Examining parental involvement in governance at primary schools: Case study of three township primary schools in the Western Cape

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ABSTRACT

In Wallacedene, the researcher became aware that minimum parental participation in school activities had reached alarming standards. This is related to learner performance which is of concern to educators, principals and education department officials. Parents are expected to perform certain roles in the governance of schools for the improvement of the quality of education in public schools. Parents are not honouring their obligatory responsibility of participation as required in terms of the public schools governing legislation.

The research focused on parental involvement in primary schools in Wallacedene examining both the nature and extent of parental involvement in school governance. This study followed the qualitative approach to determine if parents are involved in school activities and governance. Questionnaires, interviews and document analysis were utilized for data gathering. Participants were members of the School Governing Bodies (SGB) of the three primary schools in the Wallacedene area.

From the data gathered, the findings of the study indicated that parents in the townships of the Wallacedene area are not involved in school activities and governance. Issues of skills deficiency, low literacy levels, language barriers and socio-economic conditions seem to limit parental involvement in school governance. This study proposes possible recommendations to assist the school-based personnel and parents in developing and maintaining stronger and greater participation in school governance.

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DECLARATION

I, Sithembele Leonard Dick, declare that“ Examining parental involvement in governance at primary schools: Case study of three township primary schools in the Western Cape (2012-2014)” is my own work and that all the sources that I have used have been indicated and acknowledged by means of complete references.

Signed by: …….. Sithembele Leonard Dick

This…….. day of …… 2016

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DEDICATION

This dissertation is dedicated to my family and to God Almighty

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To our Almighty God for giving me courage, strength and wisdom to complete this dissertation**.**

I thank God for guiding and protecting me during the time of my studies and also for blessing me with the following people who made a great contribution in my life so that I can be the person that I am today.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

AIDS	: Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome
DoE	: Department of Education
HIV	: Human Immunodeficiency Virus
LSM	: Living Standard Measure
OBE	: Outcomes-Based Education
PTSA	: Parent-Teacher-Students' Association
SASA	: South African Schools Act
SES	: Social Economic Status
SGB	: School Governing Body
SMT	: School Management Team
WCED	: Western Cape Education Department

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1. Orientation of study

The effective participation of parents in education is imperative in successful childhood education. Lack of parental involvement in poor South African primary schools is a concern and can no longer be ignored. Adequate parental participation leads to quality education (Desforges and Abouchaar, 2003: 433). This partnership is also emphasized in legislation like the South African Schools Act of 1996 (RSA, 1996a) and is in line with the mission of parents to ensure that their children are educated or assist in the education of their children, but parental involvement in black schools is limited (Heystek, 2003: 97). Parental involvement assists in the effective learning and teaching. When parents are involved in learning and governance activities the school tend to be in better position for growth and development. It is this reason behind the encouragement of parental participation for school growth and development mission achievement. This point is demonstrated by the researcher's observation of the frustrations displayed by the fellow educators when discussing the effect of parental involvement on learner performance. This problem has become a burning issue in union meetings, amongst colleagues in staff rooms and even in educators' workshops. The role of parents is very crucial in the enhancement of learner success; and those who play little or no role in their children's education contribute to poor educational performance in schools. The Department of Education is also alarmed about the parental involvement as Minister Angie Motshekga (Minister of Basic Education) acknowledged, that "many problems at many government schools are likely the direct result of lack of parental involvement" (*The Times,* 31 January 2012). It is difficult for the Department of Education to succeed in their efforts to improve quality of public education without proactive black community (Singh and Mbokodi, 2004:301).

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1.2. Background to the study

The study was conducted in three primary schools situated in the township of Wallacedene in the Circuit Seven (Metropole North) District of Education in the Western Cape. These schools enrol learners from Grade R to Grade 7.

Calitz and Beckmen (1994:7) define delimitation as the continuous narrowing and precise definition of the field of study so that the field becomes specific through the process of investigation. The schools are situated in a large township area of Cape Town which started as an informal settlement. Currently while developing, this area still has characteristics of an informal settlement such as poverty, high unemployment rates, orphaned children and poor basic services (City of Cape Town- 2011 Census Suburb Wallacedene).

These primary schools are located in a poor community hence they have been declared no-fee schools and have inadequate facilities, are poorly resourced and equipped, enrol black working class learners living in townships and informal settlements. These schools are considered to be 'weak' according to the 2013 Western Cape Education Department (WCED) Diagnostic Test (Centralised Educational Management Information System 2013). Many parents of the learners are unemployed, low income workers and some of them are seasonal farm workers at surrounding farms. The quality of education is not up to the required standards as far as the pass rate of learners is concerned. Therefore, these three schools are ideal case studies to assess the problems of parental participation.

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1.3. An overview of parental involvement

The context of parental involvement is used in this research to describe a situation in which parents are regarded as active partners in the process of educating their children. When schools collaborate with families to support governance at the school, children are inclined to succeed (Desforges and Abouchaar, 2003:433). Makgope and Mokhele (2013:220), as cited in Okeke, 2014:1) perceive parental involvement as a "combination of supporting student academic achievement and participation in school-initiated functions." As indicated in the above paragraph adequate parental participation leads to quality education. Such participation of parents and families is essential not only for the quality of education but is also emphasized through legislation such as the South African Schools Act of 1996 (RSA, 1996a), to maintain effective and efficient governance of public primary schools. Singh et al, (2004:301) view parents as a very useful resource. Nevertheless, the Department of Education (DoE) is struggling in its efforts to improve the quality of public education due to the absence and passive nature of the township parents in school activities.

Research relating to parent involvement especially in the South African context is restricted to wealthier areas (Smit and Liebenberg, 2003:1). This study lends a hand in an attempt to gain an understanding of how township parents participation in school governance and current dynamics existing between parents and schools.

1.4. Problem statement

The problem of minimal parental participation in school activities in the Wallacedene area has reached alarming standards. As a result, the effects of parental involvement on learner performance have become a concern to educators, principals and department officials who are consistently inviting parents for effective and efficient operation of schools. These primary schools are considered to be weak, according to the 2013 Western Cape Education Department (WCED) Diagnostic Test (Centralised Educational Management Information System 2013).

Parents' participation in school activities is not up to the required standard and this low level of participation tends to have undesirable implications for the school performance, particularly for the township schools. Sheldon (2002:83) (as cited in Mbokodi, 2008:4) observed that educators continue to struggle to understand why some parents are not involved in their children's education while others are involved, especially in the light of these school performances. This problem is evident in the poor attendance of parents at parent meetings, limited involvement in fundraising projects, and low attendance at parent-teacher meetings.

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1.5. Purpose of the study

The study's significance lies in the fact that:

- It will point out the nature and extent of parental involvement.
- It will indicate that parental involvement can be used as a strategy to improve learner performance.
- It will indicate (reasons/factors) why parents are not involved in the education of their children.
- It will show how stakeholders perceive parental involvement as a direct influence in the improvement of the quality of education.

In the township, many parents do not play the desired role in their children's education, therefore the researcher intends to propose strategies. In this regard, the study will contribute towards the production of knowledge in the field of school governance.

1.6. Research Questions

As mentioned above, the main research will focus on: the nature and extent of parental involvement in school governance?

1.6.1. The following sub-questions arise:

- What is the nature of parental involvement in the 3 primary schools?
- To what extent do the parents get involved?
- What are the circumstances which limit parental involvement in school governance?
- Why are parents not getting involved in school activities?
- Which are the areas of school matters that parents can be motivated to be involved in?

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1.7. Research objectives

These flow from the above questions:

- To investigate why parents are not consistently involved in the education of their children.
- To assess the nature and extent of parental involvement in the three schools chosen as case studies.
- To investigate perceptions of stakeholders regarding parental involvement as a strategy in schools.
- To identify strategies which can be used to improve learner performance with the help of parental involvement.
- To identify factors that affect parental involvement.

1.8. Significance of the study

The importance of this study is to determine the reasons why parents do not get involved in school activities. It is also imperative for the study to explore the nature the extent of parental participation in the school activities. There are many challenges which limit parental involvement, therefore these conditions and its circumstance need to be understood and appropriate measures must be taken to address the lack of parental involvement in primary schools. Parental involvement has an influence on the quality of public school education, particularly in the township primary schools.

As an Administration Clerk who has served in the education environment for more than 10 years, the researcher became interested particularly in researching that aspect of parental involvement as outlined in the South African School Act of 1996. The fact that the researcher served as a member of a School Governing Body (SGB) also prompted him to pursue this study focusing on certain dynamics of parental involvement in school governance.

1.9. Research design

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The research approach for this study was qualitative and evaluative in nature. The researcher attempted to interact directly with the participants without influencing the results. This approach was chosen since it is concerned with understanding behaviour from the research participant's point of view (McMillan and Schumacher, 1993:373). The researcher employed the following data collection strategies: focus group interviews, and individual in-depth interviews. The various techniques of data collection are justified on the basis of their suitability and relevance to the nature and purpose of the research. The research involved a case study of three public township primary schools in the Western Cape.

1.10. Population, setting and sample

The sample in this study was selected using purposeful sampling. McMillan and Schumacher (1993:598) define a sample as comprising a number of individuals selected from a population for study. Gay and Airasian (2000:209) point out that qualitative research generally relies on purposive selection of participants.

All members of the three School Governing Bodies were interviewed for the generation of data. The population included teachers, parents and principals who were the members of the School Governing body in sampled township primary schools

Snowball sampling is appropriate when the members of special populations are difficult to locate (Babbie and Mouton, 2007:167). Representatives of teachers and parents in the School Governing Bodies were used to locate other members of the population whom they happened to know. Hence, snowball sampling was used for teachers and parents.

1.11. Data collection

Appointments were made with the participant in order to conduct the interviews. Individual structured interviews were conducted in a private room in Wallacedene. The duration of each interview was between 30-45 minutes. The interviews were audio taped and the consent was requested from the participants before the interviews took place. Field notes were written down so that they could be used to supplement and verify the voice recordings after the interviews.

1.12. Data analysis

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During data collection, in-depth interviews were audio taped and transcribed. The next stage of analysis was to check and amend transcriptions to ensure accuracy using the research question as a framework, thus establishing the nature and extent of parental involvement in school governance. Calitz and Beckmen (1994:58) mentioned that analysis of data is the method of organizing data to answer research questions. All identified themes were listed and arranged in terms of major themes, and sub-themes.

1.13. Ethical considerations

Ethics clearance was requested from the University of the Western Cape Ethics Committee and from the Western Cape Education Department (WCED). The participants were informed about the research and conditions of participation.

1.13.1. Confidentiality

Because of the sensitivity of the issues discussed, the participants were assured of confidentiality and that data generated in the study would be used for the purpose of research. Personal details of participants were kept confidential by using pseudonyms or fictitious names in field notes. The information received from the participants was locked away and will be stored for the duration of five years after the date of publication of the results and the publication of the results of the study will not utilise the participants' real names.

1.13.2. Informed consent

All participants were asked to sign informed consent forms.

1.14. Clarification of terms

The following are definitions of terms for the purpose of this study:

1.14.1. Parent

According to the South African Schools Act (SASA) of 1996c, Act 84 (RSA 1996a:4), the term parent refers to:

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

Therefore all references to parents, family and their involvement are applicable to all adults who play an important role in a child's home life.

1.14.2. Governance

Mncube (2009:85) regards governance as:

> "… the institutional structure entrusted with the responsibility or authority to formulate and adopt school policy on a range of issues which include school uniforms; school budgets and developmental priorities; endorsement of the code of conduct for learners, staff and parents; broad goals on the educational quality that school should strive to achieve; school-community relations, and curriculum programme development".

Governance is at the centre stage in reorganizing the school system (Singh et al, 2004:301). Section 16 of the SASA states clearly that the day-to-day professional management of the school is the responsibility of the principal and School Management Team (SMT) and governance of the school remains the responsibility of the SGB. For the purpose of this study, school governance refers to the transfer and sharing of power between the state and the school since schools are in the best position to know and understand their own needs. All stakeholders including parents decide on school policies which affect the education of their children. School governance implies that all stakeholders including parents decide on school policies which affect the education of their children (Mncube, 2009:86).

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1.14.3. Stakeholders

Stakeholders are "all those who have legitimate interest in the continuing effectiveness and success of an institution whilst learners themselves will be seen as primary clients" (Bush and Heystek, 2003:128). These include parents, teachers, learners and other people (such as members of the community near the school) who participate in the activities of the school (Department of Education, 1997a:6).

1.14.4. Township School

Wallacedene is a mixture of black African and coloured people. A township is a planned urban settlement of black African or coloured people (Oxford Illustrated Dictionary).

Township schools have inadequate facilities and are poorly resourced and enrol black-working class learners living in townships and informal settlements (Karlsson, 2002:334). The parents in the townships do not work in decent jobs and some of them are unemployed. There is a high rate

of poverty, unemployment rate and poor basic services (City of Cape Town-2011 Census Suburb Wallacedene). In Wallacedene the majority of parents are unemployed and some of them are seasonal farm workers on surrounding farms. They do not have sufficient funds to support schools, which is the reason most schools in townships are declared no-fee schools. The socio-economic conditions are poor, with most parents living below the poverty line.

1.15. Exposition of the study

- Chapter one deals with the introduction to the study and attention is given to the research
- Problem and research question. It outlines the research problem and methodology used and clarifies certain concepts used in the study.
- Chapters two and three review relevant literature and provide a framework for an understanding of parental involvement in primary schools.
- Chapter four is devoted to the research methodology and research design.
- Chapters five and six deal with data analysis, findings and discussion of data obtained from interviews and the literature.
- Chapter seven provides a summary of the research conclusion and makes recommendations.

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1.16. Conclusion

This chapter constituted the framework of what the research project entails. The research questions, objectives of the study, the method of information gathering and analysing data were explained in this chapter. The next chapter will present a review of the literature which will explain the different viewpoints of authors on parental involvement.

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1. Introduction

Parental involvement is one of the most important issues in our current education system. Although researchers differ in their approaches to study parental involvement, in most cases they agree that parents contribute significantly to school effectiveness and students success (Rosenblatt and Peled, 2002:349). Although there is significant literature on parental participation in school activities internationally, not much has been written about parental participation in such activities in South Africa (Okeke, 2014:1). Hence, this study investigates the nature and extent of parental involvement in primary schools when considering the South African context. Such participation of parents is critical not only for the quality of education but it is also emphasised through legislation for effective and efficient governance of public primary schools (Lemmer, 2007:218).

The best academic performance or good examination results are viewed as indicators of high quality education. Schools are managed in a performance-driven culture; the criteria for quality are measurable evidence such as school leaving (matriculation) results as well as standard mathematics and literacy tests at Grades 3 and 6, as was the case in this study.

Normally in South Africa performance in schools is measured through pass rate however at primary school is measured through systematic evaluation tests written by Grade three and Grade 6 learners, in numeracy and literacy learning areas (Centralised Information Management System, 2014). Therefore, it is important to review the debates about the meaning of parental involvement, benefits of parental involvement, legislative aspects of parental involvement in the primary schools, what other scholars have said on parental involvement in the past and at present and consider the different types of parental involvement.

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2.2. Conceptual understanding of parental involvement

In education there are different ways in which parental involvement can be understood and in this study the term 'participation' is used interchangeably with the term 'involvement. The different meanings of parental involvement in this study amount to active roles played by the parents in the governance process of the school for maintaining quality education and school development. Sheldon (2002:83) defines parental involvement as "parents' investment of resources in their children" while Mmotlane, Winnaar and Kivulu, (2009: 528) view parental involvement as parental participation in school activities which include volunteering in the classroom, attending school events, open houses and back-to-school nights. According to Epstein (1991:63), parental involvement has been defined as parenting, communicating, volunteering, learning at home, decision making, and collaborating with the community. It involves a wide range of responsibilities such as ensuring that children have breakfast before they go to school, volunteering at school, helping children with homework and holding positions on School Governing Bodies (Epstein, 1991:63).It is the responsibility of parents to participate in school activities and ensure that learners are participating in school activities. Assisting their learners is of paramount importance in this regard and the schools expect parental assistance for the benefit of the learners. In the current study, parental involvement implies that parents participate in school governance.

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2.3. Approaches to parental involvement

Schools use different and varied approaches to parental involvement. In some schools, the principal leads in promoting parental involvement while in others teaching and support staff drive parental involvement. Epstein (1987:120) assumed that it is the principal's role to orchestrate activities that will enable staff to understand parental involvement and he or she must select, design, evaluate and revise programmes for parental involvement. Michael, Wolhuter and van Wyk, (2012:63) assert that parental involvement is an essential part of school management and its effectiveness and failure lie in the hands of the principal.

Michael et al, (2012:63) believe that school management is supposed to play a greater role in the facilitation of parental involvement rather than considering family background such as race, ethnicity, socio-economic level or marital status in the determination of the extent of parental involvement in children's education. The parent's participation lies in the hands of the teaching staff. In considering the abovementioned approaches, the nature and extent of parental participation can either be hindered or enhanced by the principal and the teaching staff.

2.4. Importance of parental involvement

The literature suggests that parental involvement improves the academic achievement of learners. Parental involvement has shown to exert a positive influence on the child's educational success. Epstein (1987:123) believed that in order for school to achieve maximum effectiveness, parents and school must develop a working partnership (Heystek, 2003:129). According to a popular African proverb, "It takes a whole village to raise a child". When parents are actively involved in their children's education, children tend to model their parents' attitudes and actions. The literature on parental involvement in children's education demonstrates that parental involvement benefits children's learning (Davids, 2010:17). The term 'parental involvement' can mean in any way in which an adult is involved in the education of the child. According to Mncube (2009:84) "parental involvement in education has been associated with a variety of positive academic outcomes including higher-grade-points averages". The positive effect of parents getting involved in their children's education has been validated by many researchers. It is only natural to assume that children whose parents show an interest in their education will be more motivated and have more self confidence in school. These children would know they have the support of the parents and this knowledge will have positive effects in general on their attitude towards school as well as at home (Mncube, 2009:85). Effective parental involvement will benefit the learners which will ultimately develop the entire schooling performance. When the parents are involved in the schools, they get to know what is happening at their learners' schools. According to the literature, parental involvement is extremely emphasized for the smooth operation of schools (Epstein, 1987:125), including deviant teacher behaviour is detected timeously so that remedial action can be considered.

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The contribution of parents in school activities is highly valued and motivating. Singh et al, (2004:301) noted that through maximum parental involvement the parents develop the power to influence the behaviour they expect from teachers and principals. For school development and quality education; they further argued that no matter which class a learner belongs to, parent involvement is crucial in school governance. Okeke (2014:1) suggested that "there is sufficient evidence in suggesting that parents' involvement in education of children can make significant difference in the development of education system as a whole." Parental involvement has a positive effect on school performance.

2.5. Parental involvement in school partnership

The South African Schools Act of 1996 identifies parents as the official partners in the governance of their children's school. Through the involvement of parents, the school can be able to develop working partnerships with all stakeholders and communities it serves. Partnership refers to the collaborative relationship between the school and parents (Mncube, 2009:82). The above mentioned relationship plays an important part in parental involvement, in view of how parents perceive the school and its teachers. Mbokodi and Singh, (2011: 39) argued that the South African Schools Act (1996) describes the ideal for stakeholder participation in school governance as, "partnership between parents and schools is an instrument to improve and develop the school as the parents involve themselves in the school activities in order to benefit their children's education".

Listening to parents, encourages participation and gives them more power and responsibility which results in a better functioning school. "Parents who participate in decision-making experience greater feelings of ownership and are more committed to supporting the school's mission (Jackson and Davis, 2000 as cited in Mncube, 2009:83)". It is important for the school to have a working relationship with the community they serve. Partnerships must not be forged only through SGBs as there are many school activities in which the parents can be involved. The current parent involvement through partnerships needs to be taken beyond the statutory requirements such as a School Governing Body (Lemmer and van Wyk, 2004:261). There appears to be little evidence of effective partnerships between parents and schools at this stage in South Africa (Lemmer and van Wyk, 2004:275).The parents are not effectively participating in school activities as required by the school governance legislation.

The learners and teachers expect parents to be actively involved in school activities but parents are not committing themselves in school activities. (Heystek, 2003:343).

Ramirez (2001:130) suggests that an increase in the partnership in the governance of schools, leads to an increase in student achievement (as cited in Singh and Mbokodi, 2011:40). In addition Vassallo (2001:1, as cited in Mbokodi and Singh, 2011) confirmed that "key to school reform is the parent" and that transformation must occur at local level where school authorities play a critical role in translating national directives into local policy to ensure that these directives are being adequately practiced (Lemmer and van Wyk, 2004:262). In praising the parents, School Governing Bodies accommodate parental roles in crucial matters of governance however, the contribution of parents in governing bodies is very limited (Lemmer and van Wyk, 2004:262).

2.6. Governance under Apartheid and in democracy

Parents are the closest stakeholders to the schools and are expected to play a huge role in transforming schools. During the days of apartheid, there were no governing bodies. The governance of schools was centralised, principals took unilateral decisions, reporting directly to the education department. The post-1994 government transformed the education sector emphasizing more participation of all stakeholders particularly the parents. Seemingly the parents are not effectively utilizing the space of participation at their disposal as it is forced through legislation. Many working class and rural black parents are confronted by constraints in terms of participation in School Governing Bodies as a result of poor governance skills and lack of time. Provincial departments of education are responsible for the skills development of these School Governing Body members according to SASA.

The low socio economic conditions of the parents of Wallacedene can obstruct parents in effective participation. Most parents in this area are working on surrounding farms and some of them are unemployed. Parent partnerships could lead to greater achievement irrespective of factors such as socio economic status, background, educational level and whether parents are employed or not (Singh et al, 2004:303). The specific perspective of the partnership between schools and parents is drawn in SASA of 1996.

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This Act legally binds parents to be involved in the governance of their children's schools. According to Mbokodi and Singh (2011:38) the South African School Act of 1996 (SASA) came into effect but partnerships among the schools and the parents have not been accomplished. Section 2.2.6.1 of the Schools Act defines this concept as partnership which means a number of people who have a common goal or are co-operating with one another by contributing something of value, such as skills. According to Msila (2012:305) effective partnership has the following qualities:

- *Mutual respect*
- *Shared decision making*
- *Common vision*
- *Open communication*
- *Good teamwork.*

Heystek (1999:100) revealed that the relationship between parents and schools should change from a "client-type to a partnership–type". Since the parents form part of the decision-making process, they must also ensure its implementation. Parents must share the implementation of decisions with the teachers and contribute equally, in the best interest of the school. If the parents and professional staff share the same goals, information, responsibility and accountability, then the partnership can lead to success (Heystek, 1999:100). It will be easier to determine and achieve the goals, vision and mission of the school.

In South Africa there is no such policy holding parents accountable for their children's education. In England, there is policy holding parents accountable for their children's education (Desforges and Abouchaar, 2003:433). In consideration of SASA, participation in school governance is voluntary and the national policy of education is not empowered to force parents and school partnerships in school activities. The literature (Mbokodi and Singh, 2011; Mncube, 2009; Epstein, 1987; Heystek, 2003; Mbokodi, 2008) agreed that parental partnership has a positive influence on school performance. South Africa's National Education Policy has a little influence on school partnerships (Okeke, 2014:5). These policies are not exerting adequate pressure on schools for the establishment of these partnerships.

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There is a shortage of structured guidance on effective parental involvement and SASA is not clearly stipulating specification around that issue. For the schools to develop working relationships with communities, it will be important for the parents to develop school partnerships.

2.7. Structure of involvement

Volunteerism in school activities is another form of participation. Lemmer (2007:220) suggested the consideration of volunteers' deployment in school activities due to its cost implications but involving the community in the school tends to be very difficult. In order for parents to avail themselves for voluntary responsibilities and working partnerships, training and motivation programmes must be conducted to develop their interest in school activities. Heystek (1999:103) believed that participation of parents in non- academic school activities is better in comparison with other activities in black township schools.

Teachers spend a lot of time on these activities which can be used for academic related activities, so parent involvement can assist teachers for them to spend more time in classrooms. Heystek (1999:104) recommended that parents be involved in coaching or training learners, in the maintenance and upgrading of the school buildings. This involvement of parent in non-academic activities can be done via the SGB, or sub-committees of the governing body but the parents in working class and rural areas are not availing themselves to assist schools in these activities. Participation of black parents in school activities is very poor and parents in black communities do not have a tradition of involvement in school activities (Heystek, 1999:105). The parents have little time for volunteer activities and those who do have time are not availing them for school activities in Wallacedene.

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2.8. School environment for effective participation

The education system is transforming not only in South Africa but also internationally. As the major stakeholders parents are expected to play a significant role in school governance (Rosenblatt and Peled, 2002:349). In some schools parental involvement is hindered by the school environment and teachers' attitudes towards parents. This hostile school environment is not thoroughly researched (Desforges and Abouchaar, 2003:1).

The researchers in South Africa seem to overlook the issue of a school ethical environment for effective participation. Like all organisations, schools have an ethical environment, in other words, they provide their students, employees and parents with guiding acceptable moral values. In order for those values to be useful, they need to be aligned to the development of the schools' effectiveness (Rosenblatt and Peled, 2002:349). Parental involvement is effective when parents influence the decisions taken particularly in the governance of schools. Rosenblatt and Peled (2002:352) believed that in order for parents to make huge contributions in school governance, parent empowerment is of utmost importance. This empowerment contributes to the effectiveness of parental involvement in schools and has been reported to contribute to better parent-school relationships. A study conducted in Israeli schools showed that parental empowerment leads to higher involvement, the more the parents are empowered, the more they will be involved and trust schools (Rosenblatt et al, 352). Trust is one of the most important elements in a well-functioning institution. Cunnings and Browley (1996:305) defined trust as the belief that another individual (or group) makes good-faith efforts to behave in accordance with commitments and does not take advantage of another, even when the opportunity is available"(as cited in Rosenblatt and Peled, 2002:353).It is very easy to work when people trust each other. In school governance, teachers, principals, and parents need to trust each other in the best interests of the school. Teachers and principals have better exposure and understanding of school activities as compared to parents who have little or no knowledge, so they must not take advantage of parents' limited knowledge, particularly in townships where parents' literacy levels are low.

Although the legislation allows professional staff to create conducive environment for parental involvement, teachers are not adequately complying with legislation of parent and community involvement. In its Code of Conduct, the South African Council for Educators (Republic of South Africa, 2001) has clearly stipulated that teachers should recognise the parents as partners in education and establish working relationships with them. Therefore they must adequately keep parents informed about the progress of learners. It is also clearly stipulated in the National Education Policy Act (Republic of South Africa, 1996b) that community participation should be regarded as one of the guiding principles in education and that all interested parties must be involved in all aspects of the education system.

This involvement consolidates the active collaboration of all stakeholders of education such as teachers, principals, parents, learners and professional support personnel (Mestry and Grobler, 2007:177). The participation of parents in school activities varies from school to school on how parents are encouraged and motivated to participate. Legislation alone cannot encourage parental participation but the parents must demonstrate an interest (Heystek, 1999:99). Although legislation forces schools to have properly constituted SGBs, already, by the end of 1997, but it was alarming to note that there are schools that still do not have a governing body (Heystek, 1999:102). It will be difficult for parents to determine the norms and values of the schools without this platform.

Parents are willing to participate in school governance. There is a lack of adequate skills for effective participation in school governance. Parents are not the only reason for their lack of involvement (Mestry and Grobler, 2007: 177). This argument is confirmed by the research conducted by Alliance Schools Initiative (2004) that parents are unable to adequately participate in their children's education due to negative communication from schools. In addition, there is insufficient training for teachers on how to reach out to parents. Parents do not feel welcomed in schools, which is not motivating them for effective participation in school activities.

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2.9. Principal's responsibility in parental involvement

In South Africa public schools elect a School Governing Body as part of the governance and management structure in schools. The SASA of 1996 describes governance and management as two separate activities with two teams responsible for its responsibilities (Heystek, 2006:475). Management is the responsibility of the principal with professional staff while the SGB is responsible for the governance of the school. The SGB is not allowed to be involved in professional management activities such as decisions about learning materials, teaching methods to be used or class assessment. (Heystek, 2006:373).

Professional management of the school is the responsibility of the principal with the school management team which is responsible for teaching and learning activities in class which is comprised of all educators filling promotional posts such as Principal, Deputy Principal and Head of Department.

The principal is the member of both teams -school management team and School Governing Body, and is the key player. According to the study conducted by Karlsson (2002:333), there is no working relationship between the principals and the School Governing Bodies in South Africa due to the issues of illiteracy or semi-illiteracy of the parents.

Parents want to rule the School Governing Body and the school principals do not allow active parental participation in the governing functions of the school (Heystek, 2006:483). Unless the principal can improve the relationship between the School Governing Body and the school management team, schools cannot achieve their intended objectives.

2.10. Legislation relevant to parental involvement in School Governing Bodies

2.10.1 School governance in South Africa

In South Africa broad participation in school governance is encouraged in the national policies on education but the challenge the country faces is the lack of parental participation in school governance. Historically, according to Lemmer (2007:60) school governance used to be characterised by authoritarian and exclusive practices. The structures in place did not advocate for stakeholder participation and were dominated by principals reporting directly to the government bureaucracy. During the 1980's political struggle, initiatives moving to an inclusive and participatory system were taken when Parent- Teacher- Students (PTSA) associations were established.

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Before 1994, the educational system was unequal and after the dawn of new political dispensation in 1994 the education system was redesigned (Tsotetsi et al, 2012:63). The restructuring of the education system was done to accommodate the previously discriminated against racial groups and try to level the field of education; however up to date, there are identifiable attributes of inequality when it comes to the South African education system (Tsotetsi et al, 2012:63). One of the strongest trends in education reform had to give parents and in some cases community members an increased role in governing bodies but this reform did not fulfil its expected outcome, which is the school development (Lemmer, 2007:218).

The school governance system of South Africa is not relatively different from international systems but is exercised in different socio-economic, political and developmental system

(Heystek, 2011:456). The functions of SGBs such as drafting policies, budgeting, support and maintenance are performed in the same manner in the UK, New Zealand and Austria. In Israel, numerous studies claimed that high Social Economic Status parents tend to be more involved in schools (Rosenblatt and Peled, 2002:353). South Africa's approach to participation emerged from the stipulation of the South African Schools Act (SASA) whose view is more aligned to school governance and representation (Mmotlane et al, 2009:529). Unlike South Africa, England's Reform Act of 1998 established principles of decentralization in schools for financial implication. This movement forced schools to become more responsible for their own financial needs (Heystek, 2011:455). Lemmer (2007:218) noted:

> *… those changes in the governance did not influence learning and teaching activities which will ultimately improve student achievement. Parents prefer not to be involved through governing bodies but tend to be more involved in their own children's learning and indicated that governance arrangements do not usually improve student achievement.*

Thus, it is possible for schools to experience poor learning outcomes and achievement although they have efficient school governing bodies. It is very rare to have high achieving schools without the good governance. Good governance ensures effective and efficient teaching and learning. There are many School Governing Body responsibilities that need to be performed by members, and if those responsibilities are not adequately performed chances of the school succeeding are limited. Good governance leads to effective and efficient administration and management of schools and those functions are not inseparable. Hence, the principal is the *ex-officio* member of the School Governing Body so that she/he can be able to link management and governance.

2.10.2. SASA and democracy

This Act is based on the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa (Act 108 of 1996), and parents who form part of the School Governing Body are supposed to work in partnership with teachers and other relevant stakeholders.

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The South African Schools Act was formulated to allow new systems of democratic principles (Mabasa and Themane, 2002:112). The South African school approach to participation emerges from the South African Schools Act of 1996 which is more aligned with school governance and representation.

School Governing Bodies provide an appropriate platform in which parents take part and it is the only legally structured body in which parents are obliged to participate. This above mentioned Act gives powers to the parents as important stakeholders to participate in the decision-making processes of the public schools.

The parent component constitutes sixty per cent of the School Governing Body members whose chairperson should be a parent .According to Mncube (2009:345) in South African SGBs, parents are required by law to form the majority of SGBs with the chair of the SGBs being one such parent. This was an attempt to give power and voice against oppression and authoritarianism. In terms of learners being included in the SGB, the SASA mandates that those secondary school learners who are members of the Representative Council of Learners (RCL) should form part of the school governance authority by way of their participation in SGBs, but the focus of this study in on primary school therefore learners are not part of the SGB.

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According to the School Governing Act, the term of office of a School Governing Body is three years only. The period of time does not allow governance experience to develop to potential particularly those who have low levels of literacy which is the case in Wallacedene (Heystek, 2011:460). When the three year term lapsed, those parents who gained experience and skills vacate the office for the newly elected office bearers which simply mean training and gaining experience has to start all over again (Heystek, 2011:460). Therefore, it is difficult for South African schools to achieve continuity in school governance.

2.10.3. Functions of governing body

Functions of the School Governing Body include determining admission policy, setting language policy, making recommendations on teaching and non-teaching appointments, managing the finances of the school, determining school fees and conducting fundraising (SASA,1996b).

The legislation gives School Governing Bodies powers to perform these duties, but there are factors which limit them from active and positive participation such as the literacy levels, their experience, time and availability to attend meetings (Brown and Duku, 2008; Karlsson, 2002; Tsotetsi et al, 2008; Mncube, 2009; Xaba, 2011).

Two specific functions mentioned in SASA Section 20 (1), which may be powerful for governing bodies to improve the quality of education, are to:

(a) Promote the best interest of the school and strive to ensure its development through the provision of quality education for all learners at the schools.
(b) Support the principal, educators and other staff of the school in the performance of their professional functions.

Heystek (2011:462) noted that "the above mentioned functions are specific for the governing body but without the empowerment as with the concepts management and governance implies, there is no agreement on what governing bodies can do to support and promote the best interest of the school". Policy formulation is a complicated responsibility and requires people with adequate skills levels. This function is the core function of a School Governing Body according to SASA. It is imperative for the schools to delegate this task to the people who possess better knowledge and who are abreast of educational reforms and dynamics.

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2.10.4. Competence of School Governing Body

One of the core responsibilities of School Governing Bodies is to formulate the school governance policies as envisaged by SASA. There is a strong view that parent members of the governing body do not have the necessary literacy levels to read legislation, draft policies and manage budgets (Heystek, 2011:458).

A large number of the South African population is not sufficiently literate to meet the requirement of reading and drafting policies (Lemmer and van Wyk, 2004:262; Mabasa and Themane, 2002:112). It is possible that many parents who are members of the governing body even though they received training cannot have the required competency to read legislation, draft policies and manage budgets which is the responsibility of the governing body.

Nevertheless, they can play a positive role in school governance if they are well –trained and given sufficient opportunity to play a role (Heystek, 2011:458). The literature did not provide clearly the training and time given to parents for effective participation in school governance. According to SASA the term of parents in the school governing body amounts to three years only.

Some research in South Africa has shown that parents have a tendency of being reluctant when it comes to school governance because they believe that teachers have the necessary skills to lead without their support (Msila, 2012:305).One of the core responsibilities of the SGB is policy development, but the Review of School Governance in South Africa Report (2004) revealed that schools are weaker in terms of policy development. As a result, schools depend on departmental policies to guide their operations rather than developing policies suitable for their context (Department of Education, 2003:121). The parents do not have the specialized skills and literacy level in the development of policies which is very difficult to find in the poor areas like in the case of Wallacedene. The State alone cannot effectively and efficiently control schools but should share its power with other stakeholders, particularly those closer to the school based on partnerships (van Wyk 2004:49).

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Xaba (2011:201) argued that although there are many attempts at offering training and capacity building of school governors, studies reported numerous challenges in the governance of schools in South Africa. He further argued that one of the challenges is the capacity to govern. Provincial departments of education and district offices are trying to train school governing bodies but their efforts are less than the desired standards.

Mabasa and Themane (2002:112) noted, "SGBs are not well trained before they start their work and lead to problems such as unfamiliarity with meeting procedure, specialist language used in meetings, difficulties in managing large volumes of paper, not knowing how to make a contribution, not knowing appropriate legislation and feeling intimidated by the presence of other members who seem to know their roles". Furthermore van Wyk (2004:50) argued that parent governors do not have the required skills and experience to exercise their powers.

2.11. Historical background

2.11.1 Rural and township schools and their legacy

The achievement of democracy in 1994 did not successfully remove uneven socio-economic experiences of many parents and schools. These factors are related to poverty and underdevelopment of the apartheid era that has continued to affect the development of blacks. Prior to the democratic dispensation primary schools were exposed to authoritarian rule, racial division and uneven socio- economic circumstances but democracy granted the opportunity to parents, learners and educators to participate in the governance of their primary schools (Brown and Duku, 2008:432).

The decentralization of schools governance shifted power from the central government down to the local governors. The post-1994 democratic dispensation ensured the devolvement of power from central authorities to the local governors and the education system was not exceptional in this sharing of power process. Prior to 1994, statutory school governing body structures did not exist at all (Tsotetsi et al, 2008:2). In 1996 with the promulgation of the South African Schools Act No 84 of 1996, stakeholders' involvement was enhanced through the establishment of school governing bodies. Therefore parents were expected to be the members of School Governing Bodies and actively participate in the school activities. Parents particularly in the townships and rural areas did not have adequate experience in school governance due to the fact that they did not participate in the school activities prior to 1994. Poorly educated parents lacked skills to interpret the contents of SASA more especially in disadvantaged and rural areas. South African parents had different experiences of their participation in school activities.

Parents of the previous white schools are familiar with the powerful governing body whilst the previous black schools had little or no experience in the school involvement (Heystek, 1999:99). This lack of experience of participation by black parents developed the tendency among the blacks, not to regard the education of their children as their responsibility. These former white schools had and still have better quality education and are still in better socio- economic areas and have better educated parents who play important roles in the School Governing Body to perform the expected functions, better than in township and rural schools (Heystek, 2011:458). Furthermore, because these parents are able to pay school fees, these schools have more financial resources and facilities as compared to township schools.

The state has a responsibility in partnership with other stakeholders to develop capacity for school governing bodies to ensure that School Governing Bodies perform their duties and responsibilities effectively and efficiently. In terms of this Act (SASA) all public schools in South Africa must have democratically elected SGBs comprising parents, learners, educators, non- teaching staff and school principal. Their functions include creating an environment conducive for teaching and learning, developing a mission statement for the school, promoting the best interests of the school, and ensuring quality education for learners.

According to Mncube (2009:83), listening and encouraging parental participation results in a better functioning school, but previously disadvantaged groups do not have the capacity to do so.

Feisch (2008:1, as cited in Msila, 2012:303) argued that South Africa has two education systems, the first has better resources in former white schools with better performing learners. The second one is comprised of poorly resourced schools mostly in historically black African schools. Up to date there is still a difference between poor and wealthier schools - poor and disadvantaged schools are poorly resourced as compared with those in wealthier areas; rural schools tend to be worse off and far below the level of many poor urban schools (Msila, 2012:303).In addition to the lack of resources in rural areas, there is an absence of participation by important stakeholders such as parents and the community. Msila (2012:303) noted that rural areas have a particular history in South Africa.

He characterized these areas that are located away from the cities, with few or no everyday resources for the communities and in some rural schools there is no running water and electricity. Poverty is also another burden in running these schools as parents are indigent and living below the poverty line. Working conditions for the teachers and principals in rural schools are not conducive for productivity; hence Msila (2012:304) noted the low morale of school staff members. Research conducted by Msila (2012) acknowledged the absence of parents' involvement in the rural schools and indicated that principals were experiencing challenges as the result of their absence.

Most parents in the rural areas are unemployed and therefore have ample time to come to school and assist whenever their help is needed but they never bother themselves to come to school (Msila, 2012:307).

2.11.2. Variance between township and ex- Model C schools

There are identifiable elements of inequality among the previously white schools and black township schools. Karlsson (2002:336) discovered that there are differences between suburban schools (formerly white schools) and township schools in terms of available resources. In terms of the 2010 statistics for schools, about 1903 out of 24,751 schools are former white schools (Department of Education, 2010). These former white schools had better quality education and are still located in better socio- economic areas, with better educated parents than former non-white schools (Heystek, 2011:458). These schools benefited from the Apartheid system and have better school facilities than township schools in which the research was conducted. Furthermore, because white parents are able to pay considerable fees, these schools have more financial resources in comparison with township schools which were declared as no-school fees due to socio–economic conditions of the parents.

Heystek (2011:458) further argued that former white schools have competent parents to serve on the governing bodies and have generally better academic results which simply means better quality and high level of school performance. In motivation, by the fact that these schools perform better, African middle class parents send their children to these schools for access to better education, leaving the township schools (Heystek, 2011:458). For many schools in South Africa especially the historically disadvantaged schools, the involvement of parents as governors is new, as the first SGB took office in 1997 (Heystek,2006:475). Unfortunately for the poor and the lower class, parents don't have alternative option for their learners but to enrol them in township and rural schools.

Karlsson (2002:335) found that former white schools have superior and well equipped facilities due to the fact that in the past these schools received greater state funding than the former black schools. These schools enrolled learners from the middle and working class families, regardless of race, that could afford to pay high school fees and have the ability to honour fundraising activities. Township schools on the other hand have inadequate facilities, poor and not well equipped resources. These schools enrol black working class learners living in townships and informal settlements. Schools are no-fee schools due to many parents who are unemployed, informal traders or only employed seasonally in surrounding farms. All the primary schools that participated in the research are the township schools in the Wallacedene community. Parents in

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this community are not sufficiently educated to meet the required governance skills. They don't have experience in school governance. Epstein (1987:121) argued that parents are obliged to provide needs such as food, shelter, health and safety of learners. When the parents fail to meet those needs, schools have to play role in assisting the families.

The low socio economic conditions of the township communities force schools to take appropriate action to remedy the situation. Low socio economic conditions tend to have a negative impact on parental involvement (Msila, 2012:304). The ushering of democracy in 1994 did not sufficiently change the socio- economic status of township communities. Parents in poor societies are still living in inadequate houses, are badly paid, work long hours and some of them are unemployed, which limits their time in assisting their children (Mestry and Grobler, 2007:177). The inequality among citizens also affects the public institutions. It is high time that the government of the day considers appropriate action in dealing with the endemic inequality among the beloved South African citizenship. In enhancing parental participation, different types of involvement are discussed in the following section.

2.12. Types of involvement

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Parental involvement takes many forms, including good parenting in the home, the provision of a secure and stable environment, intellectual stimulation, parent-child discussions, and contact with schools to share information, participation in school events, participation in the work of the school and participation in school governance (Desforges and Abouchaar, 2003:433). Although there are many classifications of parental involvement types, Epstein's classification appears to be the most influential in parental involvement literature and it is worthwhile to explore her classification in more detail. According to Epstein and her colleagues from Johns Hopkins University, there are six types of involvement.

2.12.1. Parenting

This category includes the basic responsibilities of families such as providing housing, health care, nutrition, clothing and safety and creating home conditions that support children's learning, for example, purchasing the necessary books and being responsive to their children, communicating with them and supporting their development. Parenting is very important for schools to assist families to develop child- rearing skills and setting home conditions to support

learning, for instance instilling the culture of reading to encourage education. Learners can be assisted in their homework by parents and taken to the library during the weekends for doing research and reading.

2.12.2. Communicating

This type of involvement concerns the basic responsibilities of schools, including establishing two-way communication between the family and the school. These kinds of involvement assume that schools keep parents informed about school matters by sending them newsletters or progress reports, visiting parents and employing other means of communication. The school principals have the power to influence the form, frequency and the results of information sent from school to the homes of learners (Epstein, 1987:123).

2.12.3. Volunteering

This refers to anyone assisting with children's learning or development in any way at any time and place without monetary compensation. According to Lemmer (2007: 220) volunteers are a cost effective way of doing school activities. The parents' talents and contributions to the school are recognised by the authorities. Forms of parental involvement at school include assisting teachers in the classroom, on class trips, or at class parties, assisting teachers in the cafeteria, library, playground, computer lab in places which require adult supervision, assisting the school governing body, fundraising, community relations, etc. (Epstein 1987:125).

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2.12.4. Learning at home

This entails the provision of information and ideas to families about how to help students with homework and other curriculum related activities occurring at home. Examples include assisting with homework, discussing books with their children and brainstorming ideas for school projects.

2.12.5. Decision-making

Parents who are involved at this level, advocate children's interests. These parents are acting as the key stakeholders in making decisions that will impact on student learning and often participate in parent-teacher associations, advisory councils and committees.

2.12.6. Collaborating with the community

This type of involvement relies on identifying and integrating resources and co-services from the community to strengthen school programmes and student learning and development.

Okeke (2014:1) highlighted the importance of different types of involvement, as positive parenting helps to create a sound academic environment in the home. Okeke names the following: a friendly home environment for their child; assist in designing effective forms of school-to-home communication about the school programmes and child's progress; recruiting and organizing parents help and support child home learning and developing parent leaders and representatives at school which will collaborate with the community. Lemmer and van Wyk (2004:260) noted that each type of involvement poses specific challenges for its successful design and implementation and can lead to different outcomes for learners, parents and teachers.

2.13. Conclusion

Different meanings of parental involvement in this study amounts to the active role played by the parents in the school governance to develop the quality of education. Singh et al, (2004:301) referred to this involvement as the development of a vision and mission statement to achieve objectives. Epstein (1991:15) used examples such as parenting, communicating and volunteering. . Several acts were established to fight against the discriminatory educational policies and to promote the participation of all primary school stakeholders. Section 2.1.1 of the Schools Act of 1996 recognises the values of the new South African Constitution including the right to basic education for everyone; transformation and democratisation of education, which includes that ideas of stakeholders such as parents and teachers, learners and other members of the community near the school should participate in the governance of the school.

CHAPTER 3

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

3.1. Introduction

Although the education system was reformed to accommodate the full participation of parent, their contribution is still not up to the required standards and is not influencing teaching and learning. Epstein (1987) proposed a strategic model that accommodates different types of parental involvement which will result in accelerated school performance. This theory emphasizes family and school relations. "Relationship between the parents and schools makes parents to be involved in a more formal and structured partnership which relates to the child's education" (Mbokodi and Singh, 2011:39). Sharing responsibilities between the school and home consolidates coordination, cooperation and collaboration between the school and the family (Epstein, 1987:121). When the parent get involved in school activities, the school performance tend to develop. There are formal platforms in which the parents can involve themselves for effective learning and teaching. the desired implication in school development.

Parents must not be limited to a particular type of involvement. The restriction of parents in particular activities will lead to a fraction of parents able to actively participate while others will not participate (Lemmer, 2000:62). The literature suggests that school and family collaboration improves learner achievements (Epstein, 1987; Heystek, 2003; Davids, 2010; and Mncube, 2009) and influences teachers' and principals' behaviour to improve the level of education (Mbokodi, 2008:301). Therefore it is imperative for the schools to have working relationships with the communities. Epstein (1987:120) discusses the responsibility of parental involvement in school activities and categorises it into typology of six components.

3.2. Basic obligation of parents

In order for parents to fully participate in school activities Epstein (1987:121) came up with 6 requirements. The first one is the parenting; the basic obligation of parents. Those obligations revolve around the provision of children's needs such as food, shelter, health and safety.

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In most cases parents meet those children's basic needs, but when not met schools play a role in assisting the families. In order for the parents to adequately perform these responsibilities, they need some financial muscle.

Parents of Wallacedene are seasonal farm workers; some are unemployed and rely on social grants. It will be difficult for them to provide for these responsibilities particularly the black parents as most of them are living below the poverty line. In his research Msila (2012:304) found that low social capital tends to have negative implications in South African parental involvement, particularly in disadvantaged communities. It is also the responsibility of parents to develop learner behaviour, respect, and taking responsibility (Epstein, 1987:121).

Parenting is very important for schools to assist families to develop child-rearing skills and setting home conditions to support learning. Parents who have adequate resources are fulfilling parental responsibilities as compared with working class families (Mbokodi, 2008:25). The community in which the study was conducted is constituted class families whereby the majority of community members are living below the poverty levels.

3.3. School to home communication

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According to this model, principals need to influence the communication between the school and families. However, previous research found that there is a poor working relationship between the school and the parents (Karlsson, 2002:333). The principals who are supposed to ensure communication with the parents take unilateral decisions without consulting the relevant stakeholders. However, the schools are expected to inform parents about school programmes and their children's progress (Epstein, 1987:123). Principals are supposed to influence the form, frequency and the result of information sent from school to home. It is imperative to consider the issue of literacy levels and access to technology when the communication is made.

As already stated, that majority of parents in the Wallacedene area are living below the poverty threshold and their access to technology is limited. The conditions are different in former white schools, which are situated in better socio-economic areas and have better educated parents. These parents are working in decent workplaces and are earning better salaries which make it easier to fulfil parenting responsibilities. They also have higher skills levels which make it easy to make meaningful contributions in school activities and governance (Karlsson, 2002:331). The

socio-economic conditions are different in Wallacedene. Parents are living in inadequate houses, are badly paid, work long hours and some of them are unemployed, which limits their time in assisting their children (Mestry and Grobler, 2007:177).

In addition, there is a connection between teenage motherhood and poor parenting. Teenage mothers, by virtue of their young age, lack of education, and poor living conditions are unable to provide adequate parenting as compared to older mothers who are employed, have the support of male partners and who are more experienced in parenting (Mmontlane et al, 2009:532).

3.4. Community involvement and collaboration in school activities

Teachers expect parents to be actively involved in school activities but parents are not committing themselves in school activities; particularly in black township schools. The majority of parents in this study are unemployed, which means that they have ample time to give volunteer services in schools, but the literature suggests that they are not availing themselves to be considered for voluntary work. Although the volunteers have low cost advantages, participation of township parents in school activities as volunteers is very poor in township. Township communities do not have a tradition of giving out volunteer services (Heystek, 1999:105). The sampled primary schools are situated in low social capital communities. Although the parental participation is valued by the state, involvement of parents in school activities is very poor, particularly in low social capital areas (Heystek, 1999:103). Parents in the townships and rural areas do not possess adequate power of participation in school activities.

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In communities where there is high social capital, parents effectively participate in school activities. Those areas with high social capital such as better socio economic status, better educated parents seem to have adequate parental participation in school activities. Epstein (1987:121) emphasized parenting which is the basic obligation of parents to provide children's needs such as food, shelter health and safety. Meeting these basic needs is very difficult in communities with low socio-economic development. Parents in Wallacedene live in inadequate houses, are badly paid, work long hours and some of them are unemployed.

Forms of parental involvement at school include assisting teachers in the classroom, on class trips, or at class parties, assisting teachers in the cafeteria, library, playground, computer laboratories in places which require adult supervision, assisting the School Governing Body,

fundraising, community relations, etc. (Epstein 1987:125). In order for schools to achieve maximum effectiveness, parents and schools must develop a working partnership (Epstein, 1987:123). The community of Wallacedene does not have a working relationship with the schools. There is little evidence of effective collaboration between schools and poor communities at this stage in South Africa (Lemmer and van Wyk, 2004:275). Parents must be trained and motivated to develop their interest in school activities (Heystek, 2003:331). Schools must attract parents to assist in school activities.

3.5. Learning at home

Parents who played little or no role in their children's homework and study programmes contributed to the poor performance of their children in the classroom. Black parental involvement is crucial in the enhancement of learner success (Singh and Mbokodi, 2004: 301). Married parents are more involved in learning activities than the single parents (Epstein, 1987:130). Learners come from different homes; some homes are led by single parents, others by a couple. Homes with married parents are stable and have the ability to care and properly maintain their children needs. It is difficult to assume that married parents are more involved in comparison with single parents. Home stability can have implications in parental involvement irrespective of marital status. Families also differ; children have better or less educated parents. Those parents who have less education lack the ability and willingness to help in school activities. Parents' assistance in learning activities at home can be directed and coordinated by teachers or initiated by parents, with or without the knowledge of teachers (Epstein, 1987:126). Parents can read books for children or listen to the children; parents should take children to the library to borrow books and teaching materials for use with children at home. Performing this responsibility will be difficult for parents who have low literacy levels. The literature suggests that there is little evidence of effective collaboration between schools and communities at this stage in South Africa (Lemmer and van Wyk, 2004:275).

3.6. Decision making

Parents who are involved at this level, advocate children's interests. These parents are acting as the key stakeholders in making decisions that will impact student learning and often participate in parent-teacher associations, advisory councils and committees (Epstein, 1987:132).

Having democratically elected School Governing Bodies does not guarantee effective participation of parents. Parents can hold the majority in the SGB, but that does not mean that they are participating up to the required standards as required by law. SASA (1996) gives powers to parents to act as important stakeholders in participation in decision making process of public schools. In some cases the principals dominate this process not allowing the space for effective parental participation, thus excluding them in decision making although are official members of School Governing Body. According to the above mentioned act parent component constitute sixty per cent of SGB whose chairperson should be a parent. This act intention is to ensure that parents participate in decision making process.

There are some issues which hinder their effective participation and these issues need to be exposed so that the necessary action can be considered. Lemmer and van Wyk's (2004:262) study revealed that although parents have the power to govern the schools in South Africa, their contribution is very limited due to poor governance capacity. This incapacity in school governance has an undesirable effect on the parental power of participation. The reason for incapacity is that SGB parent members are not trained before they start their work, and this leads to problems such as unfamiliarity with meeting procedures, problems with speciality language used in meetings, difficulties in managing large volumes of paper, not knowing how to make contributions, etc. (Mabasa and Themane, 2002:112). The above mentioned inability of parents to perform their responsibility is not including professionals only involve parents as the members of School Governing Body.

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Although there are efforts made by the government in school governance capacity building, numerous research studies still identify challenges in school governance with regard to the power of participation (Heystek, 2003; Brown and Duku, 2008; Mashele, 2001). According to SASA, the provincial Department of Education is responsible for the empowerment of parent School Governing Body members. Xaba (2011) also questioned the effectiveness of the training that the school governors receive. Capacity building should allow the parental governors to effectively and efficiently participate in school governance and school activities.

3.7. Social capital and parental involvement

Social capital has an aspect that can describe the capital of the family and capital of the community in which the family resides. Larean and McNamara (1999, as cited in Msila, 2012:304) maintained that learners who have more valuable social and cultural capital tend to be far better in school. Bourdien (1983, as cited in Msila, 2012:304) defines social capital as "the aggregate of the actual or potential resources which are linked to possession of a durable network of more or less institutionalized relationships of mutual acquaintance and recognition." Parental involvement itself, whether in the home or in the school is a form of social capital. This form of capital plays an essential role in determining the involvement of the township parents in their children's education. Social capital includes the parents' education levels, skills, abilities, income, assets that parents and other family members have. The area in which the sampled schools are located comprises low level skills, high illiteracy rate, and low economic status. Parents' skills and knowledge also affect the level and type of involvement in their children's education (Msila, 2012:303, Brown and Duku, 2008:432; Karlsson, 2002:336).

According to Heystek (1999:102) parents with little or no education feel less able to assist their children with homework and feel less desired to communicate with teachers than those parents who are more educated. This notion/concept/theory has been challenged by many scholars. There is evidence that parents can be involved effectively and efficiently regardless of educational background when teachers actively help them to become involved (Sathiapama et al, 2012:63; Epstein, 1987:120). Msila (2012:303) noted the distinction between low and high social capital: former white schools with high social capital have better resources with better performing learners, whilst black African schools have poorly resourced and averaged performing learners.

The sampled primary schools are situated in communities with low social capital. Parents particularly in the townships and rural areas do not possess adequate power of participation in school activities (Heystek, 1999103). Communities with high social capital and parents in these areas more effectively participate in school activities. These areas have good social capital and have better socio economic status, better educated parents and adequate participation in school activities. Epstein (1987:121) emphasized parenting which is the basic obligation of parents to provide children's needs such as food, shelter health and safety.

Meeting those basic needs is a struggle in societies with low social economic status. Parents in Wallacedene are living in inadequate houses, are badly paid, work long hours and some of them are unemployed. The low social capital of this area has undesirable effects in the level of parental participation in school activities. Parents are not effectively participating in school activities. There is a correlation between low social capital and low socio economic status, thereby affecting parental involvement in these areas.

Many schools spend time and energy in the stimulation of active parental involvement in the **e**ducation of their children. Research in South Africa has shown how the social capital negatively influences parental involvement in schools (Msila, 2012:304). In his research, Sheldon (as cited in Mbokodi, 2008:4) observed that educators continue to struggle to understand why some parents become involved in their children's education while others do not, especially now that findings connect parental involvement and the school achievement. As indicated above number of factors that influence parental involvement in education were identified.

There is an assumption that the social economic status of the parents is predictive of parental involvement. The implication is that parents who have the resources will be more involved in school and in different ways than working class families (Mbokodi, 2008:5). Parents of primary school learners of Wallacedene affiliate to working class in terms of socio economic status as many parents seem to not have adequate financial resources for their children's education. In South Africa 40 per cent to 60 per cent of working class and lower class parents fail to attend teacher conferences due to the language used in conferences which is beyond their communication and literacy levels compounded by their inability to take time off from hectic work schedules (Mbokodi, 2008:5).

The situation is different for middle class parents, as they are more involved. Results indicated that they are reading to children, taking children to the library, attending school events, enrolling children in summer school and complain to the principal and play a more active role in schooling than do their working class and lower class counterparts (Mbokodi,2008:5).

In linking parental involvement and socio-economic status, Larean (1989:2) (as cited in Mbokodi, 2008:5) noted two perspectives:

(a) Value system: Higher Social Economic Status parents realized the importance of education and are confident of their right to be involved in the school which is the opposite in the lower SES.

(b) Unequal levels of parental involvement among education institutions: Schools that make middle-class families feel more welcomed than working class or lower class, the teachers (who are by definition middle-class) are perceived to be less comfortable, less friendly and less talkative with lower and working class parents.

Mestry and Grobler (2007: 177) further argued that parents do not possess adequate education and parental skills, insufficient time and language barriers have negative implications for positive parental involvement. Problems of poverty, single parenthood, non-English literacy and effects of the HIV/AIDS pandemic and socio-economic pressures tend to be the problem in Wallacedene. Local and international research has shown that the educational level of parents and their socio-economic status (SES) have an influence on school involvement (Msila, 2012:305).

Mmontlane et al, (2009:531) argued that various researchers link teenage motherhood to poverty and poor mental health. Little is associated with the education system and how parents in different family patterns respond to the education of their children. Most studies concentrate on the socio- economic status of parents as a key contributor to parent participation, not considering the teenage mothers. In Wallacedene teenage mothers, by virtue of their young age, lack proper formal education, their vulnerability to HIV and AIDS, poor living conditions, cannot be compared to older people in terms of participation in school activities. Older mothers are usually employed, have support of male partners, and more experience in parenting (Mmontlane et al, 2009:532). It is not the lack of interest that prevents parents from becoming involved in their child's education but rather problems of poverty , single-parenthood, non-English literacy, effects of the HIV/AIDS pandemic and cultural and socio-economic isolation (Okeke 2014:2).

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3.8. Previous work done on parental involvement

Research relating to parental involvement in schools in South Africa is limited to wealthier areas (Smit and Liebenberg, 2003:1). This study was conducted in a less developed area to gain an understanding of how parents engage in the schools partnership for the development of their children's education. Although there is a growing body of literature on the importance of parental involvement, studies have pointed out that parental involvement in education is still limited and to date, no systematic research has been carried out to determine what type of involvement has the strongest connection with achievement (Makgopa and Mokhele, 2013: 219 as cited by Okeke, 2014: 1).

In the study conducted by Mashele (2001:50, as cited in Zwane, 2008:17) on the role and functions of School Governing Bodies (SGB) it has emerged that SGBs lack the necessary administrative and managerial expertise to govern the schools effectively. Even after the training they received, SGB members still lacked the understanding of their roles. The similar problem of poor understanding of roles by SGBs continued to 2004 when Mazibuko (2004:58) conducted her study on the roles and functions of the SGBs specifically in the area of finance, where they were expected to draw up budgets, do fundraising and run the school bank account. This study found that, due to lack of confidence and understanding of their roles they shifted their responsibility to the principal to dominate in every aspect of finance and they become rubber stamps (Zwane, 2008:18).

According to Karlsson (2002: 332**)** principals' dominance in decision-making processes is consolidated by the fact that principals possess high levels of education in contrast to other members, have first access to information from education authorities and are the ones who execute decisions. Educators and the members representing non-educator staff are also greater participants in decision-making hierarchy after the principal.

Earlier studies on the subject of parental participation in school governance found that School Governing Bodies did not achieve the goals set out in the South African Schools Act (Singh and Mbokodi, 2011:40). The SASA was formulated on principles of participation and representation in school governance, seemingly the notion of 'participation' is not understood in the same way by all stakeholders (Brown and Duku, 2008:435). Research conducted by Alliance Schools

Initiative (2004) found that many parents encounter obstacles to participation in their children's education.

According to the study conducted by Heystek (1999:102) in black schools, parental involvement in teaching and education is very limited. In most schools involved in the research no provision whatsoever was made for the parents to be involved in the teaching and education of their children. Parents did not have the opportunity to become involved in these activities because no structures or planning existed for accommodation of these activities and the schools do not create platforms for parents to participate in teaching activities. Parental participation in different school activities does not necessarily improve the children's academic achievement, therefore the fact that the child's parent is a member of School Governing Body structure will not improve his/her academic achievement. (Heystek, 1999:103). Only parents who are interested in their child's work or who assist him/her with homework will improve achievement (Epstein, 1991:10).

Innumerable studies have been conducted into the functioning of SGBs in South Africa (Brown and Duku, 2008, Bush and Heystek, 2003; Heystek 2003; Mncube, 2009), but few studies have examined the role played by SGBs in addressing issues of school effectiveness and the manner in which parents who are members of SGBs can be best utilised. This study attempts to fill this gap.

3.9. Conclusion

Schools and families have the shared responsibility for the benefit of the learners. Epstein's (1987:121) framework of parental participation encourages parents to participate in different school activities. The six types of participation are: parenting, communication from school to home, participation in learning activities, decision making. This model discourages the separation of responsibilities. Although it encourages maximum parental involvement, there are challenges in its application in the South African context particularly in black township areas. The basic obligation of parents' needs parents to cater for children's needs of food, clothing, shelter, health and safety.

For the parent who is unemployed and seasonal farm workers, it will be difficult to satisfy those needs. “Schools must assist teachers to deal with different structures of families such as single or married, parent homes, parents working or unemployed, well-educated or poorly educated, teenage or young parents, non-English speaking parents” (Epstein, 1987:131**).** Although this model seems to be the best in parental involvement, there are issues which hinder its effective and efficient application in the South African context, as the literature suggests. Those obstructions to effective parental participation need to be exposed and appropriate action has to be considered. Social capital has an effect on the power of parental participation. The literature suggests that low social economic status communities are struggling in making effective parental participation in school activities. Lack of resources and inabilities of parental governors seem to slow down the pace and the power of participation of parents in school activities. In order for the Epstein model to be adequately applied, better social capital needs to be guaranteed.

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CHAPTER 4

RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

4.1. Introduction

The concept of research methodology refers to the range of processes and the kinds of tools, and procedures used in a research project to gather data. Therefore research methodology focuses on the process and the kinds of tools and procedures used while research design looks towards what the end product will be (Henning et al, 2004:36). Research design is defined as a set of guidelines and instructions to be followed in addressing the research problem and its main function is to enable the researcher to anticipate what the appropriate research decisions should be so as to maximize the validity of the eventual results (Mouton, 1996:107). Considering this study from the perspective of its objectives, qualitative approach was used.

4.2. Qualitative approach

Research design is a plan and structure of the investigation used to obtain evidence to answer research questions (McMillan and Schumacher, 1993:3). The purpose of the research design is to provide the most valid, accurate answers possible for research questions. Therefore research design is a plan according to which we obtain research participants and collect information from them (Welman et al, 2005:52). Qualitative approach presents facts in narrative or verbal form (Mcmillan and Schumacher, 1993:14).

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The researcher felt that a qualitative approach would best fit the aim of parental involvement in school governance. The researcher believed that a qualitative approach was the correct method to investigate the problems and experiences that School Governing Bodies found in performing their responsibilities as required by SASA.

The qualitative approach has the following limitations:

- It can be time- consuming due to the volume of data (McMillan and Schumacher, 1993:14).
- It is more expensive because of travelling costs and the need for a tape recorder.
- There are chances of human bias and error (McMillan and Schumacher, 1993:15).

Although the qualitative approach has limitations, the researcher used this method to understand participant behaviour (McMillan and Schumacher, 1993:373).

4.3. Data collection

The manner in which data is collected is crucial in the research study as it determines its success or failure. As mentioned earlier, the study involved a case study of the extent and nature of parental involvement in school governance in three primary schools situated in the Wallacedene township. A case study is a systematic and in-depth investigation of a particular instance in its context in order to generate knowledge (Rule and John, 2011:4). Yin (1994, as cited in Rule and Vaughn, 2011:4) confirmed that case studies analysis includes pattern-matching, which are patterns that emerged from the data matched with patterns in the theory and explanation building, where the idea is to generate explanations about the case.

The researcher therefore employed a combination of individual in-depth interviewing, document analysis as well as non-participant observation. This technique assisted in validating and cross-checking the findings in the case study. According to McMillan and Schumacher (1993:32) the qualitative methodological approach of this study was based on the adoption of the techniques of observations, interviews and document analysis.

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4.4. Case study

The study involved a case study of three primary schools. By studying only three primary schools, the researcher believed that these would be sufficient to draw meaningful conclusions pertaining to the attitudes and feelings of the SGB towards the involvement of parents in school governance in Wallacedene. Given the limited timeframe in which the study had to be concluded the researcher selected three primary schools from the region using the purposive sampling method.

4.4.1. School site visits

The researcher visited the selected schools to inform them about the research, and to seek permission and co-operation from the schools to conduct the study. The researcher briefly outlined the following during the visits:

- ✓ Aim of the research
- ✓ The research subjects
- ✓ The duration of the research
- ✓ The benefits to the school in being engaged in the research

4.5. Population of the study

Population is a group of individuals or events from which a sample is drawn (McMillan and Schumacher, 1993:956). He further defined the population of a study as the respondents, and described the respondents as the people who are interviewed or who gave responses to the measuring tools and procedures.

In the present study, the population includes three principals, fifteen parents, six teachers from three primary schools in the Metropole North District in the Western Cape.

4.6. Sample and sampling procedures

McMillan and Schumacher (1993:598) define the word "sample" as comprising a number of individuals selected from a population for a study. A sample represents the larger group from which it is drawn. The participants in the interview were supposed to be fifteen parents' members, six educators, representatives as well as the principals who are *ex-officio* members of the SGB. However, after the first interview that was held with the parents the researcher realised that he needed to have at least other SGB members in each grouping who were in the previous SGB as some of the questions needed members with experience in the SGB, for instance, questions based on effectiveness of parental involvement in school development. The researcher was fortunate in the case of educators as they live in the vicinity of the school and they did not have a problem in providing the information needed. The researcher made it a point that each representation had a member that belonged to the previous SGB even if she/he was no longer serving in the present SGB.

Securing interviews with members of the School Governing Bodies was very difficult although appointments were made in time; they could not stick to the schedule. The only members who were interviewed on the same day on which the appointments were made were those from School A, although they were interviewed at different times from the initial scheduled time.

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Moreover, the researcher felt that the information gathered from the interviewed members was good enough for the researcher to make a meaningful conclusion. The principals of all three schools were all easily accessible.

The interviews at each school were held with the six parents and three parent members (who belonged to the previous SGB), and four educator representatives. The interviews were held separately for each grouping, for example the parent representatives were interviewed on their own. In-depth individual interviews were held with the principals of the three schools. Gay and Airasian (2000:209) point out that qualitative research generally relies on purposive selection of participants.

4.7. Instruments used in the study

Denzin and Lincoln (2011:19) recommend that researchers need to have the various techniques of data collection justified on the basis of their suitability and relevance to the nature and purpose of the research. To complement the literature review, an empirical investigation was conducted. Several instruments were used to collect data.

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4.7 .1. Questionnaires

Questionnaires consist of questions that have been printed and given to the respondents for completion (Babbie, 1991:147). Correspondingly McMillan and Schumacher (1993:597) defined questionnaires as a written set or statements that assess attitudes, opinions, beliefs and biographical information.

Bearing in mind that both qualitative and quantitative approaches were used, questionnaires that combine both the close-ended and open-ended formats were designed. The researcher secured the appropriate permission from the authorities concerned. Questionnaires were used because they offer some measure of objectivity, validity and reliability. Thereafter, the researcher rectified problems where necessary and completed the final questionnaire.

4.7.2. Individual in-depth interviews

The study utilized semi-structured in-depth individual interviews with the members of the School Governing Bodies under investigation. Janesick (1998:30, as cited in Esterberg, 2002:83) regards the "interview as a meeting of two persons to exchange information and ideas through questions

and responses, resulting in communication and joint construction of meaning about particular topics." The interviews with the principals were done to provide insights into the role that parents play in school governance, the support and the training that members of the SGB received and challenges and successes that are experienced in working with the School Governing Body parent members of the school. This interview was also done to determine the plans the school had in terms of developing the capacity of the parent component of the SGB. Interviews with the teachers were conducted in order to get different opinions with regard to parental involvement in school activities and governance. Lastly, interviews were conducted to gain understanding about their attitudes and perceptions towards involvement in school governance and barriers in effective participation in school activities.

Interviews were valuable to this study because they are flexible and easy to change and enabled the researcher to probe cases where clarity was most needed (Mouton, 1996:283). Interviews were important in this study because non-verbal and verbal inputs could be easily picked up and the interviewer had an opportunity to motivate the participant (McMillan and Schumacher, 1993:250).

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The interviews were recorded as the interviewees granted permission for it. The recordings were then transcribed and the resulting texts analysed. Extensive field notes were taken to act as contingency plans in the event of something going wrong with the tape recorder or cassette. Where necessary, for instance when interviewing parents, questions were translated into their mother tongue (IsiXhosa). The interview was the main method for data gathering.

4.7.3. Non- participant observation

The researcher conducted direct observation of the three primary schools under investigation as this "allows the researcher to hear, see and begin to experience reality as participants do" (McMillan and Schumacher, 1993:326). Using this method the researcher sees, hears and records these observations rather than relying on participants' responses to questions or statements. The researcher focused on the following: the school garden, the physical environment of the school, the state of the building, improvements and anything that was associated with the school function.

4.7.4. Documents analysis

A variety of documents such as minutes of the meetings, agendas, newsletters, and parents' minute book were analysed for the view of continual function of schools. De Vos et al (2011:50) describe document study as analysis of existing documents, either to understand their substantive content or to illuminate deeper meanings which may be revealed by research question. . Previous year's pass rate statistics was also considered for performance review and other records including financial records, parent meeting attendance registers, SGB Minutes books, and annual reports.

4.8. Data analysis

According to Babbie and Mouton (2001:108) data analysis is the "breaking of the data into manageable themes, patterns, trends and relationship". During data collection, in-depth interviews were audio taped and transcribed.

The next stage of analysis was to check and amend transcriptions to ensure accuracy using the research question as a framework, thus the nature and extent of parental involvement in school governance. Creswell (2003:190, as cited in de Vos et al, 2011:158) believed that qualitative analysis is an on-going process involving continual reflection about the data, asking analytic questions and writing memos throughout the study." McMillan and Schumacher (1993:40) argued that in qualitative research, data collection and analysis are interactive processes that occur in overlapping cycles.

The data were collected in tape recordings, listened to and transcribed. This data, together with data obtained through non- participant observation were read over and over again, relevant extracts highlighted and then grouped into themes. The researcher then performed more detailed and fine grained analysis of the collected data. The data was compared, categorised and pattern identified. Comparisons of categories were made to determine connection among themes. After the data had been analysed the researcher interpreted it.

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4.9. Conclusion

This chapter outlined the research methodology and the research design that was followed in gathering information for the study.

The research involved a case study into three primary schools. In this study, in-depth interviews, non-participant observation, and document analysis and interpretation were employed to gather information from the SGB members, educators and principals. Non-participant observation was also used to gather information.

CHAPTER 5

DATA ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

5.1. Introduction

This study investigated the nature and extent of parental involvement in school governance. In Chapter 4 a detailed description of the methodology adopted to carry out the study was presented. In this chapter the results of the analysis of data collected for the study are presented.

A total of twenty parents, eight teachers and three principals were interviewed to gather the information. The results therefore are based on the responses of these 31 participants. The results of the analysis of data gathered by interviews were also presented along with those from the analysis of documents and observations.

5.2. Summary of the findings

Although the education governance system was reformed to accommodate the full participation of parents; their contribution is still not up to the required standards in terms of influencing teaching and learning. The literature suggests that school and family collaboration improves learner achievements (Epstein, 1987; Heystek, 2003; Davids, 2010 and Mncube, 2009). Epstein (1987) proposed six types of family-school collaboration such as parenting, communication, volunteering, learning at home and decision making. Parenting is the basic obligation of parents to provide for children needs such as food shelter, health and safety. The study revealed that most of the parents were not having adequate financial muscle to cater for their children needs. The communication between school and homes was not up to the desired standards due to literacy level of parents and language barriers. The low social capital of parents have unsolicited implications in school activities participation. The lack of capacity to govern limit parental participation in decision making process. Although Epstein model seem to be the appropriate tool to forge parental participation but there are barriers which obstruct its application in township schools. Themes that emerged in the study proved beyond reasonable doubt that parents are not effectively participating in school activities. There are many circumstances which limit parental involvement. The study found that illiteracy levels of parents, language proficiency and their general participation in school activities negatively contribute to adequate parental participation. Parental governors do not possess adequate education and parental skills;

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insufficient time and language barriers have negative implications for parental involvement (Mestry and Grobler, 2007:177). The themes that emerged in the study are briefly discussed below.

5.2.1. Lack of education and language barrier affect participation of parents in school activities

It is necessary to determine the language proficiency of parents in speaking, writing and reading. Results found that all the parent participants are able to read, speak and write isiXhosa but only 20% are able to speak, write and read English. Most of the correspondence and policies from the education authorities are written in English but the majority of parents are unable to speak, write and read English. Here are some of their responses:

> *I am not good in speaking English. Teachers are using big English words in SGB meetings. (Parent 5, School C).*

> *I can't speak and read English but I can speak Afrikaans fluently. (Parent 1, School B).*

In considering parent language proficiency, a teacher suggested that:

> *Copies of Xhosa copies of SASA should be provided (Teacher 4, School C).*

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Mabasa and Themane (2002:112) found that "SGB members are not trained before they start their work and lead to problems as unfamiliarity with meeting procedure and specialist language used in meeting". Meetings are conducted in Xhosa but English words are used in meetings which become a barrier in effective participation of parents in School Governing Body meetings. Results found that it is difficult for the parents to understand the language used by teachers and principals in the SGB meetings. Due to parental governors' literacy levels, it was difficult to understand matters in discussion and actively participate in SGB meetings.

Low literacy levels of the parents affect them negatively in fulfilling their governing body responsibilities. The results revealed that only 5% of the participants are literate, 10 % semi-literate and 85% of the participants are illiterate.

A parent responded that:

I dropped out early at school, didn't manage to complete primary school. Due to poverty I decided to come to Cape Town in search of work opportunities (Parent 4, School A).

Out of twenty parent participants, only one parent completed matric, under difficult conditions:

It was not an easy journey, going to school without shoes and food. (Parent 3, School C).

Results corroborate the study which found that in black townships, only 40.3 per cent of people older than 20 years of age completed primary education and 30.8 per cent have completed secondary education (Statistics South Africa, 2010). This finding is evident in Heystek (2006:480) which found that a large number of the South African population is not sufficiently literate to meet the requirement of reading and drafting policies. This study revealed that it is difficult for parents to draft, read and monitor school policies due to literacy levels. One of the major functions of and SGB includes the establishment of admission policy, setting language policy, making recommendations on teaching and non-teaching appointments, managing the finances of the school, determining school fees and conducting fundraising (SASA, 1996b). The majority of parents are not adequately literate to read and draft school governing policies. The language used in meetings also has negative implications for efficient and effective participation of parental governors in school governance.

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Parental governors are not fully participating in policy making. Results of the study found that 60 % of the parents indicated that they did not participate in policy making, 25 % of parents had little participation and 15 % indicated that they fully participated in policy making. One of the core responsibilities of School Governing Bodies is to formulate school governance policies as envisaged by SASA. Results of the study found that SGBs are unable to make an impact on school policies and practice because they did not fully understand the SASA power and responsibilities.

This was evident, as one teacher complained that:

Most of them are illiterate and fail to perform duties (Educator 3, School C).

Although parents have been given the power to establish and monitor school policies, they have a tendency to move back when it comes to school governance because they believe that teachers have the necessary skills to lead without their participation. Lemmer and van Wyk (2004:262) revealed that although parents have the power to govern the school, their contribution is very limited due to poor governance capacity. Bush and Heystek (2003:133) found that in almost every School Governing Body, particularly in township schools, the principal played a dominant role in decision-making process. In all the sampled primary schools, teachers and principals dominated policy making process.

A parent responded that:

> *In most cases these things are done by teachers and principals. They know how to do policies (Parent 3, School C).*

Parents think that the policy-making process is the responsibility of the principal and teachers. Parents also trust teachers to make policies. They do not fully understand that it is their responsibility to formulate school governing policies. This study corroborated Xaba's (2011) study which questioned the effectiveness of the training that the school governors received. There was no difference between parent members who received training and those who did not. The general participation of parental members in policy making was not up to the desired standards.

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> *We don't worry when it comes to policies; our principal is good in doing policies and is always reporting to us (Chairman of SGB, School A).*

Another parent confidently uttered that,

> *Policies are done by the staff and the principal and presented to us. (Parent 5, School A).*

The parents do not understand the school governing policies and that it is their responsibility to formulate those policies. The study found that most of the parents do not understand the different school governing policies. According to Xaba (2011:201) school governors lack the capacity to govern and are facing numerous challenges in performing governance responsibilities.

This study found that generally parents do not fully participate in policy making. Only a few of them are participating in policy making.

> *Yes we do participate but not to the required standards. Sometimes we are not given the chance of full participation as parents leading decisions to be taken by the SMT while it needs to be taken by us. (Parent1, School A).*

There is a shifting of policy making responsibility to teachers and principals. This study corroborates the Alliance Schools Initiative (2004) which revealed that schools are weak in terms of policy development; depend on departmental policies for guidance rather than developing their policies suitable for their school context.

5.2.2. Parental participation in school activities

Parental involvement in school activities assist in the reduction of costs which will ultimately benefit the school. The parents are helping the school without getting the monetary compensation.

Lemmer (2007: 220) believed that parental volunteers are a cost effective way of doing school activities. Forms of parental involvement at schools include assisting teachers in the classroom, on class trips, or at class parties, assisting teachers in the cafeteria, library, playground, computer lab in places which require adult supervision, assisting school governing body, fundraising, community relations, etc. (Epstein 1987:125).

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5.2.2.1. Fundraising

The research has attempted to determine the ability of parents to engage themselves in fundraising activities. The results of the study found that 80% of the parental participants do not participate in fundraising activities. All the sampled schools are no-fee schools due to the socio-conditions of the parents. It was clear that parents do not differentiate between the fundraising activities and school fees. Parents emphasized the declaration of no-fee when payment is requested from them for fundraising activities. Msila (2012:304) found that low social capital tends to have negative implications for parental involvement particularly in fundraising activities. Parents are living in inadequate houses, are badly paid, work long hours and some of them are unemployed which limit their participation in fundraising activities.

One parent emphasized that:

> *Government said we must not pay school money to school, education is free since 1994 (Parent2, School B.)*

There is a difference between suburban and township schools in terms of resources (Karlsson, 2002:336). The difference originates from the fact that former white schools supplement their government subsidy through fundraising, in contrast to the township parents who do not support fundraising activities but actually only rely on state grants. Participating in fundraising is not about only schools collecting money but also allow to parents to work out in school fundraising activities as volunteers instead of hiring out of external personnel for preparation of fundraising activities. Lemmer (2007: 220) found that utilizing parent as volunteers in school activities have positive cost implications.

> *We don't have time to volunteer during the week and on weekend we are washing our clothes (Parent 5, School A)*

This study found that parents in Wallacedene have a little time for volunteering activities and even those who do have time to participate are not availing themselves for school activities. The majority of parents are working in surrounding areas and those who are unemployed do not have an interest in involving themselves in school activities.

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5.2.2.2. Curricular and extra-curricular activities

One of the objectives of the research was to determine the involvement of parents in curricular and extra-curricular activities. Results of the study revealed that the majority of parents (80%) do not fully engage themselves in curricular and extra-curricular activities. Results of the study revealed that the majority of parental governors are not adequately participating in curricular activities.

One parent confessed that,

> *"We don't know these sport activities and we never played these games. You can ask me about stick fighting not about these new games" (Parent3, School C).*

The majority of parents are old and did not have an opportunity to play new games. Since they did not play, they are unable to understand and have a little interest in assisting in these games. There is a generational gap between the parents and learners. Considering cricket games, one parent said,

> *I don't know cricket because we grew up without watching or playing cricket, therefore it will be difficult for me to assist in those games.*

5.3. The training of School Governing Body parent members

As training of the SGB members is important, the research set out to determine the frequency of the training of these members. Results of the study indicated that 90% of the SGB members were trained once and 10% never received training. The devolution of power from the government to SGBs needs parental governors to develop skills and capacity to deal with governance issues. According to the study it was clear that the competence of SGB members is related to the amount of training received. Results also found that parental members do not feel comfortable with the method of training used by the education department.

> *All members of the SGB are trained in one venue which tends to be dominated by professional staff members (Parent 5, School C).*

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The training currently offered by the Western Cape Education Department (WCED) was criticised by the majority of teachers and principals. Lemmer and van Wyk (2004:262) found that although parents have the power to govern the schools, their contribution is limited due to poor governance capacity. This incapacity to govern has an undesirable influence on the power of participation.

> *No follow – up trainings are conducted to capacitate parental governors*
>
> *(Educator 4, School B).*

Only one training session was provided by the Western Cape Education Department although parents demonstrated low literacy levels. Continuous trainings can assist in up skilling and build governance capacity of parents. It is imperative for them to receive regular training to keep them

abreast with educational reform and perform responsibilities to the required standards. It was evident in this study that sufficient training is not provided by the WCED.

When the training is convened, it is not communicated timeously in order for the principals to make sure that all parent members attend training.

All principals share the same sentiments that workshops are arranged at short notice, there is no planned training programme. When training is convened at short notice, it is difficult for the principals to make logistical arrangements and request permission to attend, for those school governing body members who are working. A scheduled training programme can allow the principal to make proper preparation in time. All members of the SGB can be informed timeously so that they can attend scheduled training meetings. One training session cannot improve capacity building; regular or continuous training can assist parents in building their capacity. Insufficient training is not helping out in capacity building of parental governors. Xaba (2011:201) questioned the effectiveness of School Governing Body members' training. There was no difference between parental governors who received training and those who did not, in terms of participation and school governing knowledge demonstration. This study corroborated Mabasa and Themane (2002:112) findings which proves that parental governors were not adequately trained before they start their school governing responsibilities.

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5.4. Conclusion

The fact that schools have the proper constituted School Governing Body does not mean that effective and efficient participation of parents is taking place. The parental governors are not contesting the space and power to participate due to their literacy levels and capacity to govern. Low social capital has undesired effects on the parental participation in school activities.

The current capacity building approach is not yielding the expected results as required in terms of SASA. The incapacity of parent governors to govern the schools leaves the professional staff without an alternative but to excessively assist parents to govern public schools. Although the parent governors have the power to govern, they are unable to exploit it effectively and efficiently. In comparing the 3 primary schools, the results showed that all sampled primary schools tend to mutually share the same extent of parental participation. The proceedings of schools governance and the nature of parental involvement share similar characteristics; there are

no remarkable distinction in conducting their governance business. The Department of Education must intensify the training of parental governors. Epstein's (1987) model of parental participation seems to be suitable for maximum parental participation but low social capital is not giving space for its application particularly in previously disadvantaged areas. Parental governors in this area do not possess the required power for effective participation due to socio economic conditions and their low level abilities. The current capacity building strategies employed by the Department of Education are not sufficiently helping in advancing maximum parental involvement in school activities.

CHAPTER 6

DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

6.1. Introduction

The general purpose of the study was to investigate parental involvement in school governance. The study sought to determine the nature and extent of parental involvement in school governance and the reasons why parents are not consistently involved in school activities. The findings of the study offer possible opportunities through recommendations for schools to consider appropriate strategies for effective parental participation in school learning and teaching development. The areas of school matters that parents can be involved in can be easily identified. In this chapter the discussions on the findings are presented and the chapter concludes with the recommendation for future research and some practical suggestions for the school parents and other stakeholders.

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6.2. Summary of findings

The major finding of the study is that township parents in Wallacedene area are not adequately participating in school governance although they are members of the SGB. The existence of School Governing Bodies in sampled primary schools does not guarantee that the parents are adequately participating in school activities. The study found that all sampled schools have a School Governing Body but parental governors are not effectively and efficiently participating in school activities particularly in governance. Parents are willing to participate but there are remarkable factors which obstruct them in active participation. South Africa is a constitutional state which means all state activities must operate within the parameters of the supreme law. The Education Department's operational strategies are not exceptional in this requirement.

The South African Schools Act (1996) gives power(s) to parents as important stakeholders in the decision-making process of public primary schools. This Act is regulatory on core democratic principles of representation, participation, rational discussion and collective decision-making. SASA (1996) view is more aligned with school governance and representation and SASA ushered in a new approach to school governance in township schools

The most significant change was the democratic governance through the involvement of all stakeholders, particularly parents. In other countries the national policy on education is very restrictive. In South Africa there is no legislation holding parents accountable for their children's education currently in existence. The National Education Policy does not clearly stipulate the consequences for parents for not attending parents' meetings, limited involvement in fundraising projects, policy making and implementation. . SASA is not sufficiently influencing parental involvement in school governance and school activities. The results of this study correspond with There is no strong legislation holding parents accountable for participation. All the sampled schools have the School Governing Bodies but the participation of parent governors was not to the expected standards as stipulated by SASA.

The nature and extent of parental involvement is very important in decision-making processes. Although parental governors are the members of a School Governing Body (SGB), they are excluded from decision-making a process, which is consolidating the internal exclusion of members. Being a member of a School Governing Body per se does not always guarantee that members are participating effectively in it. SASA became operative at the beginning of 1997 and mandated all public state schools in South Africa to have democratically elected SGBs. The establishment of SGBs does not mean that parents are participating.– Results of this study proved beyond reasonable doubt that parental governors are not effectively and efficiently participating in school activities and governance.

-The study found that only 20% of the parent governors can speak, write and read English. Mbokodi and Singh (2011:38) state that one in three South Africans in townships over the age of twenty has no schooling at all or has not completed primary school. It was difficult for parents to understand the language used by teachers and principals and for them to actively participate in matters of discussion in the SGB meetings. This finding is consolidated by the fact that parent governors are not adequately literate to perform school governing responsibilities. This study's results found that only 5 % of the participants are literate. The results of the study however confirmed assertion that a large number of the are not sufficiently literate to meet the requirement of reading and drafting policies. Skills deficiency negatively contributed to the participation of parents in school activities.

There are circumstances which limit parental involvement in school governance. The competence of parents as SGB members is directly related to the amount of training they received. Results of the study revealed that only one training session was conducted for parent governors. Some of the SGB parent members did not receive any training. It was evident that parents lack the capacity to govern the schools. Having members of the school governing body who have poor educational backgrounds, it was necessary for the relevant stakeholders to provide training for them to perform their responsibilities to the required standards as it is clearly stipulated in SASA. It is impossible for one training session to develop capacity building particularly for the unskilled governors. It was evident that the insufficient training provided by the Western Cape Education Department has the negative implication in governing capacity of SGB members, particularly parents.

Results of this study found that parent governors were not sufficiently familiar with the content and conditions of SASA. Their ability to participate depends on their educational background (literacy level) and the biggest skills deficit occurs in townships and rural areas. It is the state's responsibility in partnership with other stakeholders to develop capacity for governing bodies which will ensure that SGBs perform their duties and responsibilities effectively and efficiently. Training of SGB members is important in building capacity for all members and ensuring successful governance. It is imperative to ensure that members understand their roles and responsibilities within the schools. Results of this study showed that this does not always happen in township primary schools. The training needs of parent governors are not clearly identified by the education authorities. All members of the SGBs are trained in one venue. Teachers, the principal and non-teaching staff have diverse needs, which were not well considered when training is convened for school governors. Insufficient training is organised, which is not helpful in capacity building, particularly for the School Governing Body parent members.

According to the literature, power relations within the School Governing Body determine the participation of parents in school governance. "Power relations remain central to any understanding of the practices and processes of school governance, regardless of the cultural context in which they operate: they are an ineradicable feature of the fragile character of the school governing bodies as organisation" (Mncube, 2009:85). This study found that parents involved themselves in school governance through the establishment of School Governing

Bodies. All the sampled schools were found to have the elected governing bodies in good standing**.** This is contrary to what exists in the literature. This study's findings found that parents have the power to govern but poor participation is demonstrated. According to the results of this study, the power of parental participation was questionable in the sense that not to the desired levels. Results of this study has shown that parent governors lack confidence and are not sure about their duties which result in them depending on the principal for performing governance responsibilities. One educator said that this resulted in their depending on the principal who uses his professional powers to influence the School Governing Body. These findings confirm that power relations within the SGBs affect the extent and level of participation with the SGB. In some cases parents hand over power to make decisions to the principals, not that principals want to take a dominant role.

Results of this study revealed that parents are struggling to meet those needs such as food, clothes and other basic needs due to their financial challenges. Participants in the study are unemployed, seasonal farm workers and some rely on grants for survival. Due to the fact that some of the interviews were conducted in homes of parents, it was clear that home conditions are not supportive to learning. Homes visited in the area did not have enough space and the number of family members occupying the house usually made it impossible for the learners to work in their homes. Many of these homes are situated in a community where there are no public libraries. Learners are not assisted in homework and are not taken to library during the weekends for doing research and readings.

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The literature suggested that married couples are more likely to participate in their children's school activities than those who were never married (Mmotlane et al, 2009:536). Results of this study have shown no determination among the married and single respondents. Study also revealed that most participants in the study were married but results fail to discover distinction among the respondents in terms of their level of participation. Their general level of participation shared similar sentiments which were not up to the required standards. In terms of their participation, the research findings did not capture any difference among married and single participants. Therefore results of the study are likely to be inconsistent with the literature which suggests that married couples more in school activities than those who are single. According to the results of the study, the community does not have a working relationship with the schools.

There is little evidence of effective collaboration between schools and township communities. In most schools, these kinds of activities are conducted by few parents who can come to the school during the school day. Over 80% of the participants in our study were never involved in any activities, assisting the teachers or staff at the school. Results of the study showed general low parental participation in school activities of the school more especially in township schools in recent years. Results of the study discovered that only 20% of the participants involve themselves in fundraising activities. The results of this study are consistent with national findings that parents with high social capital are more likely to participate than those with low social capital. This is consistent with existing literature which suggests that the socio economic class determines parental participation in school activities (Msila 2012, Brown and Duku, 2008; Karlsson, 2002; Heystek, 2003; Singh and Mbokodi, 2008). The findings of this study shows less determination by parents towards participation in their children's schools than those from higher social capital societies.

6.3. Limitations of the study

Only parents, teachers and principals who were members of a School Governing Body asked questions because of their direct involvement in the study. The selection of parents for interviews was chosen by the schools. The sampled school chose three members of the parents that were on the previous School Governing Body. These parents were willing to share their experience in the involvement in school governance. Translation of questions to the language of participants' choice was not a simple task. Some questions had to be clarified several times before the participant could fully understand and be able to respond. Securing interviews with members of the School Governing Body was also difficult.

6.4. Method of data gathering

Interviews and questionnaires were used because of time constraints and to reach more of the participants. Observation was not included in this study because of the unavailability of the researcher to visit schools on a regular basis; moreover, the researcher is not a trained observer. Observations of parents during the interview were not included because of the researchers' limited expertise to observe and could have been biased. The researcher used one-on-one in-depth interviews and document analysis. For an in-depth study, three primary schools in the

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Wallacedene area were used and not all the primary schools in the area. The findings can thus only be applicable to the three primary schools that were part of the study in the immediate vicinity of Wallacedene while there are seven schools in the area that can be identified as the township schools.

6.5. Conclusion of the study

Section 16 of the SASA states "...the day-to-day professional management of the school should be the responsibility of the principal and the governance of the school remains the responsibility of the SGB~~)~~ Principals continue to perform the function supposed to be the responsibility of the SGB. Parents are willing to participate in school governance but there are certain issues which limit their involvement in school governance. Skill deficiency, low literacy levels, language barrier and socio- economic conditions are limiting parental participation in school governance. Capacity building of school governance needs to be accelerated in order for a school governing body to perform duties up to the required standards. Results of the study revealed challenges such as lack of education, language barrier; insufficient training, low social capital, and illiteracy of parental School Governing Body members stifled its application in this study.

The purpose of the study was to investigate the extent and nature of parental involvement in school governance in the Wallacedene area. The study investigated parental involvement and the circumstances which limit parental involvement in school governance. Different activities which parents can be involved in were also investigated to motivate parental involvement. This study adopted a methodology that involved collecting both qualitative and quantitative data using questionnaires, in-depth interviews and document analysis. From the data gathered, the findings of the study indicated that parents in the Wallacedene area not participating in school activities and governance. According to the findings of this research there are circumstances which limit their involvement in school governance. Incapacity to govern, low skills level, language barriers, socio-economic conditions make it difficult for them to make notable contributions in school activities. This study did not investigate all primary schools in the area, but tried to present an understanding of the extent and nature of parental involvement in school activities. Parental governors should be capacitated for the benefit of general parental involvement of parents, the community as well as the Western Cape Education Department. In the next chapter recommendations and further study are discussed.

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CHAPTER 7

RECOMMENDATIONS

7.1. Introduction

This study was conducted to investigate the extent and nature of parental involvement in school governance. The findings showed that parents are not involved as envisaged. In the first chapter the problem was stated and the aims and objectives of the study were indicated. A literature review was conducted to establish what the concept of parental involvement in school governance entailed, and what factors promoted and/or hindered parental involvement. The qualitative method was chosen and interviews were conducted with the principal and SGB members of the sampled primary schools. The findings were analysed using qualitative data analysis and results were reported.

Participation of parents is not only essential but is also prescribed through legislation such as SASA to maintain effective and efficient governance of public schools. There were circumstances which limit their participation in school governance. Those circumstances are related to capacity and power to perform their responsibilities as required.

The following recommendations were made on the basis of the findings in Chapter 6:

In township schools, the Western Cape Education Department must achieve a balance between the expectations for School Governing Bodies and the ability of many SGBs to fulfil these expectations. The following recommendations are intended to contribute in achieving the balance:

1. Skills development of the School Governing Body members needs to be sharpened for them to perform governance functions to the required levels. The Western Cape Education Department is not training the governing body members regularly so the principals can facilitate mini workshops to train the School Governing Body members and tackle one issue at a time.

2. A parents training workshop must exclude principals, teachers and non-teaching staff and learners. Continuous training must be provided by both the school and the education department for parent members to perform their roles to the required standards. The time of the training workshops needs to be considered to accommodate the needs of the parents, for instance, be conducted on weekends rather than during the week.

3. Schools should try to attract the semi-skilled or skilful members to serve in the School Governing Bodies.
4. Stipends, awards and other incentives can be introduced to motivate the School Governing Body members. Parent members can be compensated for attending SGB meetings and other School Governing Body activities.
5. Parents should work in collaboration with principals in maintaining parental involvement activities, for example when a principal calls parents to school, they should respond.
6. Teachers need to be involved in planning, designing and implementing parental involvement programmes.
7. The character of the School Governing Body is usually determined by the school environment, which should be open, democratic and committed to parental participation in school governance.

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Western Cape Government
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Appendix I

Directorate: Research

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ENQUIRIES: Dr A T Wyngaard

Mr Sithembele Dick
25 425 Ntlabathi Street
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Dear Mr Sithembele Dick

RESEARCH PROPOSAL: EXAMINING PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT IN GOVERNANCE AT PRIMARY SCHOOLS: CASE STUDY OF THREE TOWNSHIP PRIMARY SCHOOLS IN THE WESTERN CAPE

Your application to conduct the above-mentioned research in schools in the Western Cape has been approved subject to the following conditions:

1. Principals, educators and learners are under no obligation to assist you in your investigation.
2. Principals, educators, learners and schools should not be identifiable in any way from the results of the investigation.
3. You make all the arrangements concerning your investigation.
4. Educators' programmes are not to be interrupted.
5. The Study is to be conducted from**01June 2015 till 30 June 2015**
6. No research can be conducted during the fourth term as schools are preparing and finalizing syllabi for examinations (October to December).
7. Should you wish to extend the period of your survey, please contact Dr A.T Wyngaard at the contact numbers above quoting the reference number?
8. A photocopy of this letter is submitted to the principal where the intended research is to be conducted.
9. Your research will be limited to the list of schools as forwarded to the Western Cape Education Department.
10. A brief summary of the content, findings and recommendations is provided to the Director: Research Services.
11. The Department receives a copy of the completed report/dissertation/thesis addressed to:
    The Director: Research
    Western Cape Education Department
    Private Bag X9114
    CAPE TOWN
    8000

We wish you success in your research.
Kind regards.
Signed: Dr Audrey T Wyngaard
Directorate: Research
DATE: 22 April 2015

Appendix II

25 425 Ntlabathi Street
Wallacedene
Kraaifontein
7570
Tel: 076 0501438
2555280@myuwc.ac.za
01 June 2015

Mthathi-nxaxhebaobekekileyo

Ndiyabulelakakhulungokubauvumileukuthabathainxaxhebakoluphando.Ndibulelanangentsebenzi swanoyakho

Ncedakeuqapheleokukulandelayo

- Ukuthathakwakhoinxaxhebakoluphandosisigqibosakho.
- Awunyanzelekangaukubaudizeamahleboongenakuthandaukubaathiwepa-ha-ha elubala., uvumelekileukubananininauthanda
- Konkeozakundixelelakonakuzakuhlalakulihlebo. Igamalakhoalisayikuvelanakweyiphinaindawo, naseninina.Igamalesikolosakhoelolakuhlalaliyimfihlelo. Ndizakusithiyagamalimbi. Akukhomntuuyakubaliselwangokubawenaubukhewathathainxaxhebakoluphando.
- Ukubangandlelaithilekungathikubekhongozxiinokuvelangenxayoluphando, onkeamatile-tile ayakwenziwaukuqinisekaukhuselekolwakho.
- Xaunqwenelaukubonaiziphumozophando, uyakuziboniswa

Ukubaunemibuzoonayongoluphando, ngokuokanyekwixeshaelizayo, ungaqhagamshelananamkwezinombolozingasentla

Ukusayinakwakhongasezantsiaphakwalathaukubauvumileukuthathainxaxhebakoluphandoungany anzelwangamntu. Kwalatha ukuba uyifundile wayiqonda lembalelwano ngasentla apha

Intsayino –gama……

Umhla ……

Appendix III

WRITTEN INFORMED CONSENT

Letter of request to participate in the study

Title of Research Project: Examining parental involvement in governance at primary schools: Case study of three township primary schools in the Western Cape.

The study has been described to me in language that I understand and I freely and voluntarily agree to participate. My questions about the study have been answered. I understand that my identity will not be disclosed and that I may withdraw from the study without giving a reason at any time and this will not negatively affect me in any way.

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Participant's name…….. (Optional)

Participant's signature……....

Witness……

Date ……

Appendix IV

PARENT CONSENT FORM

RESEARCH TITLE: Examining parental involvement in governance at primary schools:

Case study of three township primary schools in the Western Cape.

I have read the information presented in the information letter about a study being conducted by **Sithembele Leonard Dick** towards the Masters Programme at the School of Government (SOG) at the University of the Western Cape. This study has been described to me in a language that I understand and I freely and voluntarily agree to participate. My questions about the study have been answered.

I understand that my identity will not be disclosed and was informed that I may withdraw my consent at any time by advising the student researcher.

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With full knowledge of all foregoing, I agree to participate in this study.

Teacher Name : _____(Optional)

Teacher ID Number : _____
Teacher Signature : _____
Date :_____
Place : _____

Student Researcher : Sithembele Leonard Dick
Student Researcher Signature : _____
Student Number : 2555280
Mobile Number : 076 0501 438
Email : 2555280@myuwc.ac.za
I am accountable to my supervisor : Meron A. Okbandrias: School of Government (SOG)
Telephone : +27 21 959 3827
Fax : +27 21 959 3849
Email : mokbandrias@uwc.ac.za

Appendix V

TEACHER CONSENT FORM

RESEARCH TITLE: Examining parental involvement in governance at primary schools: Case study of three township primary schools in the Western Cape.

I have read the information presented in the information letter about a study being conducted by **Sithembele Leonard Dick** towards the Masters Programme at the School of Government (SOG) at the University of the Western Cape. This study has been described to me in a language that I understand and I freely and voluntary agree to participate. My questions about the study have been answered.

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I understand that my identity will not be disclosed and was informed that I may withdraw my consent at any time by advising the student researcher.

With full knowledge of all foregoing, I agree to participate in this study.

Teacher Name : _____(Optional)

Teacher ID Number : _____
Teacher Signature : _____
Date :_____
Place : _____

Student Researcher : Sithembele Leonard Dick
Student Researcher Signature : _____
Student Number : 2555280
Mobile Number : 076 0501 438
Email : 2555280@myuwc.ac.za
I am accountable to my supervisor : Meron A. Okbandrias: School of Government (SOG)
Telephone : +27 21 959 3827
Fax : +27 21 959 3849
Email : mokbandrias@uwc.ac.za

Appendix VI

PRINCIPAL CONSENT FORM

RESEARCH TITLE: Examining parental involvement in governance at Primary schools:

Case study of three township primary schools in the Western Cape.

I have read the information presented in the information letter about a study being conducted by **Sithembele Leonard Dick** towards the Masters Programme at the School of Government (SOG) at the University of the Western Cape. This study has been described to me in a language that I understand and I freely and voluntarily agree to participate. My questions about the study have been answered.

I understand that my identity will not be disclosed and was informed that I may withdraw my consent at any time by advising the student researcher.

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WESTERN CAPE

With full knowledge of all foregoing, I agree to participate in this study.

Teacher Name : _____(Optional)

Teacher ID Number : _____
Teacher Signature : _____
Date :_____
Place : _____

Student Researcher : Sithembele Leonard Dick
Student Researcher Signature : _____
Student Number : 2555280
Mobile Number : 076 0501 438
Email : 2555280@myuwc.ac.za
I am accountable to my supervisor : Meron A. Okbandrias: School of Government (SOG)
Telephone : +27 21 959 3827
Fax : +27 21 959 3849
Email : mokbandrias@uwc.ac.za

Appendix VII

PARTICIPATION INFORMATION SHEET

RESEARCH TITLE: Examining parental involvement in governance at primary schools: Case study of three township primary schools in the Western Cape.

Dear Parent

You are invited to participate in a research study conducted by Sithembele Leonard Dick: Student No: 2555280**.** It is in partial completion of the researcher's mini-thesis towards the MPA at the School of Government, at the University of the Western Cape.

Before you decide to participate, it is important for you to understand the purpose of the research and what it would entail. Please take time to read the following information carefully and discuss it with others if you wish. If you are unclear of anything, I would be happy to answer any questions you may have.

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PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

This research project will be conducted by Sithembele Leonard Dick, Masters Student in School of Government at the University of the Western Cape and Mr Meron Okbandrias is the supervisor. The purpose of this study is to understand the nature and extent of parental involvement in governance at primary schools in the Western Cape.

DESCRIPTION OF STUDY AND YOUR INVOLVEMENT

You will be asked to answer a few questions about your experiences on parental involvement at a primary school in Wallacedene, Western Cape Province. The interview will take about 30 – 45 minutes and will be conducted in the language of your choice. The question that will be asked is "What is the nature and extent of parental involvement in school governance at Wallacedene primary schools?"

CONFIDENTIALITY

Because of the sensitivity of the issues to be discussed, the participants will be assured of confidentiality and that data generated in the study will be used for the purpose of research. Personal details of participants will be kept confidential by use of pseudonyms or fictitious names and avoiding use of real names in field notes. The information received from the participants will be locked and stored for the duration of five years after the date of publication of the results and the publication of the results of the study will not have any participants' real names.

VOLUNTARY PARTICIPATION AND WITHDRAWAL

Your participation in this research is voluntary. You may choose not to take part at all. If you do decide to participate in this research, you may withdraw at any time. You will not be penalized when you decide to stop participating in the study. However, we encourage you to complete the interview. However you are not obliged and you can withdraw at any time if you decide to withdraw. You may also choose not to answer particular questions that are asked in the study. If there is anything that you would prefer not to discuss, please feel free to say so.

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PAYMENT FOR PARTICIPATION

There are no costs to the participant for partaking in the study.

INFORMED CONSENT

Your signed consent to participate in this research study is required before I proceed to interview you. I have included the consent form with this information sheet so that you will be able to review the consent form and then decide whether you would like to participate in this study or not.

QUESTIONS

Should you have further questions or wish to know more, I can be contact as follows:

Student Name : Sithembele Leonard Dick

Student Number : 2555280

Mobile Number : 076 0501 438

Work Number : 021 001 1140

Email : 2555280@myuwc.ac.za

I am accountable to my supervisor : Mr. Meron Okbandrias

School of Government (SOG) :

Telephone : +27 21 959 3827

Fax : +27 21 959 3849

Email : mokbandrias@uwc.ac.za

Appendix VIII

PARTICIPATION INFORMATION SHEET

RESEARCH TITLE: Examining parental involvement in governance at primary schools: Case study of three township primary schools in the Western Cape

Dear Educator

You are invited to participate in a research study conducted by Sithembele Leonard Dick: Student No: 2555280**.** It is in partial completion of the researcher's mini-thesis towards the MPA at the School of Government, at the University of the Western Cape.

Before you decide to participate, it is important for you to understand the purpose of the research and what it would entail. Please take time to read the following information carefully and discuss it with others if you wish. If you are unclear of anything, I would be happy to answer any questions you may have.

UNIVERSITY of the
WESTERN CAPE

PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

This research project will be conducted by Sithembele Leonard Dick Masters student in School of Government at the University of the Western Cape and Mr Meron Okbandrias is the supervisor. The purpose of this study is to understand the nature and extent of parental involvement in governance at primary school in the Western Cape.

DESCRIPTION OF STUDY AND YOUR INVOLVEMENT

You will be asked to answer a few questions about your experiences on parental involvement at a primary school in Wallacedene, Western Cape Province. The interview will take about 30 – 45 minutes and will be conducted in the language of your choice.

The question that will be asked is "What is the nature and extent of parental involvement in school governance at Wallacedene primary schools?"

CONFIDENTIALITY

Because of the sensitivity of the issues to be discussed, the participants will be assured of confidentiality and that data generated in the study will be used for the purpose of research. Personal details of participants will be kept confidential by use of pseudonyms or fictitious names and avoiding use of real names in field notes. The information received from the participants will be locked and stored for the duration of five years after the date of publication of the results and the publication of the results of the study will not have any participants' real names.

UNIVERSITY of the
WESTERN CAPE

VOLUNTARY PARTICIPATION AND WITHDRAWAL

Your participation in this research is voluntary. You may choose not to take part at all. If you do decide to participate in this research, you may withdraw at any time. You will not be penalized when you decide to stop participating in the study. However, we encourage you to complete the interview however you are not obliged and you can withdraw at any time if you decide to withdraw. You may also choose not to answer particular questions that are asked in the study. If there is anything that you would prefer not to discuss, please feel free to say so.

PAYMENT FOR PARTICIPATION

There are no costs to the participant for partaking in the study.

INFORMED CONSENT

Your signed consent to participate in this research study is required before I proceed to interview you. I have included the consent form with this information sheet so that you will be able to review the consent form and then decide whether you would like to participate in this study or not.

QUESTIONS

Should you have further questions or wish to know more, I can be contacted as follows:

Student Name : Sithembele Leonard Dick

Student Number : 2555280

Mobile Number : 076 0501 438

Work Number : 021 001 1140

Email : 2555280@myuwc.ac.za

I am accountable to my supervisor : Mr Meron Okbandrias School of Government (SOG):

Telephone : +27 21 959 3827

Fax : +27 21 959 3849

Email : mokbandrias@uwc.ac.za

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Appendix VIV

MEMBER	SCHOOL	PLACE	DATE
Parent 1	A	Wallacedene	03 June 2015
Parent 2	A	Wallacedene	03 June 2015
Parent 3	A	Wallacedene	01 June 2015
Parent 4	A	Wallacedene	01 June 2015
Parent 5	A	Wallacedene	01 June 2015
Educator 1	A	Wallacedene	02 June 2015
Educator 1	A	Wallacedene	02 June 2015
Principal	**A**	Wallacedene	10 June 2015
Parent 1	**B**	Wallacedene	17 June 2015
Parent 2	**B**	Wallacedene	18 June 2015
Parent 3	**B**	Wallacedene	23 June 2015
Parent 4	**B**	Wallacedene	26 June 2015

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Parent 5	**B**	Wallacedene	28 June 2015
Educator 1	**B**	Wallacedene	22 June 2015
Educator 2	**B**	Wallacedene	29 June 2015
Principal	**B**	Wallacedene	17 June 2015
Parent 1	**C**	Wallacedene	25 June 2015
Parent 2	**C**	Wallacedene	23 June 2015
Parent 3	**C**	Wallacedene	26 June 2015
Parent 4	**C**	Wallacedene	22 June 2015
Parent 5	**C**	Wallacedene	25 June 2015
Educator 1	**C**	Wallacedene	17 June 2015
Educator 2	**C**	Wallacedene	18 June 2015
Principal	**C**	Wallacedene	24 June 2015

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Appendix X

Participant	*School*	*Gender*	*Age*	*Employment status*	*Level of education*
Parent 1	A	Male	55	Unemployed	Standard 5
Parent 2	A	Female	48	Employed	Standard 1
Parent 3	A	Male	38	Unemployed	Standard 5
Parent 4	A	Female	47	Employed	Standard 3
Parent 5	A	Male	50	Unemployed	Matric
Educator 1	A	Male	40	Employed	Higher Diploma in Education
Educator 2	A	Male	36	Employed	Senior Primary Teachers Diploma
Principal	A	Female	45	Employed	Higher Diploma in Education
Parent 1	B	Male	44	Unemployed	Standard 3
Parent 2	B	Female	40	Unemployed	Standard 5
Parent 3	B	Male	51	Employed	Standard 8
Parent 4	B	Female	37	Employed	Standard 5
Parent 5	B	Female	41	Unemployed	Standard 6
Educator 1	B	Male	35	Employed	Bachelor Degree in Education
Educator 2	B	Female	40	Employed	SPTD
Principal	B	Male	46	Employed	Senior Primary Teachers Diploma, Bachelor Degree in Education , Bachelor Honours degree in Education
Parent 1	C	Male	33	Employed	Standard 1
Parent 2	C	Male	45	Employed	Standard 7
Parent 3	C	Male	43	Employed	Standard 4
Parent 4	C	Female	39	Unemployed	Standard 3
Parent 5	C	Female	36	Unemployed	Standard 4
Educator 1	C	Male	33	Employed	Bachelor Degree in Education , Senior Primary Teacher Diploma
Educator 2	C	Female	43	Employed	Senior Primary Teachers Diploma
Principal	C	Female	47	Employed	SPTD and BED

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Appendix XI

PARENT INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

Name…….. (Optional)

School……..

Position…….

Date……

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Personal details

Gender

Age

Home language

……

Residential Address

……

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…….....

Highest standard Passed

……..

……..

Term of office

.....

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Does the school have governing body subcommittees?

.....

.....

Mention subcommittees (if yes)

……

……

……

.

Do you participate in governing body subcommittees?

……..

School Governing Body

1. Do you have a Constitution?

YES		NO	

2. Does the school have a clear vision and mission?

YES		NO	

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If yes, briefly discuss the vision and mission

.....
.....
.....
.....

3. As an SGB member briefly discuss the role you played in the development of school Policies and Governance

.....
.....
.....
.....

4. Why did you decide to become a member of School Governing Body?

.....

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.....

.....

Governing Body Meetings and Participation

1. Do you know about the regulation of the School Governing Body?

   .....

2. What are the actual functions of the School Governing Body?

   .....

   .....

   .....

3. What do you expect from the participation in the School Governing Body?

   .....

   .....

   .....

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4. How often does the School Governing Body meet?

   .....

5. Do you attend meetings regularly? If no, what are the problems experienced?

   .....

   .....

   .....

6. Where are the meetings held?

   .....

   .....

7. How do members get invited to the meetings?

   .....

8. What is the role of the parents in the meeting?

.....

.....

.....

9. How do you communicate with the school?

.....

.....

10. What are the problems encountered in convening meetings?

.....

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11. To what extent are your views heard in decision making processes?

.....

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.....

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12. What are the causes of the lack of parental participation in school activities?

.....

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.....

13. To what parents' participation related?

……

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…….....

14. How can active involvement of parents in the governing body be improved?

.....

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.....

Capacity Building

1. Do you perform duties to the required standards?

.....

2. Are the Governing Bodies capacitated to deal with matters of school governance and leadership as envisaged by the South African Schools Act of 1996?

.....
.....

3. Do you need training in performing School Governing Body duties?

.....

4. Have you received any training in performing your functions?

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.....

If yes, what training have you received?

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5. What are the Governing Body circumstances which limit parental participation in school governance?

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6. What are the challenges that you experience at school as a result of parents not fully involving themselves in school governance activities?

.....
.....

7. Briefly discuss the weaknesses and strengths of this governing body?

.....
.....

8. What are your recommendations?.....
.....

END **Thank you**

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Appendix XII

PRINCIPAL INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

Name……..(Optional)

School……..

Position…….

Date……

Personal details

Gender

Age

Residential Address

…….....

.....

.....

School

1. When was the school established?

   .....

2. What is your current enrolment for the year 2014 academic year?

   ……..

3. How many educators and non- teaching staff are employed by WCED?

……..

4. What improvements have been made to the school since you have occupied the seat of principal?

.....

5. Does the school have governing body subcommittees?

.....
.....

Mention subcommittees (if yes)

6. Do you participate in governing body subcommittees?

……..

7. As an SGB member briefly discuss the role you played in the development of School Governance and Policies?

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Governing Body Meetings and Participation

8. Do the parents know about the regulation of the School Governing Body?

.....

9. Do the parents know the actual functions of the School Governing Body?

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10. What do you expect from the parent participation in School Governing Body?

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.....

11. Do the parents play an important role in school governance?

.....

12. How often does the School Governing Body meet?

.....

13. Do you attend meetings regularly? If no, what are the problems experienced?

.....

.....

.....

14. Where are the meetings held?

.....

.....

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15. How do members get invited to the members?

.....

16. What is the role of the parents in meeting?

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17. What role does the principal play in a meetings?

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18. How do you communicate meeting with the parents?

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19. What are the problems encountered in convening meetings?

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20. To what extent are your views heard and your influence in decision making?

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21. What are the causes of the lack of parental participation in school activities?

.....

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22. Is parents' participation in governing body related to their knowledge of their responsibilities?

.....

.....

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23. How can active involvement of parents in the governing body be improved?

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24. Do you have problems with parents on the governing body?

If yes, what are the problems?

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25. The South African School Act envisages parental involvement in the education of their children. In what areas are parents involved?

.....

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26. Briefly discuss advantages and disadvantages of working with parents.

.....

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Capacity Building

27. Do you perform duties to the required standards?

.....

28. Are the Governing Bodies capacitated to deal with matters of school governance and leadership as envisaged by the South African Schools Act of 1996?

.....

.....

29. Do the SGB members and you need training?

.....

30. Have your SGB members received any training in performing their functions?

.....

If yes, what training have they received?

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.....
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31. Who should train the SGB?

.....

32. What are the Governing Body circumstances which limit parental participation in school governance?

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33. What are the challenges that you experience at school as a result of parents not fully involving themselves in school activities?

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34. Briefly discuss the weaknesses and strengths of your governing body?

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.....

35. What are your recommendations?.....

.....

END **Thank you**

Appendix XIII

TEACHER INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

Name……..(Optional)

School……..

Position…….

Date……

Personal details

Gender

UNIVERSITY of the
WESTERN CAPE

Age

Residential Address

…….....

.....

.....

School

1. Does the school have governing body subcommittees?

.....

.....

Mention subcommittees (if yes)

2. Do you participate in governing body subcommittees?

……..

3. As an SGB member briefly discuss the role you played in the development of school

(Governance and Policies)

.....
.....
.....
.....

Governing Body Meetings and Participation

4. Do the parents know about the regulations of the School Governing Body?
.....
5. Do the parents know the actual functions of the School Governing Body?
.....
.....
.....
6. What do you expect from the parent participation in School Governing Body?
.....
.....
.....
7. Do the parents play an important role in school governance?
.....

8. How often does the School Governing Body meet?

.....

9. Do you attend meetings regularly? If no, what are the problems experienced?

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.....

.....

.....

10. Where are the meetings held?

.....

.....

11. How do members get invited to the members?

.....

12. What is the role of the parents in meetings?

.....

.....

.....

13. What role does the principal play in a meetings?

.....

.....

.....

14. How do you communicate during meeting with the parents?

.....

.....

15. What are the problems encountered in convening meetings?

.....

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16. To what extent are your views heard and your influence in decision making?

.....

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17. To what extent are parent views heard in decision making?

……
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……

What are the causes of the lack of parental participation in school activities?

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17. Is parents' participation in governing body related to their knowledge of their responsibilities?

.....
.....

18. How can active involvement of parents in the governing body be improved?

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.....

19. Do you have problems with parents on the governing body?

    If yes, what are the problems?

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.....

20. The South African Schools Act envisages parental involvement in the education of their children. In what areas are parents involved?

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.....

.....

.....

.....

21. Briefly discuss the advantages and disadvantages of working with parents.

.....

.....

.....

Capacity Building

22. Do you perform duties to the required standards?

.....

23. Are the Governing Bodies capacitated to deal with matters of school governance and leadership as envisaged by South African Schools Act of 1996?

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WESTERN CAPE

.....

.....

24. Do the SGB members and you need training?

.....

25. Have SGB members received any training in performing their functions?

.....

If yes, what training have they received?

.....

.....

.....

26. Who should train the SGB?

.....

27. What are the Governing Body circumstances which limit parental participation in school governance?

.....
.....
.....
.....

28. What are the challenges that you experience at school as a result of parents not fully involving themselves in school activities?

.....
.....

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29. How is the parental involvement managed in your school?

.....
.....
.....

30. How are teacher attitudes towards parent involvement?

.....
.....
.....

31. What can the school do to facilitate parental involvement and make it more effective?

32. Briefly discuss the weaknesses and strengths of your governing body?

.....

.....

33. What are your recommendations?

END **Thank you**

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