that and accentuate the importance of PI.

5.3.2.6 Collaboration with community

Community involvement is extremely important. The school must join forces and have good relationships with different stakeholders such as institutions and the businesses around the area where the school is situated so that school can benefit from such institutions in case there should be a need. Involving the community can assist the school in many cases to alleviate problems experienced by the learner and their parents. Schools must work hand in hand with the community. The school with all the learners and parents form part of the community.

- Ensure the community is actively involved and make sure they are informed on all the important activities that take place in the school
- Share achievements with the community
- Involve the community when there are families that need financial support or lack nutrition
- Bring the community to the school; involve trained and skilled people from the community
- Community is one of the stakeholders in the education of the children, community should join hands with the school and ensure that cooperation takes place

- Promote sponsorships especially for brilliant learners who show potential but are financially disadvantaged.

The data findings and interpretations allowed me to identify other relevant strategies that did not fit explicitly in Epstein's (Epstein, 2001) six areas of involvement.

5.3.2.7 Additional strategies

After reviewing the literature and data findings, I deemed it appropriate and necessary to add the additional strategies under relevant areas.

5.3.2.8 Recognition and school performance

Giving recognition and share the school's achievement is an important strategy to enhance effective PI.

- Share the achievements of the school with all the parents
- Reward top achievers with bursaries
- Award learners who perform well and give appropriate recognition
- Invite all the parents and learners to ceremonies that give recognition to learners, that will motivate parents and learners to better academic results
- Give awards to the learners who have performed well academically or in extramural activities
- Encourage other parents to get involved by announcing good academic results regularly
- Motivate all learners and the teachers by sharing the achievements of learners who perform well
- Make the community proud by informing them of the school's performance; this will encourage further commitment.

5.3.2.8.1 School climate

An inviting and friendly school climate is essential to ensure PI takes place effectively and continuously.

- Create an inviting and friendly school climate
- Have an open door policy for parents when possible

- Treat all parents the same and do not discriminate against illiterate parents or parents who have difficulty in paying the school fees
- Ensure that the school is approachable to all parents, even those parents who work long hours and cannot always take the time off during the day
- Provide opportunity for parents to meet all staff members of the school
- Ensure that all staff members have a friendly and positive attitude towards all the parents
- Ask parents to assist in creating a friendly and inviting area where parents can wait.

5.3.2.8.2 Training and policy development

The literature points out that it is necessary to train educators how to work with parents, and that there are some parents that need training on how to support the children best in their education. Not one of the participants indicated that a policy document was in place with regard to PI, that was an area that was clearly lacking and needs the attention of the SMT.

- Have quarterly sessions where parents are told how to approach their children with regard to school work
- Programmes should be held by school to train parents as to what the expectations of the teachers are; development programmes should involve parents
- All SMT members need continuous training on effective and sustainable PI, especially on two-way communication
- SMT must ensure that a policy that legitimizes the importance of PI is established
- Motivational speakers should be invited to address for SMT and parents.

5.3.2.8.3 Performance evaluation

For any performance to be improved it has to be evaluated. The SMT should take a leading role in reviewing all current PI strategies, initiatives and programmes.

- Evaluate existing PI practices
- Evaluate the strategies for PI that the SMT implemented at the end of each year in order to make improvements for the coming year

- Evaluate the success of the meetings for parents
- Give parents the opportunity to evaluate the leadership and management of the school
- Determine all the barriers to PI and strategize on alleviating the barriers
- Determine the level of PI.

5.3.2.8.4 Collaboration with parents

SMT should accentuate the importance of collaboration between the school and the parents.

- Create opportunities to emphasize the importance of working co-operatively
- Ensure that the teachers and parents experience a sense of team work
- Foster good relations between parents and teachers
- Indicate to teachers how partnership with parents can be established and maintained

5.4 Limitations of this study

The research was limited in the sense that the data were only obtained from secondary schools in the Mafeteng district in Lesotho. It would have been ideal to include other districts of Lesotho but on master's level this was deemed sufficient. However, the interpretations might be transferable to other districts in Lesotho as PI is a general problem in Lesotho and all school SMTs can benefit from the suggested strategies to improve PI at their school. The interpretations of the research were not statistically tested as this was only a qualitative study. It was, however, not necessary as the aim of the study was not to determine the statistical relationship between two variables. I was not a very skilled researcher in the beginning and had inadequate experience of qualitative research to do such a big qualitative study. I was not experienced with the methods of conducting focus group interviews. It was not easy to conduct the research in Lesotho because participants are not familiar with research in their schools; they do not feel comfortable being asked certain questions and airing their views in the presence of others, they regard themselves as *stupid* because of their level of their education. It was very hard to get participants who were willing to partake in the focus group interviews, especially the parents; they were more willing to give donations in return for the school. SMT members were also hesitant to give information in English in front of their colleagues, they complained that they were not good at English as it was not their home language and they were shy to give their opinion in front of others. After the research, some parents even thought that I could go to the government to help with their needs. Even though I introduced herself as a practising teacher, they insisted that I should help them

with their problems. It was therefore not easy for the participants and myself to conduct focus group interviews although I tried her utmost best to get data that were rich.

5.5 Value of this study

It is of the utmost importance to involve parents in the education of their children. Teachers should be knowledgeable on PI and the SMT should realize the crucial role they have to fulfil to ensure that appropriate PI strategies are in place to ensure sustained PI. The study accentuated that PI is essential to form a partnership between the parents and the school to optimize education. The study highlighted the importance of PI by indicating the importance and benefits of PI. Indicating the barriers that are unique to Lesotho will assist the SMT in Lesotho to utilize and plan effective PI strategies that will alleviate some of the barriers. The study aimed to make current SMTs aware of the role they have to play as managers and leaders to ensure PI. The study underlined the importance of training and the essential fact of ensuring that a policy regarding PI is in place. The proposed strategies can be deployed by SMTs to ensure that PI takes place and essential cooperation between the school and the parents is established. SMTs are in the position where they can influence effective involvement of parents by empowering all the stakeholders regarding PI. From this study it is evident that SMT can show their leadership skills to influence PI. It is the duty and responsibility of the SMT to have appropriate strategies in place to ensure PI.

5.6 Future questions

The study revealed the following future research questions:

- What type of training can be given to teachers, SMTs and parents to enhance effective PI practices?
- What impact does PI have on the academic performance of learners in Lesotho?
- How do learners experience PI in their schools?
- How can PI become an integral part of the teacher's professional repertoire?
- What role does the principal have in ensuring that the SMT is motivated and knowledgeable towards PI?
- How can the Government of the Kingdom of Lesotho (MOET) ensure that SMTs and parents receive appropriate training?
- How can the Government of the Kingdom of Lesotho (MOET) assist in alleviating barriers to PI?

5.7 Personal reflection on my research journey

This research study has become my life for the past five years. This journey has helped me to see that I can hold on, even though it was very difficult. I had to walk for more than two hours to go to some places to go and collect the data, because there was no transport and network near me. The journey commenced two years after I had completed my Honours degree in Management and Leadership. I developed an interest on strategies for effective PI in secondary schools in Mafeteng district after I had seen that parents do not fulfil their role in the education of their children, and that the teachers do not see the need to involve parents in education. I have been a teacher in one secondary school for many years, which is why I have realized the need to do the research. In my study I found out that both parents and teachers can become barriers in PI.

I have learnt that SMT and parents want the education sector to be successful but they do not know how they should work together. I have also seen that due to poverty in Mafeteng, it is very difficult for parents to get involved because most of them are not staying with their children due to different reasons. I gained a lot of experience in conducting qualitative research, by collecting the data and conducting the interviews. I also expanded my knowledge and understanding of the research topic.

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ADDENDUM A



Title:

School Management Team strategies for effective parental involvement at secondary schools in Lesotho

Section A: Introduction

I am Mamosele 'Mabakuena Caroline Lethoko from Tjorosing, Mafeteng. I am a mathematics teacher at Hermon Secondary School since 2002. At the moment, I am Masters student enrolled in the Faculty of Educational Science, North West University, South Africa. I intend to collect data for my research study relating to School Management Team strategies for effective parental involvement at secondary schools in Lesotho. As a teacher I experienced that it is very difficult to get parents involved in the activities of the school and even on parents' evenings when the learners' academic performance needs to be discussed. I deemed it necessary to look at strategies that the SMT can employ to improve parental involvement. The aim of this focus group interviews is to determine what are parents and SMT understanding of parental involvement and how can it be improved.

I commit myself to the professional code of ethics for researchers which, amongst other aspects, include the following;

- The participation of all research participation is strictly voluntarily and may at any time withdraw from the research without any consequences.
- The anonymity and confidentiality of the research participants are protected and guaranteed.
- Upon completion, the interpretations of the research will be made available.
- I also ask your permission for this focus group interview to be recorded in order to transcribe it later.

- I also refer to the consent form that you signed concerning all the ethical issues

If you are satisfied with the above information and ethical issues, can we please proceed with the focus group interview?

Section B: Questions to SMT members

1. What is your understanding of parental involvement?
2. What would you regard as effective/good parental involvement?
3. Why would you consider parental involvement important?
4. How would you currently describe the involvement of parents at your school? Give reasons for the current situation.
5. What areas do parents actually get involved with the learner's- and school's activities and why?
6. How do you as SMT members encourage parents to be involved in your school and its activities as well as the academic achievement of their children?
7. What do you regard as barriers referring to the specific context of your school, why do parents not get involved?
8. Are there any factors / systems in place that will motivate parents to get involved?
9. How does the school usually communicate information to parents? Explain, whether the way of communication is effective or not?
10. How do you ensure that, irrespective of level of education and economic status of parents, the school is approachable to all parents?
11. How do you evaluate the effectiveness of parental involvement at your school?
12. What strategies can be developed that would aid SMT to improve parental involvement?
13. Are there any other comments you would like to make on the aspect of parental involvement?

Section B: Questions to parents

The focus group interviews with the parents will be in Sesotho as most of them cannot speak English. (See next page)

1. What is your understanding of parental involvement?
2. What would you regard as effective/good parental involvement?
3. Why would you consider parental involvement important?
4. How are you currently involved in your child's academic activities and school activities?
5. Do you think the SMT of the school puts any effort in to get you as parents involved?
Give reasons for your answers
6. What would you as parents consider as barriers / obstacles to not get involved?
7. How does the school SMT empower you to be involved in the school and its activities?
8. Do you feel confident to voluntarily approach the school to make queries or ask about your child's academic performance? Explain.
9. What is your perception with regard to all parents being treated fairly, equally and with respect?
10. What needs to be done to get parents more involved?
11. What strategies can be developed that would aid SMT to improve parental involvement?
12. Are there any other comments you would like to make on the aspect of parental involvement?

Translated interview questions for parents into Sesotho

Parents' questions in Sesotho

1. O utloisisang ka ho kenella ha batsoali sekolong?
2. Keng hoo o ka ho nkang ele mokhoa o chatsi oa ho kenella ha batsoali sekolong?
3. Ke hobaneng ho kenella ha batsoali lithutong ea bana ho le bohlokoa?
4. Ha ha joale le kenyelletsoa joang thutong ea bana ba lona?
5. Na botsamaisi ba sekolo bo thahasella boikitlaetso ba lona?
6. Keng lona le le batsoali le bonang ho le bakela ts'itiso ea ho kenella thutong ea bana?
7. Botsamaisi ba sekolo bo lefa matla ha kae ho kenella thutong kapa mesebetsing ea sekolo?
8. Na lona le sebete sa ho toba botsamaisi moo le boning se fokola teng?
9. O ka reng ka mokhoa oo batsoali ba ts'oaroang ka bona sekolong?
10. Ke mokhoa e feng e etsoang hore batsoali ba khothalle thuto ea bana ba bona ka boholo?
11. Ke methati e feng e ka ntlafatsoang e le ho ntlafatsa ho kenella ha batsoali thutong ea bana ba bona?
12. Na hona le maikutlo o ka a hlahisang malebana le methati ka ho kenyeletsoa ha batsoali thutong ea bana ba bona?

ADDENDUM B



Privaatsak X6001, Potchefstroom
Suid-Afrika, 2520

Tel: 018 299-1111/2222
Web: <http://www.nwu.ac.za>

Tel: 018 285 2070

Dr Molly van niekerk

Ministry of Education and Training

Senior Education Officer

Mafeteng

900

Dear Sir/ Madam

Permission to conduct a MEd research study

I, *'Mamosele 'mabakuena Caroline Lethoko*, am a Masters student enrolled in the Faculty of Education Studies, North-West University, Potchefstroom Campus, South Africa. I intend to collect data for my research study relating to parental involvement in schools in Mafeteng district. The title of my proposed dissertation is: School Management Team strategies for effective parental involvement at secondary schools in Lesotho.

I hereby apply for permission from the Department of Education to conduct this research with a sample of participants consisting of SMT members and parents from the following 8 schools in the Mafeteng district in Lesotho:

- Mafeteng High School
- Matholeng High School
- Makintane High School
- Tauhali High School
- Johnson Baker High School
- Matsepe High School
- Makena High School
- Sekameng High School

The method of data collection involves focus group interviews with the SMT members (principal, deputy principal/s and head of departments) and parents of learners in the above mentioned schools. The data collection will take place over a period convenient to the participants. This intervention will not interfere with academic scheduled time.

I commit myself to the professional code of ethics for researchers which, amongst other aspects, include the following:

- The participation of all research participants is strictly voluntary and may at any time withdraw from the research without any consequences
- The anonymity and confidentiality of the research participants are protected and guaranteed
- No interference with the general and academic programme of the school will take place
- Upon completion, the findings of the research will be made available to the Department of Education, as well as to the school that participated in the research.

The planning for conducting this research is intended for November / December 2016 and January / February 2017. If you require any additional information about this research, you are most welcome to contact me on +266 56498133/ +266 59971713, or my supervisor, Dr Molly van Niekerk: +27 82 455 4554.

Your support is highly appreciated. I thank you for your interest in my research.

Yours faithfully

M.M.C. Lethoko

MEd Candidate, North-West University.

Student number: 25566636

ADDENDUM C



Privaatsak X6001, Potchefstroom
Suid-Afrika, 2520

Tel: 018 299-1111/2222
Web: <http://www.nwu.ac.za>

Tel: 018 285 2070

Principal of the school XXX

Mafeteng District

Dear Sir / Madam

Permission to do research at XXXXXX

I, *'Mamosele 'Mabakuena Caroline Lethoko*, am a Masters student enrolled in the Faculty of Education Studies, North-West University, Potchefstroom Campus, South Africa. I intend to collect data at your school for my research study relating to parental involvement in schools in Mafeteng district. The title of my proposed study is: School Management Team strategies for effective parental involvement at secondary schools in Lesotho.

I hereby request that focus group interviews may take place with the SMT and parents of the school on their experiences of parental involvement at your school. The interview will last about an hour. My empirical study is based on qualitative research data. The data collection will take place over a period of a week convenient to the participant. This intervention will not interfere with academic scheduled time.

I pledge to maintain professional and research ethical codes. This signifies that:

- Participation in this research remains voluntary and participants may, at any time, withdraw from the research
- Anonymity and confidentiality of all participants' personal information is guaranteed
- No demands will be made on academic teaching programmes
- The research findings will be made available to your school, should you request it.

I plan to conduct this research in November/December 2016 and January/February 2017. I, as well as my supervisor, Dr Molly van Niekerk: +27 82 455 4554 will be available to answer any questions you may have.

Could you please provide me with your written consent by filling in the sections on the next page. Please return the consent form to me, or email it to mabakuenalethoko@gmail.com

Your support of my research is highly appreciated!

Yours sincerely

M.M.C. Lethoko

MEd Candidate, North-West University

Student number: 25566636

Principal consent:



NORTH-WEST UNIVERSITY
YUNIBESITHI YA BOKONE-BOPHIRIMA
NOORDWES-UNIVERSITEIT

Permission for Research Project:

School Management Team strategies for effective parental involvement at secondary schools in Lesotho

LETTER OF PERMISSION: SCHOOL PRINCIPAL

I, _____, (name and surname)

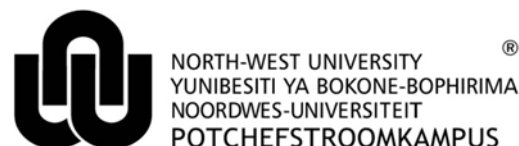
a principal from _____ (name of school)

hereby give permission that the research may be carried out at the school, and that I / we voluntarily participate in the study. I understand that at any time, the participants may withdraw from the research and that the participants' personal information will be treated as confidential.

Name and signature

Date

ADDENDUM E



Privaatsak X6001, Potchefstroom
Suid-Afrika, 2520

Tel: 018 299-1111/2222
Web: <http://www.nwu.ac.za>

Tel: 018 285 2070

Dr Molly van niekerk

SMT members of school XXXX

Mafeteng District

Lesotho

Dear Sir / Madam

Permission to participate in research at XXXX

I, *'Mamosele 'Mabakuena Caroline Lethoko*, am a Masters student enrolled in the Faculty of Education Studies, North-West University, Potchefstroom Campus, South Africa. I intend to collect data for my research study relating to parental involvement in schools in Mafeteng District. The title of my proposed dissertation is: School Management Team strategies for effective parental involvement at secondary schools in Lesotho.

I hereby request that you participate in a focus group interview on your experiences of parental involvement. The interview will last about an hour. My empirical study is based on qualitative research data. The data collection will take place over a period of a week convenient to the participant. This intervention will not interfere with academic scheduled time.

I pledge to maintain the professional and research ethical codes. This signifies that:

- At no stage will your true identity or that of your school be used. Participants in the study will be referred to as Principal 1, Teacher 1, etc. Schools will be referred to as School A and School B.
- Any comments made by the participants will be incorporated into the research in the form of a narrative.
- I would like to have your consent to use an audio recording device which will help me to analyze the data gathered at a later stage. These recordings will only be used for the research purpose the researcher has the correct information as it's been explained by you.

- You can decline to answer any question (s) at any time or request that the interview be stopped.
- The typed version of the interview will be sent to you so that you can read it and confirm that it is a true reflection of what was said during the interview. This will also help the researcher to make sure that the information is correct.

It may not be possible to ensure hundred percent confidentiality and anonymity from the group discussions. **When you sign this form you agree not to discuss any of the information from the interview with anybody else outside of this meeting.** At the beginning of the group discussion we will determine the basic rules for the discussion to ensure confidentiality and keep the names and opinions of the participants anonymous.

You can choose whether to be in this study or not. If you volunteer to be in this study, you may withdraw at any time without consequences of any kind. You may also refuse to answer any questions you don't want to answer and still remain in the study. The investigator may withdraw you from this research if circumstances arise which warrant doing so.

I plan to conduct this research in November/December 2016 and January/February 2017. I, as well as my supervisor, Dr Molly van Niekerk: +27 82 455 4554 will be available to answer any questions you may have.

Could you please provide me with your written consent by filling in the sections on the next page. Please return the consent form to me, or email it to mabakuenalethoko@gmail.com

Your support of my research is highly appreciated!

Yours sincerely

M.M.C Lethoko

MEd Candidate, North-West University.

Student number: 25566636

Respondent number:



NORTH-WEST UNIVERSITY
YUNIBESITI YA BOKONE-BOPHIRIMA
NOORDWES-UNIVERSITEIT

Permission to Research Project:

School Management Team strategies for effective parental involvement at secondary
schools in Lesotho

LETTER OF PERMISSION: RESEARCH PARTICIPANT

I, _____, (name and surname)

a deputy principal / HOD from _____ (name of
school).

I hereby give my permission to participate in the above mentioned research project. I am aware that my participation in this study remains voluntary and that I, at any time, may withdraw from the research. I also understand that all personal information will be treated as confidential by the researchers.

Name and signature

Date

ADDENDUM E



Privaatsak X6001, Potchefstroom
Suid-Afrika, 2520

Tel: 018 299-1111/2222

Web: <http://www.nwu.ac.za>

Tel: 018 285 2070

Dr Molly van niekerk

Parents from school XXXX

Mafeteng District

Lesotho

Dear Sir / Madam

Permission to participate in research at XXXX

I, *'Mamosele 'Mabakuena Caroline Lethoko*, am a Masters student enrolled in the Faculty of Education Studies, North-West University, Potchefstroom Campus, South Africa. I intend to collect data for my research study relating to parental involvement in schools in Mafeteng District. The title of my proposed dissertation is: School Management Team strategies for effective parental involvement at secondary schools in Lesotho.

I hereby request that you participate in a focus group interview on your experiences of parental involvement. The interview will last about an hour. My empirical study is based on qualitative research data. The data collection will take place over a period of a week convenient to the participant.

I pledge to maintain the professional and research ethical codes. This signifies that:

- At no stage will your true identity or that of your school be used. Participants in the study will be referred to as Principal 1, Teacher 1, etc. Schools will be referred to as School A and School B.
- Any comments made by the participants will be incorporated into the research in the form of a narrative.
- I would like to have your consent to use an audio recording device which will help me to analyze the data gathered at a later stage. These recordings will only be used for the research purpose the researcher has the correct information as it's been explained by you.
- You can decline to answer any question (s) at any time or request that the interview be stopped.

- The typed version of the interview will be sent to you so that you can read it and confirm that it is a true reflection of what was said during the interview. This will also help the researcher to make sure that the information is correct.

It may not be possible to ensure hundred percent confidentiality and anonymity from the group discussions. **When you sign this form you agree not to discuss any of the information from the interview with anybody else outside of this meeting.** At the beginning of the group discussion we will determine the basic rules for the discussion to ensure confidentiality and keep the names and opinions of the participants anonymous.

You can choose whether to be in this study or not. If you volunteer to be in this study, you may withdraw at any time without consequences of any kind. You may also refuse to answer any questions you don't want to answer and still remain in the study. The investigator may withdraw you from this research if circumstances arise which warrant doing so.

I plan to conduct this research in November/December 2016 and January/February 2017. I, as well as my supervisor, Dr Molly van Niekerk: +27 82 455 4554 will be available to answer any questions you may have.

Could you please provide me with your written consent by filling in the sections on the next page. Please return the consent form to me, or email it to mabakuenalethoko@gmail.com

Your support of my research is highly appreciated!

Yours sincerely

M.M.C Lethoko

MEd Candidate, North-West University.

Student number: 25566636

Respondent number:



Permission to Research Project:

School Management Team strategies for effective parental involvement at secondary schools in Lesotho

LETTER OF PERMISSION: RESEARCH PARTICIPANT

I, _____, (name and surname)

a parent from _____ (name of school)

hereby give my permission to participate in the above mentioned research project. I am aware that my participation in this study remains voluntary and that I, at any time, may withdraw from the research. I also understand that all personal information will be treated as confidential by the researchers.

Name and signature

Date

ADDENDUM F



Privaatsak X6001, Potchefstroom
Suid-Afrika, 2520

Tel: 018 299-1111/2222
Web: <http://www.nwu.ac.za>

Tel: 018 285 2070

Batsoali ba sekolo XXX
Seterekeng sa Mafeteng
Lesotho
Mofumahali / Monghali

Kopo ea ho etsa lipatlisiso sekolong XXX

Lebitso la ka ke 'Mamosele 'Mabakuena Caroline Lethoko, ha ha joale ke etsa lengolo la Masters le Fakalithing ea lekala la thuto Univesithing ea Bokone Bophirima, naheng ea Afrika Boroa. Ke ikemiselitse ho bokella maikutlo ka lipatlisiso boithutong baka ba hore na mekhoea ea mantla ea kenyeletso ea batsoali e hloahloa thutong ea bana ba bona ke e feng, likolong tsa setereke sa Mafeteng, Lesotho. Sehlooho saka ke mekhoea e hloahloa ea Bookameli ea ho kenyeletsa batsoali thutong ea bana ba bona.

Ke kopa hore le nke karolo lipotsong tse tlang ho botsoa ke 'malipatlisiso, 'me lipotso li tla botsoa bekeng eo le tla le nako ka eona.

Ke itlamea ka boiphihlelo ba boits'oaro ba lipatlisiso tse kenyeletsang tse latelang :

- Ho nka karolo lipatlisising ke boithaopo e ne o ka itokolla ka nako eohle ntle le litlamorao tsa letho.
- Ha ho boitsebiso botla etsoa 'me e tla le lekunutu la mabitso a batho.
- Ha ho qetiloa ka lipatlisiso, ho tla fanoa ka sephetho.

Ke rerile ho etsa lipatlisiso khoeling ea Pulungoana / Ts'itoehona lemong sena kappa Pherekhong / Hlakola lemong se tlang. 'Na le mokoetlisi oa ka Dr. Molly van Niekerk: +27 82 455 4554 re tla teng nako eohle ho araba potso tsa lona.

Ke kopa le tlatse fomo ea ho ntokolla ho etsa lipatlisiso, 'me le e romele ho mabakuenalethoko@gmail.com

Ke tla leboha ts'ehetso ea lona.

Oa lona

M.M.Lethoko

Moithuti oa li Masetase, Univesithing ea Bokone-Bophirima

Nomoro ea sekolo: 25566636

Kopo ea ho etsa lipatlisiso

Mekhoa e hloahloa eo Bookameli baka e etsang ho kenyeletsa batsoali thutong ea bana ba bona.

LENGOLO LA TOKOLLO: BA NKANG KAROLO

'Na, _____ (lebitso le fane)

Motsoali ho tsoa sekolong sa _____ (lebitso la sekolo)

Ke lumela ho nka karolo, lipatlisisong tsa sehlooho se boletsoeng ka holimo. Ke hlokometse hore ho nka karolo hoaka ke boithaopo, ene nka emisa ho nka karolo le hare ho nako. Ebile kea hlokomela hore mabitso a ka haa na hlaha le lipuisano tsa rona e tla ba lekunutu.

Lebitso le fane

Letsatsi

ADDENDUM G



Privaatsak X6001, Potchefstroom
Suid-Afrika, 2520

Tel: 018 299-1111/2222
Web: <http://www.nwu.ac.za>

Tel: 018 285 2070

Dr Molly van niekerk

Molly.vanniekerk@nwu.ac.za

November 2015

Interview/Focus Group Confidentiality (Non-Disclosure) Agreement

Thank you for agreeing to participate in an interview/focus group to discuss data-based instructional decision making in the district and your school/classroom. The ideas, opinions and attitudes shared are sensitive and should be shared only in this interview/focus group.

I, _____ hereby agree to maintain the confidentiality of information disclosed during the interview/focus group as follows:

- a) To hold in confidence any and all information about the district's and school's assessment procedures which is disclosed, or made available to you directly or indirectly, or if information you otherwise receive incident to your participation in this discussion.
- b) That any ideas, or suggestions contributed by you during the discussion, as well as any ideas, developments, or interventions conceived by you or others participating in the Focus Group, shall be held in confidence until the group sees fit to disseminate the information.
- c) That you, shall at all times hold in trust, keep confidential and not disclose to any third party or make any use of the Confidential Information beyond those activities that are part of the interview/focus group.
- e) All notes, reference materials, memoranda, documentation and records in any way incorporating or reflecting any of the Confidential Information shall belong exclusively to the undersigned or if the undersigned agrees to distribution.
- f) Also included as confidential is any participants Personally Identifiable Information ("PII"). PII shall mean a person's identity or information that might reasonably allow identification of the person. I shall at all times hold in trust, keep confidential and not disclose to any third party or make any use of the identity or PII of any Respondent involved in the interview/Focus Group.
- g) That you, hereby give permission to the research study for an audio recording to be made of this session. That you understand a transcription of this tape may be used by the research project for research purposes only.

By submitting this form you will be entering a confidentiality agreement with:

Contact details of Project Head:

Name and surname: Dr Molly van Niekerk

Contact number: (018) 2852070

Email: molly.vanniekerk@nwu.ac.za

Researcher

Name and surname: Me Mabakuene Lethoko

Contact number: 0656498133

E-mail: mabakuenalethoko@gmail.com

Participant

Signature: _____

ADDENDUM H



NORTH-WEST UNIVERSITY
YUNIBESITHI YA BOKONE-BOPH RIMA
NOORDWES-UNIVERSITEIT

Private Bag X6001, Potchefstroom,
South Africa, 2520

Tel: (018) 299-4900
Faks: (018) 299-4910
Web: <http://www.nwu.ac.za>

Institutional Research Ethics Regulatory Committee

Tel: +27 18 299 4849

Email: Ethics@nwu.ac.za

ETHICS APPROVAL CERTIFICATE OF STUDY

Based on approval by the Ethics Committee of the Faculty of Education Sciences (ESREC) on 14/07/2017 after being reviewed at the meeting held on 29/10/2015, the North-West University Institutional Research Ethics Regulatory Committee (NWU-IRERC) hereby approves your study as indicated below. This implies that the NWU-IRERC grants its permission that, provided the special conditions specified below are met and pending any other authorisation that may be necessary, the study may be initiated, using the ethics number below.

Study title: <i>School Management Team strategies for effective parental involvement at secondary schools in Lesotho.</i>															
Project Leader/Supervisor: Dr MP van Niekerk															
Student: MMC Lethoko															
Ethics number:	N	W	U	-	0	0	4	5	0	-	1	5	-	A	2
	Institution			Study Number			Year			Status					
Status: S = Submission; R = Re-Submission; P = Provisional Authorisation; A = Authorisation															
Application Type: N/A															
Commencement date: 2017-07-14															
Expiry date: 2018-12-14															
Risk: N/A															

Special conditions of the approval (if applicable):

- Translation of the informed consent document to the languages applicable to the study participants should be submitted to the ESREC (if applicable).
- Any research at governmental or private institutions, permission must still be obtained from relevant authorities and provided to the ESREC. Ethics approval is required BEFORE approval can be obtained from these authorities.

General conditions:

While this ethics approval is subject to all declarations, undertakings and agreements incorporated and signed in the application form, please note the following:

- The study leader (principle investigator) must report in the prescribed format to the NWU-IRERC via ESREC:
 - annually (or as otherwise requested) on the progress of the study, and upon completion of the project
 - without any delay in case of any adverse event (or any matter that interrupts sound ethical principles) during the course of the project.
 - Annually a number of projects may be randomly selected for an external audit.
- The approval applies strictly to the proposal as stipulated in the application form. Would any changes to the proposal be deemed necessary during the course of the study, the study leader must apply for approval of these changes at the ESREC. Would there be deviation from the study proposal without the necessary approval of such changes, the ethics approval is immediately and automatically forfeited.
- The date of approval indicates the first date that the project may be started. Would the project have to continue after the expiry date, a new application must be made to the NWU-IRERC via ESREC and new approval received before or on the expiry date.
- In the interest of ethical responsibility the NWU-IRERC and ESREC retains the right to:
 - request access to any information or data at any time during the course or after completion of the study;
 - to ask further questions, seek additional information, require further modification or monitor the conduct of your research or the informed consent process.
 - withdraw or postpone approval if:
 - any unethical principles or practices of the project are revealed or suspected,
 - it becomes apparent that any relevant information was withheld from the ESREC or that information has been false or misrepresented,
 - the required annual report and reporting of adverse events was not done timely and accurately,
 - new institutional rules, national legislation or international conventions deem it necessary.
- ESREC can be contacted for further information or any report templates via Ema.Grevino@nwu.ac.za or 018 299 4050

The IRERC would like to remain at your service as scientist and researcher, and wishes you well with your project. Please do not hesitate to contact the IRERC or ESREC for any further enquiries or requests for assistance.

Yours sincerely

Linda du Plessis
Digitally signed by Linda du Plessis
DN: cn=Linda du Plessis, o=NWU,
ou=Vaal Triangle Campus,
email=Linda.duplessis@nwu.ac.za,
c=ZA
Date: 2017.07.31 13:17:22 +02'00'

Prof Linda du Plessis

Chair NWU Institutional Research Ethics Regulatory Committee (IRERC)

ADDENDUM I

H C Sieberhagen
SATI no 1001489
hettiesieb@gmail.com

Translator and Editor
082 3359846
018 264 2309

CERTIFICATE OF LANGUAGE EDITING

ISSUED ON 06 MARCH 2019

This is to certify that I have edited the language of the dissertation

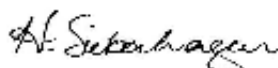
**School Management Team strategies for effective
parental involvement at secondary schools in
Lesotho**

by
MMC Lethoko

submitted in fulfilment of the requirements for the degree
Magister Educationis in Education Management at the North
West University

Supervisor: Dr MP van Niekerk

*The responsibility to effect the recommended changes remains
with the student.*



H C Sieberhagen

SATI no 1001489
06 March 2019