

**MANAGING THE DIVERSITY OF PARENTAL
INVOLVEMENT IN PRIMARY SCHOOLS**

A Smith

10094628

**Dissertation submitted in fulfilment of the requirements for
the degree**

MAGISTER EDUCATIONIS

in

Education Management

at the

Faculty of Education Sciences

Potchefstroom Campus of the North-West University

Supervisor: Dr HJ Van Vuuren

May 2012

Acknowledgements

This research would not have been possible without the help of the following people:

- Dr. H.J. Van Vuuren, my supervisor, for his leadership and assistance during the study.
- Ms. M. Robbertse for the professional language and bibliographical editing of the text.
- Ms. J.W. Breytenbach of the Statistical Consultation Services of the North-West University, Potchefstroom Campus for her assistance and guidance in analysing the results.
- The parents and teachers of the Maquassi Hills area who participated in the study.
- Mr. A.J. Engelbrecht, Maquassi Hills APO manager, for the permission granted to conduct this research.
- My colleagues at school for their assistance and encouragement throughout the study.
- My wife, Rosa, and two children, Anro and MC, for their loving support and patience during the research.
- My parents and parents-in-law for their continuous support and encouragement.
- My heavenly father in who I always find my strength.

SUMMARY

Key words: *diversity, managing diversity, diversity policy, strategy for diversity, parental involvement, community involvement, education and parents, school and parent.*

The word *diversity* can be described as being different or having differences. Furthermore, it also relates to variety or assortment. Diversity forms an integral part of society worldwide. It consists of many different aspects which are all evident in different ways in society. These aspects of diversity include culture, religion, race, language, socio-economic class, gender, ability, etc. Diversity also exists in education as an important part of society.

Parental involvement is viewed by many people as an important part of the education process. It has many positives which include improved academic performance of the child, understanding of the schools circumstances, having a more positive attitude towards the school, improved community involvement and a positive school climate. Parental involvement enhances the complete learning experience of the child and focuses on the total development of the child. It includes the making of a commitment and the forming of a partnership between parent and school which is also fundamentally prescribed by legislation. When this partnership is engaged in properly there is a definite positive outcome for both the child and the school. Fundamentally, the purpose of parental involvement lies in the opportunities that it offers all the stakeholders involved to contribute towards the upbringing and development of the children.

Managing the involvement of parents should be well planned and directed. School managers need to take into account the issue of diversity in relation to parental involvement. Schools have to make use of creative strategies and approaches as they deal with differences among people which need to be respected in such a way that everyone can be integrated into the school system. Diversity amongst people has an influence on parental involvement and need to be managed to good effect. Ultimately, positive parents will educate positive children who are what we strived for.

What is interesting from the results of the study is that the respondents that participated in the research are of the opinion that racial differences as an aspect of diversity doesn't have a significant influence on parental involvement. Diversity aspects that are viewed as having a

great deal of influence on parental involvement seem to be low literacy levels and inferior socio-economic attitudes of parents which lead to a lack of self confidence and a low self esteem.

OPSOMMING

Sleutelwoorde: *diversiteit, bestuur van diversiteit, diversiteitsbeleid, strategie vir diversiteit, ouerbetrokkenheid, gemeenskapsbetrokkenheid, opvoeding en ouers, ouer en skool.*

Die woord *diversiteit* kan omskryf word as verskillend wees of die verskille tussen mense. Verder het dit ook te make met variëteit en verskeidenheid. Diversiteit is 'n integrale deel van die samelewing wêreldwyd. Dit bestaan uit en omvat vele aspekte soos dit in die verskillende dele van die samelewing voorkom. Dié aspekte van diversiteit sluit kultuur, geslag, ras, taal, sosio-ekonomiese klas, godsdienstige oortuigings, vermoëns, ens in. Diversiteit bestaan ook in die onderwys as 'n belangrike deel van die samelewing.

Ouerbetrokkenheid by skole word deur baie mense as 'n belangrike deel van die opvoedingsproses gesien. Ouerbetrokkenheid het baie voordele waaronder verbeterde akademiese prestasie en beter begrip vir die skoolomgewing. Om dus 'n positiewe gesindheid teenoor die skool te openbaar, verbeter die gemeenskap se ondersteuning en betrokkenheid en skep dit ook 'n positiewe skoolklimaat. Ouerbetrokkenheid verbeter die algehele leerbelewenis van die kind en fokus op die totale ontwikkeling van die kind. Ouerbetrokkenheid dui op 'n verbintenis en 'n vennootskap tussen ouer en skool wat as grondslag voorgeskryf word deur wetgewing. Indien die vennootskap doeltreffend saamgevoeg word, is daar definitiewe voordele vir beide die kind en die skool. Die grondslag en doel van ouerbetrokkenheid lê dus in die geleentheid wat dit vir almal betrokke bied om 'n bydrae te maak ten opsigte van die opvoeding en ontwikkeling van kinders.

Ouerbetrokkenheid moet goed beplan en bestuur word. Die bestuur van die skool moet diversiteit ten opsigte van ouerbetrokkenheid deeglik in ag neem in beplanning en die rigting aandui ten opsigte van die aangeleentheid. Skole moet kreatiewe strategieë en benaderings implementeer wanneer verskille tussen mense hanteer moet word. Verdraagsaamheid en respek moet voorrang geniet om sodoende almal betrokke te kry in die skool sisteem. Diversiteit van mense het 'n definitiewe invloed op ouerbetrokkenheid en moet deeglik bestuur word tot voordeel van die skool. Positiewe ouers skep positiewe leerders, wat uiteindelik die doel is wat nagestreef moet word.

Interessante resultate vanuit die data van die studie is dat respondente van die opinie is dat rasverskille nie 'n aspek van diversiteit is wat 'n groot invloed op ouerbetrokkenheid het nie. Aspekte van diversiteit wat wel ouerbetrokkenheid hewig beïnvloed is lae opvoedingspeil van ouers en ondergeskikte sosio-ekonomiese omstandighede, wat kan lei tot 'n tekort aan selfvertroue en 'n swak selfbeeld.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

	<i>Page</i>
Acknowledgements.....	i
Summary	ii
Opsomming	iv
List of tables.....	xi
List of figures	xi
CHAPTER 1: ORIENTATION	1
1.1 INTRODUCTION AND PROBLEM STATEMENT.....	2
1.2 LITERATURE OVERVIEW	2
1.2.1 Concept description	3
1.2.2 Parental involvement	4
1.2.3 The management of diversity	7
1.3 RESEARCH QUESTIONS AND AIMS	8
1.3.1 Research questions	8
1.3.2 Research aims	9
1.4 RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY	9
1.4.1 Literature study	9
1.4.2 Research design and methodology	10
1.4.2.1 Research paradigm.....	10
1.4.2.2 Design and methodology	10
1.4.2.3 Study population and sampling procedure	11
1.4.2.4 Unit of analysis	12
1.4.2.5 Measuring instrument	12
1.4.2.6 Data collection	13
1.4.2.7 Statistical analysis.....	14
1.5 RELIABILITY AND VALIDITY	14
1.5.1 Reliability	14

1.5.2	Validity	15
1.6	ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS	15
1.7	CONTRIBUTION OF THE RESEARCH	16
1.8	CHAPTER DIVISION	16
CHAPTER 2: DIVERSITY AND PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT IN		
EDUCATION		17
2.1	INTRODUCTION	18
2.2	DIVERSITY: A LITERATURE OVERVIEW	18
2.2.1	A one-dimensional interpretation of diversity	19
2.2.2	A multi-dimensional interpretation of diversity	20
2.2.3	Demographic and social diversity.....	21
2.2.4	Synthesis	23
2.3	THE MANIFESTATION OF DIVERSITY	23
2.3.1	Diversity and society	24
2.3.1.1	Cultural, religious and ethnic diversity	25
2.3.1.2	Linguistic diversity.....	27
2.3.1.3	Socio-economic class as form of diversity.....	29
2.3.1.4	Gender as an aspect of diversity	30
2.3.1.5	Ability and disability as aspects of diversity	31
2.3.2	Diversity in relation to education	33
2.3.2.1	Diversity in Education	33
2.3.2.2	Diversity in the South African Education system	35
2.3.3	Relevant legislation relating to the South African Education system	35
2.3.3.1	The Constitution of the Republic of South Africa (Act 108 of 1996)	36
2.3.3.2	The National Education Policy Act (Act 27 of 1996)	37
2.3.3.3	The South African Schools Act (Act 84 of 1996)	37
2.3.3	Synthesis	38
2.4	AN OVERVIEW OF PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT	40
2.4.1	Reasons for parental involvement.....	41
2.4.2	The importance and significance of parental involvement	42

2.4.2.1	Parental involvement and the child	42
2.4.2.2	Parental involvement and the school	44
2.4.3	Legislation relating to parental involvement	46
2.4.4	Types of parental involvement	47
2.4.5	Barriers related to the parent-school relationship	50
2.4.5.1	Internal barriers to parental involvement	50
2.4.5.2	External barriers to parental involvement	50
2.4.6	Synthesis	51
2.5	DIVERSITY AND PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT	52
2.5.1	The management of diversity	52
2.5.2	Diversity as a particular challenge for parental involvement	55
2.5.3	Synthesis	56
2.6	SUMMARY	57
	 CHAPTER 3: RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY	60
3.1	INTRODUCTION	61
3.2	THE CONTEXT OF EDUCATIONAL RESEARCH	61
3.3	PURPOSE OF EMPIRICAL SECTION	62
3.4	QUANTITATIVE RESEARCH	62
3.4.1	The survey as research method.....	64
3.4.1.1	Rationale and purpose.....	64
3.4.1.2	Strengths and limitations.....	64
3.4.2	The research paradigm	65
3.5	THE QUESTIONNAIRE	66
3.5.1	Principles for developing the questionnaire	67
3.5.2	Construction of the questionnaire.....	68
3.5.3	Scale.....	68
3.5.4	Reliability	69
3.5.5	Pilot study	70
3.5.6	Validity	70
3.5.7	Statistical analysis.....	71

3.6	QUALITATIVE METHOD	72
3.6.1	Open-ended questions.....	73
3.6.2	Qualitative data.....	73
3.7	STUDY POPULATION	74
3.6.1	Study population and sampling procedure	74
3.6.2	Distribution and response rate	75
3.8	ETHICAL ASPECTS	76
3.9	ADMINISTRATION PROCEDURES	77
3.10	SUMMARY	78
	 CHAPTER 4: INTERPRETATION OF DATA	 79
4.1	INTRODUCTION	80
4.2	RELIABILITY AND VALIDITY	80
4.2.1	Reliability	80
4.2.2	Validity	81
4.3	RESULTS: QUANTITATIVE DATA	82
4.3.1	Section A: Biographical information	83
4.3.2	Section B: General information about the school	86
4.3.3	Section C: Conceptualisation of diversity	90
4.3.3.1	Concept views	91
4.3.3.2	Concept associations.....	94
4.3.4	Section D: Indicators of parental involvement	97
4.3.4.1	The extent of parental involvement	98
4.3.4.2	Advancement of parental involvement	101
4.3.4.3	Opportunities for parental involvement.....	104
4.3.4.4	Information regarding parents	107
4.3.4.5	Diversity aspects that influence parental involvement	110
4.3.5	Constructs	113
4.4	RESULTS: QUALITATIVE DATA	114
4.4.1	Section C: Associations with and interpretations of the meaning of diversity	115

4.4.2	Section D: The influence of diversity on parental involvement.....	116
4.5	SUMMARY	117
	CHAPTER 5: SUMMARY, FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS	120
5.1	INTRODUCTION	121
5.2	OVERVIEW OF THE RESEARCH	121
5.3	DISCUSSION OF RESEARCH FINDINGS	122
5.4	GUIDELINES FOR MANAGING ISSUES OF DIVERSITY	127
5.4.1	Guidelines for managing diversity to promote parental involvement in schools	127
5.4.2	Synthesis	129
5.5	RECOMMENDATIONS	129
5.6	RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH	132
5.7	LIMITATIONS OF THE RESEARCH	132
5.8	CONCLUSION	133
5.9	REFLECTION ON THE RESEARCH	134
	BIBLIOGRAPHY	135
	ANNEXURES	149

LIST OF TABLES

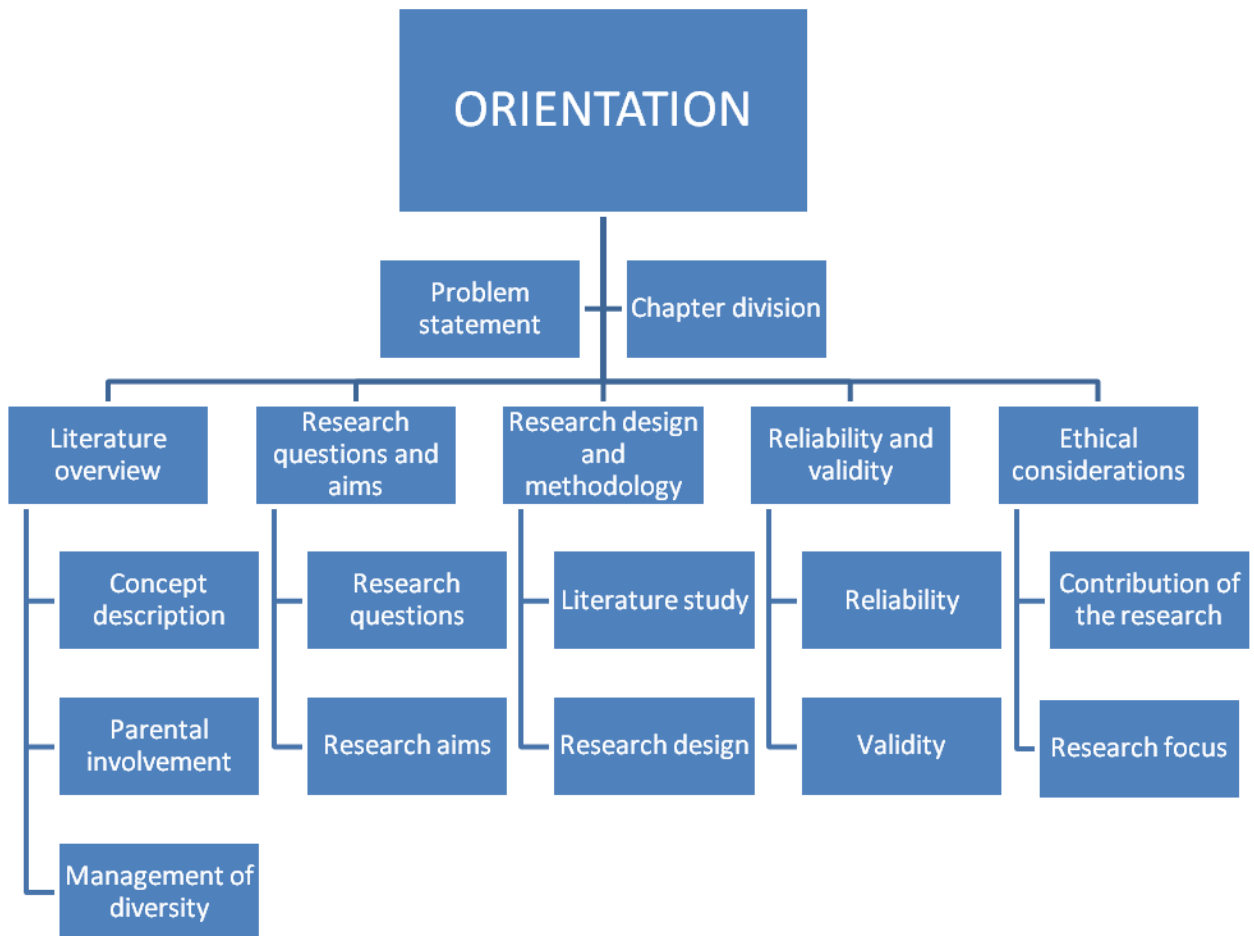
	<i>Page</i>
Table 3.1: Rating scale for questionnaire	69
Table 3.2: Purposive sample of the study population	75
Table 3.3: Distribution and response rate of questionnaires.....	76
Table 4.1: Cronbach Alpha coefficients for constructs of the questionnaire.....	81
Table 4.2: Confirmatory factor analysis	82
Table 4.3: Biographical information.....	83
Table 4.4: General information about the school.....	87
Table 4.5: Concept views.....	91
Table 4.6: Concept associations	94
Table 4.7: Extent of parental involvement	98
Table 4.8: Advancement of parental involvement.....	102
Table 4.9: Opportunities for parental involvement	104
Table 4.10: Information regarding parents	107
Table 4.11: Aspects of diversity that influence parental involvement.....	110
Table 4.12: Averages of constructs.....	113
Table 4.13: Personal associations or interpretations of diversity	115
Table 4.14: The influence of diversity on parental involvement	116

LIST OF FIGURES

	<i>Page</i>
Figure 2.1: Different interpretations of diversity	19
Figure 2.2: The interrelatedness of education with society	24
Figure 2.3: The status of parental involvement in education and within society	59

CHAPTER 1

ORIENTATION



1.1 INTRODUCTION AND PROBLEM STATEMENT

Diversity in South Africa is regarded as an actual and relevant topic because the country's diverse population and communities are still in a process of unification as a South African nation (Kollapen, 2009:14; De Klerk, 2008:5; Pandor, 2008:15; Steward, 2008:3). The country's human diversity is for example obvious in the acknowledgement of eleven official languages and the rights of the different cultural and ethnic groupings of people that are safeguarded in the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa (108/1996). After the adoption of the new democratic dispensation in 1994, many schools transformed from having a relative homogenous group of people to schools that are characterised by diversity among all of the role players. Some influences and implications of diversity in relation to education within the newly-found South African democracy have been researched to provide guidelines for the management of diversity (Van Vuuren, 2008; Fleisch, 2006; Grobler, Molo, Loock, Bisschoff & Mestry, 2006).

One theme-related aspect of school life that needs further investigation is the influence of diversity on parental involvement in schools, because the involvement of parents is identified as a particular challenge for school leadership (Carrington & Robinson, 2006:326). The focus of this research is therefore on the influence of selected aspects of diversity on parental involvement in a particular education region and the related implications for school management. The research focus is in line with the view of McWayne, Campos and Owsianik (2008:569); Grobler *et al.* (2006:449-472) and Beckman (2002:81) who regard the manifestation of diversity among school communities and the concomitant influence on parental involvement in school life as a particular challenge for school management.

The preceding paragraph provides the introduction for the problem statement of this research i.e.: *What is the influence of diversity with regard to parental involvement in the primary schools within the Maquassi Hills Education area?*

1.2 LITERATURE OVERVIEW

The literature overview is presented in three parts to substantiate the research problem statement. Firstly, the concept and manifestation of diversity is described within the South African context to support a common understanding and to minimise chances for misunderstanding. The literature overview secondly focuses on the issue of parental

involvement in schools and thirdly on the management of diversity in schools to utilise parental involvement optimally in support of effective teaching and learning.

1.2.1 Concept description

The purpose of this section is to obtain clarity about the complexity of the meaning of diversity and to delineate preliminary aspects of diversity for the purpose of this investigation. The lexicon meaning of *diversity* is indicated as being different, e.g. having different opinions or having differences of some kind. Diversity's meaning can also refer to variety and assortment (World Book Dictionary, 2005:615; Concise English Dictionary, 2002:251; Encarta World English Dictionary, 1999:549; Readers Digest, 1996:296). Although one-dimensional and narrowly described, it is clear that the dictionary clarifications for diversity are in agreement to describe something that is viewed as different and varied. It is worth mentioning that Miles (2005:255-256) points out that the meaning of diversity has evolved over time from a narrow focus in the past of being different towards a shift to a more inclusive conceptualisation of the term, which also embraces a connotation with commonness or similarities.

Literature reveals that most authors tend to classify or group some aspects of diversity in order to illustrate the meaning of diversity. In this regard Lumby (2006:152) and Wentling (2001:2) distinguish between a narrow and broad description of diversity. According to this concept elucidation, a narrow description refers to differences such as culture, race, age, gender, religion, disability, etc. On the other hand, a broad description refers to, amongst other aspects, sexual orientation, lifestyle, educational background, values, status, class, etc. From the mentioned descriptions, it seems that the narrow explanations indicate those aspects of diversity that are observable, whilst the broader explanations of diversity refer to the non-observable aspects of diversity. The implication of this particular distinction in concept explanation is that people are more likely to react at first according to aspects of diversity that are more visible.

This concept typology is of particular value for this research because it enables the researcher to identify specific and related aspects of diversity for inclusion in the investigation. From the preceding concept descriptions, the complexity of the meaning of diversity is obvious in the many views, interpretations and perspectives of what diversity actually means. This topic of concept clarification in relation to diversity is further explored in depth as part of the theoretical framework of the research (Chapter 2). For the purpose of

this research, the focus is mainly at demographic or social diversity as it manifests in the school community of the study population.

Diversity occurs in various and different ways in society. People are not the same in their thinking and ideas. There will be differences among people regarding their needs and their actions. People want to and will make different contributions to society and their community, but diversity as part of reality should not necessarily be problematic (Ruthven, 1999:57-58). Individuals from diverse cultures may experience misunderstandings and stereotyping due to differences in moral, ethical, socio-political and economic issues. Conversely, people also enjoy some kind of shared sameness in terms of their diversity (Van der Westhuizen & Van Vuuren, 2007:341). People commonly battle to deal with differences and often focus more on aspects pertaining to differences than those aspects related to sameness or commonness (Kollapen, 2009:14). Furthermore, diversity can also create conflicts of values and interests. According to Wrench (2005:74) differences must be valued in order to enable people “*to work to their full potential in a more creative and productive work environment.*” This statement is of particular value within the context of this research that deals with diversity and its influence on parental involvement in education to support teachers and learners to realise their full potential in the schooling process.

In order to be able to deal with diversity, an understanding of what it really implies is imperative. Educational leaders and managers need to understand the nature and dynamics of diversity as well as the reasons why a certain group of people or individuals behave in a certain way. Diversity can actually improve group performance. The aspects of diversity are not only important for the purpose of this investigation, but also for the broader South African situation. It is important to make a deliberate shift towards the management of diversity in schools, with parental involvement being one focus area, in order to improve our schools. In this sense, parental involvement in school affairs will be the next focus of this literature overview.

1.2.2 Parental involvement

According to the South African Schools Act (84/1996), parents should contribute towards the development of the school. Potgieter, Visser, Van der Bank, Mothata and Squelch, (1997:9) also state that parents, learners, educators and other members of the community cannot expect from the government to provide and do everything for the school. Parents are obliged

to render services where possible and to make themselves available to participate in activities such as the maintenance of school property, coaching, fund-raising, accompanying school trips, dealing with disciplinary matters, etc. (Kruger, 2003:10). Parents must assist at home in the learning process, assure regular school attendance, maintain discipline, offer guidance with homework, assure a healthy life style, etc.

Parents need to be informed and aware of developments in the school by attending parent meetings, to be available for representation on the School Governing Body (SGB), represent their child at a disciplinary meeting, read and respond to letters and circulars sent out by the school (South African Schools Act, 84/1996; Department of Education, 1997:7; Department of Education, 2009:2). It is thus imperative for the parent community of a school to take deliberately and actively part in the school's activities and to accept a shared responsibility for their children's education - without prescribing to the school how things should be done in the classroom. Financial accountability and control are also the responsibility of parents and the school (Bisschoff, 2002:108; South African Schools Act, 84/1996; Department of Education, 2009:3). In summary, parents should share responsibility for the effective governance of the school and should be aware of what is happening at the school where their child is a learner.

However, in reality there are many schools that do not have sufficient parent involvement and consequently schools cannot effectively function with regard to pedagogical aims, funding, school events, learners' achievement, community service and transformation (Blaine, 2009:2; Colombo, 2006:314; Fleisch, 2006:369). Another aspect worth mentioning is that some school managers exclude parents and other members of the community from school matters because they believe that parents infringe on the professional terrain of schooling (Van Deventer, 2003:259). In some cases there might be a conflict of interest between the school and the parent community because of different expectations between school leadership, teachers and the parents (Attanucci, 2004:57). In a study of Dempster, Carter, Freakley and Parry (2004:165) about contextual influences on school leaders, 34% of principals considered parents of children in the school as the most influential factor in their decision-making about values. Sigford (2006:71) emphasises another aspect in this regard by the statement "... *the relationship with parents and community is vital, because we want parents to choose us*". Some authors on this topic also used the term *community involvement* as opposed to parental involvement because they view the whole community or community at large as being part of a school setting (Haydon, 2007:37; Carrington & Robinson, 2006:326-327; Lunenberg

& Irby, 2006:328; Sigford, 2006:70; Van Deventer, 2003:260). A diverse community should try to find a common goal in order to bridge their differences.

Community involvement as part of parental involvement also seemed to be a problem. Reasons for the lack of community involvement are amongst others transport problems, lack of language efficiency, work hours, being a single parent, feeling unwelcome, not feeling comfortable and feeling scared. Effective communication between parents and the school seems to be a critical factor in getting parents involved (Bergman, 1992:50; Flett & Conderman, 2001:53; Kruger, 2003:10; Lunenberg & Irby, 2006:330-331; Sigford, 2006:71; Schechter *et al.*, 2007:69). In this sense, the influence of diversity needs to be investigated to overcome any related challenge.

Some authors like Schechter *et al.* (2007); Lunenburg and Irby (2006); Day (2005); Kruger (2003) and Oosthuizen (2000) discuss the influence of parental involvement in schools. The positive effects range from improved learner achievement and discipline to a change in their own lives as well as a positive approach and attitude towards the school that their child is attending. Kruger (2003:9) stipulates some school benefits because of the parents' involvement, e.g. a more positive attitude towards the school, reduced dropout rates, improved school performance, improved funding and strengthened partnerships. A study on immigrant parents in Canada showed that parents and "*linguistic minority students*" changed their attitude and behaviour towards school after getting involved in a community project initiated by the school. The parents also made more inquiries about specific learning tasks and their participation even changed the school's home language policy (Schechter *et al.*, 2007:70, 71). In a British study on principals making a difference, one of the principals noted: "*Once we get the parents more involved, I think the job will be easier*" (Day, 2005:281). Parents and families are a child's primary and most important educator, therefore parental involvement is essential in developing a child's sense of responsibility and ethical behaviour (Lunenberg & Irby, 2006:357). Colombo (2006:315), Flett and Conderman (2001:53) as well as Oosthuizen (2000:168-169) stress the importance of a close and positive relationship between the parents and the school to facilitate a better understanding of societal behaviour within a diverse community. The above-mentioned argumentation serves as a substantial rationale for this particular research focus on the influence of diversity on parental involvement with regard to a particular selection of primary schools.

1.2.3 The management of diversity

Educational leaders and managers need to have specific skills and competencies to deal effectively with diversity amongst the school community. Some models for diversity and the management of diversity have been developed. The Ethics-Diversity Process Model (Hopkins, 1997:17) that deals with the values and protects the integrity of the organisation is such a model. Gildenhuis (2008:322) developed a “*Symbolic interactive engaging leadership model inclusive of diversity management*”, which deals with leadership and diversity management. Another model in this regard is the “*Inclusive Workplace Model*” for integrating diversity in the workplace (Mor-Barak, 2005:288, 289). These models provide general guidelines on how to deal with diversity in the workplace and are very broad, with little or no relation to school management.

Other authors refer to managing diversity and describe a strategy how to deal with diversity and for implementing a diversity programme. A “*Strategy for managing diversity in secondary schools*” by Van Vuuren (2008:325) and a “*Framework for managing diversity*” (Van der Westhuizen & Van Vuuren, 2007:358-359) are two such strategies. Thomas (2006:153-168) explains “*Strategic Diversity Management (SDM)*” as a way in which to deal with diversity in an organisation. In the USA, the Council of Chief State School Officers (CCSSO, 2006) did a study over six states and developed strategies to overcome cultural and linguistic diversity in order to involve parents from outside the school. Clements and Jones (2006:94) also give an example of a programme for diversity management. A diversity strategy for a business was developed by Human (2005:86-88) and can be adapted to deal with diversity in a school situation. Henze, Katz, Nortje, Sather and Walker (2002:77) developed specific approaches in order to deal with diversity and interethnic relations. These strategies were developed mainly for economical and bureaucratic organisations, but are only useful in schools to a certain degree.

A “*taxonomy for describing the content of diversity*” (Thomas, 2005:115) that deals with diversity conflict and “*patterns in communication*” between school and community as suggested by Bergman (1992:50) are two other diversity strategies that can be implemented. Sigford (2006:132, 133) describes a continuum to assist in determining specific differences and school managers can use this instrument for a situation analysis and to develop a corresponding strategy.

Although there are a whole range of models, strategies and approaches for dealing with diversity, no single one is suitable for all schools or organisations. The focus of this research is the involvement of parents from primary school children that can't be treated in the same way as the workforce of an organisation. When it comes to the management of parental involvement in primary schools in relation to issues and aspects of diversity, no specific strategy exists for school leadership. Therefore, school managers need to deal constructively with issues of diversity in the best interest of the school.

Educational research should provide answers to today's educational questions and should contribute towards a better society, enhancing the quality of the educational experience for the learners and parents, must lead to change and improvement, promote and support the professional development of the individual and must lead to policy change (McNiff, 2008:360; Briggs & Coleman, 2007:3). Through this literature overview it is clear that there is a need for research that includes diversity and its influence on parental involvement and behaviour in primary schools. The following reasons for this identified need are formulated:

- In South Africa we are part of a diverse society.
- Most previous studies are from developed countries with little relevance to the situation in South Africa.
- Most research has been done on diversity in the workplace or in businesses, and there is a need for diversity related research in education.
- Some research was conducted for managing diversity in secondary schools (Van Vuuren, 2008), but minimal research had been done concerning diversity issues in primary schools.
- Research with a focus on the influence of diversity and parental involvement in primary schools is also limited.

1.3 RESEARCH QUESTIONS AND AIMS

1.3.1 Research questions

Based on the problem statement (par. 1.1) and from the argumentation in the literature review that focused on the influence of diversity on parental involvement in schools, the following sub questions pertaining to the research problem arose:

- What are the meaning and aspects of diversity, taking into account the plethora and dynamics of current perspectives and views?
- What are parents' responsibilities towards the school?
- What are the expectations from schools with regard to parental involvement?
- What is the influence of aspects of diversity on parental involvement in the Maquassi Hills Education area (North West Province)?
- How do you manage diversity to encourage parental involvement in primary schools?

1.3.2 Research aims

Based on the central problem statement (par. 1.1) and the related research sub questions (par. 1.3.1), the research aims for this study is to:

- describe the concept of diversity
- establish the parents' responsibilities towards schools
- establish the expectations of schools in relation to parental involvement
- determine the influence of aspects of diversity on parental involvement by means of an empirical investigation in a selection of schools and to
- develop guidelines on how to manage issues of diversity in order to optimise parental involvement.

1.4 RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

The research is based on a literature review and an empirical section of a quantitative research design. Empirical research is useful to investigate and to make sense of phenomena of which little or nothing is known (Thiétart, 2007:60).

1.4.1 Literature study

A comprehensive literature study of relevant primary and secondary sources, as well as related documentation from the Department of Basic Education and Department of Higher Education and Training were undertaken to describe the conceptual framework for clarifying the concept of diversity and to determine parents' responsibilities and involvement in schools. Databases that were explored are: NEXUS, ERIC, RSAT, GKPV and related education and management indexes. Electronic databases such as EBSCOhost, JSTOR, ScienceDirect

and the World Wide Web were also searched for related information. Keywords and phrases that were used for database searches were: *diversity, managing diversity, diversity policy, strategy for diversity, parental involvement, community involvement, education and parents, school and parent, community and school.*

1.4.2 Research design and methodology

The research design and methodology for the proposed research is described in this section.

1.4.2.1 Research paradigm

Yates (2004:15-35) presents the following claims for quality educational research:

- Educational research is measured by its contribution to learning.
- Educational research must make sense to be usable by teachers (or instructors or parents or the lay reader).
- Educational research must be scientifically-based research.

It is with the above frame of mind that I conducted this research. The research paradigm that I worked from is a positivism point of departure. Positivism is also regarded as a social research framework that is often used for educational enquiry to generalise to a bigger population if the circumstances are similar and associations between variables can be made significantly (Morrison, 2007:20-22). Positivism deals with data that is numerically measurable and is viewed to a great extent as value free. In order to adhere to this specific prerequisite as an approach to my research, I made use of an external and experienced researcher to verify the data collection, analysis and findings of the investigation to ensure optimal objectivity.

1.4.2.2 Design and methodology

In order to obtain relevant and valid data in accordance with the research problem, a quantitative approach in the form of a survey is selected as appropriate research design and methodology for achieving the aims of the research. An empirical survey aims to provide insight into a representative sample of a larger population (Mouton, 2001:52). The rationale for selecting a quantitative research design and survey methodology for this research is that the data collected by means of a structured questionnaire enabled the researcher to

determine the level of views and experiences of respondents in relation to specific aspects of the phenomenon under investigation in accordance to research aim 3.

Quantitative research is appropriate to answer questions about relationships and influences among measurable or comparable variables with the purpose of explaining, predicting, and controlling phenomena (Leedy & Ormrod, 2005:94). With quantitative methods, statistical analysis are usually undertaken and reported for discussions of the results (AERA, 2006:37). Quantitative research has a number of core features (Morrison, 2007:22, 23):

- The relation between concept understanding, observation and measurement is central and is associated with the use of structured quantitative-based questionnaires.
- Quantitative research has to do, amongst other things, with causality and the measurement of variables.
- Findings can be generalised beyond the location of the research study.
- Educational research cannot be entirely value-free and the researcher acknowledges his role as an educator and school manager within the demarcation of this research.
- The emphasis is on the respondent as the object of research.

The researcher has chosen a survey as it is of value for quantitative research in order to establish comparisons and statistical relationship (Thiétart, 2007:173). A survey provides data on the extent of diversity within the study population and determines how identified aspects of diversity influence parental involvement in the area of research.

Furthermore the researcher has also chosen to make use of a qualitative research section to gain more insight into respondents' personal views on specific aspects of the research. This will be done by using open-ended questions as part of the survey questionnaire.

1.4.2.3 Study population and sampling procedure

The study population consists of all the public primary schools as part of the constituency of the Maquassi Hills Education area, Dr Kenneth Kaunda Education District within the North West Province of South Africa. There are 38 primary schools in this specific area, of which 21 are farm schools and 17 are town or township schools. According to the EMIS (Education

Management Information System) of the North West Department of Education the area is populated with a diverse society and could be seen as a “microcosm” of the rural part of the country.

All the primary schools which fall within the Maquassi Hills Education area (38 schools) are selected to determine the influence of aspects of diversity on parental involvement in these schools. A non-probability sampling procedure is selected because members of the population will not be randomly selected for this research (Leedy & Ormrod, 2005:218; Maree, 2009:176). The school principal of each school is purposefully selected as respondent because of his/her role as education leader and manager of the school. A total number of 38 school principals were selected as respondents that represent the views from the schools. Parents as elected members of the school governing bodies (SGBs) of the schools are also purposefully selected as respondents because they *ex officio* represent the parent community of each school. There are normally 4 to 5 parents as SGB members per school, which indicate a total of between 164 to 205 respondents. The selection of all schools in the demarcated area of investigation and the purposive selection of the principal and members of the SGBs imply that no further sampling procedure was required.

1.4.2.4 Unit of analysis

Quantitative data provides the opportunity to gather data from a large number of people and to generalise the results (Creswell, 2005:562). This research only focussed on selected aspects of diversity as it is not possible to include all possible aspects of diversity. The influence of the following provisional aspects of diversity was investigated in relation to the level of parental involvement: race, gender, age, language, education and theme-related socio-economic factors. The literature study, related questionnaires and the outcomes of the pilot study informed the researcher of the final identification of specific aspects of diversity in relation to parent development. Currently, the provisional aspects of diversity are the most prominent issues of diversity in the South African education system as South Africans are in the process of building a non-racial, democratic society based on the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa.

1.4.2.5 Measuring instrument

A structured questionnaire was developed in accordance with the theoretical framework and existing questionnaires relevant to aspects of diversity and the research topic.

Questionnaires about aspects of diversity include amongst other those developed by Gardenswartz and Rowe (1998), Bean *et al.* (2001), Cross (2001), Department of Education (2002), Gardenswartz, *et al.* (2003), Molefe and Louw (2004), Ngobese (2004), and Gordon (2005). Question items concerning parental involvement were based on the research of Cotton and Wikelund (1989), Neethling (1995), Monareng (1996), Kotzé (1997) and Barnard (2004). The questionnaire included a Likert type scale consisting of a four point rating scale to include either low or high response values. The Likert scale is useful when data need to be evaluated or quantified in a research survey (Leedy & Ormrod, 2001:197). It is also useful when behaviour, attitude or other phenomena need to be evaluated on a continuum (Leedy & Ormrod, 2005:185). The questionnaire was designed to determine what the levels of parental involvement in schools are, as well as to identify certain aspects of diversity to obtain data about the influence of diversity on parental involvement at a specific school as part of the study population. The questionnaire consisted of mainly four sections, i.e.:

- Biographical information (aspects of diversity)
- General information about the school
- Conceptual matters of diversity
- Views, experiences and levels of parental involvement in a particular school.

1.4.2.6 Data collection

The systematic collection, analysis and presentation of data are a critical element of the research process (Sanders, 2008:531). According to the Standards for Reporting on Empirical Social Research (AERA, 2006:35) the rationale for data collection and the description thereof must be clear so that another researcher under similar or altered circumstances are able to reproduce or replicate the methods of the data collection.

The questionnaires, with cover letters and appropriate instructions, were distributed to the school principals via the postal box system of the Area Project Office (APO) in the Maquassi Hills Education area. Consent was obtained from the area manager and written proof was included as part of the research report (Annexure D). The principal and chairperson of the SGB were requested to oversee the completion of the questionnaire by the members of the SGB. An appeal was made to the school principals and SGB chairpersons to return the completed questionnaires before or on a predetermined target date to the Area Project Office where it was collected by the researcher. In order to maximise the return of the

questionnaires, respondents were reminded beforehand in writing and telephonically about completing and submitting the questionnaires.

1.4.2.7 Statistical analysis

A three stage statistical analysis applies to this research. The initial stage ensures the reliability of subscales (constructs) by calculating the Cronbach Alpha coefficient while the construct validity was assured by performing an exploratory factor analysis.

Secondly, descriptive statistics in graphical and numerical ways were utilised to present and analyse the gathered data of this research. Two-way frequency tables or cross tabulations were further used to explore response patterns of different subgroups (Maree, 2009:185). Central tendency measures (e.g. the mean) were applied to describe the distribution of responses and to identify characteristic values. The spread of the distribution (e.g. the standard deviation) was described by numerical variances to indicate the extent to which data measures tend to cluster close together or are widely spread over the range of values (Maree, 2009:188). Individual or raw scores (z-scores) which point to a relative position in the data distribution were also employed to indicate how far the individual score is either below or above the mean. The purpose of the descriptive statistical techniques used in this research was to organise, present and analyse the captured data meaningfully in order to understand the characteristics, patterns and relationship between the various variables of the investigation.

In the final stage, effect sizes were calculated to determine if practical significant differences between different aspects of diversity exist. Since the study population is a non-probability sample, the interpretation of results was based on effect sizes and not on p-values.

The data analysis was done in collaboration with the Statistical Consultation Services of the North West University, Potchefstroom Campus.

1.5 RELIABILITY AND VALIDITY

1.5.1 Reliability

The reliability of measurement is the extent to which the measurement yields consistent results when the characteristics being measured have not changed (Ellis, 2009:13; Leedy & Ormrod, 2005:93). A theoretical framework based on the literature study forms the basis and

first line of reliability from which the questionnaires was developed. Secondly, a pilot test in a primary school, which did not form part of the target population, was conducted in order to ensure that the formulation and outline of the question items are feasible, understandable and reasonable towards respondents in order to achieve a reliable response. The pilot questionnaire also included a section where respondents could provide recommendations for improving the reliability and validity.

1.5.2 Validity

According to Leedy and Ormrod (2005:97) validity refers to the accuracy, meaningfulness and credibility of a research project to allow the researcher to draw meaningful and defensible conclusions from the captured data. Internal validity allows the researcher to draw valid conclusions from the research. The internal validity for this research was secured by means of a pilot test to verify the different questionnaire items.

1.6 ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

All the ethical aspects of research were taken into account when conducting the research according to the NWU regulations. All respondents' rights and privacy were protected and interruption in their professional life was minimised. Anonymity and confidentiality was guaranteed at all times. In order to avoid any misunderstanding of their role in the research, as well as the purpose of the research, all information was clearly communicated orally and in writing to respondents without any deception. The following ethical aspects in relation to the research were being adhered to:

- Consent and approval (Annexure D) for the research was obtained from the Area Project Office (APO) manager of the Maquassi Hills Education area, Mr. A.J. Engelbrecht.
- Informed consent (Annexure E and F) was obtained from the respondents through a *confidentiality agreement form* that provides a clear description of the nature and purpose of the study. Any participation is regarded as strictly voluntary.
- The right to privacy and confidentiality of respondents were assured by means of a written statement (Annexure B) which forms part of the questionnaire.

- Caution was exercised that no respondent experienced any unnecessary stress or embarrassment during the research.
- All findings are reported in an honest and clear manner and no information is withheld that could have an influence on the results.
- Where possible, feedback will be given to respondents and other role players on the outcome of the research.

1.7 CONTRIBUTION OF THIS RESEARCH

The study contributes to the effective management of parental involvement in the diverse school communities we live in. This study could also contribute in a way that may serve as an example to schools in other rural areas in order to manage diversity amongst parents to improve parental involvement for the benefit of the school and all its stakeholders. Ultimately this could lead to quality learning and teaching, which is the core purpose of the South African education system.

1.8 CHAPTER DIVISION

Chapter 1: Orientation

Chapter 2: Diversity and parental involvement in education

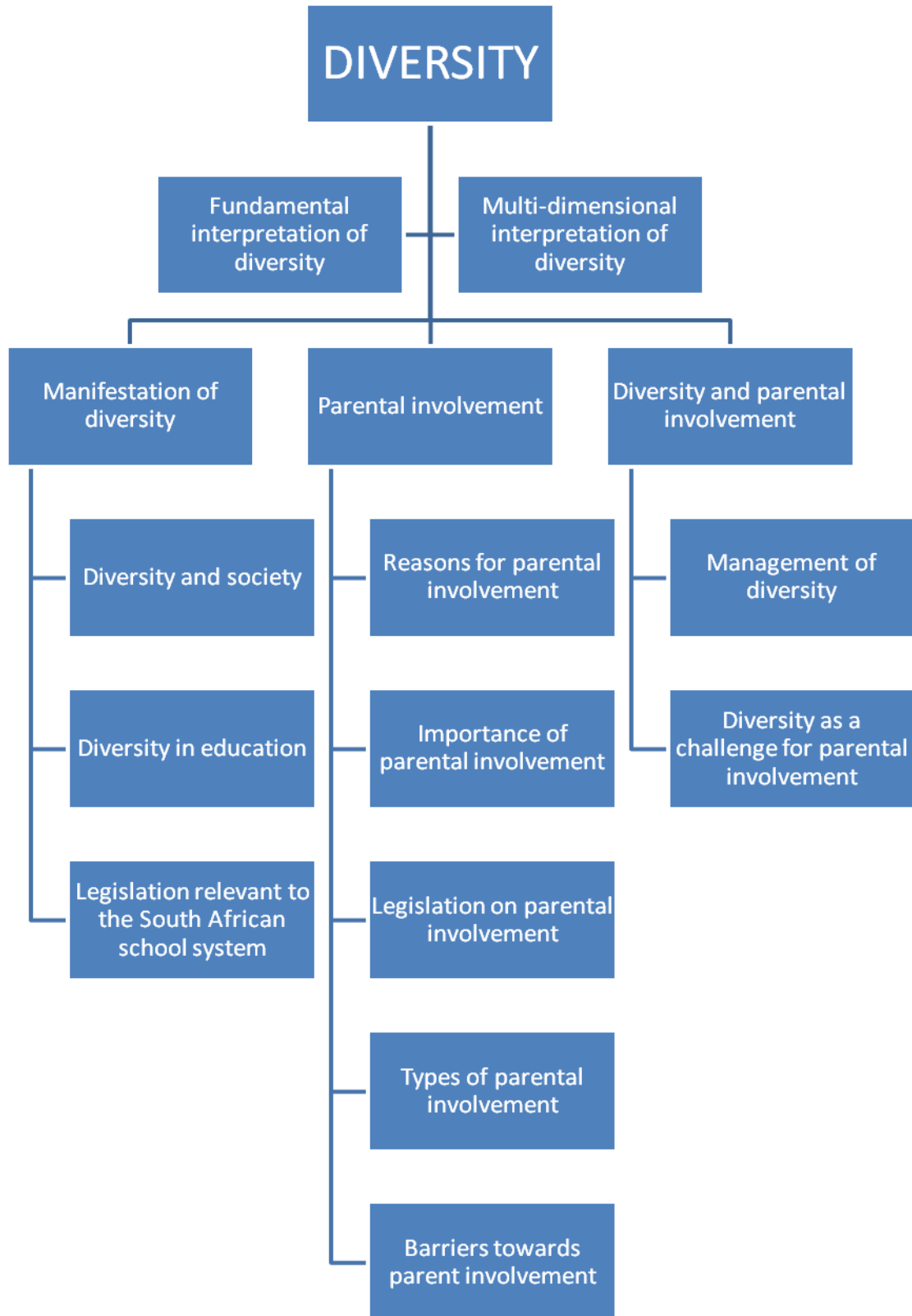
Chapter 3: Research design and methodology

Chapter 4: Interpretation of data

Chapter 5: Summary, findings and recommendations

CHAPTER 2

DIVERSITY AND PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT IN EDUCATION



2.1 INTRODUCTION

South Africa as a nation has many dissimilarities among its people. Different languages, races, cultures and religions are just some of the differences that are seen in this country. These differences are the basis of our societies and it brings diversity to our everyday lives. The Constitution of the Republic of South Africa (Act, 108/1996) doesn't only describe the diversity of people widely (e.g. 11 official languages, different religions and rights of different ethnic groupings) but also protects the differences of all the people living in South Africa.

Since 1994, with the first non-racial elections and new democracy, people in South Africa have struggled to understand and come to terms with all these differences and varieties. During the previous political era most South Africans knew about the differences between people, although their knowledge and understanding of diversity was different. South Africans were just not used to being part of diversity and didn't have to deal with this aspect because of the government's legislation and policies on separate development of different cultural and ethnic groupings.

Because of the previous government's strategy schools and in particular principals and teachers also didn't have the opportunity to engage in diversity. Thus, most schools don't know how to deal with diversity issues in present-day times. Parents as primary care-givers have a certain obligation towards the education of their children. To get parents of different sections of society actively involved is a challenging part in dealing with diversity in schools. The preceding argument serves as a background to the focus of this chapter which will subsequently be discussed.

2.2 DIVERSITY: A LITERATURE OVERVIEW

The purpose of this section is to give an overview of the meaning of diversity in all its complexity, as well as to clarify all the different interpretations, perspectives, aspects and views from the literature in relation to diversity. This will serve as a theoretical framework of diversity which is an important part of the focus of this research.

From the literature that will be presented it is clear that a definite distinction can be made in relation to the differences in interpretations of the term diversity. For the purpose of this study the distinction was made between the more fundamental or one-dimensional interpretations of diversity on the one hand, and the multi-dimensional interpretations of diversity on the

other hand. Figure 2.1 illustrates the distinction that was made between the different interpretations of diversity. The multi-dimensional approach towards diversity encompasses much more than just the differences among individuals that diversity entails. It includes all the aspects of the fundamentalist approach but also looks wider at the concept of diversity as it takes into account other aspects that might have an influence on people.

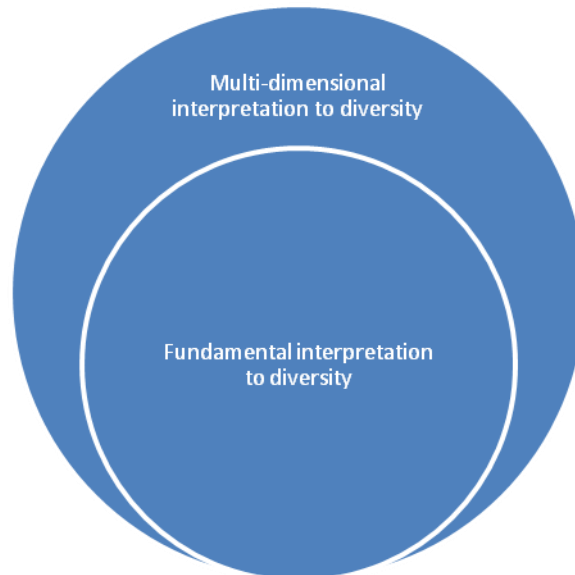


Figure 2.1: Different interpretations of diversity

2.2.1 A fundamental interpretation of diversity

The word *diversity* can be described as being different or having differences of some kind. It can also mean to have a different opinion than another person. Furthermore, it also relates to variety or assortment. Bell (2007:4) defines diversity as “real or perceived differences among people that affect their interactions and relationships.” This perspective of Bell (2007) is unique in the sense that it relates to the influence on interactions and relationships, which can also be seen as the focus of this chapter.

The definitions from some sources can be seen as being elementary or one-dimensional as it only gives a restricted description of the concept. They all agree on the meaning of diversity as something that is different, assorted or varied. An example in this regard is the views of Akande (2000:4) as well as Pollar and Gonzalez (1994:4) who summarise the definition of diversity as the ways in which people differ from each other.

Everyone is diverse. Part of human nature is to be different from another person, rather than to be the same, as we are all individuals of society. It is not necessarily wrong to be different and is part of the make-up and characteristics of every human being. Lambert and Myers (2005:1) refer to diversity as “the collection of similarities and differences that we carry with us at all times based on characteristics we were born with, experiences we have had, and choices we have made.”

It is thus clear from the description of Lambert and Myers (2005:1) that diversity can also relate to the similarities between people. Miles (2005:255-256) points out that the meaning of diversity has evolved over time from a narrow focus of being different, towards a shift to a more inclusive conceptualisation of the term, which also embraces a connotation with commonness or similarities. Because of people’s diversity, they also enjoy some kind of sameness in terms of their diversity (Van der Westhuizen & Van Vuuren, 2007:341). Kollapen (2009:14) is of the opinion that people tend to focus on other’s differences more often than not, instead of looking for some kind of sameness or commonness between them. Some people will relate more to other people in their sameness because of personalities, interests, experiences, needs, etc., while with others the similarities will be of a lesser extent. The additional perspective to diversity with relation to sameness helps to avoid a limited or narrow emphasis on differences as the only constituent of diversity.

2.2.2 A multi-dimensional interpretation of diversity

There are other authors that attempt to describe or interpret diversity according to certain aspects and give different explanations of the meaning thereof. They also categorise different aspects of diversity as being part of a whole.

Lumby (2006:152), Lambert and Myers (2005:40), Wentling (2001:2) and Akande (2000:3-4) distinguish between a narrow and broad description of diversity. According to this concept classification, a narrow description indicates all the observable aspects of diversity and refers to differences such as culture, race, age, gender, religion, disability, etc. On the other hand, a broad description indicates the non-observable aspects of diversity and refers to, amongst other aspects, sexual orientation, lifestyle, educational background, values, status, class, etc. People’s first reaction in relation to diversity is usually towards the observable aspects as they are more visible to the naked eye. The non-observable aspects could have a strong

emotional effect on people as they are also 'deeper' aspects than the observable aspects. These aspects can affect people in an emotional way.

According to Johnson and Johnson (2009:443-444) diversity can be classified into three types, namely demographic diversity which includes culture, language, ethnicity, religion and social class; personal aspects of diversity which includes age, gender and economic background; and diversity related to ability such as social, literacy and technical skills. Anderson and Metcalfe (2003:5) have another viewpoint, which is in agreement with the above, with their typology of diversity. They categorise diversity into three parts, being social diversity (personal and social aspects), informational diversity (differences in education, tenure and functional background) and psychological diversity (differences in personality and attitudes). Both the above perspectives highlight the immense multiplicity of people. It also illustrate all the different aspects that could have an influence on individuals and make them different from others.

The preceding discussion of the different authors' understanding of diversity can be described as multi-dimensional as it entails a wider and more detailed description of the concept which also categorises and classifies the different aspects thereof. This elaboration of the different meanings of diversity is necessary to fully understand the complexity of the concept and clarify any ambiguous or vague description that there might be. The different interpretations are also indicative of the diversity of perspectives concerning the meaning of the concept. The focus of the further discussion on diversity will look at demographic and social diversity as it is those aspects that manifests mainly in the school community of the study population and is of relevance to this study.

2.2.3 Demographic and social diversity

According to the classification of Johnson and Johnson (2009:443) demographic diversity includes culture, ethnicity, language, handicapping conditions, age, gender, social class, religion and regional differences. These differences or diversity issues can on their own and in conjunction with each other affect how people interact with one another. A common culture in a specific country or region has been formed by the interaction of the various diverse cultures and has been influenced over centuries, willingly and unwillingly, by a wide variety of people. These influences through diversity express themselves in the music, art, food, religion, language and eventually the culture of the region.

Demographic diversity, also described as social diversity (Anderson & Metcalf, 2003:5), can also be referred to as those aspects of diversity that can generally be observed by other people. These aspects are likely to be confronted by certain people first as they present themselves more noticeably and are immediately visible to others. Such easily identifiable differences may result in immediate conflict as individuals make assumptions about others before getting to know them. Lumby (2006:153) states that it is those differences that are seen as unacceptable or problematic that will have a strong emotional effect on people and will affect the way they are treating others around them. This type of conflict is generally associated with differences over personal preferences and interactions.

However, social diversity can also have positive consequences. Changes in the world over the past few decades has made each person, each community and each country increasingly interdependent upon each other for solving problems and finding answers to issues of importance (Johnson & Johnson, 2009:444). Research done by Mcleod, Lobel and Cox in 1996 has shown that diverse groups have a positive effect on creativity and problem solving (Anderson & Metcalfe, 2003:15). Dreachlin (2007:83) also provides confirmation of this positive effect and argues that when diversity is properly leveraged, it can actually improve group performance. Such effects depend on the context in which it is being leveraged.

Conversely, there are a number of differences that may only be apparent when people say or do something to indicate their dissimilarity. These aspects are the non-observable aspects that make people diverse and include among many others values, attitudes, beliefs, stereotypes, personalities, skills and abilities. One needs to make sure that you also take into account these non-observable issues of diversity as it could be an obstacle for working collectively. Seemingly everything might look sound on the surface, but these deep-rooted aspects are of importance to understand people's behaviour and actions.

In relation to this study, one needs to take into account the observable and non-observable aspects of diversity that may have an influence on the involvement of parents in schools. If parents don't share or feel comfortable with the views of the school, they might withdraw from school affairs. Thus, educational managers need to engage in interaction and have proper and regular contact with parents to obtain information about diversity issues that may affect their involvement in the school where their children attend.

2.2.4 Synthesis

From the above argumentation and different author's descriptions it is evident that diversity firstly has to do with differences. Diversity is however multifaceted and one needs to understand the complexity thereof and the many different things the concept brings to society. An analysis of differences needs to be made to fully understand diversity. How diversity manifests in society depends on the perspectives that people have about things that make others different from them - personally, physically, socially and emotionally. We need to understand the various differences of each other and find ways to interact and work together for better collective functioning in harnessing a variety of knowledge, skills and attitudes.

Diversity, when properly engaged in, can have a positive effect on any organisation, schools alike. In a country like South Africa with the vast differences among its people it is important that South Africans understand each other in order to find effective solutions to the problems that are experienced every day. In relation to this study, educational managers need to understand the diversity of parents in order to use the human resources they offer through their differences.

The manifestation of diversity also relates to the focus of this study theme. How diversity manifests in society and specifically in relation to education will be the next focus of this chapter.

2.3 THE MANIFESTATION OF DIVERSITY

In this section there will be an in-depth discussion on how diversity manifests in society and specifically in the education system. This discussion is of relevance as it will illustrate and describe the various and distinct aspects of diversity as it occur among people.

The discussion is also of relevance to education as part of society as it is considered to be a very important aspect of society. Education within society is interconnected and linked with each other which brings about that the two facets can't be separated from each other. The two facets need to be viewed in relationship with each other as part of the expansion of the general society. Society cannot properly and purposefully function without good quality education.

Education provides the necessary input to the development of the individuals within society which contributes and is responsible for the overall enhancement and improvement of society in general. Figure 2.2 illustrates the interrelatedness of education with society.

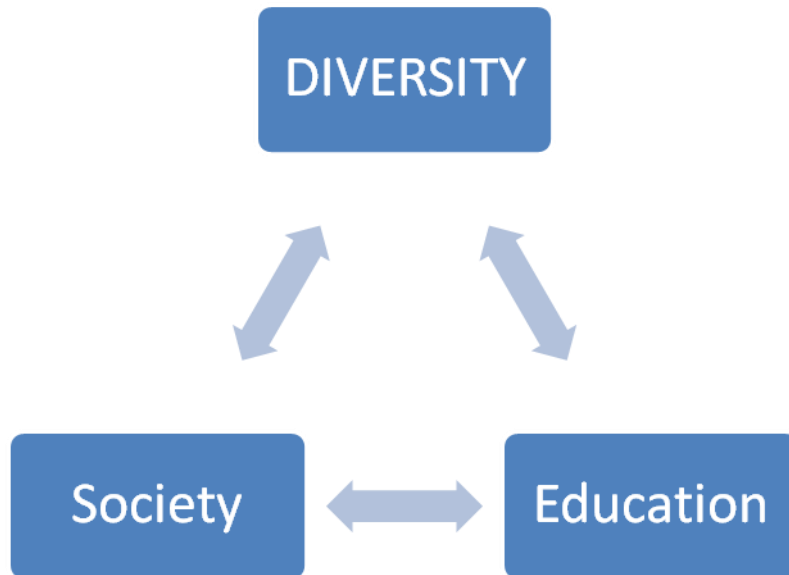


Figure 2.2: The interrelatedness of education with society

2.3.1 Diversity and society

Diversity manifests in society in many different and interesting ways. It can be seen as a complex, multifaceted and intricate part of humanity that is part of reality. It can be a problematic or challenging aspect at times because people have different views, ideas and beliefs concerning certain issues. Because of the nature of people there will always be more differences than similarities on matters in life. People need to accommodate and appreciate the differences to reach a point of agreement on certain important issues. Ruthven (1999:57-58) says that people will make different contributions to society and their community, but diversity as part of reality should not necessarily be problematic. It is inevitable that individuals from diverse cultures may experience misunderstandings and stereotyping due to acute differences in moral, ethical, socio-political and economic issues (Grobler *et al.*, 2006:449). Sigford (2006:129) emphasises the importance of diversity in society and argues that embracing and learning about diversity is essential for societal cohesion and unity. It is important that people should gain an understanding of the richness and complexity of the diversity among human beings. This argument is especially of importance in relation to the

research theme. In the following sections those aspects of diversity related to this study theme in particular will be reviewed.

2.3.1.1 Cultural, religious and ethnic diversity

The defining of different racial and ethnic groups is a complex and controversial topic. For the purpose of this study race and ethnicity will be discussed under one section, although there is a difference between the two aspects. Race can be seen as being part of a group of people because of having specific external features. Ethnicity, on the other hand, has to do with being part of a certain group of people sharing more or less the same values, beliefs and rituals. Ethnicity also has to do with being part of a specific cultural grouping.

Race and ethnicity is a classification system created by humans and is merely based on factors like skin colour and hair type. Ethnic groupings constitute who we are and display how we treat others or are treated by other people. According to Sigford (2006:131) race is a political rather than biological reality. The author states further that we should rather shift our focus from ethnicity or race towards cultural diversity. Human (2005:15) argues that the term “race” is often linked to cultural differences. We look at a person’s physical appearance and associate certain cultural characteristics with it. To use nationality, ethnic or religious group membership to classify people can be seen as a generalised approach to diversity (Human, 2005:14).

Globalisation is another aspect that has an effect on the shaping and reshaping of cultures through their interconnections across the globe and within society. The contact and interaction between cultures also has an effect, positive or negative, on perceiving the differences between people. The fact of the matter is that these aspects are visible and cultural diversity does exist in society. Kirton and Greene (2000:21-22) studied this matter with a study of racial groupings in the United Kingdom. The results have yielded that there was a significant difference in the economic activity rates and levels of unemployment under minority ethnic groups. This can be seen as a negative aspect of cultural diversity. Where groupings have been integrated and assimilated, this accumulation can be seen as a positive effect with relation to the differences of people. For the purpose of this research one needs to understand the different cultures in a country and the different ethnic groupings. One can easily generalise about a certain group of people (Human, 2005:17), but it is essential to refrain from stereotyping aspects of diversity, and to accept and embrace diversity in a positive manner.

Cultural diversity is part of reality and occurs all over the world. Most countries have different cultures in society that need to be accommodated and respected by others. Minority cultural groupings exist all over the world as is evident in countries like South Africa, Belgium, the United Kingdom, the United States of America and Canada. Within these countries, among the different cultural groupings, people must be allowed to maintain their unique particularity (De Groof & Lauwers, 2001:50). For example, in most Western countries immigrants are free to maintain their traditional customs regarding food, dress, religion, etc. De Groof and Lauwers (2001:51) explain that contact with other cultures gives people access to a range of meaningful options and to understand other cultures in order to make informed decisions as part of a process of social assimilation and integration. People cannot be expected to give up aspects of diversity such as their culture.

Most people value their cultural membership more than national identity (De Groof & Lauwers, 2001:52). In order to improve communication between people, one needs to become aware and appreciate the beliefs, values and attitudes of other cultural groups. One also needs to be aware of personal attitudes towards diverse cultural groups of people (Flett & Conderman, 2001:53). During the last few decades there have been widespread changes of attitude toward historically excluded populations – from discrimination and exploitation to tolerance and inclusion (Mor-Barak, 2005:90).

Many cultural groups also stem from the numerous religions in the world. There are differences in the lifestyles of different ethnic and religious beliefs, e.g. Catholic, Protestant and Muslim families (Haralambos & Holborn, 2008:483). Therefore religion and culture are closely related and integrated. Most human beings want to belong to and feel comfortable within a particular cultural group. It is therefore important to understand the diversity aspects related to different cultures. The importance of being part of a certain cultural group can subsequently not be underestimated and should not be taken lightly when making decisions that have to do with diversity. This insight is of particular relevance concerning the theme of this research.

A large number of these cultural groupings also exist because of the different languages that are used. The bonds of language and culture are strong as people view these aspects as fundamental to their cultural membership and self identity. Linguistic diversity will thus be discussed in the following section.

2.3.1.2 Linguistic diversity

Language is the most important medium of communication which is used by people in order to communicate with each other. One can argue that it is one of the most essential aspects in everyday life as we all need to communicate with each other in order to get certain things done. People who speak the same language will feel more of an affirmation towards each other, because they share the same communication medium. The main reason for this would be that they understand each other when they speak to each other. If someone cannot understand another person's language, there will be a serious communication gap which could lead to misconceptions and even conflict between individuals and parties.

Diversity associated with language or linguistic diversity occurs all over the world and is evident in most countries with a multicultural society. Language rights are a fundamental cause of political conflict in European countries such as Belgium, Spain, Bulgaria and Turkey (De Groof & Lauwers, 2001:53). French and Dutch (Flemish) are used as official languages in Belgium and linguistic diversity is experienced in one way or another (De Groof & Lauwers, 2001:54). According to the Belgium constitution, citizens need to be able to speak French for government business and law. For instance, people who want to enter employment in the government sector of the economy need to be able to converse fluently in French, which is consequently a disadvantage for the Dutch speaking citizens. There is also a definite divide in the country with the Dutch region of Flanders in the north, the French region of Wallonia in the southern part of the country and Brussels, the capital as supposed to be bilingual. The United Kingdom is also faced with linguistic diversity because of the numerous immigrants and refugees that find their way to the country. Most of the refugees are from Asian, West Indian and Eastern European descent with little or no knowledge of English. This issue makes prospects of employment and other opportunities in the economic and social sector of the country relatively limited (Kirton & Greene, 2000:23-24). This can be seen as a negative effect that diversity has on cultures (par. 2.3.1.1).

In North America, a country such as Canada also experiences linguistic diversity. The province of Quebec is a region where French is the spoken language and all the administration of the province is done in French as opposed to English which is used in the rest of the country. The differences in the languages used provide some form of linguistic diversity between the people in the country. The reality of linguistic diversity could result in some people feeling excluded from the society and culture of the country. The United States

of America has many minority groupings which are from Spanish or Caribbean descent. These minority groups often find it difficult to integrate in communities because of the language barrier. Children in these families often face educational dilemmas stemming from these barriers (Portman, 2009:24; Bray & Salazar, 2007:2). Bell (2007:89-189) provides information that disparities in earnings and wealth between White people against Black, Asian and Hispanic people can be anything between 15%-20%. Much of this can be associated with language proficiency or the lack thereof.

The Constitution of the Republic of South Africa (Act, 108/1996) doesn't only recognise, but also protects the use of 11 official languages in the country. However, all the languages do not enjoy the same support as some of the lesser known languages that are spoken by fewer people will confirm. To regard and value each language as equal is virtually an impossible task and an administrative and operational nightmare. This is evident in the lack of providing education in the mother tongue by the education department. Most of the communication of government departments is also done in only one language, i.e. English. Language can be a nation building aspect through communication. On the other hand language can also be a barrier towards uniting the different people of a nation because of misinterpretation, confusion and the lack of communication. Because of the nature of languages and the many emotional sentiments and feelings it creates among people, this aspect can divide people rather than unite them if not recognised and valued in the correct manner.

For the purpose of this study linguistic diversity is very apparent and relative. Lack of language proficiency can be seen as a major obstruction for parents not to be involved in their child's school. This aspect will be investigated as part of the empirical section in chapter 5. Because of discrepancies in the past some people are not well educated and not well spoken. The fact of the matter is that some parents are not well equipped when it comes to speaking a certain language. Because they are unable to understand the language, they might withdraw themselves because of a feeling of intimidation by the system that they find themselves in.

Linguistic and cultural diversity, as discussed in the preceding sections, sometimes also result in another form of diversity which is evident in society through the difference in social class. Thus, socio-economic class as form of diversity will be the next topic of discussion.

2.3.1.3 Socio-economic class as form of diversity

In most countries and societies there are class differences between people. People with more or less the same social and economic status and background have a tendency to group together and share ideas and information with each other (Wood & Baker, 1999:239). There are few opportunities for people from a 'lesser' class to be able to join the 'ruling' class of society and generally are not able to take full advantage of what is on offer by society. Socio-economic class as a form of diversity is often linked to minority language and cultural groupings (par. 2.4.1.1). The link between poverty and low levels of literacy has also been recognised (Cairney & Ruge, 1993:3). Although one cannot generalise, there is little doubt that children who are socio-economically disadvantaged, are more likely to experience learning difficulty in literacy learning than children not similarly disadvantaged (Cairney & Ruge, 1999:3; Wood & Baker, 1999:239). Even in countries where there haven't been outright discrimination towards minority groups, these groups couldn't take full benefit of the educational system because of their poverty and economic background (Mor-Barak, 2005:92).

Another fact is that some minority ethnic groups are growing quite significantly because of high fertility rates as opposed to the general population. According to Mor-Barak (2005:90) higher fertility rates are generally associated with lower socio-economic status. This reality leads to other related problems, i.e. unemployment, lower income levels and high levels of deficiency under socio-economically disadvantaged people (par. 2.3.1.1). Programmes organised in Malaysia to close the income gap among workers have been constrained because of lower levels of education and language proficiency (Mor-Barak, 2005:91). Mor-Barak (2005:92) comes to the conclusion that educational differences tend to create barriers between workers of different racial and ethnic origins. Furthermore, although minority populations may not have been deliberately excluded from the educational system, their relative poverty has hindered them from taking full advantage of it. This perspective has significance for this study as we have similar problems and disparities that have an influence on issues related to socio-economic class and education in South Africa.

Another type of diversity associated with socio-economic class comes in the form of single parenthood. These families tend to have associated problems because of having one parent in the family. Single parenthood tends to be associated with lower living standards. Not all single parents are poor, but the majority experience sub-economical conditions. In 2005 in the United Kingdom, 41% of single parents had an income of less than 200 pounds per week

and most of these families received a grant from the government. Furthermore, UK government figures show that 53% of these families live in poverty, which is much higher for any other household type (Haralambos & Holborn, 2008:487-488). To be a single parent implies that one of the parents, man or woman is not actively part of the family. This can expose some related socio-economic problems, i.e. poverty, lower employment opportunities, social functionality and educational problems. As society changes more of these socially constructed families come to the fore. Single-parent families can be a problem if it comes to parental involvement in schooling as single parents will have more responsibilities and less time than a complete family.

Gender is a universally accepted aspect of diversity and as such needs to be accounted for in relation to parental involvement.

2.3.1.4 Gender as an aspect of diversity

Gender differences are the most basic and pervasive of all differences between people. From an early age people learn of some cultural stereotypes about how men and women are supposed to be and what their roles in society are (Carr-Ruffino, 1996:137). People generally expect men and women to express different traits, i.e. feminine as opposed to masculine.

Gender as an aspect of diversity is relevant in cases where sexism occurs and in the recent past has become a contentious issue of discussion as more and more women enter the structured social, political and economic sectors of society. Both demographic and social changes have altered the pattern of economic activity for women all over the world. In most countries women comprise more than half the population and about half the workforce. The traditional composition of families with the female as housewife and male as main breadwinner are nowadays the exception rather than the rule. There are also many women taking leading roles in society and the old patriarchal structure of men being superior to women is declining. This change is most visible in Europe and North America, and is increasing in South America, Northern Africa and Western Asia (Mor-Barak, 2005:85). Women are spending much less time in their life as carer to the family and participate more in the economy, especially after reaching forty years of age. In the United Kingdom the working age population contains more women ages 40 years onwards, than those between 20 to 40 years of age (Mor-Barak, 2005:88). The reason for this trend is that most women, after they were educated, would only get actively involved in the workforce once they have completed their gender-based responsibilities of raising children at home (Mor-Barak, 2005:89). This

fact might be of significance to parent involvement, especially at the time when children progress to secondary school. It could be put forward as being part of the reason why parents tend to participate less in education affairs at secondary schools than in primary schools (Prinsloo, 2005:31; Kotze, 1997:43).

According to a study in Britain, women's participation in the labour market has increased rapidly, but it still tends to be concentrated in certain occupations and industries that are viewed as being feminine, e.g. teaching, administration and marketing. On the other hand, men still dominate traditionally male occupations such as engineering and technology. Men also still hold most of the management positions. Furthermore, women also have a greater tendency to work part time which result in them earning as much as 58% less than men in full time occupations (Kirton & Greene, 2000:15-16). The main reason for this is that women are more often forced to occupy two roles in society, i.e. responsibility towards the needs of the family on the one hand and earning income in the labour market on the other hand (Kirton & Greene, 2000:56). In the United States of America, women working full time only earn about 70% of the income of men and occupy only 4% of the highest earning positions in the country (Bell, 2007:249). Bell (2007:251) states that gender diversity is a socially constructed rather than a biological phenomenon. This is reflected in what society expects from males and females in relation to behaviour, dress, occupation, etc. This fact is more evident in some cultural societies where women are still seen as inferior to men and where gender roles are still very specific. The Constitution of the Republic of South Africa (Act, 108/1996) provides for equality between men and women across the spectrum of society. In the South African workforce women are currently given more opportunities in order to correct the immense gender differences that resulted from past practices. Gender diversity will always exist as the roles of men and women are forever changing and forms in this sense an important aspect of diversity for further investigation in this research.

Ability can also be categorised as a type of diversity. In the following section diversity because of ability or disability will be discussed.

2.3.1.5 Ability and disability as aspects of diversity

The ability to be able to do something in particular, or not, also makes people different from each other. A person's ability can be seen as his capability or capacity to add value within a specific context. On the other hand disability is the incapacity to be able to participate in the

activities of an organisation. Being disabled can thus also be regarded as an aspect of diversity.

The definition and classification of disabled people is a complex and controversial area (Kirton & Greene, 2000:27). Disability can be defined as a physical or mental impairment that substantially limits one or more of the major life activities. Disability can range from minor functional loss to disability that is severe and noticeable. As will be discussed, there is evidence that this form of diversity does exist as people with disabilities are treated differently because of their situation.

In the United Kingdom a survey showed that disabled people's level of unemployment is almost three times higher than that of non-disabled people. People with disability tend to have lower levels of education and qualifications than non-disabled people, suggesting that discrimination against disabled people is embedded in social institutions, including the education system. Economic activity rates are also lower for disabled women than for disabled men, which mirror the average able workforce (Kirton & Greene, 2000: 28-29). The reasons for disabled people struggling to find suitable employment can vary. Firstly, in most countries, people with disability receive benefits which discourage them from finding paid employment because they would lose their allowances. Secondly, many disabled people don't have the same educational opportunities as their able counterparts, thus being less skilled. Thirdly, many workplaces are not suitably set up for disabled people which makes access to work difficult and job opportunities limited. Finally, there is a general stigma clinging on to disabled people that they are inferior workers in comparison with their non-disabled counterparts (Mor-Barak, 2005:93, Kirton & Greene, 2000:28).

Thus, if people with disabilities can overcome barriers, they too can become actively and productively involved in the workforce. In many countries there are programmes already existing and in place to help disabled people in society and the economic sector. South Africa's Constitution provides for every citizen to be treated equally. Most public areas and workplaces make provision for disabled people with special facilities. As with women, disabled people are also given more opportunities and support in order to get them actively involved in the workforce. The National Education Policy Act (Act, 27/1996) of South Africa protects the interests of learners with special needs and provide for them to be treated equally. In the United States of America the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 was initiated to protect the rights of disabled people. According to this act employment cannot be

denied to a disabled individual in the United States of America if he is qualified to perform the functions of the job. This implied that discrimination against disabled individuals who can perform key functions of an occupation was unlawful, therefore being abolished.

The ability of people to interact with each other and be of value to an organisation can also form part of this aspect of diversity. Every individual has his own significance and can contribute in many ways because of the skills, expertise and competencies that he can bring to the organisation's development. It is also very important to value each person's contribution and abilities in order for an organisation to grow and be successful in the world. To be able to streamline all employees' expertise and talents can result in being much more proficient and can have many good outcomes for any organisation. This is of importance to this study as at any school there are parties with different abilities. This needs to be taken into account when dealing with parental involvement. From the previous argumentation, it is clear that diversity of abilities and disabilities is evident all over the globe and in all aspects of society.

Most of the authors indicated in the previous line of reasoning refer to the above-mentioned aspects of diversity outside of the perspective of education. The following section will consequently describe diversity as it occurs in the education system.

2.3.2 Diversity in relation to education

In the Education system one works with people therefore diversity will most probably manifest in different ways just as it does in the different sections of society. In the following section of this chapter diversity will be firstly described as it presents itself in the education system in general and secondly, specifically in the South African context.

2.3.2.1 Diversity in Education

The education system is an important and integral part of society as it is supposed to educate young people on how to become good and functional citizens in life. In the education system learners are diverse and they should be treated accordingly. The fact that learners are different and have different learning needs should be accepted and respected. Learners come from different backgrounds, ethnicity, culture or class. They are also different from each other because of their gender, age, language or ability to do certain things. On the other hand learners are also similar in a way. All children can learn and need support in order to develop fully.

Kalenga (2005:19) provides two ways in which learners' differences occur in the education system. Firstly there are learners with specific differences because of cognition, social development and physical motor skills. Secondly learners are different because of more typical developmental issues. Social exclusion exists because not all children have the same background. Some are born in poverty, have inadequate housing, chronic ill-health and unemployment. These children are denied the resources and opportunities available to other children (par. 2.3.1.3). Children from poor families tend to benefit less from schooling than those from advantaged backgrounds and that these differences widen rather than narrow as children go through the education system (Kalenga, 2005:28).

When working with learners educators can help them to become better members of a community by creating new visions for communities and particularly schools. Aspects that need to be addressed are the language and medium of learning programmes, content of the curriculum, teaching style and assessment techniques. A specific method in which there can be differentiated between learners is through inclusive education. Inclusive education is founded on the ideal of teaching the entire class, but making sure that all learners' differences are taken into account when managing and organising classrooms and schools. The main aim for inclusive education is to develop children cognitively and socially in order to create an inclusive society. This strategy can also be used in the attempt of getting more parents involved in schools.

Multicultural education is another approach that can be used to deal with diversity in the education system. Van Vuuren (2008:75) summarises multicultural education as "an educational theory to provide basic education for learners of the various cultures of society in an accommodative school environment by means of a process to develop cross-cultural awareness, educational equality, and positive learning outcomes." Van Vuuren (2008: 82) is of opinion that there should be a shift from multicultural education towards an approach of diversity in education which includes all relevant aspects of diversity and not only cultural issues.

The notion of multicultural education should however be considered in relation to social issues in order to facilitate better school communities and positive nation building. This approach could positively be used to appreciate and promote diversity amongst parents during their involvement in schools.

2.3.2.2 Diversity in the South African Education system

Before 1994 there was no equality between the people of the different races in South Africa. Fundamentally people were judged on their skin colour and were placed into groups with certain privileges allocated towards specific groups while other groups were neglected. Diversity was never really promoted by the previous government because of their strategies and policies on separate development of different groups. The same policy was also used in the education system.

During the previous political dispensation the education system was committed towards the segregation of groups of people on the basis of race and colour with very little or no relevance towards dealing with aspects of diversity. A conservative multicultural approach, where children learned and developed separately according to race, was principally employed by the government. Since 1994 there was a shift to making the education system equal and accessible to all people.

After 1994, the new democratic government made sure that legislation and policies include aspects of diversity in order for all people to be treated equally and to value diversity as a component of nation building. In the following section the relevant legislation concerning the South African Education system will be discussed.

2.3.3 Relevant legislation relating to the South African Education system

After the first democratic election in 1994, certain legislation was put into place by the new government in order to accommodate diversity and unifying the citizens of South Africa as a nation. According to Van Vuuren (2008:85) there are specifically three acts that are of relevance to the education system as it makes reference to the manifestation of diversity. These acts are the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, the National Education Policy Act and the South African Schools Act. In this section the mentioned acts will be examined in relation to the manifestation of diversity in the South African Education system. The following sections will describe the manifestation of diversity as part of the legal framework in dealing with diversity in the South African Education system.

2.3.3.1 The Constitution of the Republic of South Africa (Act 108 of 1996)

The Constitution of the Republic of South Africa (Act, 108/1996) is the country's supreme law and all other law and conduct must be in accordance with it (Department of Education, 1997:5; Potgieter, Visser, Van der Bank, Mothata & Squelch, 1997:5). Its main aim (as described in the Bill of Rights) is to protect all citizens' basic human rights and to respect the diversity among the people of South Africa. It was essentially written to promote unity among the diverse people of the country. The following aspects from the Constitution have relevance towards the manifestation of diversity:

- **Equality** *Section 9(3)*
Unfair discrimination of individuals on any aspect of diversity is prohibited
- **Dignity** *Section 10*
The dignity of all individuals is to be respected and protected
- **Expression** *Section 16(2c)*
Hatred will not be tolerated, stemming from freedom of expression
- **Education** *Section 29(1)*
Everyone has the right to basic and further education
- **Culture** *Section 31(1)*
Members of a community have the right to maintain and enjoy their respective cultures
- **Interpretation** *Section 39(1)*
The interpretation of any legislation must be in accordance with the spirit, purpose and objectives of the Bill of Rights as it is set out in the Constitution.

The manifestation of diversity within the Constitution has relevance towards the Education system as it describes that everyone has the right to education and that all people have the right to be treated equally and with dignity, with acknowledgement to human diversity. Furthermore everyone has the right to express themselves freely and maintain their own culture as long as it takes into account the human diversity that exists among the people of South Africa.

The education system and more particular schools should take into account and acknowledge the implications of the Constitution towards diversity in South Africa, especially when implementing legislation and policies. All acts must be interpreted with the Constitution

as background. Relevant implications of The National Education Policy Act for diversity will be examined next.

2.3.3.2 The National Education Policy Act (Act 27 of 1996)

The National Education Policy Act (Act, 27/1996) was written to facilitate the democratic transformation of the education system so that all the people in South Africa's needs, interests and fundamental rights would be served and protected against unfair discrimination on grounds of diversity (Act, 27/1996:2). This act was developed and ought to be used, in accordance with the Constitution, to guide and manage the national education system and to determine national policy for education.

In the act some aspects of diversity are emphasised, e.g. language, culture, religion, gender, ability and experience (Act, 27/1996:3-4). Learners with special education needs are also mentioned as not to be discriminated against (Act, 27/1996:14). Learners affected by HIV/AIDS may not be unfairly discriminated against and should be treated in a just and humane way (Act, 27/1996:27). Religion as an aspect of diversity is also clearly stipulated in the act. Religious observances should be conducted on an equitable basis, attendance should be voluntary and steps should be put in place for minority groups in order for them not to be disadvantaged in any way within the school community (Act, 27/1996:146).

The National Education Policy Act (Act, 27/1996) clearly sets out certain aspects of diversity and promotes the understanding thereof. Unfair discrimination is mentioned a number of times in the act and is a strong precondition in dealing with the different aspects of diversity. Furthermore, the act also presents specific guidelines on certain matters, e.g. religious observances, HIV/AIDS status and special education needs. Educators and educational managers should be aware of the consequences and guidelines of The National Education Policy act when dealing with diversity in schools. In the following section the South African Schools Act, as it underlines diversity, will be looked into.

2.3.3.3 The South African Schools Act (Act 84 of 1996)

The main purpose of the South African Schools Act (Act, 84/1996) is to guide school education in South Africa. It is aimed at redressing practices of injustice from the past through the effective management of a new school system. In this act diversity is acknowledged, respected and protected. A further basic aim of the act is that the quality of education of all learners must be improved (Potgieter *et al.*, 1997:6).

In the preamble of the South African Schools Act (Act, 84/1996:3) the manifestation of diversity is given prominence. In this section of the act it is emphasised that education of high quality for all learners must be based on the acknowledgement and accommodation of the diversity of all people. The rights of all learners, educators and parents are also to be upheld by the specific act. For the purpose of this research it is of significance that the role of parents in the school is specifically addressed.

In the South African Schools Act (Act, 84/1996:5-31) specific indication of the manifestation of diversity are made:

- The act advises against unfair discrimination, specifically in relation to language, race and religion (Section 6).
- School governing bodies must promote unity and diversity in schools according to Constitutional principles (Section 20).
- Guidelines for school management, based on the Constitution, are provided for dealing with basic human rights, equal opportunities, fairness, human dignity and practicability.
- The school governing body must appoint additional staff members taking into account factors like equity and representivity.

The manifestation of diversity is acknowledged by the South African Schools Act (Act, 84/1996) and specific references are made to the protection of some aspects of diversity. Unfair discrimination is also seen as an important part of this act and all people are protected against being unfairly treated on the basis of human rights, dignity and equal opportunities.

2.3.3 Synthesis

In its essence diversity is a very complex and intricate aspect of life because of it being part of human nature. Diversity manifests in the society in many different ways. Some aspects of diversity are more observable than others because of its features being more visible. On the contrary there are other, more deep lying aspects of diversity that are not always easily detectable but also need to be valued with the same high opinion. One needs to take into account the wide-ranging effect diversity can have on everyday life and deal with it in the appropriate manner by using the correct approach within a suitable strategy.

Within the school setup there will also be vast differences among children because of being part of society. Schools as important organisational structures in society need to be able to take note of what diversity entails and how the different aspects of diversity manifest. This will enable educators and schools to help children to develop into good quality citizens of the country that can contribute to the well-being of all people. Conversely, parents have a role to play in the development and education of their children. If parents can be educated to be able to properly fulfil their role in the educational process then children can simply further benefit from this reality.

In the South African Education system there are many acts that make reference of diversity and give guidelines on how to deal with certain diversity aspects. The acts reveal and provide directives for dealing with the manifestation of diversity in the South African Education system. The acts are fundamental as a legal framework to ensure an effective national education system. The general purpose of all three acts discussed is to promote unity through being diverse. It is also at hand to promote and protect each human being's diversity through dignity and fairness and to eradicate unfair practises from the past.

The Constitution of the Republic of South Africa (Act, 108/1996), as the supreme law of South Africa, protects our basic human rights and secures that education is available to all people. The National Education Policy Act (Act, 27/1996) helps to guide and manage the South African education system while the South African Schools Act (Act, 84/1996) gives a specific framework on certain aspects of diversity and how it should be implemented in schools.

There are also other acts, e.g. *Employment of Educators Act (Act, 76/1998)*, *The Labour Relations Act (Act, 66/1995)*, *The Promotion of Equality and prevention of Unfair Discrimination Act (Act, 4/2000)* and *The South African Council of Educators Act (Act, 31/2000)* that make reference to the manifestation and management of diversity but with smaller significance to the education system. These acts will not be discussed as it will not be necessary for the objective of this study.

When dealing with diversity issues in the South African education system it is very important to keep these acts in mind and refer to them in order to make sure that any strategy that is presented in dealing with diversity is in line with the relevant legislation. The appreciation of the manifestation of diversity in the South African Education system is of critical importance

for this study as it serves as the background to understanding the vast differences one deals with when engaging in a topic of this significance.

For the purpose of this study parental involvement in school affairs will be the next focus of this chapter.

2.4 AN OVERVIEW OF PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT¹

In this section of the chapter, firstly the reasons for parental involvement will be discussed. Why parents have to become involved in their child's education, and if it is really necessary for parents to be involved with their child's schooling will be looked into.

Secondly, the importance of parental involvement for the child on the one hand and the school community on the other hand, will be considered. Parental involvement can be seen as those ways in which parents get involved in the schooling system of their child. There should be a fundamental partnership between all stakeholders who have an interest in education, including parents and the school (Potgieter *et al.*, 1997:8). These partners are expected to fulfil obligations, co-operate and maintain certain values in guiding a child's development (Kotze, 1997:50; Smith, 1997:10; Monareng, 1995:43; Van der Linde, 1993:21; Gryffenberg, 1991:25). The parent community is usually in the best possible position to analyse and consider the problems and necessities of the school and to engage in solutions to overcome difficult situations.

There will also be a discussion of what legislation and policies desire from parents. The legal status of parents as primary educator and their responsibility towards the education system will be discussed.

Parents should form a team with the teachers, principal and more general with the school. They are often willing to participate and get involved in the school programme, but are not always sure how to engage in it. The different ways in which parents are or can get involved in schools will also be reviewed as part of the discussion. Lastly there will be an examination

¹ The term "parental involvement" is used in this research, although some literature refers to "parent involvement". According to the Collins Cobuild English Language Dictionary (1991:1042) the word "parental" "is used to describe something that comes from or relates to parents in general". Thus, the use of the term "parental" rather than "parent" for this study.

of the barriers related to parental involvement that could be a problem to getting diverse parents involved in schools.

2.4.1 Reasons for parental involvement

Several reasons can be stated to substantiate parents' association with and involvement in schools. Monareng (1995:44-47) argues that the following reasons are a fundamental rationale for parents to be involved in their child's education:

- **Religious grounds** – the family is God's idea and the school can be viewed as an extension of the home. The family as the primary educational setting cannot be replaced by the school and should therefore be responsible for educating the child. Consequently, the parent has a responsibility towards God to be involved in his child's education (Van der Linde, 1993:10; Gryffenberg, 1991:12).
- **Juridical grounds** – the family is a sovereign societal structure to make and implement law within its own sphere. One of the most important duties of parents is to educate their children. On the basis of parental rights (South African Schools Act, 84/1996b:19) the parent is therefore legalised to participate in the affairs of the school of his child (Prinsloo, 2005:29; Van der Linde, 1993:15).
- **As a matter of principle** – because of the parent's responsibility as primary educator, parents must never be excluded from the formal education of the child. The parent is co-responsible for his child's education and the teacher merely supplements the parent as his partner. Each of these partners has a unique relationship with the child. It therefore implies that parents are indispensable in the formal education of the child (Gryffenberg, 1991:26).
- **Pedagogical grounds** – the purpose of schools are to enhance a child's education by teaching what cannot be taught at home. Therefore parents need to know what children are being taught at school. It is their duty to make sure that school programmes correspond with the values, norms and views that are taught at home (Prinsloo, 2005:29; Van der Linde, 1993:21; Gryffenberg, 1991:22). With the introduction of Outcomes Based Education (OBE) in the last

decade, parents are obliged to be more involved in learning programmes (Prinsloo, 2005:17).

From the previous discussion it is clear that parental involvement can be justified on several different grounds and that a partnership between school and parents should be established and maintained in the development of the child towards maturity. The importance and significance of parental involvement will be discussed next.

2.4.2 The importance and significance of parental involvement

Parental involvement in children's education has long been recognised as an important element in effective schooling (Cairney & Ruge, 1999:1). The significance of parental involvement is twofold. On the one hand it is significant for the development and behaviour of the child and on the other hand it is of significance to the school and the management thereof.

2.4.2.1 Parental involvement and the child

The education of the child is in the first place the task of the parents as primary care-giver and in the second place that of the school. This fact can never be substituted as the parents carry the responsibility of ensuring the child has a sound upbringing which includes moral, cultural and spiritual training (Prinsloo, 2005:25-26; Smith, 1997:11; Monareng, 1995:46; Van der Linde, 1993:20; Gryffenberg, 1991:23). In the last two decades many parents have shifted the responsibility of educating the child towards the school and have withdrawn their actual responsibility to a large extent. Many reasons can be given for this phenomenon, e.g. both parents working, change in family set-up, socio-economic situation, single-parenthood, etc. (par. 2.3.1.3). Monareng (1995:43) states that lack of parental support is observable in many situations and is often due to their lack of knowledge of the education system. Some parents might have an inappropriate assumption of what their role as parent is or might feel totally intimidated by the school setup (Prinsloo, 2005:33).

However, parental involvement is very important as it has an influence on the attitude and performance of the child at school (McWayne *et al.*, 2008:552). Therefore parents must not be excluded from their child's education and their role should not be moderated as they are still primarily responsible for the child's upbringing (Prinsloo, 2005:26). According to Prinsloo (2005:28) and Smith (1997:15) children whose parents are positively involved in the school are less likely to have disciplinary and behavioural problems. These children are also less

likely to leave school early as they see the importance of the school in their development towards maturity. Furthermore parental involvement contributes to better academic performance as well as motivation of the child towards the school (Kotze, 1997:45).

By encouraging parents to become involved in their child's education early on can lead to lasting benefits for the child (Barnard, 2004:59). In this sense parents need to work closely together with teachers to make sure that they form a partnership with the school in order to address any problems that may arise and to give the necessary support to their children's well-being. Kruger (2003:9) states that without cooperation between the parent and the educator the child cannot be sufficiently educated. Continuous and regular contact between parent and school can also give a better idea of a child's social background in order to address behavioural problems (Smith, 1997:13). Regular, positive contact with the school also has an influence on the parents' attitude towards the child as it provides a better understanding of the child and what to expect of him in the school system. Involved parents tend to set more realistic goals for their children. Parental involvement can also give parents a chance to fulfil their personal lives as they are given opportunities to serve and assist the school community with their knowledge and skills (Prinsloo, 2005:28). Prinsloo (2005:30) states that parental involvement can have the following positive effects on children:

- higher average marks and test results (Barnard, 2004:39);
- improved behaviour and attitude toward academic achievement;
- improved school attendance;
- higher percentage of homework done;
- a lesser chance of special education;
- a greater probability to finish a high school career (Barnard, 2004:39), and
- a greater possibility to be selected for tertiary education.

To conclude, it is clear out of the previous discussion that parents who are involved in their child's school have a positive effect on their overall school experience. Parents in conjunction with the school are responsible for their child's education. When parents are involved in their child's schooling it will have a positive effect towards the child, the family and society in general. Part of the education process is to develop good citizens who can contribute positively towards society. Parents have an important role to play in this partnership as schools cannot achieve in this process on their own. When parents are

involved they are part of the school and education process of the child and can contribute positively towards the parent-school partnership.

2.4.2.2 Parental involvement and the school

Parental involvement is a very important component of the school-home relationship. Parents are supposed to build schools into educational institutions of outstanding quality. Smith (1997:18) states that parental involvement is the biggest asset that any school can have to become an exceptional educational establishment.

Parental involvement needs to be facilitated in such a way that it can contribute positively towards the school. At the school level it is essential that the principal coordinate all the school activities to rationalise and optimise parental involvement to the utmost advantage of the school. Planning is essential in order to structure parental involvement in such a way that it is thoughtful and can build a constructive association with the school. Uncooperative and unplanned parental involvement can easily lead to disorder and confusion in the school. According to Monareng (1995:44), the school principal, with the management team are the major contributors to school management and should make sure that:

- relations between the school community is good and that all stakeholders fulfil their obligations in the education process;
- all the stakeholders perform their tasks within the framework of their rights;
- parents are trained, orientated and continuously improved in working effectively with the school, and
- the school is effectively and efficiently managed in order to obtain optimal results from the education process.

Parents as part of the education process form an integral part of a school. It is the management team of the school's task and obligation to make sure that all parties in the education process know exactly what is expected from them within the legal framework of their rights. When educational leaders efficiently manage the school and its stakeholders it will lead to better communication and in general a better understanding of each other. Ultimately the school will benefit from this cooperative and constructive involvement and will yield optimal effects and outcomes. Within the framework of parental involvement, the principal and school management team must make sure that all parents have the opportunity

to become actively involved by the development of programmes through which parents are cultured, educated and informed on their role in the education process.

When parents are actively involved in schools they generally have a specific purpose towards making the school more effective in the education process. Here are some author's views on how parents contribute positively towards the effective management of schools when handled appropriately:

- It enhances a positive school climate which leads to an improved school culture (Kotze, 1997:45; Van der Linde, 1993:35).
- Improved coordination between school and home as being a unity and a partnership (Prinsloo, 2005:29; Kotze, 1997:45; Smith, 1997:18; Van der Linde, 1993:56).
- Financial assistance to the school, securing financial stability, in making schools more effective and efficient (Kotze, 1997:45; Smith, 1997:18).
- Service delivery and support towards the school programme by means of human resources (Prinsloo, 2005:29; Kotze, 1997:45; Smith, 1997:19).
- Improved community support and involvement (Prinsloo, 2005:29; Smith, 1997:19; Van der Linde, 1993:57).
- Parents as contributing managers participate in making school policy, thus contributing to the school's success (Prinsloo, 2005:29; Kotze, 1997:45; Van der Linde, 1993:35).
- Parents have a more positive attitude towards the school programme and assist constructively in the learning programme (Prinsloo, 2005:29; Kotze, 1997:45; Smith, 1997:17).
- A better understanding of the school's circumstances and the problems and situations that are dealt with everyday (Smith, 1997:21).
- Improved communication between school and home because of openness towards each other as part of the education process (Kotze, 1997:49; Smith, 1997:24; Van der Linde, 1993:54).
- It is a crucial and indispensable component in order for transformation to take place in schools (Kotze, 1997:45).
- An understanding of the challenges of the diverse situations that their child needs to cope with and handle every day.

The positive involvement of parents has vast effects on schools as they bring about another dimension to the school that enhances the general school culture and climate. Within the framework of this study parental involvement enhances the complete learning experience of the child and also helps children to take into account the diversity that exists in society. When one is part of society one cannot exist in isolation. Children in their education also need to be able to cope with the challenges that school and its diverse situations bring to the fore, and parents have an immense role to play in the significance thereof. Ultimately, positive parents will develop positive children which are what we all are striving for in a multicultural country like South Africa.

Essentially the purpose of parental involvement lies in the opportunities that it offers all the stakeholders involved to contribute towards the upbringing and development of the children. It provides a sense of togetherness as part of the education process. When schools and parents work together in a cooperative relationship that promotes student success, academic success as well as the student's emotional health is improved (Bray & Salazar, 2007:1). The partnership between school and parent should therefore be a healthy one, with both parties knowing precisely what their roles in the education process are.

Legislation and policy also put a responsibility on parents as contributor to their child's education. Thus the following section will discuss what legislation expects from parents as stakeholders in the education process.

2.4.3 Legislation relating to parental involvement

The South African Schools Act (Act, 84/1996) stipulates that parents should contribute towards the development of the school. The role of parents in the education of their children at school is described in this act. The South African Schools Act assigns the following rights and responsibilities to parents:

- Cause every learner to attend a school between the years 7-15 *Section 3(1)*
- Render voluntary service to the school *Section 20(1h)*
- Serve on the school governing body *Section 23(2a)*
- Attend school meetings *Section 38(2)*
- Pay school fees *Section 40(1)*

The above rights and responsibilities suggest that parents have a responsibility towards their children as well as to the management and governance of the school their child is attending. Potgieter *et al.* (1997:9) also state that parents, learners, educators and other members of the community cannot expect from the government to provide and do everything for the school. Parents are obliged to render services where possible and to make themselves available to participate in activities such as the maintenance of school property, coaching, fund-raising, accompanying school trips, dealing with disciplinary matters, etc. (Kruger, 2003:10).

Parents must assist at home in the learning process, assure regular school attendance, maintain discipline, guidance with homework, assure a healthy lifestyle, etc. Parents need to be informed and aware of developments in the school by attending parent meetings, to be available for representation on the school governing body, represent their child at a disciplinary meeting, read and respond to letters and circulars sent out by the school, etc. (Department of Education, 2009:2; Department of Education, 1997:7; National Educational Policy Act (Act, 27/1997)). It is thus imperative for the parent community of a school to actively take part in the school's activities and to accept a shared responsibility for their children's education - without prescribing to the school how things should be done in the classroom. Financial accountability and control are also the responsibility of parents and the school (Department of Education, 2009:3; Beckman, 2002:77; Bisschoff, 2002:108). These mentioned aspects of parental involvement will be addressed in the empirical section of this research (chap. 5).

2.4.4 Types of parental involvement

It is important to see the school-parent relationship as a partnership. In a partnership all the parties involved usually strive to achieve the shared goals set by them. If one of the parties is not in consensus with the other there will be a breakdown in confidence and communication between them. The partnership between school and parent is very crucial for a child's development. Both parties must know of the successes as well as the failures and they shouldn't blame each other for disappointments and frustrations, but rather work together to overcome it (Smith, 1997:26).

All the members of the community should be involved in the partnerships with schools. The reason for this is that the different partnerships has an influence on all sectors of the community. The community on the other hand has an obligation to make sure all children are educated (Prinsloo, 2005:19). According to the CCSSO (Council of Chief State School

Officers) (2006:12) schools can build capacity through partnerships with the community. As was explained earlier, many parents want to become involved in their child's education but do not know how to, mainly because of a lack of knowledge or feeling intimidated by the education system (par. 2.4.2.1). The CCSSO (2006:5) states that parental involvement signifies a broad continuum of education-related parental activities. Epstein (1995:702) identified six types of parental involvement:

- **The process of being a parent** in order to fulfil their duty as the primary care-giver to the basic needs of the child through e.g. in providing disciplinary measures, health, security, etc.
- **Effective communication** and relations between school and the home as participant in the child's education.
- **Voluntary help** with school activities which leads to improved motivation and has a positive effect on the child at school in many areas.
- **Cooperation and interaction with community** organisations in order to enhance the learning experience of the child.
- **Parental involvement and participation in learning activities** at home which has a positive outcome on a child's academic work.
- **Parents being managers and policy formulators** as part of the school's decision making process.

According to Prinsloo (2005:20) Epstein's framework can be used to develop parent-partnership programmes. In developing partnerships with parents the whole parent community can become involved which on the one hand leads to an overall enhancement of the child's learning experience in school and on the other hand to a school which is much more than an academic institution but is also an organisation that interacts with the whole community and has everyone's concern as its objective. The main reason for building school, family and community partnerships is to help children to be successful in school and in their later lives.

Parents can support schools in formal and informal ways. Formal ways are those set organisations which provide parents with the opportunity to contribute to school, e.g. by means of the governing body, parent-teacher organisations and parent meetings. Alternatively there are also many informal ways in which parents can become involved in schools without needing to fully commit to a structured parent organisation. Many parents

may not want to serve on formal bodies of the school, but are happy to help the school in other ways (Department of Education, 1997:59). Examples of informal ways are monitoring of school activities and encouraging learning activities. Barnard (2004:41) describes these activities as indirect parental involvement that can be indirectly associated with a child's achievement. Kotze (1997:46-47) provides some practical ways in which parents can become involved in schools:

- Becoming part of the school governing body (Department of Education, 2009:2; South African Schools Act, (Act, 84/1996)).
- Being involved in Parent-Teacher Associations (PTA) (Monareng, 1995:52).
- Taking part in the education process of the child by becoming involved as assistants in classrooms (CCSSO, 2006:5).
- Community service through the use of school facilities e.g. *Adult Basic Education (ABET)* and outreach to the community.
- Providing human resources by means of help with activities (CCSSO, 2006:5).
- Active decision-making in connection with school related aspects (CCSSO, 2006:5).
- Active interest and participation in school and parent meetings.
- Providing help with educating parents for better understanding of the school system.
- Participation in learning activities at home (CCSSO, 2006:5).
- Voluntary help and active support of child's school and extra-mural activities.
- Evaluating school programmes and learning activities on a continuous basis in order to provide insight and support.

As can be seen in the previous discussion there are many ways, willingly and unwillingly, for parents to become involved in their child's school. Most parents are involved in some or other way, but much can still be done to improve parental involvement as it has so many positive outcomes when done properly. Within the framework of diversity many parents are not involved because of them not feeling comfortable within the school setup. Aspects of diversity that might have a negative effect on parental involvement are amongst others, communication because of a lack of language proficiency, cultural differences, socio-economic factors and ability with parents feeling inferior towards the school because of

financial circumstances or lack of ability to participate in school programmes. The barriers that can influence parental involvement negatively will be discussed in the following section.

2.4.5 Barriers related to the parent-school relationship

As was argued earlier the involvement of parents is of utmost importance to the child's development as well as for the management of the school (par. 2.4.2). The involvement of parents is a combination of contribution and active participation towards the school and the child's education. However, there are some parents that choose not to be involved in their child's school activities. The reasons for these barriers can be internally or externally motivated.

2.4.5.1 Internal barriers to parental involvement

Many parents choose not to participate in the school's activities because they do not feel comfortable with the school setup. These barriers come from within the individual and are internally motivated. Prinsloo (2005:31-32), Kotze (1997:52) and Smith (1997:28-29) provide the following reasons for this:

- Some parents are illiterate or have little education.
- Lack of knowledge about what is expected from them (Flett & Conderman, 2001:55).
- Importance of the child's education is of no or little value to them.
- Previous failure or disappointing experiences from the past.
- A feeling of insufficiency towards the education of the child.
- Lack of communication skills.
- Lack of self-confidence.
- Language barriers (Bray & Salazar, 2007:3; Flett & Conderman, 2001:55).
- Feeling superior to teachers.

The reasons for the above barriers are internally motivated and occur mostly because of uneducated parents and a lack of knowledge about the school system.

2.4.5.2 External barriers to parental involvement

In some instances the reasons for parents not to be involved in schools are externally motivated. Parents might feel intimidated by the school system. The following external

barriers can interfere on successful parental involvement (Prinsloo, 2005:33-35; Kotze, 1997:51-53):

- Negative attitude of principal and teachers (CCSSO, 2006:8).
- Poor leadership by the principal and management team.
- Communication between school and home is not effective (CCSSO, 2006:8).
- Work and family related activities (Bray & Salazar, 2007:3; Wood & Baker, 1999:240).
- Socio-economically disadvantaged (Cairney & Ruge, 1999:3).
- A negative school climate because of a poor organisational structure.
- Insufficient implementation of policies and legislation.
- Teachers are not fully trained to involve parents in the school programme.
- Parents are seen as clients and not as partners.

From the preceding argument it is clear that the barriers that stop parental involvement come from both sides. It is therefore very important that educational managers establish specific, structured programmes in order to train and educate parents and teachers in what their role in the partnership between school and home is. Kotze (1997:49-50) argues that programmes of the school to improve parental involvement must be part of the mission statement of the school. Contact between school and home should be established through proper two-way communication and contact opportunities have to be set up frequently. Schools need to accept that they need to go out to meet parents in the community rather than expect them only to come in to school (Egersdorff, 2010:7). These programmes should be part of the policy of the school and have to be continuously monitored in order to be evaluated and adapted if necessary.

2.4.6 Synthesis

As can be deduced from the preceding argumentation parental involvement is much more than just being interested in children's homework or other academic activities. It also focuses on the total development of the child. It includes actual involvement and participation resulting because of a concrete partnership between parent and school and which is also fundamentally prescribed by legislation. Furthermore this partnership can be seen as a commitment from both the parent and the school towards the education and development of

the child. When this partnership is engaged in properly there is a definite positive outcome for both the child and the school.

Parental involvement is the duty of the whole community in order to provide the child with the necessary skills, knowledge and values to succeed in school and in later life. There are numerous ways in which parents can become involved in their children's education. However, having said that, there might be many a reason for parents not being involved in their children's education. The major problem with parental involvement still seems to be uneducated parents who don't know how to become involved and feeling intimidated by the education system. In general, parents are not unwilling to become actively involved in their child's education, but are rather unsure of what is expected of them and therefore choose not to become involved.

Managers should always provide good leadership and direction towards the school's advantage. The issue of parental involvement should be well planned and directed by the school principal. School managers need to deal with all issues, including the issue of diversity in relation to parental involvement. Diversity can have a major influence on parental involvement and will be under discussion in the next section.

2.5 DIVERSITY AND PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT

In this section of the chapter the focus will be on the management of diversity, specifically in relation to parental involvement. Diversity is a reality and a challenge that manifests in and affects all parts of society in many different ways (par. 2.3). Diversity, will most likely, also have an effect on parental involvement.

2.5.1 The management of diversity

The concept of the management of diversity is complex and multifaceted and has many different implications for managers. Mor-Barak (2005:2) makes the statement that successful management of today's workforce is among the most important challenges faced by leaders and managers. To be able to deal with the diverse workforce a deep understanding of other individual's needs are required.

Authors interpret and describe diversity management in various different ways. Here are some author's views and explanations on this subject:

- Diversity management is the differences in skills and talents that already exist and how to take advantage of them (Pollar & Gonzalez, 1994:5).
- Managing diversity must be all-inclusive and must deal with employees as individuals, taking into account their cultural and experiential background against the backdrop of a diverse society (Carr-Ruffino, 1996:553).
- The ideal of managing diversity seeks to effect outcomes by changing cultures, systems and structures, seeing difference as a positive rather than a negative (Kirton & Greene, 2000:111).
- Managing diversity emphasises the managerial skills and policies needed to optimise and emphasise every employee's contribution to the organisational goals (Akande, 2001:8).
- The management of diversity includes finding ways of accessing diverse talent and using different perspectives and ideas to increase creativity and innovation to gain economic advantage (Anderson & Metcalfe, 2003:viii).
- Diversity management refers to the voluntary organisational actions that are designed to create greater inclusion of employees from various backgrounds into the formal and informal organisational structure through deliberate policies and programmes (Mor-Barak, 2005:209).
- The management of diversity constitutes effective people management; it creates an inclusive and supportive environment in which individuals can develop and grow (Human, 2005:91).
- Thomas (2005:148) argues that diversity should be at the core of every organisation, thus being in the mind of every leader, to facilitate achieving the organisational goals of moral, ethical, and social responsibility, fulfilling legal obligations, and maintaining solid economic performances.

- Bell (2007:482) describe diversity education as comprehensive diversity training and development efforts that provide historical background and current status of specific groups, focuses on discrimination as a general process and individual attitudes and behaviours.

Although somewhat different in opinion, most of the authors have comparable views on the management of diversity. When analysing the various concept descriptions of diversity management, the following aspects come to the fore:

- There is a responsibility on management not only to participate in diversity management, but to provide comprehensible leadership and to steer this issue intelligibly.
- In any organisation there are individuals whose perspectives and ideas should be taken into account when directing diversity issues.
- Diversity, when dealt with appropriately, should lead to growth and development of the organisational structure and achievement of the organisation's goals.

In the light of the above, Van Vuuren's (2008:104-105) formulation of the management of diversity can be viewed as an acceptable summation of the previous authors' views and definitions on this subject:

“The process of managing diversity encompasses specific actions by people in management positions who value the uniqueness of human potential in an inclusive and supportive environment where the unification of human diversity is promoted to ensure optimum performance and the fulfilment of human potential.”

Another unique viewpoint is that of Carr-Ruffino (1996:21). The author argues that there should be a definite shift from just valuing diversity, which is the tolerance of the differences of individuals, to an approach of managing diversity, which can be seen as using the differences of individuals to good effect. The above argument encompasses the focus of this study. The effect that diversity has on parental involvement cannot just be tolerated or accepted, but the variety that each parent brings to the organisation should rather be used to promote growth and development in schools.

The next part of this chapter will deal with the specific challenges that diversity might hold for active parental involvement.

2.5.2 Diversity as a particular challenge for parental involvement

The focus of this research is the involvement of parents of primary school children. In relation to diversity they can't be treated in the same way as the workforce of an organisation. When it comes to the management of parental involvement in primary schools in relation to issues and aspects of diversity, no specific strategy exists for school leadership. Thus, school managers need to deal constructively with issues of diversity in the best interest of the school. As one author states in this regard: "*Schools need to promote a climate that affirms diversity as a resource*" (Schechter *et al.*, 2007:70).

As with all types of managers, educational managers need to have the necessary knowledge, skills and attitudes in order to successfully manage a school. Managers should have a clear vision and strategic plan to deal with diversity issues and to provide leadership for proper parental engagement (Egersdorff, 2010:6). They need to develop ways and ideas on how to deal with issues that might have a negative impact on the school. Diversity aspects cannot be excluded from a manager's planning and managerial duties as it is a reality in a changing world.

Blaine (2009:1) states that the active and supportive participation of parents in the schools of their children, rather than money and resources money could buy, is a major factor of what makes schools effective and successful. No school can function properly without the input and support of the learners' parents. A school is thus not an isolated entity, but needs the input and contributions of parents as well as that of other relevant role players. Parents have a crucial responsibility towards the school of their children and must be involved towards the school's development and growth to transform education (Department of Education, 1997:6).

However, in reality there are many schools that do not have sufficient parental involvement and consequently schools cannot effectively function with regard to pedagogical aims, funding, school events, learners' achievement, community service and transformation (Blaine, 2009:2; Colombo, 2006:314; Fleisch, 2006:369). Another aspect worth mentioning is that some school managers exclude parents and other members of the community from school matters because they believe that parents infringe on the professional terrain of schooling (Van Deventer, 2003:259). In some cases there might be a conflict of interest between the

school and the parent community because of different expectations between school leadership, teachers and the parents (Attanucci, 2004:57) (par. 2.4.5).

In a study of Dempster, Carter, Freakley and Parry (2004:165) about contextual influences on school leaders, 34% of all principals considered parents of children in the school as the most influential factor on their decision-making about values. Sigford (2006:71) emphasises another aspect in this regard by the statement “... *the relationship with parents and community is vital because we want parents to choose us*”. Some authors on this topic also use the term *community involvement* as opposed to parental involvement because they view the whole community or community at large as being part of a school setting (Haydon, 2007:37; Carrington & Robinson, 2006:326-327; Lunenberg & Irby, 2006:328; Sigford, 2006:70; Van Deventer, 2003:260). A diverse community should try to find a common goal in order to bridge their differences. Carrington and Robinson (2006:326) highlight a specific advantage for parental involvement in their statement: “*School communities that value and respect members and provide a safe learning environment for everyone to express their views, build awareness and develop capabilities together are more likely to be inclusive and successful*”.

Community involvement was identified as a challenge in the above-mentioned literature sources. Reasons for the lack of community involvement are cited as: transport problems, lack of language efficiency, work hours, being a single parent, feeling unwelcome, not feeling comfortable and feeling scared – especially ethnic minority parents, feeling failed by the system and unemployment (Sigford, 2006:75; Day, 2005:281). Effective communication between parents and the school seems to be a critical factor in getting parents involved (Bergman, 1992:50; Flett & Conderman, 2001:53; Kruger, 2003:10; Lunenberg & Irby, 2006:330-331; Sigford, 2006:71; Schechter *et al.*, 2007:69). Grobler *et al* (2006:451) states that managing diversity encompasses the creation of a school environment in which people understand, accept, respect, tolerate and explore their differences. In such an environment the learners, educators, parents, general workers and administrators feel a sense of belonging, are accepted and are able to reach their full potential.

2.5.3 Synthesis

From the above argumentation it is clear that the influence of diversity on parental involvement is substantial. The management of diversity is a process in which different

people's ideas have to be organised by management in such a way that the organisation benefits from it. This process places an important and critical responsibility on managers.

In relation to education, principals and school management teams need to take this matter seriously and work constructively towards including a diverse parent community. The uniqueness of people creates a challenge for school managers as all the different viewpoints of stakeholders need to be taken into account. In order to be able to get more parents involved schools would have to make use of creative programmes and strategies as they deal with differences among people which need to be respected and tolerated in such a way that everyone can be integrated into the school system. In the light of this argument this subject needs to be investigated to overcome any related challenge.

2.6 SUMMARY

Diversity is a controversial and sensitive issue in today's society. Diversity is a reality in all societies that cannot be ignored or taken lightly. As most countries in the world are trying to deal with diversity, it has become the focus of leadership and management studies in a variety of disciplines.

Diversity is a concept that cannot easily be defined as it is very complex and multifaceted. In the past definitions of diversity have been interpreted narrowly as being different. In the recent past the definition of diversity has changed to a broader description that included many more aspects of diversity than just being different from each other. There was a change in perception, from valuing diversity to managing diversity, that can be useful to the organisation or establishment. When dealing with diversity issues all aspects of diversity, observable and non-observable, should be taken into account. It manifests itself in different ways in society and is evident in the culture, language, religion and economic activities of a country. It is also evident in South Africa, which is a very diverse country with its assortment of people.

Diversity is also an issue which manifests in education. Since 1994, South African legislation has included diversity issues and makes explicit reference to it. Its purpose is to promote and protect the diversity of individuals. Some legislation makes specific reference to diversity in education and present distinct guidelines on how it should be managed in the system.

Much has been said about the importance of parental involvement. The positive consequences it can create when organised correctly is of immense importance to the child and to the school. Parental involvement relates to more than just interest in a child's education, but rather requires active participation of parents. There are numerous ways in which parents can become involved in schools, but there are also several reasons, willingly or unwillingly, why parents do not want to participate in education. Diversity can also result in barriers that can be a hindrance to the parent-school partnership which is of extreme importance for effective education.

Diversity can also present a unique challenge for parental involvement as parents represent a certain section of society. Diversity manifests in schools as a component of society and as being part of societal behaviour. In order to deal with parental involvement the influence of diversity on parents needs to be examined. Educational managers need to deal with a diverse parent community creatively, innovatively and constructively in order to increase parental involvement.

The status of parental involvement in its relation to diversity is explained in Figure 2.3. It also illustrates its relation towards education and society. Parental involvement is pictured at the bottom of the reverse triangle. Parental involvement, although seen as a part of education, is also an important part of society. All different parts of society are represented within schools and among the parent community. It can thus be seen as a foundation or basis for the development of the wider society. The education system is shown in the middle of the triangle. This is to illustrate that the education system is the linkage between the parents and children and the society. The society is shown at the top of the figure to illustrate that it regulates and directs both the other aspects but is also interdependent on the other two aspects for development. Parental involvement forms an integral part of education in its relation to the education system as part of society.

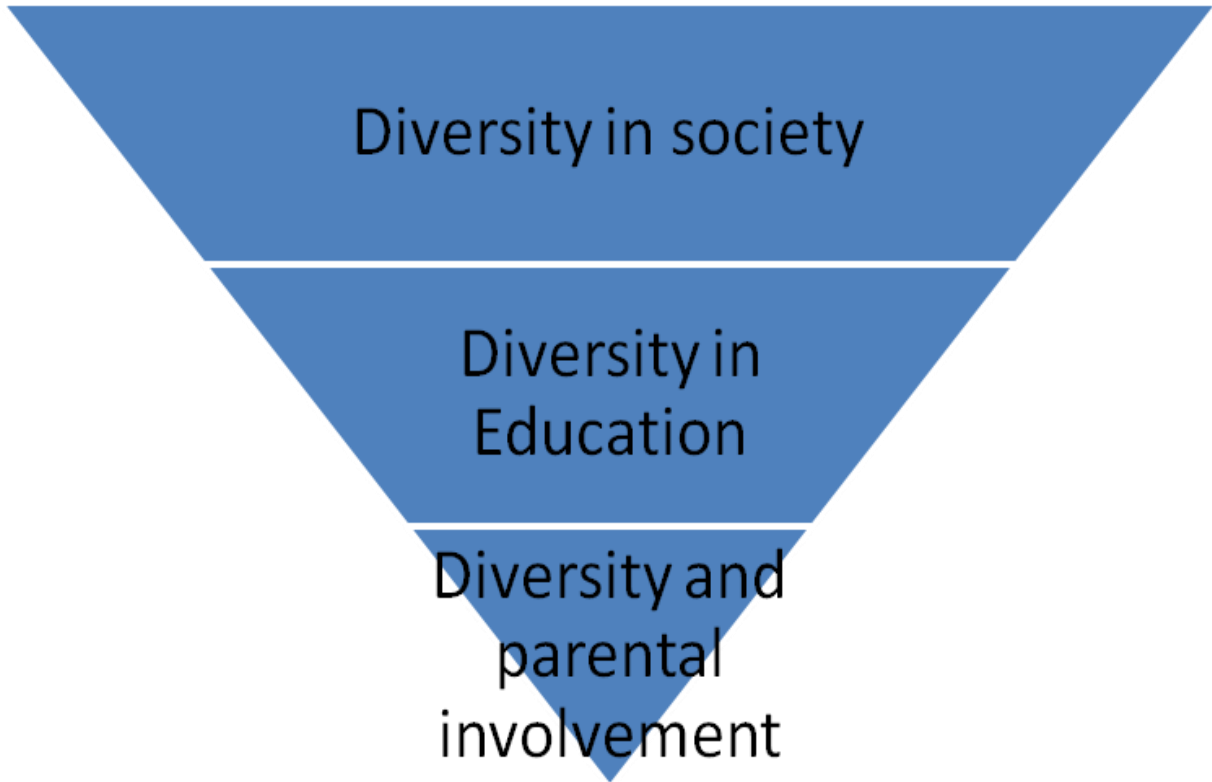


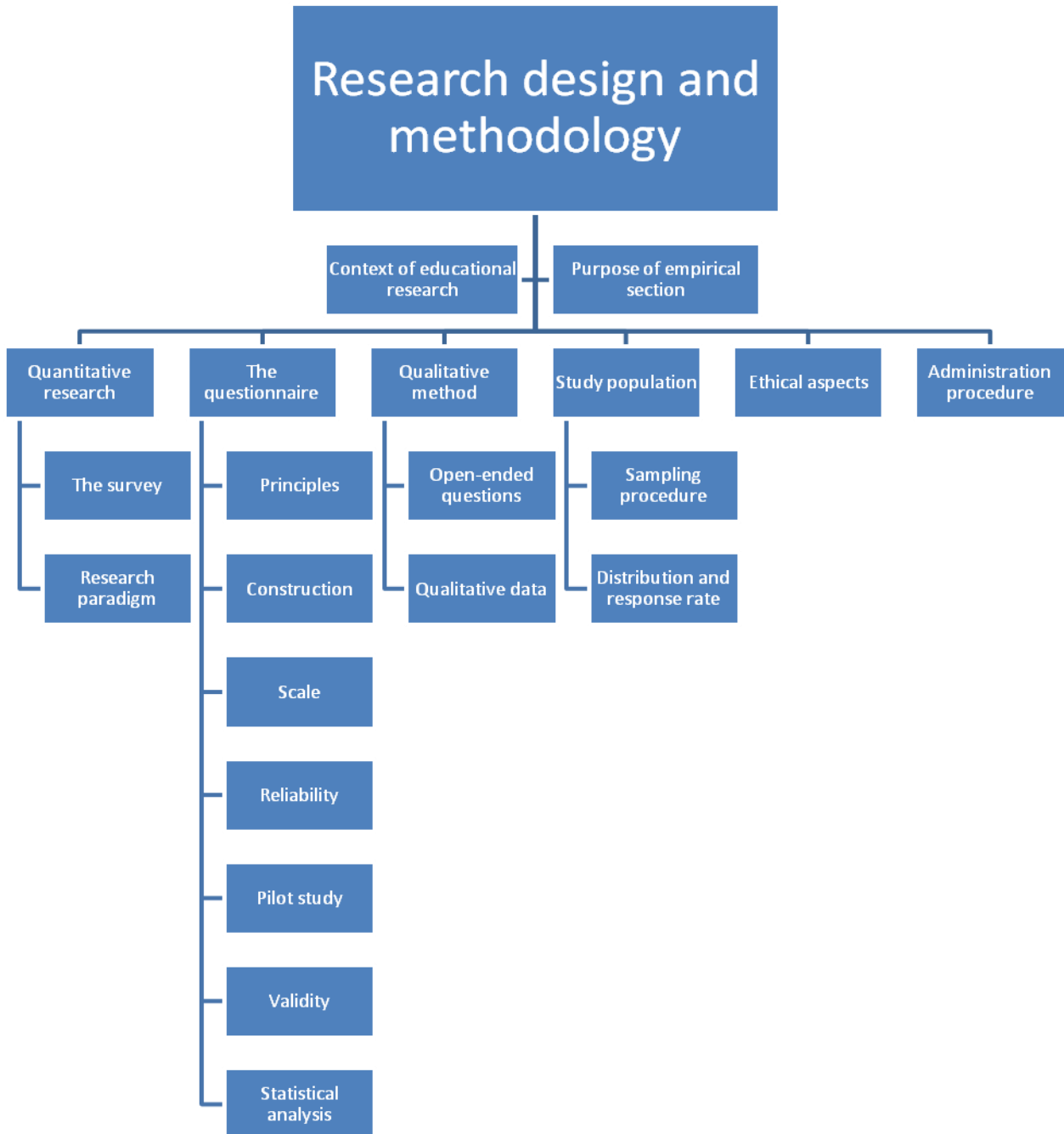
Figure 2.3: The status of parental involvement in education and within society

The influence of diversity on parental involvement in primary schools needs to be investigated further in order to find out how to deal with diversity issues in relation to education. Parental involvement is a starting point from where diversity can be investigated as it forms an integral part of education and has a significant influence on the education process. When diversity issues can be dealt with among parents, schools will be able to function better in the education process.

The literature overview in this chapter on diversity and parental involvement in education established a theoretical framework for the empirical section of this research report that will subsequently be dealt with in the following chapter.

CHAPTER 3

RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY



3.1 INTRODUCTION

In the previous chapter the two main aspects related to the focus of this research project, diversity and parental involvement, were discussed. There was an in-depth look into the influence that diversity has on parental involvement. The previous chapter forms a contextual and theoretical framework for this research project. Subsequently, this chapter will present the empirical section of this research.

In this chapter the methodology which is used in this research will be covered. A report on the procedures undertaken in carrying out this study as well as shortcomings experienced during the study is presented. The questions: how, where, what and why certain procedures were followed and decisions were made are answered in this chapter. A quantitative research design was chosen in order to address the research problem and associated research questions. The focus will be firstly on the context and specific aims of the research. The reasons for the choice of the measuring instrument will be explained next, after which the statistical methods used for this study will be examined. Lastly, the ethical aspects and administrative procedures of this research will be discussed.

3.2 THE CONTEXT OF EDUCATIONAL RESEARCH

When undertaking educational research one needs to take certain aspects into consideration. Educational researchers need to purge or clear themselves as far as possible of biases that may impair their objectivity to the topic of inquiry (Van der Westhuizen, Potgieter & Mahlomaholo, 2009:18; Morrison, 2007:21). Engelbrecht (1991:11) believes that educational research is a collective human activity through which a particular phenomenon or problem of reality is objectively studied in order to get a clear understanding of the problem, or to obtain answers to the questions. Yates (2004:15-35) presents the following claims for quality educational research:

- Educational research is measured by its contribution to learning.
- Educational research must make sense to be usable by teachers (or instructors or parents or the lay reader).
- Educational research must be scientifically-based research.

This research aims amongst other aspects to make a valuable contribution to the study field of education with a specific focus on parental involvement. It is with this frame of mind that this research project is undertaken.

3.3 PURPOSE OF EMPIRICAL SECTION

The purpose of the empirical section of this research is to describe the research design and methodology that is used in this research report. The process of collecting reliable and valid data for the research problem and related research problems will also be considered. The research questions inquired about the nature of diversity, established the responsibilities and expectations of parents and schools and determined the possible influence of diversity on parental involvement. Guidelines on how to manage diversity in parental involvement will also be developed as part of Chapter 5 of this research. The purpose of the empirical section included the following research themes to obtain the necessary data for this study:

- a description of the theoretical framework for the concept of diversity;
- an establishment of parents' responsibilities towards schools;
- an establishment of the expectations of schools in relation to parental involvement;
- determining the influence of aspects of diversity on parental involvement by means of an empirical investigation in a selection of schools; and
- developing guidelines on how to manage issues of diversity in order to improve parental involvement.

The purpose of the research is in accordance with the research problem (par. 1.1) and research aims (par. 1.3.2) and focussed on the assessment of the influence diversity has on parental involvement in schools. An analysis of the above-mentioned data facilitated the development of guidelines for the school management team to manage parental involvement amidst the manifestation of diversity in the school community.

3.4 QUANTITATIVE RESEARCH

The aim of any research design is to select and utilise the methods and techniques that the researcher considers imperative to yield a better attainment of the aims and objectives of the

study being conducted (Kalenga, 2005:47). According to Creswell (2003:47) it is mandatory that a specific research problem be solved through an appropriate research methodology.

A quantitative research method was considered relevant and appropriate by the researcher for this study. According to Thietart (2007:78) and Creswell (2005:573) quantitative research deals with statistical analysis and the description of numerical data to provide quantitative information. With quantitative methods, statistical analysis is usually undertaken and reported for discussions of the results (AERA, 2006:37).

Quantitative research has a number of core features (Morrison, 2007:22, 23):

- The relation between concept understanding, observation and measurement is central and is associated with the use of structured quantitative-based questionnaires.
- Quantitative research has to do, amongst other things, with causality and the measurement of variables.
- Findings can be generalised beyond the location of the research study.
- Educational research cannot be entirely value-free and the researcher acknowledges his role as an educator and school manager within the demarcated area of this research.
- The emphasis is on the respondent as the object of the research.

After careful consideration of the above core features of quantitative research, it was decided that it is the most relevant research method for this study. In this study, which deals with diversity and its influence on parental involvement, it is necessary to be able to establish what the respondents conceptualisation of diversity is before its influence on parental involvement can be determined. Furthermore, this research has to do with causality, i.e. the influence of diversity on parental involvement, and if done accurately can be generalised to similar situations elsewhere in society. The respondent's response is crucial to be able to understand the causality as explained above. This can be done with quantitative research and statistical analysis. An *empirical survey* is selected as a research method to investigate the research questions in this research.

3.4.1 The survey as research method

The researcher has chosen a *survey* as it is of value for quantitative research in order to establish comparisons and statistical relationships (Thiétart, 2007:173). According to Mouton (2001:152) a survey aims to provide a broad overview of a representative sample of a large population. A survey will also provide data on the extent of diversity within the study population and will determine how identified aspects of diversity influence parental involvement in the area of research.

3.4.1.1 Rationale and purpose

The rationale for selecting a quantitative research design and survey methodology for this research is that the data collected by means of a structured questionnaire will enable the researcher to determine the level of views and experiences of respondents in relation to specific aspects of the phenomenon under investigation in accordance to research aims 3 and 4 (par. 1.3.2).

Quantitative research is appropriate to answer questions about relationships and influences among measurable or comparable variables with the purpose of explaining, predicting, and controlling phenomena (Leedy & Ormrod, 2005:94). In order to investigate the relationship between diversity and parental involvement fieldwork was done in the education practice by means of a survey. The preceding explanations constitute the purpose and rationale for using the survey as a quantitative research design.

3.4.1.2 Strengths and limitations

High measurement reliability and high construct validity of a quantitative research method can be seen as its major strength (Mouton, 2001:153). Other strengths of a quantitative research method can include, among others, time saving, easy to administer and can be restricted to a reasonable size (Maboe, 2005:88). A lack of depth and insider perspective that leads to surface level analysis and data being context specific can be seen as specific limitations of this type of research method (Mouton, 2001:153). Other limitations can be incomplete questionnaires, low response rates and wrong interpretation by respondents (Leedy & Ormrod, 2005:185). Leedy and Ormrod (2001:223) give the following strategies that could be employed to minimise the occurrence of possible shortcomings in a survey:

- Clear and uniform instructions must be given to respondents for the completion of questionnaires.

- Questionnaire items must be scrutinised for contents that promote or contain bias, e.g. presuppositions and prejudice.
- Observational factors that describe the contextual situation of the data need to be reported.
- Follow-up actions to non-respondents for the completion of questionnaires need to be made.

All of the above strategies were employed in order to make sure that data were handled appropriately and correctly. A specific limitation of this research is the literacy levels of some of the School Governing Body members, especially at the farm schools. This study deals with schools in a rural area where literacy levels in some regions are low. In order to deal with this problem, principals were asked to help with the distribution and explanation of questionnaires where there was a need for it. This strategy will improve interpretation of the questions and improve the response rate of questionnaires.

3.4.2 The research paradigm

Paradigms support the methodological predilection (Teddlie & Tashakkori, 2009:98). Prejudice and bias can be depleted and minimalised when working from the perspective of a specific paradigm. The appropriate paradigm is important for any research as it assists the researcher, because it strengthens the data gathering and analysis process of the research (Nieuwenhuis, 2007:66).

The research paradigm that is used for this study is the positivistic perspective. According to Nieuwenhuis (2007:53) “the positivistic perspective is based on the ontological assumption that the social world is external to individual cognition and is a real world made up of hard, tangible and relatively fixed phenomena”. Knowledge can be revealed through scientific method and this knowledge can provide explanations for things that happen in the world (Nieuwenhuis, 2007:55). The social world is made up of human constructed entities that can be described (Nieuwenhuis, 2007:54). The positivistic paradigm has the following characteristics (Teddlie & Tashakkori, 2009:86):

- Data is objective with a dualism or separateness between the knower and the known.
- Inquiry is value-free.
- Reality is single, tangible and fragmentable.

- There are real causes that occur before or simultaneously with effects.
- Time and context free generalisations are possible.

The positivistic paradigm was chosen as a research design as it is best suited for this research. Diversity is a reality that is understandable and apprehendable and can be dealt with objectively. The data that will be collected and analysed is objective and value free as respondents and data will not be interfered with when distributing, collecting or interpreting the data. This research will also help to develop strategies about the influence of diversity on parental involvement which can be generalised to a fair degree, especially in other areas within a similar locality and environment and with similar circumstances.

3.5 THE QUESTIONNAIRE

A questionnaire was selected to collect data from respondents about diversity and parental involvement. A structured questionnaire was developed in order to obtain the data from the study population. A structured questionnaire usually contains specific responses that respondents have to choose from without the respondent having to give answers of their own.

The questionnaire was developed in alignment with the theoretical overview (chap. 2) and the research aims (par. 1.3.2 and 3.3) of the study. The questionnaire was also developed by taking into consideration existing questionnaires about aspects of diversity, e.g. those developed by Van Vuuren (2008), Gordon (2005), Molefe and Louw (2004), Ngobese (2004), Gardenswartz, *et al.* (2003), Department of Education (2002), Bean *et al.* (2001), Cross (2001) and Gardenswartz and Rowe (1998). Question items concerning parental involvement were based on the research of The Council of Chief State School Officers (CCSSO) (2006), Maboe (2005), Prinsloo (2005), Barnard (2004), Kotzé (1997), Monareng (1996), Neethling (1995) and Cotton and Wikelund (1989).

According to Monteith (2009(b):11) questionnaires are suitable to obtain the following kinds of information:

- Biographical information about respondents.
- Typical behaviour in relation to certain aspects.
- Opinions, beliefs and convictions about a certain topic.

All of the above were used in constructing the questionnaire. The questionnaire items were developed to include responses of biographical information as well as general information about the schools. There were also items that evaluated respondents' views and experiences of diversity and indicators of parental involvement. Closed form questions were provided so that respondents could choose a particular response from a four-point Likert type scale.

3.5.1 Principles for developing the questionnaire

The standard principles or guidelines when constructing a questionnaire were taken into account in compiling the questionnaire. The following principles were taken into account as suggested by Monteith (2009(b):12); Thietart (2007: 174) and Leedy & Ormrod (2005:190-192):

- The principle of economy so that the questionnaire only solicit information essential to the research project.
- The use of simple, clear and unambiguous language in order to communicate exactly what is expected from the respondent without making unwarranted assumptions.
- Question formulation was thoroughly attended to.
- Counter questions were used for consistency of responses.
- Clear and simple instructions for completion of the questionnaire.
- The questionnaire was developed to look attractive and professional in order to be clear and easy to follow.
- The theoretical framework (chap. 2) and research aims (par. 1.3.2) were considered as the parameters to develop the questionnaire.

The questionnaire was set out in different sections that grouped related question items together for it to be easy to follow. Each section was introduced by means of a phrase presented in bold typing to indicate the start of the section. At the end of the questionnaire a summary of the different sections were given in order to give an overview of it.

3.5.2 Construction of the questionnaire

During the construction of the questionnaire questions were targeted that would maximise the cooperation of respondents. The questionnaire was made up of four sections and was outlined as follows:

- **Section A: Biographical information (Questions 1 – 8)**

The purpose of questions in this section was to obtain biographical information about the respondents in order to classify them according to related diversity aspects. The biographical information contextualises the respondents' responses to the questions in the other sections.

- **Section B: General information about the school (Questions 9 – 17)**

The aim of this section of the questionnaire was to collect general information about the school setting, the location and surrounding conditions of the school. This section will provide necessary background information to responses.

- **Section C: Conceptualisation of diversity (Questions 18.1 – 19.9)**

Section C of the questionnaire aims to gather information about respondents' conceptualisation and knowledge of diversity issues and the different aspects related to this phenomenon.

- **Section D: Indicators of parental involvement (Questions 20.1 – 24.9)**

In this section the extent to which parents carry out their duties and responsibilities towards the school was investigated. It also aimed at obtaining information about methods that are used by the school to improve and develop parental involvement. Lastly it also attempted to collect information on aspects of diversity that influence parental involvement.

3.5.3 Scale

The questionnaire was constructed by using the Likert type scale. The Likert scale is useful when data need to be evaluated or quantified in a research survey (Leedy & Ormrod, 2001:197). It is also useful when behaviour, attitude or other phenomena need to be evaluated on a continuum (Leedy & Ormrod, 2005:185). Likert scales use the method of summated ratings and are constructed by assembling a number of statements where half the responses express favourable attitudes and half unfavourable attitudes about the object. It is

important that these statements constitute a representative sample of all possible opinions (Monteith, 2009(b):10).

The scale used in this study for respondents to indicate their reaction to the statements with regard to diversity and parental involvement was a four-point rating scale, ranging from no extent to great extent. The following table shows an example of the scale that was constructed for the questionnaire:

Table 3.1: Rating scale for questionnaire

No extent	Little extent	Some extent	Great extent
1	2	3	4

A rating scale as used above allows the researcher to obtain fairly accurate assessments of respondents' beliefs and opinions (Monteith, 2009(b):13). Accuracy and consistency are important themes in research. Hence, the reliability and validity of this research will be described in the following sections.

3.5.4 Reliability

Reliability refers to the accuracy of the data that are gathered in relation to the research (Leedy & Ormrod, 2001:31). The reliability of measurement is the extent to which the measurement yields consistent results when the characteristics being measured have not changed over time and are presented in different forms or situations and by different researchers (Ellis, 2009:13; Monteith, 2009(b):5; Leedy & Ormrod, 2005:93). The goal of developing reliability measures is to minimise the influence of chance or other variables unrelated to the intent of the measure (Monteith, 2009(b):5). The theoretical framework based on the literature study (chap. 2) that was compiled served as the basis for constructing the questionnaire. These measures increased the reliability and accuracy of the questionnaire. Subsequently, these measures also increased the consistency of the research project.

The Cronbach Alpha coefficient is another way of measuring the reliability of the results. Coefficients measure the internal cohesion of a scale without necessitating any dividing or duplicating of items. Cronbach Alpha is a coefficient that measures the internal coherence of a scale that has been constructed from a group of items (Drucker-Godard *et al.*, 2001:203). "The Cronbach Alpha coefficient provides a reliable estimate for items not scored

dichotomously but for a measure that is composed of items with values other than 0 and 1, thus for items with multiple scores such as attitude scales where for example item values may range from one through five or seven” (Monteith, 2009(b):7). The closer the values of the score is to 1 the stronger the internal coherence or consistency of the scale (Sekaran & Bougie, 2010:324). Values equal to 0.7 and above are generally accepted as being reliable (Drucker-Godard *et al*, 2001:203). Items that are homogenous will result in a higher reliability estimate.

The Cronbach Alpha coefficient for the questionnaire was calculated for each group of questions in order to illustrate the internal consistency for each subsection. It also served another purpose in indicating the level of measuring the same construct validity. In the different subsections the general coefficient was higher than the acceptable, which is 0.7 and above.

3.5.5 Pilot study

A pilot study was done in one primary school to ensure that the different sections of the questionnaire as well as the formulation of the questions were feasible, reasonable and understandable. The main purpose of the pilot study was to increase the reliability and validity of the data. The respondents were requested to comment critically by means of recommendations on the relevance of questions and the overall format and construction of the questionnaire. The results of the pilot study were thoughtfully examined and aptly applied. The questionnaire was adjusted accordingly to ensure comprehensiveness, relevance and clearness to the measurement of the data.

3.5.6 Validity

Validity is the extent to which a measuring instrument measures what it is actually intended to measure (Leedy & Ormrod, 2005:92). Validity also refers to the accuracy, meaningfulness and credibility of a research project to allow the researcher to draw meaningful and defensible conclusions from the captured data (Leedy & Ormrod, 2005:97). Monteith (2009(b):2) states that validity is a judgement of appropriateness of a measure for specific inferences or decisions that result from the score generated.

Internal validity allows the researcher to draw valid conclusions from the research. The internal validity as well as face validity for this research was secured by means of a pilot test to verify and adjust the different questionnaire items to measure what it is supposed to

measure (Monteith, 2009(b):5). The ethics committee of the North West University approved the research in order to make sure that it is in compliance with the university's ethical code. The Statistical Consultation Services (SCS) of the North-West University's Potchefstroom Campus also agreed to the questions of the questionnaire which further enhanced the face validity.

The content validity was insured by means of the theoretical framework discussed in chapter 2 of the research. A critical, objective reader was also asked to authenticate the information as it was presented by the researcher. The construct validity was guaranteed by means of confirmatory factor analysis. External validity was guaranteed by selecting all the primary schools in the specific area according to the criteria of the research aims (par. 1.3.2).

3.5.7 Statistical analysis

Descriptive statistical techniques were applied to organise, analyse and interpret data. Measurements were recorded as scores on a four-point Likert scale. Data from the questionnaire was statistically interpreted and analysed in collaboration with the Statistical Consultation Services of the North-West University, Potchefstroom Campus. The statistical analysis in this research was done in three stages:

- In the initial stage, descriptive statistics in graphical and numerical ways were utilised to present and analyse the gathered data of this research. No data reduction was done in this initial stage. Two-way frequency tables or cross tabulations were used to explore response patterns of different subgroups (Maree, 2009:185). Central tendency measures (e.g. the mean) were applied to describe the distribution of responses and to identify characteristic values. The spread of the distribution (e.g. the standard deviation) was described by numerical variances to indicate the extent to which data measures tend to cluster close together or are widely spread over the range of values (Maree, 2009:188). Individual or raw scores which points to a relative position in the data distribution were also employed to indicate how far the individual score is either below or above the midpoint of a 4 point Likert scale, namely 2.5.
- The second stage ensures the reliability of subscales (constructs) by calculating the Cronbach Alpha coefficient while the construct validity was assured by performing a confirmatory factor analysis. To determine whether a factor

analysis may be appropriate, Kaiser's Measure of Sample Adequacy (MSA), which gives an indication of the inter-correlations among variables, were computed (Tabachnick & Fidell, 2001) for each confirmatory factor. Guidelines according to Hair, Andersen, Tatham and Black (1998) were used to confirm that the MSA's were appropriate.

- In the final stage, effect sizes were calculated to determine if practical significant differences between different aspects of diversity exists. Since the study population is an availability sample, interpretation of results was based on effect sizes. Interpretation of data in this stage was done according to Cohen's effect sizes (Cohen, 1988). Effect sizes indicate the practical significance, specifically the extent to which a difference is large enough to have an effect in practice (Ellis & Steyn, 2003:1). The following guidelines were used for d-values regarding differences between means: small effect: $d = |0.2|$; medium effect (noticeable with the naked eye): $d = |0.5|$; large effect (practically significant): $d \geq |0.8|$ (Cohen, 1988). P-values were reported to ensure the completeness of the data. A small p -value (eg. smaller than 0.05) is considered as sufficient evidence that the results are statistically significant (Ellis & Steyn, 2003:1).

3.6 QUALITATIVE METHOD

In addition to the quantitative research, a qualitative measurement was also used. The rationale behind the decision to add two open qualitative questions for the purpose of this research is to (Anderson, 2004:213):

- elucidate more comprehensive responses,
- provide additional information,
- allow for unexpected developments,
- clarify underlying logic, and to
- explain distinctive circumstances, approaches, opinions and practices of different respondents.

Quantitative and qualitative methods of measurement and the accompanying analyses are compatible and complementary to each other in a research design and are considered as an appropriate measure to meet the particular demands of the nature of the research in its full

complexity (De Vos *et al.*, 2005:359, 360). The qualitative method involves the inclusion of supplementary open-ended questions to some of the structured scale questions of the questionnaire.

3.6.1 Open-ended questions

Open-ended questions were integrated as an important part of the questionnaire, because the closed-ended structure of questions cannot probe and elaborate sufficiently into the respondents' views, opinions and experiences. Open-ended questions obtain further responses that are embedded in the unique words and expressions of the respondents (Gall *et al.*, 1996:289, 290). The purpose of the empirical research is to determine the influence of diversity on parental involvement in primary schools in the Maquassi Hills Education area of the North West Province. This empirical research supports the incorporation of open-ended questions to discover the respondents' logic, reasoning and frame of reference. Open-ended questions also permit creativity, self-expression and the provision of richness of detail (Neuman, 1997:241). Neuman (1997:241) further supports the mixing of closed and open-form questions to reduce the disadvantages of the question form as measuring instrument.

3.6.2 Qualitative data

The analysis of responses from open-ended questions in the questionnaire was done according to a qualitative response analysis procedure as recommended by Gall *et al.* (1996:322) and De Vos *et al.* (2005:334). The analysis procedure entails the following:

- Managing and organising of data.
- Evaluation of responses.
- Generating categories, themes and patterns.
- Searching for alternative explanations.
- Writing the report.

The process of analysis is rather like a circular approach than a fixed linear approach which implies that the above-mentioned procedures are viewed as guidelines and not as rigid prescriptions (De Vos *et al.*, 2005:334). For the purpose of this research project respondents' views will be taken into account in order to understand what their way of thinking is and to appreciate and value the problems they might have in relation to diversity and its influence on parental involvement. The information obtained through qualitative data will help to improve the researcher's perception of the respondents' opinion about the related topic.

3.7 STUDY POPULATION

According to Creswell a population refers to a large group of people from which trends in attitudes, opinions, behaviours or characteristics need to be identified (Creswell, 2005:52). The population in this research refers to all the people to whom the research relates or is subject to the research interest, i.e. all educators and parents of primary schools.

3.7.1 Study population and sampling procedure

The population may be all the individuals of a particular type. The study population of this research consists of all the public primary schools as part of the constituency of the Maquassi Hills Education area, Dr Kenneth Kaunda Education District within the North West Province of South Africa. When the study was started originally there were 41 primary schools in this specific area. Since then 3 schools closed down, thus bringing the total of primary schools in the area to 38, of which 21 are farm schools, 12 are township schools and 5 are town schools.

Sampling refers to a proportion of a population selected for observation and analysis (Monteith, 2009(a):1; Maboe, 2005:93; Creswell, 2005:92). Sampling forms an important part of the research process because the sample has a substantial influence on the significance and substance of the research results. By observing the characteristics of the sample one can make certain inferences about the characteristics of the population (Maboe, 2005:93). A good sample is one that is representative of the population from which it is selected (Monteith, 2009(a):1). An availability sampling procedure was selected because members of the population will not be randomly selected for this research (Leedy & Ormrod, 2005:206; Maree, 2009:176).

Purposive sampling, of respondents that were available, was used in this study. The school principal of each school was purposefully selected as respondent because of his/her role as education leader and manager of the school. A total number of 38 school principals were respondents that represented the views of the schools. Parents and educators as elected or co-opted members of the School Governing Bodies (SGB) of the schools were also purposefully selected as respondents because they *ex officio* represent the parent-teacher community of each school. Between 3 and 4 parents and educators (3 per farm school and 4 per town or township school) were selected as respondents to represent the parent-teacher community at each school, which indicate a total of 134 respondents. Thus, bringing the sample population to a number of 172. The selection of all schools in the demarcated area of

investigation and the purposive selection of the principal and members of the SGB's imply that no further sampling procedure was required. An outline of the purposive sampling procedure is illustrated in table 3.2.

Table 3.2: Purposive sample of the study population

Schools	Principals	SGB Members (Parents & educators)	Study population
38	38	134	172

3.7.2 Distribution and response rate

It was reasonably unproblematic to collect all the questionnaires. The researcher made use of the following strategy to distribute the questionnaires. The researcher met with all the primary school principals at scheduled principal's meetings and explained the process and purpose of the study as well as gave information about the questionnaire. Any concerns and questions of the principals were dealt with accordingly. Principals were also asked for assistance with the distribution and collection of the questionnaires from the relevant parties. The questionnaires were distributed to each school principal accompanied by a cover letter (Annexure G) that explained the purpose of the research as well as information on completing it.

Questionnaires were designed to be completed individually and anonymously by each respondent. In order to increase the response rate of the questionnaires an appeal was made to the school principals and SGB chairpersons to distribute and return the completed questionnaires before or on a predetermined target date to the Area Project Office (APO) where it was collected by the researcher. To maximise the return of the questionnaires, respondents were reminded beforehand in writing and telephonically about completing and submitting the questionnaire.

Although this method of distributing and collecting increased the response rate of the questionnaires, there were a number of problems in the distribution, completion and submission process. These problems included the following:

- Non-attendance of meetings by principals.
- Respondents didn't complete and return the questionnaires within the timeframe.

- The distance of some schools from the Project Area Office as well as travel related problems made submission difficult.
- Unwillingness by some schools to participate or cooperate with the researcher.
- Low literacy levels of some respondents.
- Non-compliance by some schools.
- Incomplete returned questionnaires.

Table 3.3 indicates both the distribution and response rate of the questionnaires.

Table 3.3: Distribution and response rate of questionnaires

Questionnaires sent out	Questionnaires returned	% of questionnaires returned
172	135	78,5

3.8 ETHICAL ASPECTS

According to AERA (2006:39) reporting of research is expected to reflect the highest standards of ethical practise both with respect to human participants and with respect to the execution of professional conduct and judgement in research. AERA (2006:39) also states further that reporting should be accurate and free from falsification or fabrication of data or results; reflect the work of the researcher with appropriate attribution to others; be free of plagiarism; and be accessible to be subject to verification, replication, or further analysis. In adherence with the above statements and the regulations of the North-West University, all the relevant ethical aspects were accounted for in this research. The following ethical aspects in relation to this research were adhered to (AERA, 2006:39-40; Leedy & Ormrod, 2001:107):

- Consent and approval for the research was obtained from the Area Project Office Manager of the Maquassi Hills Education area.
- Informed consent was obtained from the respondents through an *Informed consent form* (Annexures E and F) that provided a clear description of the nature and purpose of the study.
- The right to privacy and confidentiality of respondents was assured by means of a written statement at the beginning of the questionnaire.

- Caution was exercised so that no respondent experienced any unnecessary stress or embarrassment during the research.
- All findings were reported in an honest and clear manner and no information was withheld that could have resulted in bias.

The sensitivity of the subject of research, i.e. diversity issues in relation to education, was also taken into account in conducting the research (Van Vuuren, 2008:215). Therefore, all the respondents' anonymity and confidentiality were guaranteed at all times. The researcher also made sure that all the respondents' rights and privacy were protected during the study. Interruption in their personal and professional life was minimised to a large extent because of the method in which the questionnaires were distributed. The necessary ethical clearance was given to the researcher by the North-West University's (NWU) ethical committee. The NWU ethical committee made sure that the research was done within the ethical measures set out by the university's ethical code.

3.9 ADMINISTRATIVE PROCEDURES

Permission to conduct research in the sample of primary schools in the Maquassi Hills Education area of the Kenneth Kaunda District in the North West Province was requested from the APO manager, Mr. A.J. Engelbrecht. A copy of the questionnaire was also included with the letter that requested permission from the Area manager. One certified copy of the letter of permission was sent to each of the identified schools by the Area office before the questionnaires were distributed. A cover letter (Annexures B) in which the nature and purpose of the research were explained and with clear instructions on how to complete the questionnaire was provided with each questionnaire.

The returned questionnaires were collected from the Maquassi Hills Area Project Office (APO) postal box system. It was returned to the researcher in envelopes that were provided to schools. After the collection the questionnaires were then submitted to the Statistical Consultation Services (SCS) of the North West University, Potchefstroom Campus for capturing and processing of the gathered data. The statistical calculations were done by using appropriate statistical software programmes (SAS, 2005a & b).

3.10 SUMMARY

This chapter outlined the design of the empirical section on the influence of diversity on parental involvement in primary schools. The context of educational research as well as the research aims was highlighted for the research project.

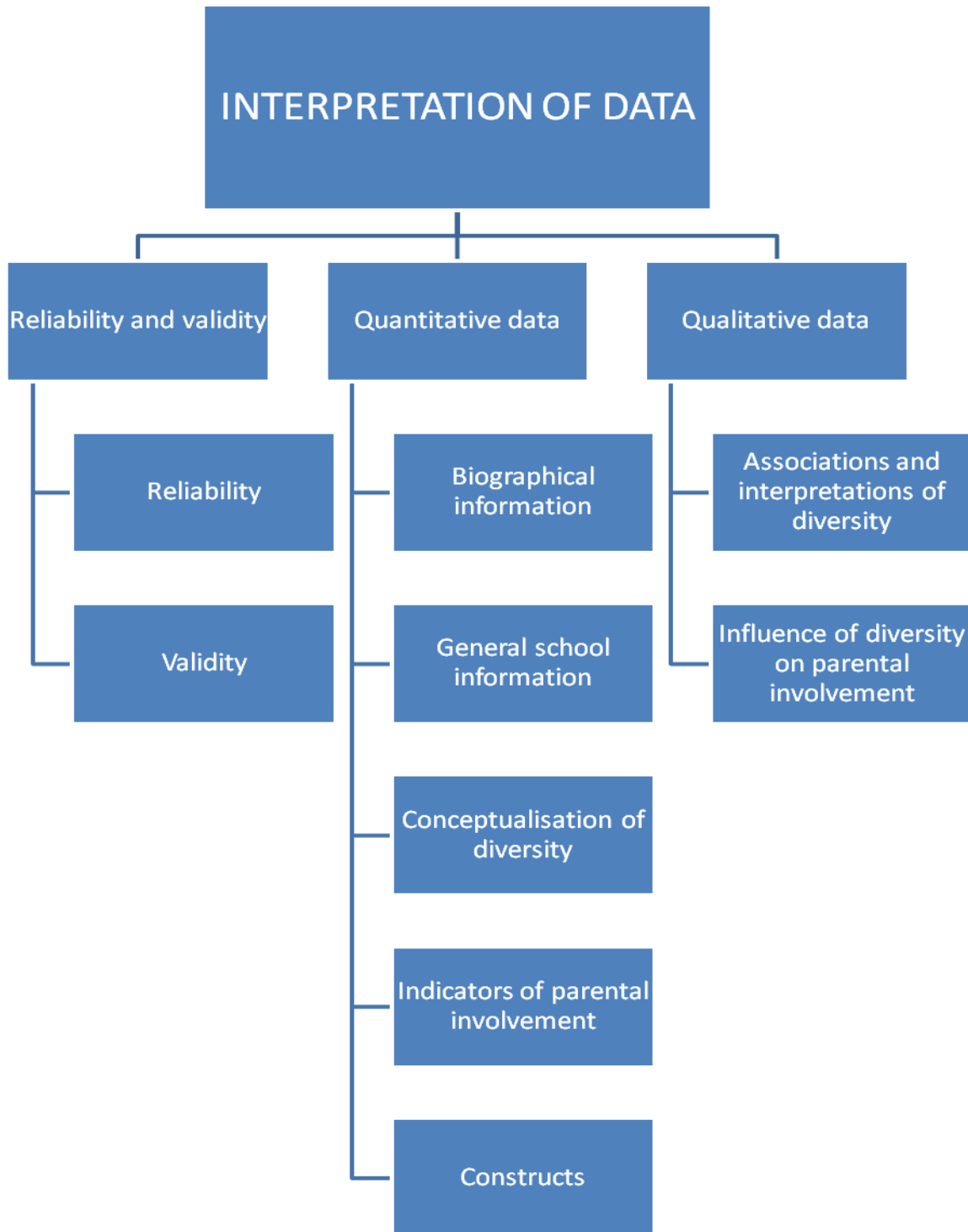
A quantitative research design and specifically a survey was selected as the appropriate method to gather information for the research. This was done within the framework of the positivistic paradigm. It was followed by a discussion on the choice of questionnaire and means of obtaining data for the study. This section also included the principles and format of the questionnaire, aspects of reliability and validity, as well as the basis on which the statistical analysis of the research project will be conducted. A qualitative research section was also incorporated into the questionnaire to make sure that the respondents' views and perspectives on diversity and parental involvement could be included and utilised in the data collecting process.

The following section dealt with the formation of the study population and the sampling procedure as well as the method in which the questionnaires were distributed and the response that was received from the respondents. The chapter concluded with a look into the ethical considerations pertaining to this study and the practical, administrative procedures that were followed in conducting the research.

Whereas this chapter covered the methodology of the research project, the next chapter will discuss the statistical information that emerged from the questionnaires that were returned by respondents. Subsequently, the acquired data will be analysed and interpreted in correlation with the topic of the research project, i.e. the influence of diversity on parental involvement in primary schools.

CHAPTER 4

INTERPRETATION OF DATA



4.1 INTRODUCTION

The aim of this chapter is to analyse and interpret the data collected by means of the questionnaire as discussed in chapter 3 (par. 3.5). In the first section of this chapter the level of reliability and validity is discussed. The following two sections involve the interpretation of data on the biographical information of respondents and the general information about the schools that the questionnaire was distributed to. These sections provide the necessary background information about respondents as well as the surrounding conditions of the school.

In sections C and D respondents' conceptualisation of diversity and indicators of parental involvement are analysed. Data on aspects of diversity that influence parental involvement are also examined in the last section. The interpretation of mean scores, frequencies and rank ordering are also provided and discussed at each subsection. After this descriptive stage, the different question items were analysed to identify constructs in relation to the research theme. Constructs were also ranked to understand their significance in the research.

Two open-ended questions also form part of the questionnaire and are analysed separately using the qualitative methodology. The chapter concludes with a summary on the contents of the chapter.

4.2 Reliability and validity

4.2.1 Reliability

The reliability of a questionnaire or test refers to the consistency of scores obtained by the same respondents when they are addressed with the same question items, but on different occasions, or under other variable conditions (Anastasi & Urbina, 1997:84). Reliability refers to the accuracy of the data that are gathered in relation to the research (Leedy & Ormrod, 2001:31).

The Cronbach Alpha coefficient is a method of measuring the reliability of question items in relation to constructs of a questionnaire. Values equal to 0.7 and above are generally accepted as being reliable (Drucker-Godard *et al.*, 2001:203). Table 4.1 below illustrates the n-values for each construct of the questionnaire in relation to its question items.

Table 4.1: Cronbach Alpha coefficients for constructs of the questionnaire

n	Construct	Cronbach Alpha coefficient
111	Concept view	0.85
120	Concept association	0.93
124	Extent of parental involvement	0.93
130	Advancement of parental involvement	0.86
128	Opportunities for parental involvement	0.91
125	Information regarding parents	0.94
123	Aspects of diversity that influence parental involvement	0.93

The different subsections or constructs of the questionnaire yielded high scores with the general Cronbach Alpha coefficient ranging between 0.85 and 0.94 which indicates a high level of reliability for each construct.

4.2.2 Validity

Validity is the extent to which a measuring instrument measures what it is actually intended to measure (Leedy & Ormrod, 2005:92). The validity of a questionnaire relates to what it measures and how well it does so (Anastasi & Urbina, 1997:113). It has a high level of validity if it measures what it is supposed to measure.

A construct, concept or a theoretical construction is aimed at organising and making sense out of our environment. The main purpose is to use observed variables to describe a construct or concept which is an unobservable variable, e.g. diversity (Pedhazur & Schmelkin, 1991:86). Construct validity is the extent to which a questionnaire or test measures a theoretical concept or trait.

The Confirmatory factor analysis was used to determine the construct validity for each subsection of the questionnaire. To determine whether a factor analysis may be appropriate for the questionnaire, Kaiser's measure of sample adequacy (MSA) was computed for each confirmatory factor. Kaiser's measure of sample adequacy (MSA) gives an indication of the inter correlations among variables (par.3.5.7). An MSA of 0.5 is an indication that the data is appropriate for factor analysis. A variance retained of more than 50% was considered to make the data reduction sufficient. The final communalities indicate the range of low and

high contributions that each variable is making to the specific factor. The results of the factor analysis are presented in table 4.2 below.

Table 4.2: Confirmatory factor analysis

Construct	Variance retained (%)	MSA	Final communalities
Concept view	59.74	0.83	0.47 - 0.76
Concept association	65.56	0.89	0.52 - 0.76
Extent of parental involvement	64.89	0.91	0.57 - 0.71
Advancement of parental involvement	64.91	0.83	0.51 - 0.74
Opportunities for parental involvement	65.13	0.86	0.39 - 0.79
Information regarding parents	67.13	0.91	0.60 - 0.75
Aspects of diversity that influence parental involvement	65.54	0.89	0.56 - 0.77

The significance of the above Confirmatory factor analysis is the fact that it demonstrates the high level of construct validity of question items in being homogenous in relation to each other. It also illustrates that the questionnaire measures what it is suppose to measure.

4.3 RESULTS: QUANTITATIVE DATA

Descriptive statistics are used to understand on what level the respondents consider each of the question items. All the question items of each question were discussed because not much research has been done on the specific topic. Each question was examined to determine if the question items constitute a theme related construct by means of the Cronbach Alpha coefficient and a factor analysis.

Quantitative data collected by this research regarding the influence of diversity on parental involvement in primary schools in the Maquassi Hills Education area, as part of the Kenneth Kaunda district of the North West Province, are presented and interpreted in the following sections.

4.3.1 Section A: Biographical information

Section A, question items 1-8, aimed to gather information of a biographical nature about the respondents in order to identify certain aspects of diversity (par. 4.3.3). The number of questionnaires that were distributed to respondents was 172. A total of 135 questionnaires were returned which indicates a return rate of 78.5% (par. 3.7.2). Not all the information on each questionnaire was completed in full, hence the difference in total responses at each question item. Table 4.3 summarises the responses of section A, question items 1-8.

Table 4.3: Biographical information

Item no.	Question	Frequency	Percentage (%)
1	Gender		
	Male	56	41.79
	Female	78	58.21
	Total (respondents)	134	100%
	<i>NR</i>	1	
2	Current position		
	Principal	33	25.19
	Deputy-Principal	1	0.76
	SMT Member	8	6.11
	Teacher	50	38.17
	School Governing Body	27	20.61
	Parent	12	9.16
Total (respondents)	131	100%	
	<i>NR</i>	4	
3	Population group		
	Black	94	70.15
	White	37	27.61
	Coloured	3	2.24
	Asian	0	0.00
	Other	0	0.00
	Total (respondents)	134	100%
	<i>NR</i>	1	
4	Age group in years		
	21-30	14	10.37
	31-40	36	26.67
	41-50	55	40.74
	51-60	25	18.52
	60+	5	3.70
	Total (respondents)	135	100%
	<i>NR</i>	0	
5	Home language		
	English	2	1.49
	Setswana	71	52.99
	Afrikaans	41	30.59
	Other	20	14.93
	Total (respondents)	134	100%
	<i>NR</i>	1	

Item no.	Question	Frequency	Percentage (%)
6	Level of education / training		
	No formal education	3	2.27
	Primary school education	21	15.91
	High school education	21	15.91
	Tertiary education: Certificate		2.27
	Tertiary education: Diploma	43	32.58
	Tertiary education: Degree	30	22.73
	Tertiary education: Hons	9	6.81
	Tertiary education: Masters	0	0.00
	Tertiary education: PhD	2	1.52
Total (respondents)	132	100%	
	<i>NR</i>	3	
7	Years experience in position		
	Not applicable	17	12.78
	1-3 years	17	12.78
	4-6 years	21	15.79
	7+ years	78	58.65
	Total (respondents)	133	100%
	<i>NR</i>	2	
8	Current socio-economic status		
	High income	4	3.25
	Middle income	81	65.86
	Low income	38	30.89
	Total (respondents)	123	100%
		<i>NR</i>	12

NR = No Response

An analysis and interpretation of the biographical data according to table 4.1 can be described as:

- **Gender** (Question 1)

There is an acceptable representation of male and female respondents, with female respondents being 58.21% and male respondents 41.79%. A reason for the fact that there are more female respondents can be that there are usually more female educators per school than male educators. The difference in the responses from male and females should not have any significant influence on the data collected and hence, the results of this research. Based on this data, it is accepted for this research that the respondents were satisfactorily represented in relation to gender.

- **Current position** (Question 2)

This question illustrates that most principals participated in the survey, being 33 out of a total of 38 schools (par 3.7.1). Only one deputy principal participated in the survey, which can be a direct result of the fact that most of the schools do not have such a position because of its total number of learners (question 9) and the survey being done in a rural environment. The results for this question item may differ in urban surroundings where there are schools with a larger learner enrolment.

- **Population group** (Question 3)

The different population groupings of the area in which the survey was done is well represented in the results. From the responses, 70.15% indicated that they are black and 27.61% indicated that they are white. These figures correlate to some extent with the population compilation of South Africa and are thus accepted as representative of the South African population for this study.

- **Age group in years** (Question 4)

The results demonstrate that most of the respondents in the survey were older than 40 years of age. The reason for this can be that there is a growing concern with an ageing workforce in relation to education. Educators that are part of management are usually experienced, thus the reason for the high relative age (Question 7). It also reveals that most parents of primary school learners fall in this age group.

- **Home language** (Question 5)

The results show that two of the official languages of the province and specifically the area, in which the survey was done, Setswana and Afrikaans, are well represented. English as a home language is not widely used. Other languages that were specified in the questionnaire (total number of respondents per language in brackets) are Sesotho (9), isiXhosa (3), isiZulu (1) and Shona (1). There were 6 respondents that didn't indicate which other home language they are using.

- **Level of education / training** (Question 6)

This question produced a whole range of results. Most of the respondents that participated in the survey have a further qualification. The reason for this can be that most of the respondents were teachers, who should have a formal tertiary qualification in order to be working in the teaching profession. More than 20% of respondents have no formal education or only primary school education, which can be a direct result of the rural environment in which the survey was done (Question 17). These responses may be recorded by the parent component of respondents.

- **Years experience in position** (Question 7)

The results in this question reveal that most educators are experienced in the profession. These figures correlate with the relative high age of the respondents as indicated in Question 4.

- **Current socio-economic status** (Question 8)

Very few respondents (3.25%) indicated that they fall in the high income group, while most respondents indicated that they are part of the middle income group. This is a relative subjective question as opinions may differ between respondents as to what the differences in income groups imply. Most educators indicated that they were part of the middle income group. The largest percentage, almost 31%, of respondents falling into the low income category can also be attributed to the fact that the survey was done in rural surroundings (Question 15) characterised by socio-economic challenges.

4.3.2 Section B: General information about the school

The aim of section B, question items 9-17, was to collect general information about the school's location and surrounding conditions of the school community in order to get some background information about the respondents' responses. Table 4.4 summarises the responses of section B, question items 9-17.

Table 4.4: General information about the school

Item no.	Question	Frequency	Percentage (%)
9	Number of learners		
	<100	29	21.64
	101-200	27	20.15
	201-300	6	4.48
	301-400	11	8.21
	401-500	18	13.43
	501-600	0	0.00
	601-700	6	4.48
	701-800	4	2.98
	800+	33	24.63
	Total (respondents)	134	100%
	<i>NR</i>	1	
10	Medium of instruction		
	Afrikaans	33	31.43
	English	36	34.28
	Setswana	18	17.14
	Dual medium	11	10.48
	Parallel medium	4	3.81
	Other	3	2.86
	Total (respondents)	105	100%
	<i>NR</i>	30	
11	Number of educators		
	<5	38	28.36
	6-10	27	20.15
	11-15	14	10.45
	16-20	17	12.68
	21+	38	28.36
	Total (respondents)	134	100%
	<i>NR</i>	1	
12	Number of School Governing Body members		
	<2	7	5.34
	3-4	28	21.37
	5-6	33	25.19
	6+	63	48.09
		Total (respondents)	131
	<i>NR</i>	4	
13	General style of leadership		
	Democratic and accommodating	108	82.44
	Autocratic and impersonal	0	0.00
	A combination of the 2 above	23	17.56
		Total (respondents):	131
	<i>NR</i>	4	
14	General school climate		
	Inviting and friendly	117	88.64
	Unapproachable and hostile	3	2.27
	A combination of the 2 above	12	9.09
		Total (respondents)	132
	<i>NR</i>	3	

Item no.	Question	Frequency	Percentage (%)
15	Socio-economic status of the area around the school		
	High income	1	0.77
	Middle income	37	28.46
	Low income	92	70.77
	Total (respondents)	130	100%
	NR	5	
16	Type of school		
	Town school	30	22.56
	Township school	42	31.58
	Farm school	59	44.36
	Other	2	1.50
	Total (respondents)	133	100%
	NR	2	
17	General education level of parents		
	Minimum of formal education	58	44.62
	Primary school education	32	24.61
	High school education	34	26.15
	Tertiary/Further education	6	4.62
	Total (respondents)	130	100%
	NR	5	

NR = No Response

The general information about the schools was analysed and interpreted according to table 4.4 and is discussed in the following paragraphs.

- **Number of learners** (Question 9)

The results for this question show that more than 40% of schools have a number of less than 200 learners. The area in which the survey was done is a rural area and 17 of the 38 schools selected for the survey are relatively small farm schools, which explains this phenomenon. More than 24% of respondents indicated that they are part of schools that have a total number of more than 800 learners, which can be seen as large primary schools. The reason for this can be the growing number of people and school children in townships and the lack of availability of schools in some areas, hence the large schools in a rural environment.

- **Medium of instruction** (Question 10)

The medium of instruction that most respondents indicated is Afrikaans and English. Taking into account that almost 53% of respondents indicated Setswana as their home language (question 5) and only 17.14% of schools use Setswana as a medium of instruction, it highlights the problem of home language education. The trend to let children undergo schooling in English can also be seen in these results as over 34% of schools have English as medium of instruction while only 1.49% of respondents make use of English as a home language. There is a significant relation between the language of instruction and home language for Afrikaans, both being around 31% (also compare question 5).
- **Number of educators** (Question 11)

The results for this question show a relationship with the results of question 9 and confirm that most schools in the area are either small, with less than 5 educators, or large, with more than 21 educators. The schools that participated in this research were fairly representative of small as well as larger schools.
- **Number of school governing body members** (Question 12)

Most schools in the survey have more than 6 school governing body members which is in line with national standards.
- **General style of leadership** (Question 13)

The results from this question item yielded interesting responses as no respondent indicated the leadership style in the school as being autocratic and impersonal. Actually, most respondents view the leadership style in their schools as democratic and inviting - a direct consequence of being part of a democratic country and the emphasis placed on a democratic and participative approach to management.
- **General school climate** (Question 14)

This question's results combine to a large extent with the findings of question 13, namely that most schools (over 88%) are perceived as inviting and friendly.

- **Socio-economic status of the area around the school** (Question 15)

The respondents indicated that most of the schools are in a low income area. Only one respondent indicated that the school is situated in a high income area. Again, this question can be seen as being subjective, but the data draw a parallel with the results of question 8.
- **Type of school** (Question 16)

Farm schools constitute the majority of schools (44.36%) followed by township schools (31.58%) and then town schools (22.56%). The distribution of schools is typically of a rural environment where one of the main economic activities is agricultural in nature. The majority of respondents are thus from farm schools, but for the purpose of this research it can be deduced that all the types of schools were well represented in the survey.
- **General education level of parents** (Question 17)

Respondents' views to this question show a relationship with the results of question 6, where quite a high number of respondents indicated that parents' level of education is low, being a minimum of formal education (44,62%) or only primary school education (24.62%).

4.3.3 Section C: Conceptualisation of diversity

A four point Likert scale questionnaire was used for this research to determine the extent of knowledge and understanding that respondents had in relation to the concept of diversity. The interpretation of low and high values from the recorded responses was done according to the procedure stated in par. 3.5.3. The four point Likert scale of the questionnaire was merged into two main groupings to facilitate and support an analysis of more specific interpretations with reference to either low or high values. A mean score of 2.50 or higher was interpreted as of a high or positive value (some extent and great extent), while a mean score of less than 2.50 was interpreted as a low or negative value (no extent and little extent). This specific value of reference was selected as a marker within the four point scale to serve as an indicator of either low (negative) or high (positive) values for each question item. This procedure was applied continuously for the interpretation of sections C and D of the questionnaire.

Section C of the questionnaire was further divided into the following two subsections and is described accordingly.

- Concept views (Question items 18.1-18.9)
- Concept associations (Question items 19.1-19.9)

4.3.3.1 Concept views (Question items 18.1-18.9)

The responses from this section are presented in table 4.5 below.

Table 4.5: Concept views

Rank	Item no.	Question	n	Mean	Std Dev	NR	Scale-ratings							
							1		2		3		4	
To what extent do you view diversity as ...							F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%
1	18.6	caring for one another in their uniqueness?	126	3.09	0.79	9	4	3.17	23	18,25	60	47.62	39	30.95
2	18.3	differences among people?	130	3.04	0.79	5	5	3.85	22	16.92	66	50.77	37	28.46
3	18.4	a mixture of human differences and similarities?	129	2.90	0.77	6	3	2.33	32	24.81	66	51.16	28	21.71
4	18.1	inborn human uniqueness?	130	2.87	0.95	5	12	9.23	34	26.15	47	36.15	37	28.46
5	18.5	seeable and non-seeable aspects of people?	129	2.81	0.83	6	7	5.43	36	27.91	61	47.29	25	19.38
6	18.2	associated with group affiliations?	130	2.80	0.82	5	9	6.92	34	26.15	65	50.00	22	16.92
7	18.9	linked to some kind of idea?	132	2.77	0.80	3	10	7.58	35	26.52	67	50.76	20	15.15
8	18.8	dynamic, thus forever changing?	130	2.65	0.85	5	12	9.23	45	34.62	53	40.77	20	15.38
9	18.7	being a threat?	127	2.10	0.98	8	46	36.22	39	30.71	31	24.41	11	8.66

Scale rating: 1 = No extent, 2 = Little extent, 3 = Some extent and 4 = Great extent

NR – No Response

The responses to the relevant question items are discussed in the following paragraphs.

- **Diversity as being caring for one another in their uniqueness** (Question 18.6)

This item received the highest mean score as part of the subsection (3.09). The majority of respondents considered this item to some extent (47.62%) and 30.95% to a great extent. Only 3.17% of responses were indicated as to no extent. This state of affairs shows that the respondents are viewing the caring for one another in their uniqueness as an important part of diversity and serves in this regard as an equal significant indicator for the management of diversity in schools.

- **Diversity as being differences among people** (Question 18.3)

The response to this item received the second highest mean score (3.04) in this subsection of the questionnaire. This response supports the findings from the literature that describes diversity as being different or having differences (par. 2.2). It can be assumed that this viewpoint of diversity as pointing to mainly differences is the most common interpretation of this complex and trendy concept.

- **Diversity as being a mixture of human differences and similarities** (Question 18.4)

This item received the third highest mean score (2.90). As found in the literature (par. 2.2), diversity is not only viewed as differences between people but encompasses also similarities that manifests in a diverse group of people. This response highlights a specific and balanced interpretation of diversity that includes both features of difference as well as commonness.

- **Diversity as being inborn uniqueness** (Question 18.1)

This item received a relative high mean score (2.87) with most respondents indicating that diversity is something that is associated with inborn uniqueness. This data indicates that the respondents regard diversity as something that one is born with and of a permanent nature. An individual is thus born with an idiosyncratic nature that constitutes diversity.

- **Diversity as being seeable and non-seeable aspects of people** (Question 18.5)

The relatively high mean score that this item received (2.81) confirms that respondents see diversity as something profound. A total of 47.62% of the respondents consider diversity as seeable and non-seeable aspects only to some extent, while 19.38% of respondents rated this item to a great extent. This fact is also supported by the literature that there are multiple explanations for diversity (par. 2.2). The significance of the responses from this question item is that diversity is not just associated with the superficial seeable aspects, but also with the deeper layers (non-seeable aspects) of being a human.

- **Diversity as being associated with group affiliations** (Question 18.2)

The mean score for this item was also relatively high (2.80). This response supports the fact that people like to belong to a specific group and that society in general is divided into diverse groups as are found in the literature (par 2.3).

- **Diversity as being linked to some kind of idea** (Question 18.9)

The relative high mean score that this item obtained (2.77) is supported by the literature. Many authors have different understandings of diversity (par. 2.2). The majority of respondents (50.76%) indicated that diversity is linked to an idea to some extent, while 15.15% of respondents suggested that diversity is linked to some kind of idea to a great extent. The assumption from these responses is that diversity has the potential to be linked to some sort of ideology, as history is proof in this regard.

- **Diversity as being dynamic** (Question 18.8)

Respondents' idea about diversity as being dynamic altered between little extent (34.62%) and some extent (40.77%), while 15.38% of respondents indicated that diversity is a dynamic aspect to a great extent. These findings demonstrate the notion that diversity is changing from time to time. This is also supported by the literature that diversity manifests in society in many different ways (par. 2.3). Some aspects of diversity are according to this view subjected to change over time.

- **Diversity as being a threat** (Question 18.7)

This question item received the lowest mean score (2.10) which indicates that most people see diversity as a positive aspect of society. There were 8.66% of respondents that rated diversity as being a threat to a great extent which also indicates that there are some people that do perceive diversity negatively. The positive attitude towards diversity is encouraging in a diverse country like South Africa and the positive responses may be ascribed to the national axiom of unity in diversity and the accompanying emphasis on reconciliation among the South African people.

4.3.3.2 Concept associations (Question items 19.1-19.9)

The responses from these question items are presented in table 4.6.

Table 4.6: Concept associations

Rank	Item no.	Question	n	Mean	Std Dev	NR	Scale-ratings							
							1		2		3		4	
To what extent do you associate diversity with ...							F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%
1	19.9	aspects that need to be taken into account when engaging with people?	130	2.98	0.82	5	8	6.15	22	16.92	67	51.54	33	25.38
2	19.1	cultural differences?	132	2.91	0.93	3	14	10.61	29	21.97	52	39.39	37	28.03
3	19.6	differences between racial groups?	130	2.85	0.97	5	19	14.62	21	16.15	55	42.31	35	26.92
4	19.5	differences in education levels?	126	2.84	0.90	9	13	9.92	28	21.37	61	46.56	29	22.14
5	19.4	differences in socio-economic class?	130	2.83	0.88	5	13	9.92	28	21.37	71	54.62	23	17.69
6	19.8	aspects that can be used to enhance performance?	131	2.82	0.83	4	8	6.11	35	26.72	63	48.09	25	19.08
7	19.3	differences in religion?	130	2.78	0.89	5	13	10.00	32	24.62	58	44.62	27	20.77
8	19.2	differences in language?	131	2.74	0.91	4	17	12.98	32	24.43	56	42.75	26	19.85
9	19.7	differences in ability to do certain things?	126	2.68	0.90	9	13	10.32	37	29.37	53	42.06	23	18.25

Scale rating: 1 = No extent, 2 = Little extent, 3 = Some extent and 4 = Great extent

NR - No Response

The responses to the relevant question items are discussed in the following paragraphs.

- **Diversity associated with aspects that need to be taken into account when engaging with people** (Question 19.9)

In this subsection this question received the highest mean score (2.98), which illustrates the respondents' views about diversity. This item also corresponds with question item 19.8, and confirms that diversity aspects need to be taken into account and can be optimised to contribute to a group's performance (par. 2.5.1). More than half the responses were to some extent (51.54%), while another 25.38% of respondents suggested that diversity aspects should be taken into account to a great extent.

- **Diversity associated with cultural differences** (Question 19.1)

This item attained the second highest mean score of this subsection (2.91). Most respondents associate cultural differences with diversity to some extent (39.39%) and to a great extent (28.03%). Cultural differences as being part of diversity is also evident in the literature as most people value their cultural inheritance (par. 2.3.1.1). A total of 10.61% of respondents didn't associate diversity with cultural differences which can be regarded as a contradicting response to what the literature presents.

- **Diversity associated with differences between racial groups** (Question 19.6)

This question item's mean score was 2.85, the third highest of this subsection. Most of the respondents indicated that they associate diversity with this aspect, to some extent (42.31%) and 26.92% to a great extent. These responses are supported by the literature that racial or ethnic differences are also related to cultural differences and that people regard the association with a certain group highly (par. 2.3.1.1). Taken into account the South African history with enforced racial divisions, the response is understandable in a society which, as a young democracy, is still in a process of reconciliation.

- **Diversity associated with differences in education levels** (Question 19.5)

Diversity associated with differences in education levels received a mean score of 2.84. The category 'some extent' accumulated the highest number of responses, namely 46.56%. This aspect of diversity links up with question item 19.4 as literature shows that there is a correlation between differences in socio-economic class and education levels (par. 2.3.1.3). The response can also be

interpreted according to the prevailing divisions between those who received formal education to some extent and those who were deprived of opportunities for education and development.

- **Diversity associated with differences in socio-economic class** (Question 19.4)

This item scored a relatively high mean (2.83). Although most responses fell in the categories 'some extent' (54.62%) and 'great extent' (17.69%), the other two categories both scored 13.85%. Socio-economic differences were rated highly by the respondents as an aspect that is associated with diversity. In par. 2.3.1.3 in the literature section of this study, this state of affairs is also stressed. The attention this question item received as a particular aspect of diversity can also be seen in the light of the increasing division between the more wealthy people and the people who are living in the poorest of the poor conditions.

- **Diversity associated with aspects that can be used to enhance performance** (Question 19.8)

Most of the responses in this item were positive, with a mean score of 2.82. The indications of respondents in order of preference were as follows: some extent (48.09%); little extent (26.72%); great extent (19.08%); and no extent (6.11%). This data correlates with and is evident in the literature that diversity, when correctly utilised, can be used to the advantage of an organisation or group by mobilising the talents and potential of a diverse group of skilled people (par. 2.5.1).

- **Diversity associated with differences in religion** (Question 19.3)

Differences in religion associated as an aspect of diversity were the topic of this item. Most respondents indicated that they associate diversity with this aspect to some extent (44.62%) and 20.77% to a great extent. The literature supports this indication by respondents that differences in culture also result in differences of religion and that people feel comfortable within their own religious groupings (par. 2.3.1.1). People regard their religious convictions as one of the most fundamental features of their beliefs and world views and this is seen as an important aspect of diversity to account for when dealing with people in an organisation.

- **Diversity associated with differences in language** (Question 19.2)

The mean score for this item was 2.74. The category that received the most responses was 'some extent' (42.75%). A total of 12.98% of respondents didn't think that language differences have any association with diversity. The relative high score that this item received is in line with the literature which confirms that linguistic diversity is evident in the world, especially in a multicultural society (par. 2.3.1.2). The response from participants who didn't relate diversity to language can be interpreted in the context that South Africa has eleven official languages and that language rights are protected in the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa.

- **Diversity associated with differences in ability to do certain things** (Question 19.7)

The mean score for this item was the lowest in this subsection (2.68). Although most respondents indicated to some extent that they associate ability with diversity (42.06%), there were also 29.37% of respondents that only associated it to a little extent. The literature regards this aspect highly, hence more and more opportunities are provided to disabled people lately, in order to participate in the society as a whole (par. 2.3.1.5). These responses furthermore indicated that people are regarded as individuals with different skills and abilities that constitute a particular aspect of diversity.

4.3.4 Section D: Indicators of parental involvement

In section D (question items 20.1-24.9) the extent to which parents carry out their responsibilities towards school was investigated. It also aimed to obtain information from respondents to determine the methods that schools use to improve parental involvement in school life. Lastly, this section specifically focussed on aspects of diversity that have an influence on parental involvement in the primary schools of the Maquassi Hills Education area in the Dr Kenneth Kaunda district of the North West Province (par. 3.5.2.). Section D of the questionnaire was further divided into the following subsections:

- Extent of parental involvement (Question items 20.1-20.9)
- Advancement of parental involvement (Question items 21.1-21.5)
- Opportunities for parental involvement (Question items 22.1-22.7)

- Information regarding parents (Question items 23.1-23.9)
- Aspects of diversity that influence parental involvement (Question items 24.1-24.9)

4.3.4.1 The extent of parental involvement (Question items 20.1-20.9)

The responses from this section are presented in table 4.7 below.

Table 4.7: Extent of parental involvement

Rank	Item no.	Question	n	Mean	Std Dev	NR	Scale-ratings								
							1		2		3		4		
To what extent are parents of the school involved in ...							F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	
1	20.6	supporting sports and cultural activities?	128	2.62	1.07	7	26	20.31	31	24.22	39	30.47	32	25.00	16.03
2	20.2	decision-making in the management of the school?	131	2.54	0.93	4	17	12.98	48	36.64	43	32.82	23	17.56	
3	20.1	setting the school's goals, mission and vision?	131	2.48	0.96	4	23	17.56	41	31.30	46	35.11	21	16.03	
4	20.3	creating of an inviting school climate that will enhance education?	132	2.47	0.91	3	19	14.39	48	36.36	46	34.85	19	14.39	
5	20.7	maintenance of the school facilities and grounds?	131	2.45	1.08	4	32	24.43	36	27.48	35	26.72	28	21.37	
6	20.5	volunteering at school functions, social events and fundraising?	130	2.44	1.01	5	25	19.23	44	33.85	36	27.69	25	19.23	
7	20.4	evaluating and monitoring of the effectiveness of management?	133	2.31	0.92	2	29	21.80	45	33.83	46	34.59	13	9.77	
8	20.8	school work through help at home?	132	2.28	1.00	3	33	25.00	47	35.61	34	25.76	18	13.64	
9	20.9	implementation of legislation?	130	2.18	1.01	5	40	30.77	42	32.31	32	24.62	16	12.31	

Scale rating: 1 = No extent, 2 = Little extent, 3 = Some extent and 4 = Great extent

NR – No Response

The responses to the relevant question items related to the extent in which parents are involved in schools are discussed in the following paragraphs.

- **Supporting sports and cultural activities** (Question 20.6)

This question item received the highest mean score in this subsection (2.62). Responses were divided evenly over all four scales as follows: no extent (20.31%); little extent (24.22%); some extent (30.47%); and great extent (25.00%). Although this data show that parents are more involved in sports and cultural activities than with other aspects of parental involvement, it is still alarming to see the high percentage of parents that are not involved at all. The high rating of this item might be a direct result of parents in certain schools who want their children to participate and perform in these activities; therefore they are willing to be more involved in this particular aspect of the school programme.

- **Decision-making in the management of the school** (Question 20.2)

The mean score of this question item was 2.54, which was just over the 2.5 division mark set beforehand. Most of the responses were marked as 'little extent' (36.64%), with 'some extent' receiving 32.82% of the responses. This is a suggestion that parents aren't always involved in decision making processes or in the broader management aspects of the schools. This is an aspect that is seen as an important part of parental involvement to ensure 'ownership' of one the most important stakeholders of the education system (par. 2.4.4). A negative attitude of educational managers (par. 2.4.5.2) or the illiteracy levels of parents (par. 2.4.5.1) are offered in the literature as possible reasons for this situation.

- **Setting the school's goals, mission and vision** (Question 20.1)

The mean score of this item (2.48) fell marginally below the 2.50 mark that was set to determine the positive or negative value of the different question items (par. 4.2.4). Most of the responses were in the groupings of some extent (35.11%) and little extent (31.30%) which is an indication that parents are only from time to time involved in the goal setting of schools. According to the literature section parents should be part of policy formulation in the school (par. 2.4.4). The reason for the relative low mean score is an indication that some schools do not always involve parents in this aspect of the school. The reason for this might be because of internal or external barriers that prevent effective parental involvement (par. 2.4.5).

- **Creating of an inviting school climate that will enhance education** (Question 20.3)

This item also received a low mean score of 2.47. Respondents responded to this question item to a little extent (36.36%) and some extent (34.85%), while the other two categories both received 14.39% of the responses. These scores correlate with question items 20.1 and 20.2 that only in some cases do parents feel comfortable in contributing towards school affairs. This particular aspect of the research provides a valuable pointer for school management to pursue creative and innovative measures to improve the involvement of parents in school programmes where a need exists.

- **Maintenance of the school facilities and grounds** (Question 20.7)

The extent to which parents are involved in the maintenance of the school's facilities received a mean score of 2.45, which is regarded as a low value (<2.5). Again the responses were evenly divided between the four scales. Respondents' responses were 27.48% to a little extent and 24.43% to no extent, which adds up to over half of the responses being of a low value. The data from this question item indicate a situation in opposite what the authorities and school management propagates, namely that parents are requested to become involved in the maintenance of the school facilities and grounds which can be a costly and daunting task for the school to run alone. Literature supports the involvement of parents in the maintenance of school facilities (par. 2.4.4).

- **Volunteering at school functions, social events and fundraising** (Question 20.5)

The mean score for this item was 2.44, which is relatively low. Literature, and specifically the SA Schools Act (Act, 84/1996) declares that it is imperative that parents become actively involved in schools and that parents should render voluntary services to schools in order for schools to develop and be functional organisations (par. 2.4.3). It is worrying to observe that 33.85% of responses were marked as little extent and 27.69% as some extent. There were just as many responses for no extent as for a great extent (19.23%). It means that parents do not really volunteer to be part of the schooling of their children. Yet again, the reason for this can be because of certain barriers, some related to

aspects of diversity, which can stand in the way of active parental involvement as is described in the literature (par. 2.4.5).

- **Evaluating and monitoring of the effectiveness of management** (Question 20.4)

The mean score for this question item was low (2.31). Although 34.59% of respondents indicated that the effectiveness of management is evaluated to some extent, 21.80% indicated that it doesn't happen at all and only 9.77 % indicated that it occurs to a great extent. According to the literature (par. 2.4.4) parents need to evaluate the school programmes on a continuous basis to provide insight and support to schools. The data in this section reveal that it takes place only in a few schools and in certain instances.

- **School work through help at home** (Question 20.8)

The mean score for this item was the second lowest in the subsection (2.28). Most of the responses were to a little extent (35.61%), while only 13.64% indicated that opportunities for school work at home occur to a great extent. A quarter of the respondents (25.00%) indicated that school work is not done at home at all. The low literacy levels of some of the parents, as explained in question 17 of the questionnaire, can be offered as a reason for the apparent lack of parental assistance at home with school work (par. 4.2.2). If parents are illiterate, they won't be able to assist children in school work at home. This factor is also supported by the literature (par. 2.4.5).

- **Implementation of legislation** (Question 20.9)

This item received the lowest mean score of 2.18. Most of the responses were either no extent (30.77%) or little extent (32.31%). Respondents' indications can be attributed to their lack of knowledge of legislation pertaining to school matters as is suggested in the literature (par. 2.4.5). The data however clearly show that the parents were not involved concerning matters dealing with the implementation of legislation in their respective schools.

4.3.4.2 Advancement of parental involvement (Question items 21.1-21.5)

The responses from this section are presented in the table below.

Table 4.8: Advancement of parental involvement

Rank	Item No.	Question	n	Mean	Std Dev	NR	Scale ratings							
							1		2		3		4	
To what extent does the school advance parental involvement through ...							F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%
1	21.1	supporting an inviting school climate?	131	2.94	0.83	4	7	5.34	28	21.37	62	47.33	34	25.95
2	21.2	involving parents in management and decision-making?	130	2.83	0.81	5	6	4.62	37	28.46	37	46.15	27	20.77
3	21.5	educating parents regarding help rendered with their children's homework?	131	2.73	0.95	4	14	10.69	39	29.77	47	35.88	31	23.66
4	21.4	educating parents regarding their children's physical and emotional development?	132	2.71	0.89	3	14	10.61	37	28.03	56	42.42	25	18.94
5	21.3	training its staff to equip them towards facilitating parental involvement?	130	2.67	0.93	5	16	12.31	36	21.69	53	40.77	25	19.23

Scale: 1=No extent, 2=Little extent, 3=Some extent and 4=Great extent

NR – No Response

The following paragraphs discuss the responses to the relevant question items that show the extent in which the school advances parental involvement.

- **Supporting an inviting school climate** (Question 21.1)

This question item received the highest mean score of the subsection, namely 2.94. Most of the responses were recorded as either to some extent (47.33%) and to a great extent (25.95%), which is an indication of how schools are trying to urge parents to be involved by having an open-door policy. Only 5.34% of respondents indicated that the school does not support an inviting school climate. This data are convincing evidence that the managements of the participating schools are trying to set a atmosphere conducive for parents to get involved in school matters as required from them.

- **Involving parents in management and decision-making** (Question 21.2)

This item's mean score of 2.83 was the second highest in the subsection that has to do with the advancement of parental involvement. The responses of some extent (46.15%) and great extent (20.77%) illustrate the fact that schools are trying to involve parents in the decision making process at school. These results correlate with the data of question item 20.2 which also had a positive mean score. The involvement of parents in the decision making process is an important aspect to promote 'ownership' of the school among the parent community.

- **Educating parents regarding help rendered with their children's homework** (Question 21.5)

The mean score that this question item received was 2.73. More than a third of respondents (35.88%) indicated that the school advances parental involvement through educating parents regarding children's homework to some extent. Another 23.66% of respondents said that schools educate them to a great extent. More than 40% (no extent 10.69% and little extent 29.77%) of respondents didn't receive much or any education regarding children's homework. According to the literature participation in learning activities forms an integral part of creating a positive learning experience for the child (par. 2.4.4). The responses from this subsection highlight the importance of providing guidance to parents in order to capacitate them to support their children at home with school work. Some aspects of diversity (e.g. literacy level) may be a key factor in this regard.

- **Educating parents regarding their children's physical and emotional development** (Question 21.4)

This item received a mean score of 2.71. The respondents' responses of 42.42% to some extent and 18.94% to a great extent show that most schools are attempting to provide information and educate parents in bringing up their children. Taking into account the rural area in which the study was done as well as the literacy levels of some of the parents, it is viewed as an important aspect for developing the child as a whole. This aspect is especially of importance to provide the children with a safe, caring and supportive environment at home.

- **Training its staff to equip them towards facilitating parental involvement**
(Question 21.3)

The mean score for this item was the lowest in the subsection (2.67). The highest percentage responses were in the 'some extent' category (40.77%), with 'little extent' second highest (27.69%) and 'great extent' having the third highest percentage of responses (19.23%). These percentages present that some schools are indeed training staff members towards facilitating parental involvement in order to enhance the learning of their child. This is supported by the literature as an important contributor concerning the improvement of parental involvement (par. 2.4.2.2). The empowerment of staff members to facilitate parental involvement is regarded as a crucial factor for the successful involvement of parents as a key stakeholder of the school community.

4.3.4.3 Opportunities for parental involvement (Question items 22.1-22.7)

Table 4.9 summarises the responses on the opportunities that schools create for involving parents.

Table 4.9: Opportunities for parental involvement

Rank	Item no.	Question	n	Mean	Std Dev	NR	Scale-ratings							
							1		2		3		4	
To what extent does the school manage to create opportunities in which parents can participate in							F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%
1	22.4	the maintenance of school facilities and grounds?	131	2.81	0.87	4	10	7.63	34	25.95	59	45.05	28	21.37
2	22.6	sports activities?	131	2.75	0.96	4	17	12.98	30	22.90	54	41.22	30	22.90
3	22.7	cultural activities?	131	2.67	0.92	4	17	12.98	34	25.95	56	42.75	24	18.32
4	22.3	organising social events?	130	2.63	0.96	5	21	16.15	32	24.62	53	40.77	24	18.46
5	22.5	fundraising for specific projects?	130	2.60	1.00	5	24	18.46	30	23.08	51	39.23	25	19.23
6	22.2	teaching at home (homework)?	131	2.58	0.92	4	16	12.21	48	36.64	44	33.59	23	17.56
7	22.1	teaching in the classroom?	130	2.20	1.02	5	43	33.08	36	27.69	36	27.69	15	11.54

Scale rating: 1 = No extent, 2 = Little extent, 3 = Some extent and 4 = Great extent

NR – No Response

The responses to the question items in relation to opportunities that schools create for parental involvement are discussed in the following paragraphs.

- **Opportunities for the maintenance of school facilities and grounds** (Question 22.4)

This item scored the highest mean for the subsection (2.81). The majority of respondents (71%) (some extent 45.05% and great extent 25.95%) indicated that there are opportunities for the maintenance of the school facilities and grounds. These percentages are in relation to the SA Schools Act (Act, 84/1996) that assigns this as one of the core responsibilities of parents towards schools (par. 2.4.3). The mean score of this item is higher than the mean score for question item 20.7 (2.45) which shows that opportunities do exist for parents to become involved in maintenance of the school grounds, but parents are not always willing to engage in such activities. Time can be seen as one of the factors for this aspect as most parents are working full time and are not always available to render assistance in this regard.

- **Opportunities for sports activities** (Question 22.6)

This question item received the second highest mean score in this specific subsection (2.75). Most of the respondents indicated opportunities to get involved in sports activities to some extent (41.22%), while the categories 'little extent' and 'great extent' both received 22.90%. This corresponds with the mean score of question item 20.6 (2.62) which was the highest in the subsection that dealt with the extent of parental involvement in schools. This situation explains that schools do present opportunities to get involved in sports activities and that parents are more willing to become involved in this way than with some other facets of the school.

- **Opportunities for cultural activities** (Question 22.7)

This item also recorded quite a high mean score of 2.67. Most of the indications by respondents were made at some extent (42.75%) and little extent (25.95%). This data shows a comparison with the data of question item 22.6 being opportunities for sports activities. It can be deduced that parents are also involved in school programmes that deal with cultural matters.

- **Opportunities for organising social events** (Question 22.3)

The mean score for this item was 2.63. This positive mean score shows that schools do present opportunities for parents to organise social events. Over 40% of respondents indicated that it doesn't happen a lot or to any extent, while 40.77% (some extent) and 18.46% (great extent) indicated that it does happen regularly in some schools. Getting the community involved in schools is seen as important in enhancing the learning experience of a child (par. 2.4.4).
- **Opportunities for fundraising for specific projects** (Question 22.5)

The mean score for this item (2.60) indicates that the opportunities for fundraising do exist in schools. Although 39.23% of respondents indicated that it happens to some extent there were 18.46% of respondents who indicated that it happens to no extent. This correlates with the mean score of question item 20.5 (2.44) that illustrates the fact that parents are not always willing to volunteer for fundraising projects. The occupation of parents in their personal careers where both father and mother are more than often involved, may be a reason for this state of affairs.
- **Opportunities for teaching at home (homework)** (Question 22.2)

This item received a mean score of 2.58. Most of the responses were recorded in the middle categories of little extent (36.64%) or some extent (33.59%). 12.21% of responses rated that to no extent does the school create opportunities for homework. This is worrying statistics for education in the area. Homework is the underpinning and an important part of the learning process of children, through which academic work is reinforced in order to enhance learning. The responses indicated that this aspect is not satisfactorily dealt with at the homes of the learners. A possible reason for this state of affairs can again be attributed to the low literacy levels of parents and their inability to assist the school with the learning experience of their children (par. 4.3.2).
- **Opportunities for teaching in the classroom** (Question 22.1)

The mean score for this item was the lowest as part of this subsection (2.20). Most of the responses were classified under no extent (33.08%) and only 11.54% under great extent. The reason for the low mean score of this question item can be traced back to unwillingness of some schools to use parents as assistants in

classes in order to facilitate a more comprehensive learning experience for the child. It can also be because of the low literacy levels of some parents being almost 70% of parents having no formal education or just primary school education (par. 4.3.2).

4.3.4.4 Information regarding parents (Question items 23.1-23.9)

The responses from this subsection, concerning information obtained about parents, are presented in the following table.

Table 4.10: Information regarding parents

Rank	Item no.	Question	n	Mean	Std Dev	NR	Scale-ratings							
							1		2		3		4	
To what extent does the school make an effort to obtain information from the parents regarding their ...							F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%
1	23.6	family structure?	132	2.92	0.84	3	7	5.30	34	25.76	54	40.91	37	28.03
2	23.4	language preference?	130	2.77	0.85	5	10	7.69	36	27.69	58	44,62	26	20,00
3	23.7	literacy levels?	129	2.71	0.86	6	11	8.53	39	30.23	54	41.86	25	19.38
4	23.9	religious background?	131	2.71	0.91	4	15	11.45	36	27.48	54	41.22	26	19.85
5	23.3	socio-economic situation?	130	2.70	0.83	5	11	8.46	39	30.00	60	46.15	20	15.38
6	23.5	cultural background?	129	2.68	0.84	6	11	8.53	40	31.01	58	44.96	20	15.50
7	23.8	disability circumstances?	131	2.62	0.93	4	17	12.98	44	33.59	45	34.35	25	19.08
8	23.1	skills which the school could utilise?	129	2.54	0.88	6	18	13.95	41	31.78	53	41.09	17	13.18
9	23.2	needs and fears?	130	2.46	0.91	5	21	16.15	41	31.54	52	40.00	16	12.31

Scale rating: 1 = No extent, 2 = Little extent, 3 = Some extent and 4 = Great extent

NR – No response

The responses to the relevant question items are discussed in the following paragraphs.

- **Information regarding parents' family structure** (Question 23.6)

This question item received a mean score of 2.92, which is the highest mean score in the subsection. Respondents indicated as follow: little extent (25.76%); some extent (40.91%); and great extent (28.03%). Only 5.30% of responses were indicated as no extent. These data illustrate that schools make an effort to

obtain information about family structure in order to enhance parental involvement. The literature regards family structure, especially single parenthood as a barrier for effective parental involvement (par. 2.5.2).

- **Information regarding parents' language preference** (Question 23.4)

This question item received the second highest mean score in the subsection (2.77). Only 7.69% of respondents highlighted the fact that no effort was made to obtain information about their specific language preference. All schools are supposed to enquire about the home language as well as the preferential language of teaching that the parent requires for the child. With that information the School Governing Body is then able to outline the language policy of the school. Only 20.00% of respondents indicated that it happens to a great extent, while 44.62% indicated some extent.
- **Information regarding parents' literacy levels** (Question 23.7)

According to the mean score of this item (2.71) schools are making an effort to obtain information concerning the literacy levels of parents. Respondents viewed this item to some extent (41.86%) and great extent (19.38%). More than a third of responses indicated that very little or no attempt is being made to identify the literacy levels of parents. Schools need to obtain this information as the literature states it as one of the foremost barriers for constructive parental involvement (par. 2.4.5.1).
- **Information regarding parents' religious background** (Question 23.9)

This item received the third highest mean score of 2.71. The results of the data surfaced as follow, in order of rank: some extent (41.22%); little extent (27.48%); great extent (19.85%); and no extent (11.45%). The mean score for this item correlates well with that of question item 23.5 (mean score 2.68) concerning cultural background. In the literature, religion and culture are viewed as being closely related and sometimes integrated aspects of diversity (par. 2.3.1.1).
- **Information regarding parents' socio-economic situation** (Question 23.3)

The mean score of 2.70 that this item received, shows that schools are making an effort to obtain information from parents about their socio-economic situation. Only 8.46% of respondents marked this item as no extent. Some extent

(46.15%) and little extent (30.00%) received the highest ratings on the questionnaire. If schools get hold of this type of information better planning can be done for effective schooling, especially in relation to finances, resources and facilities in order to develop parental involvement (par. 2.4.2.2).

- **Information regarding parents' cultural background** (Question 23.5)

This item received a mean score of 2.68. This is a positive value which also presents a positive attitude on the part of the school. The cultural background of parents is an important part of the information that schools must acquire as is indicated in question 19.1 in which diversity is associated with cultural differences (par. 2.4.2). The mean score for this item was rather high at 2.91. Only 8.53% of respondents indicated that to no extent was information obtained about this aspect of diversity.

- **Information regarding parents' disability circumstances** (Question 23.8)

The mean score for this question item was 2.62. Most of the respondents indicated that they consider this item to some extent (34.35%) and little extent (33.59%). Although the mean score is more than the 2.50 categorisation for a positive value, very little is still done to obtain information about the disability circumstances of parents, a fact that is substantiated by the literature (par. 2.3.1.5).

- **Information regarding parents' skills which the school could utilise** (Question 23.1)

The mean score for this item was 2.54. More responses were given as some extent (41.09%) than any other category. There were also 31.78% of responses for little extent and a further 13.95% for no extent which indicate that schools do not always try to obtain information about parents' skills that can be utilised. This might be the reason why parents are not always willing to render help because they do not know in which way they can be of assistance to the school. Literature affirms the fact that parents are not always sure how to get involved in their school (par. 2.4).

- **Information regarding parents' needs and fears** (Question 23.2)

The mean score for this item was 2.46 which marginally falls below the 2.50 mark for a positive value. 40% of respondents indicated that information about their needs and fears are obtained to some extent. A further 31.54% (little extent) and 16.15% (no extent) of respondents indicated that little or no effort was made to acquire information about parents' needs and fears. Literature reveals that in order to deal with parent related problems and situations, schools need to get hold of more information about parents' needs and fears (par. 2.4).

4.3.4.5 Diversity aspects that influence parental involvement (Question items 24.1-24.9)

The responses from this subsection are presented in table 4.11 below.

Table 4.11: Aspects of diversity that influence parental involvement

Rank	Item no.	Question	n	Mean	Std Dev	NR	Scale-ratings							
							1		2		3		4	
To what extent do the following diversity aspects influence parental involvement at your school ...							F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%
1	24.9	the socio-economic situation?	132	2.68	0.93	3	20	15.15	33	25.00	55	41.62	24	18.18
2	24.6	family structure?	132	2.61	0.96	3	17	12.88	39	29.77	47	35.88	20	15.27
3	24.4	language related problems?	132	2.54	0.95	3	18	13.64	39	29.55	62	46.97	13	9.85
4	24.1	cultural differences?	131	2.50	0.86	4	29	22.14	28	21.37	58	44.27	16	12.21
4	24.8	differences in education levels?	131	2.50	0.97	4	32	24.43	43	32.82	43	32.82	13	9.92
6	24.2	age differences?	131	2.39	0.91	4	26	19.85	42	32.06	48	36.64	15	11.45
7	24.5	different racial groupings?	133	2.35	0.95	2	30	22.56	45	33.83	42	31.58	16	12.03
8	24.7	different religious groupings?	131	2.32	0.96	4	32	24.43	43	32.82	43	32.82	13	9.92
9	24.3	gender differences?	130	2.18	0.93	5	35	26.92	45	34.62	39	30.00	11	8.46

Scale rating: 1 = No extent, 2 = Little extent, 3 = Some extent and 4 = Great extent

NR – No Response

The responses to the relevant question items on aspects of diversity that influence parental involvement are discussed in the following paragraphs.

- **The socio-economic situation** (Question 24.9)

This question item received 2.68, which is the highest mean score in the subsection. The percentages of responses in this question item read as follow: great extent (18.18%); some extent (41.67%); little extent (25.00%); and no extent (15.15%). The implication of these results is that the socio-economic situation of parents has the highest influence on parental involvement, as indicated by the respondents, and that could be the reason why parents do not want to participate in the schooling of their children. The literature supports this viewpoint and states further that people of a lower socio-economic status are less likely to take full benefit of the education system because of their poverty (par. 2.3.1.3). Taking into consideration the economic challenges of the rural parts of the country, this situation is not surprising to be recorded by this research that is conducted in a rural part of the North West Province of South Africa. The management of diversity in relation to parental involvement in school life has to account for this important aspect of diversity, namely the socio-economic circumstances of the school community.

- **Family structure** (Question 24.6)

This item received the second highest mean score in this subsection (2.61). 37.12% of respondents responses were marked as to some extent, 32.58% little extent, 17.42% great extent and no extent received 12.88%. The relative high mean score that this item received is supported by the literature that the structures of families are forever changing with many single-parent families and both parents working (par. 2.3.1.3). Many families, especially in the rural areas, are headed by older children and grandparents, which also has an effect on parental involvement. The family structure is thus viewed as an important aspect of diversity to deal with in school management with a focus on parental involvement.

- **Language related problems** (Question 24.4)

This question item received a mean score of 2.54. Some extent (46.97%) and little extent (29.55%) received the highest percentages of responses. This indicates that language as an aspect of diversity was viewed by respondents as having an influence on parental involvement, but it is not the main attribute to insufficient parental involvement. This is also supported by the fact that only

9.85% of respondents indicated that language problems influence parental involvement to a great extent and 13.64% to no extent. The literature also mentions that language proficiency can be obstructive towards parental involvement (par. 2.3.1.2).

- **Cultural differences** (Question 24.1)

The mean score for this item is 2.50. The highest number of responses was in the category some extent (44.27%) and no extent (22.14%). 21.37% of respondents marked little extent and only 12.21% great extent. The data recorded for this question reveals that although the respondents view cultural differences as being part of diversity, they do not regard it as having a very substantial influence on parental involvement. The emphasis on a multicultural approach in diverse societies of the newly found democracy in South Africa may be a contributing factor to responses in this question item.

- **Differences in education levels** (Question 24.8)

The mean score for this item is 2.50, which just falls in the category for positive values. The low levels of literacy of parents in the study area were already highlighted in previous sections and are also confirmed by the responses of this question item (par. 4.3.2).

- **Age differences** (Question 24.2)

The mean score for this question item was of a low value (2.39). The respondents indicated that age difference shouldn't have a significant influence on parental involvement and that parents can be involved whatever their age.

- **Different racial groupings** (Question 24.5)

The mean score that this item received was a rather low value of 2.35. Most of the responses fell in the categories 'little extent' (33.83%) and 'some extent' (31.58%). What is also interesting is that 22.56% of respondents view this aspect of diversity as having no effect on parental involvement. The significance of this data is that it reveals that people of different races can work together and that different racial groupings do not have an effect on parental involvement. This situation is furthermore indicative of the absence racial biases, which is an encouraging factor taken into account the country's history of racial division.

When different races are represented at a school they are part of a certain group of people sharing more or less the same values, beliefs and rituals. The literature supports this viewpoint of working together to enhance performance and the overall welfare of the learners of the school (par. 2.3.1.1).

- **Different religious groupings** (Question 24.7)

Religion as a factor having an effect on parental involvement received the second lowest mean score (2.32) of the subsection. Quite a number of respondents (24.43%) indicated that it has no influence on parental involvement, while the categories 'some extent' and 'little extent' both scored 32.82% of the responses. Religion as an aspect of diversity doesn't seem to have a major influence on parental involvement, which points to a great deal of tolerance amongst different religious groups.

- **Gender differences** (Question 24.3)

The mean score for this question item was the lowest of all the items in this subsection of the questionnaire (2.18). Although 30.0% of the respondents indicated that they view gender differences as an aspect of diversity that influences parental involvement to some extent, there were also responses of 34.62% for 'little extent' and 26.92% for 'no extent'. The reason for the low mean score of this item is supported by literature which explains that the traditional composition of families with the female as housewife and male as main breadwinner are changing lately and rapidly (par. 2.3.1.4).

4.3.5 Constructs

The construct for each question item was calculated to find out the level of validity and reliability for each construct. The constructs were ranked and yielded the following averages.

Table 4.12 Averages for constructs

Rank	Construct	Average
1	Concept association	2.79
2	Advancement of parental involvement	2.77
3	Concept view	2.76
4	Information regarding parents	2.68
5	Opportunities for parental involvement	2.59
6	Aspects of diversity that influence parental involvement	2.44
7	Extent of parental involvement	2.43

All but two questions yielded averages of more than 2.50 which is an indication that the constructs in the questionnaire possess a high level of validity and reliability. Part of the results was that an investigation was done to calculate the effect sizes for each construct. This was done to find out if there was a large enough difference in the perceptions between the different groups of respondents to be of importance in practice. Groupings for the calculation of effect sizes were done as they represent a specific position in the study population. In the first category the difference was calculated between two groups, i.e. men and women (gender). Category two was divided into three groups, namely: principals, deputy principals and SMT members were placed in one group as they form part of the management of the school. The second group was made up of the teachers and the third group represented the parents as part of the SGB and parent community. In the third category respondents were placed in two groups, i.e. those under 40 years of age and those over the age of 40. The fourth category consisted of three groupings: respondents that have only a basic education, respondents with high school education and those with a tertiary qualification. In the last group the effect size was calculated between respondents with a low income against those with middle and high income.

Overall and apart from some isolated exceptions, there were no significant differences in effect sizes that were calculated that would have a practical effect on the results of this study. The importance of the above results regarding the constructs is that future studies and research can utilize the constructs as part of their questionnaire without having to do any data reduction.

4.4 RESULTS: QUALITATIVE DATA

The qualitative data regarding the association and interpretation of the meaning of diversity and its influence on parental involvement in the primary schools of the Maquassi Hills education area in the Dr Kenneth Kaunda Education district of the North West Province, was captured to reveal more comprehensive responses and to clarify the underlying logic of the respondents (par. 3.6). The qualitative part of this research report consists of two integrated open-ended questions as part of the questionnaire. The aim for the inclusion of the open-ended questions was to obtain further responses that were embedded in the unique wording of the respondents. The methodological procedure for the analysis of the qualitative data entailed the transcribing and organising of responses, evaluation of responses, identifying

patterns, categories and themes, searching for alternatives as part of a content analysis and lastly, to write the report. The discussion of the qualitative data is presented according to sections C and D of the questionnaire. Response levels to the open-ended questions were low in both the sections of the questionnaire. A possible reason for the low responses to the qualitative questions may be ascribed that respondents (participants) regarded the quantitative questioning as sufficient and didn't have anything of worth to add to the questionnaire items. The responses to the qualitative section are discussed in the following paragraphs.

4.4.1 Section C: Associations with and interpretations of the meaning of diversity

The aim of this open-ended question was to obtain a descriptive response of what respondents' personal association with and interpretation of the meaning of the concept of diversity is. The responses to the open-ended questions were firstly transcribed from the questionnaire and subsequently organised in table form. The next step was to evaluate the recorded responses to identify relevant categories, patterns and themes (par. 3.6.2).

The responses are presented in table 4.13 below.

Table 4.13: Personal associations or interpretations of diversity

Rank	Responses	Frequency
1	Differences between people	6
2	Changes in order to bring variety in schools	4
3	Accommodating the uniqueness of oneself and others	4
4	Multiculturalism within society	1

No Response: 120

The presented data about the personal associations or interpretations of diversity only received a total of 15 responses. The responses revealed that 6 respondents regarded differences between people as their understanding of diversity. This response is also supported by the results of question item 18.3 (par. 4.3.3.1). The second association with diversity regarded by 4 respondents was changes in order to bring variety in schools. The third personal association or interpretation of diversity as indicated by 4 respondents was accommodating the uniqueness of oneself and others. Question item 18.6 of the questionnaire confirms this viewpoint (par. 4.3.3.1). These responses illustrate that respondents understand the common view of diversity to some extent. The fourth

interpretation of diversity as indicated by only 1 respondent was multiculturalism within society. This is a single response and an indication that the association of most respondents is not that diversity has to do with culture only. This is also recognised by the findings in question item 24.1 (par. 4.3.4.5).

The general significance of the presented data was that the researcher noted that most respondents' interpretation and association of diversity is fundamentally orientated and not multi-dimensional, as it is described in the literature (par. 2.2.1). Respondents' personal associations and interpretations of diversity also show a relationship with the quantitative data.

4.4.2 Section D: The influence of diversity on parental involvement

The rationale for this question was to determine what the respondents' views were on the influence of certain diversity aspects on parental involvement. The gathered data was organised into categories of meaningful groups as recorded by the respondents' comments on this topic. The identified categories are presented in table 4.14.

Table 4.14: The influence of diversity on parental involvement

Rank	Responses	Frequency
1	Low literacy levels of parents	6
2	Parents must be motivated and taught how to be involved	5
3	No parental involvement at all	2
4	Fear to become involved	1
5	Disability of parents	1
6	Parents are very involved to build diversity between learners	1

No Response: 119

The overall response rate for this open-ended question was low with only 16 respondents replying with reference to the influence of diversity on parental involvement. A total of 6 respondents indicated that low literacy levels of parents at their school have an influence on parental involvement. This response is in line with the responses of question item 17 of the questionnaire which indicated a low literacy level amongst parents (par. 4.3.2). The second response of 5 respondents indicated that parents need to be taught and motivated on how to get involved in schools. The third response of 2 respondents was that there is no parental

involvement at their school at all. In the fourth instance, fear to become involved was a reason for the lack of parental involvement as pointed out by 1 respondent. This response can also be connected to the previous two responses and may also possibly be because of the high level of illiteracy amongst parents and their uncertainty as to what role they are suppose to fulfil at schools. This view is in line with the literature that parents are not involved because of a lack of knowledge and low education levels. Lack of knowledge about what is expected from them and previous failure or disappointing experiences from the past are also reasons for insufficient parental involvement as presented in the literature section of this study (par 2.4.5.1). The fifth response by 1 respondent in this section was a lack of ability of parents as an influence on parental involvement. It is not clear if the respondent implied that parents are disabled, therefore not able to participate fully in school affairs. The respondent could also have suggested the lack of ability to do certain things or it was an insinuation by the respondent that parents are not literate enough, therefore not being able to fulfil their parental role in school. This single response is noted, but will not be analysed further as it is uncertain what the respondent meant with the response. The last category also received 1 response. It is also the only response which implied that parents are very much involved and that 'diversity is built' between learners. This respondent also commented on the fact that a character building programme is put into practice at school through which children learn to deal with diversity issues.

According to the literature, managing diversity is a prerequisite for positive parental involvement and that diversity can be used to strengthen the organisation as a whole (par. 2.5.1 & 2.5.2). Question items 19.8 and 19.9 (par. 4.3.3.2) also relate to diversity being used to enhance the performance of a group.

The responses in this section enlightened what respondents' views are regarding the influence of diversity on parental involvement. What it also portrayed is that, seemingly, very little parental involvement if at all, is taking place at schools in general.

4.5 SUMMARY

The chapter started with a description of the responses from the structured quantitative section of the questionnaire. It revealed that most of the respondents were Setswana and Afrikaans home language speakers and over the age of 40 years. Noteworthy was that the majority of members of the respondents that participated in the research were females

(58.21%). What the responses also present was that most schools in the survey area were farm schools with an enrolment of less than 200 learners. Also worth mentioning is the fact that there were quite a number of schools (24.63%) with an annual enrolment of more than 800 learners.

The responses indicated that most of the respondents conceptualised, interpreted and associated diversity with differences between people and caring for others in their uniqueness. The majority of respondents were also of the opinion that diversity has to do with similarities as well as differences between people. The responses further point to the associations of diversity as aspects that need to be taken into account when engaging with people.

The results from the quantitative responses indicated that the main contributor to insufficient parental involvement in schools is low literacy levels and the current socio-economic situation of parents in the area in which the study was done. The responses with reference to the extent in which parents are involved at schools were mostly negative which also presents worrying statistics for parental involvement in the area. The respondents were of the opinion that the lack of education amongst parents does have a serious influence on parental involvement as parents are not able to support children in education. A response for concern was that homework as an essential building block for educational growth didn't receive a high rating. According to the data, it could be summarised that parents as primary caregivers of their children are not fully assisting (involved) in their children's schooling.

The respondents qualitatively recorded a variety of responses. Examples of the responses agreed with the results of the quantitative data which brought replies such as differences between and uniqueness and variety of people to the fore. These specific aspects are important exemplars as they support the results of the quantitative data. Valuable responses were recorded with regard to the description of the influence of diversity on parental involvement in primary schools (par. 4.4.2). It was also further reported that low literacy levels and educating parents in the aspects of parental involvement was the main concerns relating to this issue.

The responses from both the quantitative and qualitative sections of the research are considered supplementary to the theoretical framework with reference to the influence of diversity on parental involvement in primary schools as described in par. 3.6. The responses

provided additional information about the various sections of the theoretical framework, firstly that of associations or interpretations of diversity and secondly the influence of diversity on parental involvement.

The findings and recommendations for this research project are discussed in the next chapter.

CHAPTER 5

SUMMARY, FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS



5.1 INTRODUCTION

The aim of this chapter is to present an overall summary as well as the findings and recommendations of the research study. The purpose of the research was to find out if there are specific aspects of diversity that have an influence on parental involvement in a designated area where the research was conducted. This study focussed on these aspects particularly as it is presented in the context of primary schools. The chapter also provides a summary of findings as they surfaced from the acquired data in chapter 4. The chapter further provides recommendations and shortcomings regarding the influence of diversity on parental involvement in primary schools. Lastly a discussion is provided where recommendations for further research relating to diversity and parental involvement are presented.

5.2 OVERVIEW OF THE RESEARCH

The context, the problem statement as well as the motivation for the study was discussed in chapter 1. The literature overview was done in three parts to substantiate the research problem. The divisions for the literature overview were concept description, parental involvement and the management of diversity. With this in mind, the formulation of the purpose of the study was formulated. The research design and methodology, an explanation of the contribution of the research as well as ethical considerations also formed in a concise manner part of the chapter.

Chapter 2 formed the overall theoretical framework and conceptual basis for the empirical part of this research. In this chapter a description was outlined of what the existing literature expresses regarding diversity and parental involvement. It started with a discussion about the interpretation of diversity in all its complexity as well as how diversity manifests in society and in relation to education. A further discussion followed about the reasons for and importance of parental involvement, what legislation expects of parents and barriers that prevent satisfactorily parental involvement. The chapter was concluded with a deliberation on the subject of the management of diversity as a particular challenge for schools in relation to parental involvement.

Chapter 3 deals with the research design and methodology and accordingly focuses more on the empirical part of the study. To begin with, the context of educational research and purpose of the empirical section were stated and clarified. The research method for the

quantitative and qualitative sections was explained and motivated. Subsequently, all the aspects of the questionnaire were discussed. The descriptions include subdivisions such as principles for developing a questionnaire, construction of the questionnaire as well as reliability, validity issues and statistical data analysis procedures. The chapter ended with a description of relevant administrative procedures and applicable ethical matters of the study.

The statistical information that emerged from the questionnaires completed by the respondents was subsequently analysed and interpreted in correlation with the identified research problem and topic as part of chapter 4. This was done by means of tables dealing with rank order, frequencies, standard deviation and the mean scores. The findings of the research were explained in two sections, namely quantitative and qualitative results.

5.3 DISCUSSION OF RESEARCH FINDINGS

This section of the research concludes with the findings the way they have been mentioned and stated under the research aims of the study (par. 1.3.2). Findings of this research are based on both the literature and the empirical study.

- **Research aim 1: To describe the concept of diversity**

The different interpretations of diversity are indicative of the difference of perspectives concerning the meaning of the concept. Diversity is perceived by most people as being different, assorted or varied (par. 2.2.1 & 4.4.1). On the other hand, the concept of diversity is a multifaceted concept with many explanations and descriptions. There is a definite distinction in the description of diversity between a fundamental approach and a more multi-dimensional approach. The multi-dimensional approach entails a wider and more detailed description of the concept which also categorise and classifies the different aspects thereof (par. 2.2.2). From the literature section of the study it was also realised that diversity manifests in many ways in society and education. Diversity is a reality in everyday life; therefore different individuals have a distinct understanding of what diversity entails (par. 2.3).

It has emerged from the study that most of the respondents' interpretation and association of diversity is fundamentally orientated and not multi-dimensional, as it is described in the literature (table 4.5, par. 4.3.3.1). Respondents' personal

associations and interpretations of diversity also show a relationship with the quantitative data. Most of the respondents' responses included words such as differences, variety and uniqueness (table 4.12, par. 4.3.1). These views of respondents illustrate that they are regularly confronted with diversity aspects in education. Consequently diversity in relation to education, in this case, parental involvement is important to examine and to provide guidance and possible solutions to educational managers.

From the preceding literature overview as well as the respondents' views on diversity, the following definition is formulated by the researcher:

Diversity embraces the uniqueness, observable and non-observable, between people in their uniqueness, with the variety of idiosyncratic attributes that they can bring to the benefit of the organisation of which they form part.

- **Research aim 2: To establish the parents' responsibilities towards schools**

According to the South African Schools Act (Act, 84/1996) parents are important role players in the education system by proclaiming that parents should contribute towards the schooling of their children and the development of their school (par. 2.4.3). The SA Schools Act views parents as significant partners and states that they can contribute in a variety of ways. Legislation considers parental involvement as a prerequisite for effective education management. Parents are also motivated to participate meaningfully in the education of their children through means such as the rendering of voluntary service to the school (*section 20(1h)*), serve on the school governing body (*section 23(2a)*), attend school meetings (*section 38(2)*) and to pay school fees (*section 40(1)*).

Parents make undertakings that they will support the education of their children by becoming partners with the school. In a partnership the different parties strive to achieve the common goals set by them for a specific purpose, in this case for enhancing and support of their children's learning experience. Parents in this way, resolve to support the school in its curriculum, discipline, governance and policy making. Parents can become involved or contribute in many ways through

voluntary help, cooperation and participation in learning activities and effective communication. Parental involvement implies a broad range of education-related parental activities for the well-being of the child (par. 2.4.4).

It has emerged from the study that parents are only involved in some aspects related to the school. Parents are more involved in sports and cultural activities than with other aspects of the school such as decision making, volunteering for school functions, maintenance of school grounds, assistance at home, goal setting and implementation of legislation at school level (table 4.7, par. 4.3.4.1). Respondents' personal views of parental involvement also correlate with the data and what it shows is that very little parental involvement is taking place in schools (table 4.14, par. 4.4.2). In view of the importance of parental involvement, as described in the literature, it reveals that parents are not taking full responsibility for their children's schooling.

- **Research aim 3: To establish the expectations of schools in relation to parental involvement**

As described in the previous section there is an onus placed on parents to become actively involved in a supportive manner in their children's schooling. Schools, therefore, expect from parents to be involved in matters that they are supposed to make a difference in. Parents are involved in their child's schooling, willingly or unwillingly. Although not all parents want to be involved in formal ways, there are many informal ways that parents can become involved (par 2.4.4).

What the data in this study reveal is that schools do make an effort for parents to become involved, but that in most cases there is a lack of parental involvement. The results from the quantitative data reveal that, in most cases, schools are trying to advance parental involvement through activities such as creating an inviting school climate, training staff to facilitate better parental involvement and educating parents regarding different aspects of their child's schooling (table 4.8, par. 4.3.4.2). The opportunities for parents to become involved were also sufficient in most cases and the data demonstrated that schools can expect better involvement in aspects such as homework, volunteering, maintenance and extra-curricular activities (table 4.9, par. 4.3.4.3). Reasons for the lack of

parental involvement that emerged from the qualitative data, where respondents' personal views were requested through open-ended questions, were low literacy levels of parents, fear of involvement, educating parents and no parental involvement at all (table 4.14, par. 4.4.2).

- **Research aim 4: To determine the influence of aspects of diversity on parental involvement by means of an empirical investigation in a selection of schools**

The literature chapter of this study reveals that diversity manifests in society and therefore also in schools (par. 2.3). There are also diversity aspects that can influence parental involvement (par. 2.5).

It has emerged from the study that the aspects of diversity that have the most influence on parental involvement were the prevalent socio-economic situation, family structures, language related problems, differences in education levels and cultural differences. These results were supported by the quantitative data that emerged from other sections of the questionnaire where low literacy levels of parents were highlighted (par. 4.3.2). The literature supports the opinion that people of a lower socio-economic status are unlikely to take full advantage of the education system, because of poverty (par. 2.3.1.3). Language ability can also be obstructive towards parental involvement (par. 2.3.1.2), as well as the structures of families that are changing with the prevalence of many single-parent families at the order of the day (par. 2.3.1.3). The data reveal that people with low literacy levels and from a lower socio-economic background feels kind of inferior to others, and consequently are not enthusiastic to get involved in schools. The same situation applies for people that don't feel comfortable with the language of the school and are not willing to participate for this reason in school affairs.

The qualitative data that transpired from respondents' personal viewpoints as captured in the open-ended questions, also supports the fact that low literacy levels of parents have a major influence on parental involvement. Parents have a lack of self confidence and feel incapacitated towards the more formal (school) education of their children. Parents may also feel inferior to other parents, teachers and school principals and therefore experience or fear embarrassment

when getting involved in schools. The respondents also reacted that parents need to be educated and motivated on how to get involved in schools (table 4.13, par. 4.3.2). The department of education need to guide or train teachers and school managers so that schools are enabled to educate parents on how to become more involved (par. 2.4.5.2).

The aspects of diversity with the least amount of influence on parental involvement were gender differences, age differences, religious differences and racial differences (table 4.11, par. 4.3.4.5). The results of these aspects of diversity are supported by the literature in relation to gender, race and religion whereas people with a common goal can work together to enhance group performance (par. 2.3.1.1). The surprise of these findings is that racial differences didn't feature very high as a diversity aspect having an influence on parental involvement and received a rather low mean score. The significance of this data is that it reveals that people of different races can work together and that different racial groupings in a school do not have an effect on parental involvement.

- **Research aim 5: To develop guidelines on how to manage issues of diversity in order to optimise parental involvement**

There are many viewpoints in the literature on how to manage diversity. Diversity should be managed by using the differences and commonalities between individuals to good effect to promote the common goals of the organisation (par. 2.5.1). There are also many barriers that can have a negative influence on parental involvement. These barriers can be either internally or externally motivated and should be effectively managed by educational leaders to promote parental involvement (par. 2.4.5). They need to develop ways and ideas on how to deal with issues of diversity that might have a negative impact on parental involvement.

There are certain principles and starting points when developing guidelines for managing diversity (par. 2.5.1). These principles include the following:

- School managers should have a clear vision and strategic plan of how to manage diversity.

- Managers should not only participate in diversity, but should provide high-quality leadership to steer this issue comprehensibly.
- All individuals' in an organisation perspectives and differences should be taken into account when dealing with diversity issues.
- When diversity is dealt with appropriately, it should lead to the growth of the organisation.
- The management of diversity encompasses effective people management.

(For comprehensive guidelines on how to manage diversity in order to optimise parental involvement, see par. 5.4.)

5.4 GUIDELINES FOR MANAGING ISSUES OF DIVERSITY

Resulting from the previous sections, this section presents some relevant guidelines for managing diversity issues in relation to parental involvement. These guidelines were developed by accounting for the literature section and as guidelines emerged from the empirical part of this research (cross reference serve as an indication in this regard).

5.4.1 Guidelines for managing diversity to promote parental involvement in schools

When taking into account the literature as well as the results obtained from the empirical study, the following can serve as guidelines on how to manage issues of diversity in order to optimise parental involvement in schools:

- Parents should not be excluded from schools because of fear by educational managers that parents might intrude negatively on the professional terrain of teaching or school management (par. 2.4.5.2 & table 4.8, par. 4.3.4.2). School management should be aware of these possible fears and innovative initiatives should be launched to counteract these negative effects on parental involvement in schools.
- As much information as possible about parents should be obtained to promote parental involvement, especially in relation to language barriers and family structures (par. 2.4.5.1 & table 4.10, par. 4.3.4.4). This will allow educational managers to plan more efficiently to initiate situation-specific (tailor made) programmes to increase parental involvement in schools.

- If there is a conflict of interest between the school and the parents because of different expectations by the school community, a common goal should be found and the different parties should strive to achieve the goals purposefully (par. 2.5.2). Dealing with diversity also implies the strengthening of commonalities and the risk to focus narrowly on differences alone must be avoided at all costs.
- The school and broader community should be involved in the school through different activities such as fund-raising events, parent meetings, maintenance of school grounds, supporting extra-curricular activities and decision making in relation to school affairs (par. 2.5.2 & table 4.9, par. 4.3.4.3).
- Effective and regular communication between the school and parents are most important for increased parental involvement. Creative ways should be explored and initiated to reach parents where issues of socio-economic nature, language matters and literacy levels are applicable (par. 2.4.5.2).
- A school environment needs to be created where the different stakeholders do not only value and respect each other's differences, but utilise the diversity of each other to good effect and for the benefit of the school (par. 2.5.1). The promotion of the school's values as well as the values associated with the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa is important in this regard.
- Parents' fears of school because of previous failure or disappointing experiences from the past should be eradicated in order to improve parental involvement (par. 2.4.5.1 & table 4.8, par. 4.3.4.2 & par. 4.4.2).
- School managers need to establish opportunities where parents can be educated concerning their responsibility towards the schooling of their child and to build self confidence amongst these parents (par. 2.4.5.1 & table 4.8, par. 4.3.4.2 & par. 4.4.2). Community projects can be started to empower the parents and other community members.
- It is also essential that parents are educated about legislation regarding their role towards schools (par. 2.4.3 & table 4.7, par. 4.3.4.1).
- Teachers and school managers should be trained on how to actively involve parents in the school programme (par. 2.4.5.2 & table 4.8, par. 4.3.4.2). This aspect is closely linked to the establishment of an inviting and open school climate where parents are welcomed and appreciated.
- Where possible, the government and education department in collaboration with the school should provide assistance to improve low literacy levels and the

socio-economic situation amongst parents (par. 2.4.5.1 & table 4.11, par. 4.3.4.5 & par. 4.4.2).

5.4.2 Synthesis

Managing issues of diversity is important when taking into account the involvement of parents. Diversity is something to embrace and to be used to good effect of the school and to enhance parental involvement.

When looking at the issue of parental involvement it is essential that parents' needs and fears should be taken into account. Parents have to be educated and taught on how to become involved. Furthermore, there should be a whole range of opportunities for involvement so that a diverse collection of parents can be included in the school programme. Lastly it is important to involve the whole school community as they are all playing an essential role in the school.

5.5 RECOMMENDATIONS

As a result of the literature study and empirical study findings, the following recommendations are proposed.

It is the obligation of the school to educate parents on their role and responsibilities towards school. They should share with the parents the information they have received from workshops, seminars and through studies at higher education institutions. Appropriate legislation and responsibilities need to be enlightened so that parents understand what is expected from them as partners in the educational process. Parent meetings, parent evenings or workshops at an appropriate time should be arranged for this purpose. Newsletters can also be used to communicate information on this matter.

The school management should act as a source of information to parents and also acquire access to as much information about parents as possible. Obtaining information should be specifically focussed on the socio-economic situation, language ability, family structure, literacy levels and cultural differences of the parent community. Information can be collected by distributing short questionnaires and surveys to all stakeholders or by means of learners' enrolment forms. Face-to-face conversations and the building of relationships based on integrity and trust can be a valuable source of information regarding parents. Collection and

record keeping, of information should form part of schools' Management Information Systems (MIS) which are essential and should be kept up to date in order to have the correct information when planning for the future - in this case, how to manage diversity with regard to parental involvement.

This research has shown that diversity aspects need to be taken into account when dealing with parents in a school setting. Diversity aspects that have a great deal of influence on parental involvement seem to be low literacy levels and inferior socio-economic attitudes of parents which leads to a lack of self confidence and a low self esteem. School managers need to involve these parents in supportive and innovative ways that they can contribute positively to the education of their children and the development of the school. Strategies that can be followed amongst other activities are voluntary work in the classroom or school and maintenance of the school buildings and grounds. This could lead to a greater feeling of achievement by the parent and a belief of being part of the school. Self confidence will also be enhanced by these actions which in turn could lead to better participation in other divisions of the school. Recognition of involvement is also a strategy that can be utilised to enhance parental involvement. Rewarding initiatives where parents are rewarded for their positive input towards the school is a method that can be employed for better parental involvement. Initiatives such as reward cards or points, certificates, discount on school fees and clothing and food vouchers can be included in this case. Acknowledgement as appreciation for support by the parents can for example also be made part of the annual prize giving ceremony.

This research further re-emphasised the paramount importance of effective communication between the school and parents as a prerequisite for successful parental involvement programmes. Methods through which parents can be encouraged to become more involved will depend on the specific school situation and could include the following: regular newsletters, circulars, notes to parents, notice or bulletin boards, school website, bulk text messages, emails, etc. Strategies regarding illiterate parents that might be useful are parent meetings, interviews, house calls and word of mouth. Another strategy that could be utilised successfully is the setting up of a café in school which is open during school hours and which provides a comfortable place for parents to meet and opportunities for informal engagement (Egersdorff, 2010:7). This can also help parents to become involved at school as they grow to be more comfortable with the school setup.

The school governing body (SGB) has an important task and should contribute to the school management to fully develop and empower parents at the school. The school governing body should promote involvement and set an example to all parents on how to become involved at school. Role modelling and the power of example are good strategies that can be employed to get more parents involved. The school governing body, representing the parent community, should include and take into account all parents of the school. The approach that they exercise must be *us* rather than *they*. Another approach is doing *with* rather than doing *to*. With this strategy parents will realise that everyone is viewed as important and is obliged to become involved in the affairs of the school in different ways according to what parents can offer or afford.

Specific fears of parents to become involved because of negative associations with schools should also be addressed and parents should be persuaded to discharge their fears. Parents should be purposefully selected and invited to become involved in their children's schooling. This can be done through helping children with homework activities, classroom support, assistance with extra-curricular activities and organising social events. A case study approach can also be used as a strategy to analyse specific occurrences in order to prevent similar situations in the future. A register can be used to record all the specific incidents and to document what the outcome for each case was. School management should also make sure that teachers are trained on how to handle specific situations regarding parents' fears and negative attitudes towards school.

Opportunities may be provided to decrease the low literacy levels and a distressing socio-economic situation that exists, especially in the area where the study was conducted. With these diversity aspects being the major obstacles or barriers contributing towards ineffective parental involvement something ought to be done to improve the current state of affairs. Some schools can contribute towards improving this situation through arrangement of evening classes for parents, a school nutrition programme, exemption of school fees, etc. It is the responsibility of every South African to lend support where possible. The main challenge is the fact that the workforce is increasing and the economy is forever declining with a negative impact on the socio-economic situation in the country. Having said this, it is primarily the function and responsibility of the government of the Republic of South Africa in association with the national and provincial education departments to improve the life of every individual. The last recommendation that can be highlighted as it emerged from the study is that it is the mutual responsibility of all stakeholders to join hands in order to ensure that high

quality teaching and learning is taking place in schools. These stakeholders include parents, school staff, community members and officials from the education department and government.

5.6 RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH

The purpose of this study was to determine the influence of selected diversity aspects on parental involvement in primary schools. It is recommended that further research studies could be undertaken in the following fields and with a subsequent focus:

- The leadership role of school managers in educating parents about their roles and responsibilities towards schools.
- Developing a model on how to manage the influence of diversity aspects as barriers in the way of effective parental involvement.
- The capacity necessary by school management to facilitate effective parental involvement.
- The perception of parents on their duty and responsibility towards school.
- A similar study in urban surroundings could yield interesting and different results that can be compared to this study.
- A similar study, but focussing on the constructs, without any data reduction.

5.7 LIMITATIONS OF THE RESEARCH

The researcher is aware of the following limitations which might be relevant to this research. Applicable strategies were employed to minimise the possibility of any effect of the limitations on the research, which include *inter alia*:

- The findings are only relevant to rural areas, for the study was done in this type of surroundings, thus it can only be generalised to the purpose for which the research was conducted and designed.
- The survey was only done in primary schools and can therefore not be applied to other types of schools, e.g. secondary and comprehensive schools.
- All primary schools in the survey area didn't participate in the survey or didn't return their questionnaires in time, although control measures were put in place.

These measures included clear and uniform instructions given to respondents for the completion of questionnaires, personal contact with respondents and follow-up actions to non-respondents for the completion of questionnaires. The fact that not all schools participated in the study was disappointing to the researcher as all inputs would have been appreciated for the purpose of this study.

- Low literacy levels of some of the respondents as well as administrative difficulties made the response rate of the questionnaires lower than was anticipated by the researcher. The response rate of 78.5% is however acceptable to support the validity and reliability of the research (table 3.3, par. 3.7.2).
- The questionnaire was only available in English, given the lack of language proficiency in the area, other languages, i.e. Afrikaans and Setswana, could also have been used.
- Possible other influences in the survey, especially when completing the questionnaires, like distracting noises and activities could not be controlled and can therefore not be excluded.

5.8 CONCLUSION

This study has outlined the aspects of diversity as it manifests in society and its influence on parental involvement in education as an important part of society. This study has also revealed that parents are not performing their roles on the expected level due to the influence of certain diversity aspects as well as other circumstantial reasons. To improve the involvement of parents in schools is a complex issue. More effective parental involvement rests on the contribution of schools as well as the education departments. Parental involvement remains a crucial aspect in the organisation and governance of schools in South Africa. Therefore schools and specifically educational managers are obliged to provide and facilitate strategies and capacity building programmes for the development of parents to perform their functions as partners in education effectively.

It is hoped that the recommendations made in this research will assist parents to understand and fulfil their roles and responsibilities in terms of parental involvement to the full. It is also hoped that educational managers will be assisted in managing the diversity of parents as part of parental involvement in schools. Finally, it is trusted that this study will contribute towards

the effective management of diversity and parental involvement in primary schools in the area of research as well as in other similar education areas.

5.9 REFLECTION ON THE RESEARCH

When reflecting on the research there was a number of issues that arose. A few farm schools closed down during the research which is not good for the rural areas as more and more children need high-quality education. The researcher came to the conclusion that most of the schools in the study area have low socio-economic circumstances, in most schools parents are not as involved as they should be and that low literacy levels are at the order of the day in the area.

Furthermore, the researcher learned that parents do not always know what their role is towards the school and that most people know what diversity is and have a similar impression of diversity. What was interesting was that race is not seen by most people as an aspect of diversity that divides people. Low literacy levels and socio-economic circumstances are aspects of diversity that influence people's attitudes. Diversity is everyone's responsibility and all stakeholders need to be involved to embrace it.

The researcher enjoyed the research and believes that it was worth the while. Schools can benefit from the recommendations that were made. It can be used to acknowledge and understand diversity and take into account diversity aspects in their planning process. This can ultimately lead to improved parental involvement in schools and quality education for all children in our country.



BIBLIOGRAPHY

ACTS **see** SOUTH AFRICA.

AERA **see** AMERICAN EDUCATIONAL RESEARCH ASSOCIATION

AKANDE, A. 2001. Moving together in the new millennium: Fostering diversity, forging consistency are the answers, but what was the question? (Inaugural speech held on 18 May 2000, Potchefstroom: PU for CHE). 30p.

AMERICAN EDUCATIONAL RESEARCH ASSOCIATION. 2006. Standards for Reporting on Empirical Social Science Research in AERA Publications. *Educational Researcher*, 35(6):33-40.

ANASTASI, A. & URBINA, S. 1997. Psychological testing, 7th ed. New York: Prentice Hall, Inc. 721 p

ANDERSON, V. 2004. Research methods in human resource management. London: Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development. 290p.

ANDERSON, T & METCALFE, H. 2003. Diversity: stacking up the evidence. London: CIPD. 35 p.

ATTANUCCI, J.S. 2004. Questioning honour: a parent-teacher conflict over excellence and diversity in a USA urban high school. *Journal of Moral Education*, 33(1):57-69, Mar.

BARNARD, W.M. 2004. Parent involvement in elementary school and educational attainment. *Children and Youth Services Review*, 26:39-62

BECKMAN, J. 2002. Governance and management in South African public schools. (*In Calitz, L. ed. Leadership in education – productive learning cultures. Sandown: Heineman. p. 77-91*)

BEAN, R., SAMMARTINO, A., O'FLYNN, J., LAU, K. & NICHOLAS, S. 2001. Using diversity climate surveys: a toolkit for diversity management. Department of Immigration and Multicultural and Indigenous Affairs. Available: <http://www.ecom.unimelb.edu.au/acib/diverse>
Date of access: 07 Nov. 2009.

BELL, M.P. 2007. Diversity in organizations. Mason, OH: Thomson South Western. 492 p.

BERGMAN, A.B. 1992. Lessons for principals from site-based management. *Educational Leadership*, September: 48-51.

BISSCHOFF, T. 1997. Financial School Management Explained. Cape Town: Kagiso Tertiary. 173 p.

BLAINE, S. 2009. Parents' key to schooling. *Business Day*, 8 March.

BRAY, S. & SALAZAR, C. 2007. Essential awareness and knowledge for school counsellors providing diversity-component parent education and consultation. Vistas Online. <http://counsellingoutfitters.com/vistas/vistas07/Bray.htm> Date of access: 9 Mar. 2009.

BRIGGS, R.J. & COLEMAN, M., eds. 2007. Research methods in Educational leadership and management. London: Sage Publications. 390 p.

CAIRNEY, T.H. & RUGE, J. 1999. Developing partnerships: The home, school and community interface. Queensland Journal of Educational Research, Vol 15. <http://education.curtin.edu.au/iier/qjer/qjer15/cairney1.html> Date of access: 9 Mar. 2009.

CARRINGTON, S. & ROBINSON, R. 2006. Inclusive school community: why is it so complex? *International Journal of Inclusive Education*, 10(4-5):323-334, Jul.-Sep.

CARR-RUFFINO, N. 1996. *Managing diversity: people skills for a multicultural workplace*. San Francisco: Thomson Executive. 580p.

CCSSO see COUNCIL OF CHIEF STATE SCHOOL OFFICERS

CLEMENTS, P. & JONES, J. 2006. *The diversity training handbook*. London: Kogan Page. 202 p.

COHEN, J. 1988. *Statistical power analysis for behavioural sciences*. 2nd Ed. Hillsdale, NJ: Erlbaum. 567p.

COLLINS COBUILD ENGLISH LANGUAGE DICTIONARY. 1991. Harper Collins Publishers.

COLOMBO, M.W. 2006. Building school partnerships with culturally and linguistically diverse families. *PHI Delta Kappan*: 314-318, Dec.

CONCISE ENGLISH DICTIONARY. 2002. London: Penguin Books.

CONSTITUTION **see** SOUTH AFRICA. 1996c.

COTTON, K. & WIKELUND, K.R. 1989. *Parent involvement in education*. <http://www.nwrel.org/scpd/sirs/3/cu6.html> Date of access: 22 March 2010.

COUNCIL OF CHIEF STATE SCHOOL OFFICERS. 2006. *Parent Involvement at Selected Ready Schools*. http://www.ccsso.org/projects/school_readiness. Date of access: 9 Mar. 2009.

CRESWELL, J.W. 2003. Qualitative, quantitative and mixed methods approaches. 2nd Ed. London: Sage. 320p.

CRESWELL, J.W. 2005. Educational research: planning, conduction, and evaluating quantitative and qualitative research. Upper Saddle River, NJ: Pearson.

CROSS, M. 2001. Mapping and assessment of campus climate at the University of the Witwatersrand. Questionnaire. Johannesburg: WITS. (Unpublished.)

DAY, C. 2005. Principals who sustain success: Making a difference in schools in challenging circumstances. *International Journal of Leadership in Education*, 8(4):273-290.

DE GROOF, J. & LAUWERS, G. 2001. Education policy and law: The politics of multiculturalism in education. *Perspectives in Education*, 19(4):47-63.

DE KLERK, F.W. 2008. National unity: dependant on essential balances in society. (*In* The FW de Klerk Foundation. Unity in Diversity: Papers read at the Unity in Diversity Conference held in Cape Town on 28 February 2008. Cape Town. p. 1-24.)

DEMPSTER, N., CARTER, L., FREAKLEY, M. & PARRY, L. 2004. Contextual influences on school leaders in Australia: some data from a recent study of principals' ethical decision-making. *School Leadership and Management*, 24(2):163-174.

DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION. 1997. First steps School Governance Starter Pack: a resource for school governing body members. Pretoria: Department of Education. 78 p.

DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION. 2002. EMIS. Annual survey for schools. Questionnaire. 14 March 2002. Potchefstroom: Teemane Building.

DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION. 2009. Directorate: National and Provincial Communication. Rights and responsibilities of parents – a guide to public school policy. 5p. http://wced.wcape.gov.za/documents/rights_responsibilities/rights-eng.html. Date of access: 2 Feb. 2009.

DE VOS, A.S., STRYDOM, H., FOUCHE, C.B. & DELPORT, C.S.L. 2005. Research at grass roots. For the social sciences and human service professions. 3rd ed. Pretoria: Van Schaik. 471p.

DREACHSLIN, J.L. 2007. Diversity management and cultural competence: research, practice and the business case. *Journal of Healthcare Management*, 52(2):79-86, March/April.

DRUCKER-GODARD, C., EHLINGER, S. & GRENIER, C. 2001. Validity and Reliability. (In Thietart, R. Doing management research: a comprehensive guide. London: Sage. p. 196-219.)

EGERSDORFF, S. 2010. Leadership for parental engagement. *National College for Leadership of Schools and Children's Services*. 28p.

ELLIS, S.M. & STEYN, H.S. 2003. Practical significance (effect sizes) versus or in combination with statistical significance (p-values). *Management Dynamics*, vol. 12, no. 4, pp. 51-53.

ELLIS, S. 2009. Descriptive statistics. (Lecture delivered as part of the MEd and PhD Research development and support training programme on 31 March 2009.) Potchefstroom. 15p.

ENCARTA WORLD ENGLISH DICTIONARY. 1999. London: Bloomsbury.

ENGELBRECHT, S.C. 1991. Benaderings, metodes, strategieë en tegnieke in opvoedkundige navorsing. *Suid-Afrikaanse Tydskrif vir Opvoedkunde*, 11(1):10-17.

EPSTEIN, J.L. 1995. School/family/community partnerships: caring for the children we share. *Phi Delta Kappan*, 76(9):701-712.

FLEISCH, B. 2006. Bureaucratic accountability in the Education Action Zones of South Africa. *South African Journal of Education*, 26(3):369-382.

FLETT, A. & CONDERMAN, G. 2001. Enhance the involvement of parents from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds. *Intervention in School and Clinic*, 37(1):52-55.

GALL, M.D., BORG, W.L. & GALL, J.P. 1996. Educational research: an introduction. 6th ed. New York: Longman. 788p.

GARDENSWARTZ, L. & ROWE, A. 1998. Managing diversity: a complete desk reference and planning guide. Rev. ed. New York: McGraw-Hill. 538 p.

GARDENSWARTZ, L., ROWE, A., DIGH, P. & BENNETT, M.F. 2003. The global diversity desk reference: managing an international workforce. San Francisco: Wiley. 479 p.

GILDENHUYS, A. 2008. Leadership style as a component of diversity management experience. Potchefstroom: North West University. (Dissertation – D. Phil.) 358 p.

GORDON, J., ed. 2005. Pfeiffer's classic activities for diversity training. San Francisco: Pfeiffer. 397 p.

GROBLER, B.R., MOLOI, K.C., LOOCK, C.F., BISSCHOFF, T.C. & MESTRY, R.J. 2006. Creating a School Environment for the Effective Management of Cultural Diversity. *Educational Management Administration & Leadership*, 34(4):449-472.

GRYFFENBERG, L.E. 1991. Kommunikasie van die skoolhoof met die ouerhuis. Potchefstroom: PU for CHE. (Mini-Dissertation – M.Ed). 133p.

HAIR, J.R., ANDERSON, R.E., TATHAM, R.L. & BLACK, W.C. (1998). *Multivariate data analysis*. New Jersey: Prentice-Hall, Inc. 730p.

HARALAMBOS, M. & HOLBORN, M. 2008. *Sociology; themes and perspectives*. London: HarperCollins.

HARRIS, N. 2007. *Education, Law and Diversity*. Portland, OR: Hart Publishing. 487 p.

HAYDON, G. 2007. *Values for educational leadership*. London: Sage Publications. 116 p.

HENZE, R., KATZ, A., NORTE, E., SATHER, S.E. & WALKER, E. 2002. *Leading for diversity; how school leaders promote interethnic relations*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Corwin Press. 204 p.

HOPKINS, W.E. 1997. *Ethical dimensions of diversity*. Thousand Oaks, Ca: Sage Publications. 184 p.

HUMAN, L. 2005. *Diversity management for business success*. Pretoria: Van Schaik. 144 p.

JOHNSON, D.W. & JOHNSON, F.P. 2009. *Joining together: group theory and group skills*. Upper Saddle River, NJ: Pearson.

KALENGA, R. 2005. *The challenges of educators in the effective implementation of inclusion in the classroom*. Vanderbijlpark: North West University. (Dissertation – M.Ed.) 144p.

KIRTON, G. & GREENE, A. 2000. *The dynamics of managing diversity: a critical approach*. Oxford: Butterworth-Heinemann. 282p.

KOLLAPEN, J. 2009. Protecting the Diversity that is South African. *GDE News*, March:14.

KOTZÉ, G.J. 1997. The role of parent involvement in school transformation. Stellenbosch: University of Stellenbosch. (Dissertation – MEd)

KRUGER, A.G. 2003. Cultivating a culture of learning and teaching. (*In* Van Deventer, I. & Kruger, A.G., eds. *An educator's guide to school management skills*. Pretoria: Van Schaik. p. 3-13.)

LAMBERT, J. & MYERS, S. 2005. Trainer's diversity source book: 50 ready-to-use activities from icebreakers through wrap ups. Virginia: Society for human resource management. 214p.

LEEDY, P.D. & ORMROD, J.E. 2001. *Practical research: planning and design*. 7th ed. New Jersey: Prentice Hall. 318 p.

LEEDY, P.D. & ORMROD, J.E. 2005. *Practical research: planning and design*. 8th ed. New Jersey: Prentice Hall. 318 p.

LUMBY, J. 2006. Conceptualizing diversity and leadership. *Educational Management Administration & Leadership*, 34(2):151-165.

LUNENBERG, F.C. & IRBY, B.J. 2006. *The Principalship: vision to action*. Belmont, CA: Thomson Wadsworth. 474 p.

LYNCH, F.R. 1997. The diversity machine. *Society*: 32-44, Jul/Aug.

MABOE, T.P. 2005. Educational law basis for parental involvement in the school system. Potchefstroom: North West University. (Dissertation – MEd.) 162p

MAREE, K. ed. 2009. *First steps in research*. Pretoria: Van Schaik. 334 p.

MCNIFF, J. 2008. The significance of “I” in educational research and the responsibility of intellectuals. *South African Journal of Education*, 28:351-364.

MCWAYNE, C., CAMPOS, R. & OWSIANIK, M. 2008. A multidimensional, multilevel examination of mother and father involvement among culturally diverse Head start families. *Journal of School Psychology*, 46:551-573.

MILES, M.F. 2005. Confusing means with ends: How the ninth circuit continues the tradition of mistaking diversity as an end in parents involved in community schools v. Seattle School District, No. 1. *B.Y.U. Educational and Law Journal*: 245-260.

MOLEFE, M.A. & LOUW, E. 2004. Potensiële probleme van diversiteitsbestuur in samesmeltinginstansies: 'n geval van die Universiteit van Noordwes en Potchefstroom. PU vir CHO & UNW. Diversiteitsvraelys van navorsingsprojek. 15 p.

MONARENG, A.M. 1996. The influence of parent involvement on the management style of secondary school principals. Pretoria: University of Pretoria. (Dissertation - MEd)

MONTEITH, J. L. DE K. 2009. (a) Sampling: A simple overview. (Lecture delivered as part of the MEd and PhD Research development and support training programme on 31 March 2009.) Potchefstroom. 10p.

MONTEITH, J. L. DE K. 2009. (b) Data collection instruments. (Lecture delivered as part of the MEd and PhD Research development and support training programme on 31 March 2009.) Potchefstroom. 15p.

MOR-BARAK, M.E. 2005. Managing diversity: towards a globally inclusive workplace. Thousand Oaks, Ca: Sage Publications. 343 p.

MORRISON, M. 2007. What do we mean by educational research? (*In* Briggs, R.J. & Coleman, M., eds. Research methods in educational leadership and management. London: Sage Publications. p. 13-52.)

MOUTON, J. 2001. How to succeed in your Master's and Doctoral studies: A South African guide and resource book. Pretoria: Van Schaik.

NEETHLING, S.A.C. 1995. Die ontwerp van 'n model vir ouerbetrokkenheid by die skoolkurrikulum in 'n sosio-ekonomies gedepriveerde gemeenskap. Stellenbosch: Universiteit van Stellenbosch. (Verhandeling – MEd)

NEUMAN, W.L. 1997. Social research methods. Qualitative and quantitative approaches. 3rd ed. Boston: Allyn and Bacon. 560p.

NGOBESE, S.S. 2004. Management of cultural diversity as an aspect of school effectiveness. Johannesburg: RAU. (Thesis – DEd)

NIEUWENHUIS, J. 2007. Introducing qualitative research. (*In Maree, K., ed. First steps in research, p. 46-68.*) Pretoria: Van Schaik.

OOSTHUIZEN, I.J. 2000. School Governance. (*In Oosthuizen, I.J. Aspects of Educational Law, p.167-177.*) Pretoria: Van Schaik.

PANDOR, N. 2008. Education has vital role in uniting SA. (*In The FW de Klerk Foundation. Unity in Diversity: Papers read at the Unity in Diversity Conference held in Cape Town on 28 February 2008. Cape Town. p. 1-24.*)

PEDHAZUR, E. & SCHMELKIN, L. 1991. Measurement, design and analysis. Hillsdale, NJ: Erlbaum, 819 p.

POLLAR, O. & GONZALEZ, R. 1994. Dynamics of diversity: strategic programs for your organization. Boston, MA: Thomson Learning. 87p.

PORTMAN, T.A.A. 2009. Faces of the future: School counsellors as cultural mediators. *Journal of Counselling and Development, 87:21-27, Winter.*

POTGIETER, J.M., VISSER, P.J., VAN DER BANK, A.J., MOTHATA, M.S. & SQUELCH, J.M. 1997. Pretoria: Department of Education. 68 p.

PRICE, H.B. 2008. Mobilizing the community to help students succeed. Alexandria, VA: Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development. 140p.

PRINSLOO, T. 2005. Die invloed van ouerbetrokkenheid op die akademiese prestasie van leerders in primêre skole binne die uitkomsgebaseerde benadering. Vanderbijlpark: North West University. (Dissertation – M.Ed.) 115p.

READER'S DIGEST ASSOCIATION SOUTH AFRICA (PTY) LTD. 1996. Cape Town: Reader's Digest Dictionary.

RUTHVEN, D.A. 1999. The changing workplace – Affirmative Action and diversity management from a white male perspective. Potchefstroom: PU for CHE. (Mini Dissertation – MBA.) 66p.

SA **see** SOUTH AFRICA

SANDERS, M.G. 2008. Using diverse data to develop and sustain school, family and community partnerships. *Educational Management Administration & Leadership*, 36(4):530-545.

SAS Institute Inc. (2005a). SAS/STAT, Release 9.1, www.sas.com.

SAS Institute Inc. (2005b). SAS OnlineDoc®, Release 9.1, www.sas.com.

SCHECTER, R., IPPOLITO, J. & RASHKOVSKY, K. 2007. Giving parents part of the pie. *Educational Leadership*: 69-70, Mar.

SEKARAN, U. & BOUGIE, R. 2010. Research methods for business: a skill building approach. United Kingdom: Wiley. 468p.

SIGFORD, J.L. 2006. The effective school leaders guide to management. Thousand Oaks, CA: Corwin Press. 217 p.

SMITH, S.S. 1997. Die rol van ouervennootskappe in agtergeblewe gemeenskappe ten opsigte van doeltreffende onderwysbestuur. Stellenbosch: University of Stellenbosch. (Dissertation – M. Ed.)

SOUTH AFRICA. 1996a. The South African Schools Act, 84 of 1996. Date of Commencement: 1 January 1997. Pretoria: Government Printers.

SOUTH AFRICA. 1996b. The National Education Policy Act, 27 of 1996. Pretoria: Government Printers.

SOUTH AFRICA. 1996c. The Constitution of The Republic of South Africa as adopted by the Constitutional Assembly on 08 May 1996 and as amended on 11 October 1996, Act 108 of 1996. Pretoria: Government Printers.

STEWART, D. 2008. Welcome to the conference on unity in diversity. (*In* The FW de Klerk Foundation. Unity in Diversity: Papers read at the Unity in Diversity Conference held in Cape Town on 28 February 2008. Cape Town. p. 1-24.)

SYLVESTER, A. 2008. Diversity goes to school: What chief diversity officers can teach colleges and universities. *Best Practices for Business Leaders*, June: 77.

TABACHNICK, B.G. & FIDELL, L.S. 2001. Using multivariate statistics. Boston: Allyn & Bacon.

TEDDLIE, C. & TASHAKKORI, A. 2009. Foundations of mixed methods research. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage. 387p.

THIETART, R., ed. 2007. Doing management research: a comprehensive guide. London: Sage. 425 p.

THOMAS, K.M. 2005. Diversity dynamics in the workplace. Belmont, CA: Thomson Wadsworth. 233 p.

THOMAS, R.R. 2006. Building on the promise of diversity: how we can move to the next level in our workplaces, our communities, and our society. New York: Amacom. 238 p.

VAN DEVENTER, I. 2003. Successfully involving the community. (*In Van Deventer, I. & Kruger, A.G., eds. An educator's guide to school management skills. Pretoria: Van Schaik. p. 255-265.*)

VAN DER LINDE, H.H. 1993. Die taak van die hoof in die primêre skool om ouerbetrokkenheid te optimaliseer. Potchefstroom: PU for CHE. (Mini-Dissertation – M.Ed). 134p.

VAN DER WESTHUIZEN, P.C., POTGIETER, F.J. & MAHLOMAHOLO, M.G. 2009. Research in Education: Epistemology, paradigms and methodology. (Lecture delivered as part of the Med and PhD Research development and support training programme on 27 January 2009.) Potchefstroom. 21p.

VAN DER WESTHUIZEN, P.C. & VAN VUUREN, H.J. 2007. Organisational development in schools: a strategy for the management of diversity. (*In Van der Westhuizen, P.C., ed. Schools as organisations. Pretoria: Van Schaik. p. 338-375.*)

VAN VUUREN, H.J. 2008. A strategy to manage diversity in secondary schools. Potchefstroom: North West University. (Thesis – D.Phil.) 396 p.

WENTLING, R.M. 2001. Diversity in the work force. *The Highlight Zone: Research@Work:1-10*. Columbus, Oh: National Dissemination Center for career and Technical Education.

WOOD, W.D. & BAKER, J.A. 1999. Preferences for parent education programs among low socioeconomic status, culturally diverse parents. *Psychology in the schools*, 36(3):239-247.

WORLD BOOK DICTIONARY. 2005. Chicago, I.C: World Book Inc.

WRENCH, J. 2005. Diversity management can be bad for you. *Race & Class*, 46(3):73-84.

YATES, L. 2004. What does good education research look like? Maidenhead: Open University Press. 232 p.

၂၀၀၅

ANNEXURES

SURVEY QUESTIONNAIRE

MANAGING THE DIVERSITY OF PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT IN PRIMARY SCHOOLS

DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION: MAQUASSI HILLS AREA OFFICE
DR. KENNETH KAUNDA DISTRICT, NORTH WEST PROVINCE

Questionnaire number

Indicate your response with an **X** in the applicable frame.

SECTION A: BIOGRAPHICAL INFORMATION

For example:

Male	X (If you're male)
Female	

1 Gender?

Male	1
Female	2

2 Current position?

Principal	1
Deputy principal	2
SMT Member	3
Teacher	4
School Governing Body	5
Parent	6

3 Population group?

Black	1
White	2
Coloured	3
Asian	4
Other(specify): _____	5

4 Age group in years?

21 - 30	1
31 - 40	2
41 - 50	3
51 - 60	4
60+	5

5 Home language?

English	1
Setswana	2
Afrikaans	3
Other(specify): _____	4

6 Level of education / training?

No formal education	1
Primary school education	2
High school education	3
Tertiary Education: Certificate	4
Tertiary Education: Diploma	5
Tertiary Education: Degree	6
Tertiary Education: Hons	7
Tertiary Education: Masters	8
Tertiary Education: PhD	9

7 Years experience in position?

Not applicable	1
1-3 years	2
4-6 years	3
7+ years	4

8 Current socio-economic status?

High income	1
Middle income	2
Low income	3

SECTION B: GENERAL INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

9 The number of learners in the school?

<100 learners	1
101-200 learners	2
201-300 learners	3
301-400 learners	4
401-500 learners	5
501-600 learners	6
601-700 learners	7
701-800 learners	8
800+ learners	9

10 The medium of instruction at the school?

Afrikaans	1
English	2
Setswana	3
Dual Medium	4
Parallel medium	5
Other(specify):_____	6

11 The number of educators in your school?

<5	1
6-10	2
11-15	3
16-20	4
21+	5

12 The number of School Governing Body members at your school?

<2	1
3-4	2
5-6	3
6+	4

13 How do you perceive the general style of leadership in your school?

Democratic and accommodating	1
Autocratic and impersonal	2
A combination of 1 and 2	3

14 How do you perceive the general school climate?

Inviting and friendly	1
Unapproachable and hostile	2
A combination of 1 and 2	3

15 The prevalent socio-economic status of the area in which the school is located?

High income group	1
Middle income group	2
Low income group	3

16 The type of school?

Town school	1
Township school	2
Farm school	3
Other(specify): _____	4

17 The general education level of parents of the school?

Minimum of formal education	1
Primary school education	2
High school education	3
Tertiary/Further education	4

SECTION C: CONCEPTUALISATION OF DIVERSITY

For example:

	No extent	Little extent	Some extent	Great extent
Diversity is colour blindness	X (if it is your answer)			

18 To what extent do you view diversity as ...

		No extent	Little extent	Some extent	Great extent
18.1	inborn human uniqueness?	1	2	3	4
18.2	associated with group affiliations?	1	2	3	4
18.3	differences among people?	1	2	3	4
18.4	a mixture of human differences and similarities?	1	2	3	4
18.5	seeable and non-seeable aspects of people?	1	2	3	4
18.6	caring for one another in their uniqueness?	1	2	3	4
18.7	being a threat?	1	2	3	4
18.8	dynamic, thus forever changing?	1	2	3	4
18.9	linked to some kind of idea?	1	2	3	4

19 To what extent do you associate diversity with ...

		No extent	Little extent	Some extent	Great extent
19.1	cultural differences?	1	2	3	4
19.2	differences in language?	1	2	3	4
19.3	differences in religion?	1	2	3	4
19.4	differences in socio-economic class?	1	2	3	4
19.5	differences in education levels?	1	2	3	4
19.6	differences between racial groups?	1	2	3	4
19.7	differences in ability to do certain things?	1	2	3	4
19.8	aspects that can be used to enhance performance?	1	2	3	4
19.9	aspects that need to be taken into account when engaging with people?	1	2	3	4

Any other personal association(s) / interpretation(s) of the meaning of diversity?

.....

.....

SECTION D: INDICATORS OF PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT**20 To what extent are parents of the school involved in ...**

		No extent	Little extent	Some extent	Great extent
20.1	setting the school's goals, mission and vision?	1	2	3	4
20.2	decision-making in the management of the school?	1	2	3	4
20.3	creating of an inviting school climate that will enhance education?	1	2	3	4
20.4	evaluating and monitoring of the effectiveness of management?	1	2	3	4
20.5	volunteering at school functions, social events and fundraising?	1	2	3	4
20.6	supporting sports and cultural activities?	1	2	3	4
20.7	maintenance of the school facilities and grounds?	1	2	3	4
20.8	school work through help at home?	1	2	3	4
20.9	implementation of legislation?	1	2	3	4

21 To what extent does the school advance parental involvement through ...

		No extent	Little extent	Some extent	Great extent
21.1	supporting an inviting school climate?	1	2	3	4
21.2	involving parents in management and decision-making?	1	2	3	4
21.3	training its staff to equip them towards facilitating parental involvement?	1	2	3	4
21.4	educating parents regarding their children's physical and emotional development?	1	2	3	4
21.5	educating parents regarding help rendered with their children's homework?	1	2	3	4

22 To what extent does the school manage to create opportunities in which parents can participate in ...

		No extent	Little extent	Some extent	Great extent
22.1	teaching in the classroom?	1	2	3	4
22.2	teaching at home (homework)?	1	2	3	4
22.3	organising social events?	1	2	3	4
22.4	the maintenance of school facilities and grounds?	1	2	3	4
22.5	fundraising for specific projects?	1	2	3	4
22.6	sports activities?	1	2	3	4
22.7	cultural activities?	1	2	3	4

23 To what extent does the school make an effort to obtain information from the parents regarding their ...

		No extent	Little extent	Some extent	Great extent
23.1	skills which the school could utilise?	1	2	3	4
23.2	needs and fears?	1	2	3	4
23.3	socio-economic situation?	1	2	3	4
23.4	language preference?	1	2	3	4
23.5	cultural background?	1	2	3	4
23.6	family structure (e.g. single parenthood)?	1	2	3	4
23.7	literacy levels?	1	2	3	4
23.8	disability circumstances?	1	2	3	4
23.9	religious background?	1	2	3	4

24 To what extent do the following diversity aspects influence parental involvement at your school ...

		No extent	Little extent	Some extent	Great extent
24.1	cultural differences?	1	2	3	4
24.2	age differences?	1	2	3	4
24.3	gender differences?	1	2	3	4
24.4	language related problems?	1	2	3	4
24.5	different racial groupings?	1	2	3	4
24.6	family structure (e.g. single parenthood)?	1	2	3	4
24.7	different religious groupings?	1	2	3	4
24.8	differences in education levels?	1	2	3	4
24.9	the socio-economic situation?	1	2	3	4

Any other comment about the influence of diversity on parental involvement in your school?

.....

Thank you for your time and cooperation in completing this questionnaire.

DIVISION AND NUMBER OF QUESTION ITEMS

Section A: Biographical information	1 – 8	Biographical information	(8)
Section B: General information about schools	11 – 17	General information	(9)
Section C: Conceptualisation of diversity	18.1 - 18.9 19.1 - 19.9	Concept views Concept associations	(18)
Section D: Indicators of parental involvement	20.1 – 20.9 21.1 – 21.5 22.1 – 22.7 23.1 – 23.9 24.1 – 24.9	Extent of involvement Advancement of involvement Opportunities for involvement Information regarding parents Aspects of diversity	(39) (74)

CONFIDENTIALITY AGREEMENT

**TITLE: MANAGING THE DIVERSITY OF PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT IN
PRIMARY SCHOOLS**

I, as the researcher, undertake that all the information acquired from the questionnaire will be handled with the strictest confidentiality. No information will be held against any participant to harm him/her in any way either physically, emotionally or socially.

Andre Smith

2011-05-09

A. Smith
(Researcher)

Date

I, as head of the school governing body, school governing body member, headmaster, deputy headmaster, head of department, teacher or parent of the identified primary school in the Maquassi Hills area, am conversant with the aim of the research as well as what is expected of me. I undertake to handle all matters that might arise during the discussion as highly confidential. I further undertake not to use information given during the research against any participant to harm him/her in any way either be it physically, psychologically, emotionally or socially.

Name of participant

Date

Signature of participant

Andre Smith
PO Box 4
Wolmaransstad
2630

1 March 2011

Mr. A. J. Engelbrecht
Area Office Manager: Maquassi Hills area
Dr. Kenneth Kaunda District
Department of Education North West Province
Maquassi Hills APO Office
Wolmaransstad

Mr. Engelbrecht

ASSISTANCE IN AND PERMISSION TO CONDUCT A RESEARCH STUDY IN THE MAQUASSI HILLS AREA

I intend to conduct a research study for a M.Ed. in Educational Management at the North-West University. The theme of the study deals with **MANAGING THE DIVERSITY OF PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT IN PRIMARY SCHOOLS.**

I hereby apply for permission to conduct the above mentioned research in the Maquassi Hills area. The research will be conducted in all the primary schools in the area. Assistance is needed in the provision of a list of all the primary schools in the area as well as with the sending out of the questionnaires to the schools.

The method of data collection includes the completion of individual questionnaires by the principal and members of the governing body of the selected schools. The questionnaires will take no longer than 10 minutes to complete.

I commit myself to the professional code of ethics for researchers which include among other:

- participation is strictly voluntary
- necessary documentation e.g. permission and consent forms will meet the requirements as stipulated by the code of ethics for researchers
- anonymity and confidentiality are guaranteed
- no interference with the general and academic programme of schools

- any visits at school sites, if necessary, will only be conducted with consent and by appointment
- the findings of the research will be made available upon completion to the NWDE and schools that have participated.

The planning of the fieldwork of the study is scheduled for the period of May to June 2011.

If you need any additional information about the research, you are most welcome to enquire in this regard and I will gladly provide you with the requested information.

Yours faithfully

Andre Smith

Andre Smith

M.Ed. candidate (North-West University)

(Student number: 10094628)

Contact number: 018 596 1108 / 082 566 6573

Ethics number: NWU-00015-11-S2

Supervisor / Study leader: Dr. H J Van Vuuren

Faculty of Educational Sciences

Contact number: 018 299 4569 /Herman.Vanvuuren@nwu.ac.za



education

Lefapha La Thuto Onderwys
 Departement Department of
 Education

NORTH WEST PROVINCE

Private Bag X1015
 73 Kruger Street
 WOLMARANSSTAD, 2630

Tel: 018-5969200
 Fax: 018-5962853
 e-mail: aengelbrecht@nwpg.gov.za

Enquiries: Mr. AJ Engelbrecht

**DR. KENNETH KAUNDA DISTRICT
 MAQUASSI HILLS AREA OFFICE**

TO All Principals
Maquassi Hills

FROM : Mr. AJ Engelbrecht Area
 Manager Maquassi Hills
 Area Office Wolmaransstad

DATE 24 March 2011

**SUBJECT : PERMISSION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH IN SCHOOLS -MR.
 A SMITH**

This communique serves to grant the said official permission to conduct research in our schools.

The permission to conduct research is granted with the full understanding that learning and teaching would not be disrupted at all.

Your co-operation and understanding would be highly appreciated.

Thanking you

AJ ENGELBRECHT
 AREA MANAGER

cc: Circuit Managers
Maquassi Hills

Mr. A Smith

Andre Smith
P.O.Box 4
Wolmaransstad
2630

9 May 2011

The Principal
Mr. /Mrs.

CONSENT TO PARTICIPATE IN A RESEARCH STUDY AT PRIMARY SCHOOLS

I intend to conduct a research study for a M.Ed. in Educational Management at the North-West University. The theme of the study deals with **MANAGING THE DIVERSITY OF PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT IN PRIMARY SCHOOLS**. For all research conducted in schools, written proxy consent of the participant is required.

With permission from the North-West Department of Education as well as yourself, the principal of Primary School A, I hereby ask for your voluntary consent to participate in the above mentioned research. The method of data collection includes the filling in of a questionnaire which will take no more than 10 minutes.

I commit myself to the professional code of ethics for researchers which include among other that:

- participation is strictly voluntary
- necessary documentation e.g. permission and consent forms will meet the requirements as stipulated by the code of ethics for researchers
- anonymity and confidentiality are guaranteed
- no interference with the general and academic programme of the school
- the questionnaire and any visits to the school site, if necessary, will only be conducted with consent and by appointment
- the findings of the research will be made available upon completion to the NWDE and the school.

The planning of the fieldwork of the study is scheduled for the period of May to June 2011. I am attaching the questionnaire as well as a written consent form. On approval, please complete the consent form.

If you need any additional information about the research, you are most welcome to enquire in this regard and I will gladly provide you with the requested information.

Yours faithfully

Andre Smith

Andre Smith

M.Ed. candidate (North-West University)

(Student number: 10094628)

Contact number: 018 596 1108 / 082 566 6573 / smith09@vodamail.co.za

Supervisor / Study leader: Dr. H J Van Vuuren

Faculty of Educational Sciences

Contact number: 018 299 4569 / Herman.Vanvuuren@nwu.ac.za

Andre Smith
PO Box 4
Wolmaransstad
2630

9 May 2011

The Principal
Primary School A
Mr. / Mrs.

PERMISSION TO CONDUCT A RESEARCH STUDY AT PRIMARY SCHOOL A

I intend to conduct a research study for a M.Ed. in Educational Management at the North-West University. The theme of the study deals with the **MANAGING THE DIVERSITY OF PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT IN PRIMARY SCHOOLS**.

With permission of- and assistance from the North-West Department of Education Primary School A has been selected and I hereby apply for permission to conduct this research at your school. The method of data collection includes individual completion of questionnaires by you as the principal as well as the members of the school governing body. The questionnaire will take no longer than 10 minutes to complete.

I commit myself to the professional code of ethics for researchers which include among other that:

- participation is strictly voluntary
- necessary documentation e.g. permission and consent forms will meet the requirements as stipulated by the code of ethics for researchers
- anonymity and confidentiality are guaranteed
- no interference with the general and academic programme of the school
- any visits at school sites, if necessary will only be conducted with consent and by appointment

- the findings of the research will be made available upon completion to the NWDE and the school.

The planning of the fieldwork of the study is scheduled for the period of May to June 2011.

If you need any additional information about the research, you are most welcome to enquire in this regard and I will gladly provide you with the requested information.

Yours faithfully

Andre Smith

Andre Smith

M.Ed. candidate (North-West University)

(Student no: 10094628)

Contact number: 018 596 1108 / 082 566 6573

Supervisor / Study leader: Dr. H J Van Vuuren

Faculty of Educational Sciences

Contact number: 018 299 4569 /Herman.Vanvuuren@nwu.ac.za

Andre Smith
PO Box 4
Wolmaransstad
2630

9 May 2011

The Chairperson of the School Governing Body
Mr. /Mrs.

CONSENT TO PARTICIPATE IN A RESEARCH STUDY AT PRIMARY SCHOOLS

I intend to conduct a research study for a M.Ed. in Educational Management at the North-West University. The theme of the study deals with **MANAGING THE DIVERSITY OF PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT IN PRIMARY SCHOOLS**. For all research conducted in schools, written proxy consent of the participant is required.

With permission from the North-West Department of Education as well as the principal of Primary School A, I hereby ask for your voluntary consent to participate in the above mentioned research. The method of data collection includes the completion of a questionnaire by the school principal as well as all the members of the school governing body. Completion of the questionnaire will take no longer than 10 minutes.

I commit myself to the professional code of ethics for researchers which include among other that:

- participation is strictly voluntary
- necessary documentation e.g. permission and consent forms will meet the requirements as stipulated by the code of ethics for researchers
- anonymity and confidentiality are guaranteed
- no interference with the general and academic programme of the school

- the questionnaire and any visits to the school site, if necessary, will only be conducted with consent and by appointment
- the findings of the research will be made available upon completion to the NWDE and the school.

The planning of the fieldwork of the study is scheduled for the period of May to June 2011. I am attaching the preliminary questionnaire as well as a written consent form. On approval, please complete the consent form and return it to the principal. It is only after your voluntary consent that any future arrangements can be made.

If you need any additional information about the research, you are most welcome to enquire in this regard and I will gladly provide you with the requested information.

Yours faithfully

Andre Smith

Andre Smith

M.Ed. candidate (North-West University)

(Student number: 10094628)

Contact number: 018 596 1108 / 082 566 6573

Supervisor / Study leader: Dr. H J Van Vuuren

Faculty of Educational Sciences

Contact number: 018 299 4569 /Herman.Vanvuuren@nwu.ac.za