



**Educators' experiences on parental involvement towards learners with learning barriers: A case study of a high school in Mooi River**

**By**

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## **DECLARATION**

Submitted in fulfilment / partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of

Master of Education in the Graduate Programme in Psychology

University of KwaZulu-Natal, Westville, South Africa.

I, **Zandile, Linah Mlambo** declare that:

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2. This thesis has not been submitted for any degree or examination at any other university.
3. This thesis does not contain other persons' data, pictures, graphs or other information, unless specifically acknowledged as being sourced from other persons.
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Signature

07/02/2024

Date

## **DEDICATION**

This dissertation is a dedication to my mother **Miss M.C Lukhozi** for her endless support, regardless of the fact that she is not educated, but always motivated me to keep going and be the shining light. Thank you so much mom.

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First and foremost, I would like to thank my mother, **Miss M.C Lukhozi**, for always believing in me and always encouraged me to pursue my studies and never lose hope when things get harder. I am where I am today because of all your sacrifices.

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I would also like to thank all my participants, who participated in this study, without them it was not going to be possible to complete this study. Thank you for taking some time off from your busy schedules.

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## **ABSTRACT**

The purpose of this study was to explore parental involvement towards learners with learning barriers. This is a qualitative study that was carried out in one of the rural schools in Mooi River, under Umgungundlovu District. Purposive sampling is the sampling technique that was used to select the participants, which were the educators. Data was generated using questionnaires with open-ended questions and focus group interview for further probing questions, and data was analysed using thematic analysis. This study was aligned to the interpretivist paradigm and also guided by Epstein's theory of overlapping sphere model. The findings in this study clearly indicated that parental involvement is an issue in this school and the educators are not well equipped in order to support learners with learning barriers. The findings further indicated that educators are willing to learn, however the parents as well should be taught about the importance of their involvement in their children's education regardless of the hindering factors that hinders their involvement. It was then recommended that the Department of Basic Education should include in their plans building more special needs schools and also design more workshops for both parents and educators, which will help them develop necessary skills.

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# CHAPTER 1

## INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

### 1.1 Introduction

This chapter aims at establishing the opinions of the educators in a chosen high school regarding the issue of parental involvement and how it influences learners' academic performance. This chapter looks at the background of the study, problem statement, research objectives, research questions, research methodology, theoretical framework, trustworthiness issues, significance of the study, rationale to the study, location of the study, ethical considerations, selection of participants. The chapter ends with a short summary.

Both parental involvement and learning barriers are key concepts in this study, therefore, they are defined into detail so that one may get an understanding of what the study is about.

### 1.2 Background to the study

When I did background on this topic, it was evident that parental involvement is not something new, it is something that has existed for the longest time. Parents have always formed a great part of their children's education; they are the ones who taught their children at home before formal schooling was introduced. They are the ones who taught their children how to pronounce certain words, their children depended on them for learning certain words and how to pronounce those words (Oranga, et al, 2023). According to Govender, (2021) during apartheid, parents were not considered as important in South African school, basically the apartheid government abused the term parental involvement because the parents were partially involved in school. In a further attempt to promote the involvement of parents in South African education, the Policy on the South African Standard for Principalship (PSASP) of 2015 drew attention to the duties and responsibilities of principals. The PSASP highlights that it is the responsibility of the principal of a school to integrate parents into the school environment as outlined in the policy (Republic of South Africa, 2015)

Watson, et al., (2016) state that parental involvement was first created with the purpose of creating a relationship between educators and parents, so that learners may perform well at school. (Sakaue,

et al., 2023) states that when parents are involved, helping their children with homework and also motivates them, good academic performance is expected, this simply means that when parents are involved in decision making, in the school, when they volunteer at school, take part in the extra-mural activities, good academic performance is expected. According to Myers-Young, (2018) suggests that parental involvement, whether in happens at home or at school, can translate into long-lasting benefits for children from early childhood through adult life because when educators and parents work together that can improve the child's social functioning.

According to Govender (2021) parental involvement is also an issue in primary schools, it is not something that only affects high schools, and therefore we cannot turn a blind eye. The educators are frustrated about it, the parents on the other hand they are also complaining, the issue of parental involvement is something that is discussed everywhere, in Union meetings, in the staff rooms and even in educator's workshops. Moreover, parental involvement may be a good thing; however, there are factors that hinder it, such as parents being illiterate and some have multiple responsibilities, as a results parents fail to be part of their children's education (Livine & Sutherland, 2013). Due to busy schedules, they cannot find time to assist their children and if they do get time, some do not understand what is needed from them. I then discovered that most studies talk about the factors but there isn't much that talks about how these factors can be overcome so that the parents can be involved in their children's school work. Therefore, what this study aimed to achieve is to find out what could be done so that they can be involved.

### **1.3 Rationale to the study**

I was motivated to conduct this study based on the things that I have experienced, such as working in a in a public school that is situated in a deep rural area and I have observed and saw that it is always difficult to involve the parents in their children's school work, due to different reasons. Moreover, with the informal observations that I have done, it is crystal clear that most parents do not really pay attention to their children's school work. Some of them are even reluctant to attend parents' meetings. When I decided to ask other educators about the issue of parental involvement, it was evident that I was not the only one struggling to get parents involved. Even during orientation workshops, out of curiosity, I asked other educators from neighbouring schools about parental involvement, especial of those with learning barriers. It was evident that the issue of parental involvement prevails in their schools. I was then eager to find out why is parental involvement is

an issue and what are the hindering factors towards parental involvement. Furthermore, when I joined the Department of Education a few years ago I had a different perspective about the education sector. I was then surprised by the number of progressed learners in the school I was teaching in and in the province. According to Moagi, (2020) progressed learners refers to learners whose marks doesn't allow them to be moved into another grade but they are moved any way due to the fact that maybe they meet the requirements, such as number of years in phase. It then came to my attention that these learners who are progressed into the next grade most of them have learning barriers, which then leads them not to perform well academically, however they still do not qualify for special education for their learning barriers.

I further observed that the learners whose parents are involved tend to perform better than the learners whose parents are not involved. You find that the learners whose parents are involved do their homework and they are always well behaved, compared to those whose parents do not play a role. Therefore, in this study I would like to find out whether poor performance of learners with learning barriers is associated with the lack of parental involvement or when parents are involved good results are to be obtained. Moreover, different scholars, Mahuro & Hungi, 2016; Maples, 2018; Kovács, et al., 2022 state that parental involvement is crucial, because it is associated with learners performing well academically.

However, contextually research has shown that even though parental involvement is crucial, some parents find it difficult to be part of their children's school work due to different factors (Romsaitong & Brown, 2020). For some of the parents, the issue of being illiterate hinders that involvement and others have busy schedules (Watson et al., (2012). Furthermore, those who are illiterate do not understand what is taught in school, as a result they cannot assist them with homework, and the ones with busy schedules hardly get time to assist their children. Learner performance is a big issue in the department of education; we see the department trying different strategies that will help in ensuring that learners with learning barriers in rural schools also obtain good results. Furthermore, I would like to find out the factors that hinder parental involvement so that it will be easy to find solutions as to how they can be involved in their children's school work.

#### **1.4 Significance of the study**

In this study I was interested into finding out if the progressed learners with learning barriers could be able to pass if appropriate approaches are put into practice such as parental involvement. This study would be a benefit to both the parents and the educators. This is because this study aimed at bringing into light the views of educators and how it is like for educators to teach learners with learning barriers. Furthermore, another significant value of this study is to promote the working relationship between learners with learning barriers and the educators which will assist in minimizing the number of progressed learners with learning barriers.

### **1.5 Problem statement**

According to Ho & Kwong, (2013) parents form an important part within the education sector. Therefore, there has been a growing number of studies conducted by different scholars, aiming to understand the influence of parental involvement towards learners' academic performance. In many places more especially, rural areas parental involvement is an issue, since most parents are occupied or have multiple duties (Watson et al., 2012). Basically, they have a lot of things on their plate and therefore they do not get much time to assist their children with school work. Therefore, as result purpose of this study is to find out whether parental involvement results into good academic performance or poor academic performance of the learners with learning barriers.

### **1.6 Objectives of the study**

1. To explore teachers' understanding of parental involvement towards learners with learning barriers.
2. To understand how parental involvement influence academic performance of learners with learning barriers.
3. To explore the factors hindering the parental involvement in a selected high school.

### **1.7 Research questions**

1. What are teachers' understanding of parental involvement towards learners with learning barriers?
2. What are the factors hindering the parental involvement in a secondary school?

3. How does parental involvement influence academic performance of learners with learning barriers?

### **1.8 Location of the study**

The study is located in KwaZulu-Natal in a small town called Mooi River, in a school that is situated in the rural area in under Mpofana circuit in Umgungundlovu district. The name of the school is Sithuthukisa imfundo high school (pseudonym), it is a non-fee-paying school with learners around 367 and 10 teachers and 3 non-teaching staff. The people in this community work in the farms, which therefore means that they are struggling financially therefore it falls under quintile 1.

### **1.9 Theoretical framework**

Osanloo & Grant, (2016) defined theoretical framework as something that gives the researcher a direction as to what research design to use, direction on how data is going to be collected and analysed. Theoretical framework is considered as something that is very important because it gives the researcher structure and vision, therefore, without it the structure and the vision of the study will be unclear (Osanloo & Grant, 2016). This study utilises the Epstein's overlapping spheres of influence model on parental involvement as a theoretical framework. Epstein's parental involvement theory was first developed by Joyce Epstein in the early 1990s. This theory combines psychological, educational, and sociological perspectives on social institutions to describe and explain the relations among parents, schools, and local environments. In essence, this theory suggests that the parents, the school and the community should work together in building the child's future; this is because these three spheres influence children's growth and development (Maga, S., & Mugari, S., 2017).

Furthermore, Epstein's theory suggests that these spheres should share the responsibilities; the educators must be in a position to share the responsibilities, for student learning with the parents and the people in the community (Epstein, 2005). Basically, this theory suggests that a child is not raised by one person but it takes a village to raise a child. Therefore, I have chosen the Epstein's theory of overlapping spheres because this study focuses on parental involvement, so it is suitable for my study because this theory says that the teachers should be willing to share responsibilities with the families, by so doing the parents will be involved, assisting the children

with homework and providing them with an environment that is suitable for learning and also be in a position to ask the children about school. The parents will be able to take part in everything that is taking place at school, such as attending parent meetings and volunteering in SGB (Osanloo, & Grant, 2016).

## **1.10 Research methodology**

### **1.10.1 Research paradigm**

The term paradigm has different meanings provided by different authors, (Bertram & Christiansen, (2020); Kivunja & Kuyini, (2017) state that the research paradigm represents a particular worldview that informs what is acceptable to research and how research should be done. Basically, a research paradigm helps the researcher to know what kind of questions to ask, what can be observed, how he or she going to collect or generate data and when data is collected how it is going to be interpreted. Moreover, there are different types of research paradigms that a researcher can choose from such as: positivist, interpretivist, feminist, critical paradigm, post structuralist and post-positivism. Therefore, this study focused on the interpretivism paradigm, in this type of paradigm the researcher's focus is not on predicting what people will do or to understand regular causality but rather its focus is on describing and understanding how people make sense of their worlds and how they make meaning of their particular actions (McMillan & Schumacher, 2014).

Moreover, the reason why I have used the chosen research paradigm it is because the research topic aimed to understand how parental involvement influence the performance of learners with learning barriers. Then I interacted with the participants and in order to understand what the participant was thinking and therefore the researcher was able to understand and interpret what the subject was thinking or the meaning that the subject is making of the content. Basically, this paradigm allowed me to be able to understand the personal experiences of the participants in terms of parental involvement towards learners with learning barriers. It allowed me to understand what happens when parents are involved or not involved in the children's school work, specifically those with learning barriers, does it give positive results or negative results (Rehman & Alharthi, 2016)

### **1.10.2 Research approach**

Qualitative, quantitative, and mixed methods are examples of research approaches that researchers can decide to use for their studies. Therefore, the present study used a qualitative approach. Maree (2016) argued that a qualitative approach is primarily exploratory and plays a critical role in providing an understanding about underlying reasons, motivations and opinions to the researcher. This study used a qualitative approach because as a researcher I wanted to understand how parental involvement influences learner performance of the learners with learning barriers, does it affect it positively or negatively. Furthermore, the research designs used in qualitative research allowed me as the researcher to obtain necessary data that allowed me to a good conclusion, since it uses naturalistic approaches to research intended to understand the phenomena in its real- world setting (McMillan & Schumacher 2014). Basically, when the researchers are using the approaches used in qualitative research, they do not maneuver the chosen phenomenon but they researcher allow the phenomenon of interest unfurl on its own (Cohen et al., 2018; McMillan & Schumacher, 2014).

### **1.10.3 Research design**

According to Bertram and Christiansen (2020) a research design is all about how the researcher will collect and analyse data, basically it provides direction as to how the information will be obtained and after that how is it going to be analysed. There are different types of research designs in qualitative methodology that a researcher may choose from, such as: case studies, ethnographic research, life histories, action research, and experimental research. This study used case study design. Bertram and Christiansen (2020); Yin, (2009); Heale & Twycross, (2018) defined a case study as a systematic and in-depth study of one particular case in its context. Case studies focus on describing how it is like to be in a certain situation, case studies may be used when one wants to study an individual, a group or phenomenon. Case studies are categorised into two: intrinsic or instrumental, in intrinsic case studies a researcher conducts a certain study because it is interesting in itself, and in instrumental a researcher conducts a study to look at a more general issue. Moreover, a case study can be ethnographic or naturalistic.

Furthermore, I have chosen case study design because this study looked at how parental involvement influence learners' academic performance, what it is like to teach in a school where parents are more involved in their children's education, this type of research design allowed me to get a better understanding as to what happens when the parents are involved and what happens

if they are not involved in their children's education, therefore my case study is ethnographic in nature.

## **1.11 Selection of participants**

### **1.11.1 Sampling**

Sampling involves making decisions about your participants, where the research will take place, the events or behaviors to include in the study. Sampling is divided into two: probability and non-probability, these terms are used as an umbrella. Pajo, (2018) pointed out that under probability sampling there is simple random, stratified random, cluster and systematic sampling and under non-probability sampling there is convenience, quota and judgmental samples and purposive sampling, therefore this study will use purposive sampling.

Both Pajo (2018) and Bertram and Christiansen (2020), both defined purposive sampling as a technique that allows the researcher to select the participants that he or she finds relevant or suitable for the study. Basically, the researcher targets a specific group knowing that the group does not represent the wider population, it simply represents itself. Moreover, the reason for choosing purposive sampling for this study was because I wanted to choose the people who will take part in the research. This helped me as a researcher to obtain data that is appropriate for the study because not everyone was chosen but only those that were in a position to provide valid data; teachers in a specific secondary were chosen as the participants. These participants were able to tell me if being involved in the child's school work especially if the child has learning barriers improves or doesn't improve the learners' academic performance. Another reason for choosing purposive sampling besides being able to choose participants, it's that I do not wish to generalize the results beyond the group sampled.

## **1.12 Data generation methods**

There are different types of data collection methods that a researcher can choose from as means of gathering information, research methods depend on the type of research approach that they have chosen, if its quantitative, qualitative, or mixed methods. Interviews, questionnaires,

observations, focus groups and document analysis are different types of data collection methods. Due to the fact that this study adopted a qualitative approach, as a result I therefore used focus groups and questionnaires as tools that assisted in gathering data.

### **1.12.1 Questionnaires**

According to Bertram and Christiansen (2020); Khaldi, (2017) a questionnaire is referred to as document that consists of questions that are to be answered by participants, questionnaires can either be open- ended or closed ended, where in closed-ended the participants are not given an option to explain further but they are only given possible answers that they have to choose from, for an example: do you check your child's school work, yes or no, whereas in open-ended questionnaires the participants are given an opportunity to explain further using their own words which they think will allow the researcher to obtain relevant data.

Therefore, the reason for choosing semi- structured questionnaires was that I wanted to get detailed information. Therefore, since open- ended questions leave space on the questionnaire for participants to answer these questions in as much detail as they would like. This type of research method allowed the participants to explain further or to express themselves freely and therefore more data was be obtained. Semi-structured questionnaires allowed my participants to write their opinions or share their experiences in relation to the influence of parental involvement in a learners' academic performance without being limited by closed-ended responses.

### **1.12.2 Focus groups**

According to Paradis, et al., (2016) focus groups consist of between 6 and 12 people who meet in a specific setting to talk about particular or certain topic that has been set by the researcher, basically the participants do not choose what to talk about but the researcher gives direction to what the discussion is about. The moderator tries by all means to keep the group together, in terms of discussing the topic but at the same time he or she doesn't direct them on what they should say, the group is allowed to explore the subject from as many angles as they want to provided it is still relevant to the topic (Kothari, 2004); Gundumogula & Gundumogula, 2020).

Therefore, I have chosen focus groups as a tool for data collection because it allows the researcher to ask follow up questions, because the participants were given a set of questions to

respond to and then share their opinions, focus groups gave the researcher an opportunity to obtain data that is valid and relevant to the study because the people that are taking part in my research will be sharing experienced related to the topic. Focus groups were suitable for this study because when people write down, they tend to leave out some of the information that might be important therefore using focus groups allowed the researcher to ask more questions if I felt like some of the participants were not giving enough information.

### **1.13 Data analysis**

Bertram and Christiansen (2020) defined the term analysis as a close or systematic study or separation of a whole into parts for the purpose of study, therefore when the researcher is analysing data he or she looks into the collected data and then make sense of it. Moreover, in qualitative research there are two broad approaches to analysis data, which are: deductive and inductive, where in inductive data analysis the researcher is not restricted by categories but they emerge along the way and on the other hand deductive data analysis the researcher starts with a set of categories. Therefore, this study followed the route of inductive data analysis because it allowed the inclusion of other categories that might emerge along the way; the data will speak for themselves.

Furthermore, there are six ways in which data can be analysed in qualitative approach, there is qualitative content analysis, narrative analysis, discourse analysis, thematic analysis, grounded theory and interpretive phenomenon, in this study data was analysed using thematic analysis. According to Clarke & Braun (2017), thematic analysis is a method for identifying, analysing and interpreting patterns of meaning, it has a six steps process that is followed: familiarization, coding, generating themes, reviewing themes, defining and naming themes, and writing up. Therefore, I have chosen thematic analysis as a tool for analysing data that is collected in this study because it is flexible, it allows change of research questions, sample size, and data collection method if there is a need.

### **1.14 Trustworthiness of the study**

According to Nowell et al (2017) trustworthiness is considered to be very important; it defined as a way of researchers convincing themselves and the readers that the findings that they obtained from their data is worth given an attention. There is a criterion that is used in order to

measure whether trustworthiness has been met, and that criteria includes: creditability, transferability, dependability and conformability. Basically, once a study meets all these four, it therefore means that trustworthiness has been met, which is why it is important that qualitative researchers ensure that the study meets the criteria so that trustworthiness is met.

#### **1.14.1 Credibility**

Korstjens & Moser, (2018); Johnson et al., (2020); states that credibility is similar to internal validity in quantitative research, it is concerned with the aspect of truth-value. There are certain strategies that a researcher should follow in order to ensure that credibility is met. Strategies such as: prolonged engagement, persistent observation, triangulation and member check (Anney, 2014). Therefore, this study ensures that credibility is met by including activities such as lengthy engagement, tenacious observation, data collecting triangulation and researcher triangulation. Furthermore, peer debriefing is also considered, so that credibility can be increased and also it follows the process of member checking test, the findings and interpretations with participants.

#### **1.14.2 Transferability**

According to Treharne & Riggs, (2015) states that transferability is all about findings of the study being applicable in another context. In other words, transferability refers to the results of data obtained from another study being able to be applied to another context. Basically, transferability is the ability to transfer research findings from one group to another (Korstjens and Moser, 2018). Therefore, in this study transferability was met by giving detailed descriptions. This was done so that should another researcher wish to apply the same results, he or she gets a clear understanding of everything.

#### **1.14.3 Confirmability**

Johnson et al., (2020) states that in order for a researcher to achieve confirmability, he or she has to consider persistent observation of data, meaning that he or she read and re-read collected data. Basically, the researcher needs to ensure that credibility, transferability and dependability is met in order to achieve confirmability of the study. The researcher includes details on how data was obtained and how he or she got to a particular conclusion and this is called an audit trail. You

need to secure the inter-subjectivity of the data. I achieved confirmability by the fact that I did not base interpretations on what I preferred on your own particular preferences or what I thought was right but everything was grounded in the data (Korstjens & Moser,2018). Moreover, in order for me to achieve confirmability in this study I made sure that credibility, transferability, and dependability is met, and I provided clear and detailed explanations as to why I decided on certain things such as theoretical framework, methodologies and data analysis methods. Moreover, I also explained how I got to a certain conclusion.

#### **1.14.4 Dependability**

According to Loh, (2013) dependability is all about examining the process of the inquiry (how data was collected; how data was kept; accuracy of data). A qualitative researcher should ask him or self this question: would similar findings be obtained should another researcher conduct the same study? Treharne & Riggs, (2015). In this study questionnaires and focus group were used as tools for data collection and detailed information was provided in terms of how data was collected and the tools that were used and also how I came to certain conclusions. Questionnaires were given to participants to fill in, giving detailed information based on the questions and focus group interviews I asked suitable participants to participate. Data that was collected using the above- mentioned data collection methods was kept safe in a locked place, access was given to only relevant people.

#### **1.15 Ethical considerations**

The term ethics is defined as a system of morals, they are important in research because they provide guidelines to researchers, as to what they should do and what not do when conducting research. It helps the researchers not to engage in misconducts such as distorting data, basically researchers should pay attention to ethical consideration and in this study the following ethics are considered: confidentiality, informed consent, competence and deception to ensure that the participant's rights are protected.

Before I went about conducting this study, I requested for ethical clearance for the University of KwaZulu-Natal, and once I received clearance, it was when I collected data. Moreover, consent from the provincial Department of Education in written form and certified with an official stamp. I made sure that my participants were people who are in a position to give me relevant data such as educator.

## **Informed consent**

According to (Fleming & Zegwaard, (2018) informed consent refers to requesting for permission from participants that will be part of the study. The participants then sign an informed consent form, which has all the information that the participants need to know such as the procedures of the study, what the research is about and any form of harm (Manti & Licari, 2018). An informed consent form is signed prior to the commencement of the collection of data (Mahlalela, 2012). Therefore, in this study all my participants participated willingly and they were informed that they are allowed to withdraw at any time should they feel uncomfortable or not interested anymore, and there will not be any consequences. Moreover, the participants are fully aware of what they are getting themselves into; they are made aware of what the study is about and what its purpose. I ensured that the participants are aware of the data collection methods to be used which were questionnaires and also focus groups. This was done so that they prepare themselves and should they feel uncomfortable with the methods they can decide not to be part of the study. I made them aware of how the data will be used and reported and once the agreement was reached, they signed the information sheet.

### **1.15.1 Risk of harm, anonymity and confidentiality**

The participants should be assured of anonymity, confidentiality and risk of harm. Anonymity refers to keeping the participants anonymous (Mahlalela, 2012). Ensuring that no one knows the identity of the researcher such as names, age, ethnic group, etc. (Dube et al., 2014). Therefore, in this study anonymity was achieved by using pseudonyms instead of the participants' real names. Confidentiality refers to keeping the information shared by participants a secret. I gave participants assurance that anything shared during focus group interview or information obtained through the use of questionnaires will be kept a secret. Assurance was given in terms of harm; participants are not to be exposed to any type of harm because their names will not be exposed when the data is published. Moreover, the participants are aware that the questionnaires and recording from focus groups discussion will be kept in a locked cabinet and it can only be accessed by me and should someone else need access, permission will be required from the

participants. Basically, all information shared by the participants will be confidential; in cases where names were provided, they were removed and information was adjusted so that it won't be easy to identify the participants.

### **1.15.2 Competence and deception**

Welman et al., (2017) and (Struwig & Stead, (2011) argue that competence and deception are something that a researcher should pay attention to because if not it can lead to causing harm to the participants and they may also feel embarrassed and emotionally uncomfortable. Therefore, in this study no misleading information was given to the participants and also no information was withheld, therefore they were not forced or deceived to take part or not. Moreover, there were no lies to the participants in terms of the skills that I have, basically there are no lies as to what skills I have just to make them participate in my research; the data obtained from this study is reported truthfully, no data will be tampered with.

### **1.16 Limitations of the study**

When doing research there are problems or limitations that a researcher anticipates and therefore there must be ways as to how they can be overcome in case he or she come across them. The possible limitations in this study could be participants, and corona virus.

A limitation to my study could be that educators have very busy schedules, therefore it will be difficult to get them all at once, when I need them to participate during focus group interview. Moreover, due to their busy schedules, some of them may take time to return the questionnaires and that may lead to the shortage of participants since the school has a small enrolment. Furthermore, Covid 19 is a pandemic that has changed a lot of things, a lot has changed, the things are no longer functioning in a normal way, so does research conduction procedures. Therefore, due to Covid-19 pandemic the participants may be reluctant or skeptical about meeting a stranger, since I will be holding discussions using focus groups. The participants may fear that they might contract the virus, so should I come across such participants. I will give them assurance that all Covid-19 regulations will be adhered to, there will be social distance, every participant will wear a face mask and the room will be kept ventilated and all members will be sanitized before they enter the room.

## **1.17 Definition key concepts**

### **1.17.1 Parental involvement**

Chowa et al., (2013) defines parental involvement as taking part in a child's education by being actively present both at home and at school. When the parents are actively involved at home, it means that they are assisting the children with work that they are supposed to do at home (Joseph, 2014; Echaune et al., 2015). Holding conversations that involve their schoolwork, expressing what you expect from the child academically, providing the child with an environment that allows the child to learn. While on the school-based parental involvement involves the parents being interested to how the child is doing, being part of the trips and also doing volunteering (Romsaitong & Brown, 2020). This may also be achieved by keeping contact with the teachers of the child and also visit the school to check the child's progress. Moreover, having a good relationship parental involvement means having a good relationship with your child's educators as a parent is also considered as school-based parental involvement (Alonso R et al., 2017). Epstein (2005) further defined parental involvement as motivating and encouraging act that parents can provide to their children at schools. Some research reveals different impacts of parental involvement as schools on learner's academic achievement.

### **1.17.2 Learning barriers**

Khan, (2011); Børte, et al., (2023) stated that learning barriers could be anything that is an obstacle in the process of teaching and learning of the child. Learning barriers may vary from those that can be easily minimised or removed to those that are almost impossible to be removed such as natural disability or limitations. The most common barriers to learning that learners may face may be personal, emotional, economic, attitudinal or even organisational. Basically, most learners may have difficulty in learning due to their personal experiences, or if there is something that they are going through, could be the abuse that they may face at home. Moreover, some of the learners may not perform well academically due to the family's economic status, in cases where the parents are working long hours and they do not get time to assist or even support the child (Adelman & Taylor, 2017). While some learners may not perform well due to the attitude that they have towards school other learning barriers could be differences in culture differences and parenting styles (Triegaardt, & van Diermen, 2021).

## **1.18 Arrangement of chapters**

### ***Chapter One:***

This chapter is a brief introduction of the study. It includes the discussions on the background of the study, problem statement, significance of the study, rationale to the study. The research questions and objectives are outlined. It further gives a glimpse of research methodology and trustworthiness issues, ethical considerations and the theoretical framework. Basically chapter 1 shows what will be included in the study as a whole.

### ***Chapter Two:***

This chapter comprises of the explanation of the theoretical framework that was used in this study. The background on the theoretical framework is provided, just after the introduction. This chapter further explains why I have chosen Epstein's theory of overlapping spheres model, however not only the advantages of it are discussed, also the limitations of it are discussed. The last part of this chapter is the summary, which explains what the chapter discussed.

### ***Chapter Three:***

This chapter encompasses literature review, what other scholars say about parental involvement. The chapter also includes definition of terms (parental involvement and learning barriers). It also looks at the importance of parental involvement and how significantly it is to learners' education. It further explores the factors that hinders parental involvement, also the educator's understanding of learning barriers and their experiences in teaching learners with learning barriers. It examines the attitudes of learners with learning barriers towards learning and the relationship that they have with their peers. Summary of the chapter included at the end of this chapter.

### ***Chapter Four:***

This chapter comprises of the discussions on the research design and methodology that was utilised in this study. At the beginning of this chapter there is a discussion of the research paradigm, it includes the definition of the type of research paradigm that I have chosen and the reasons why it is suitable for this study. It further explores the research design, and the research methodology utilised to carry out the study in order to achieve the research objectives and the research questions. This chapter further provides explanations on the sampling technique that I used, the data

generation methods used to collect data, and the methods to analyse that I used. A detailed discussion on trustworthiness issues and ethical considerations is also included in this chapter, how I ensured that they are met in this study. After the ethical considerations then the summary of the chapter is provided.

#### ***Chapter Five:***

This chapter entails the detailed discussion on the findings based on the data that was collected. The findings in this study were analysed thematically, meaning the themes and sub-themes were discovered and then coded accordingly. After the themes participants' profile is outlined, and then responses from the participants are presented and the chapter ends with a summary.

#### ***Chapter Six:***

Chapter 6 is the final chapter of this study. It presents the findings, limitations, recommendations and conclusion. Just after the introduction of the chapter, the presentation of the summary of the whole study is provided. This chapter further outlines the limitations that I came across while conducting the study. The conclusion and recommendations based on the findings are also presented in this chapter.

### **1.19. Summary**

In this chapter I provided explanation why it was important to conduct a study about parental involvement towards learners with learning barriers, looking at a specific high school in Mooi River. I made sure that the following concepts were discussed briefly: significance of the study, background of the research, theoretical framework, rationale of the study, ethical considerations, limitation of the study, research methodology, trustworthiness issues. The next chapter which is chapter 2 will be looking at the theoretical framework.

## CHAPTER 2

### THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK OF THE STUDY

#### 2.1 Introduction

The previous chapter looked at the background of the study, rationale of the study, significance of the study, problem statement, objectives of the study, research questions, location of the study, trustworthiness of the study, and an introduction to research methodology. In this chapter, the main focus is on the theoretical framework, and I have chosen Epstein's parental involvement theory as the theoretical framework that is suitable for this study. In this chapter I unpacked the theory as a whole, looking at the background or its origin, its advantages and limitations. I further explained the reasons for choosing this theory as a suitable one for the study, a link between the theory and the research as a whole is explored.

#### 2.2 Background of Epstein's overlapping of spheres model

Osanloo and Grant (2016); Kivunja, (2018); Grant & Osanloo, (2014) defines theoretical framework as something that gives the researcher a direction as to what research design to use, direction on how data will be collected and analysed. Theoretical framework is considered as something that is very important because it gives the researcher structure and vision, therefore, without a theoretical framework, the structure and the vision of the research is unclear (Osanloo & Grant, 2016). The theoretical framework within which the researcher chooses to frame this study includes Epstein's overlapping spheres of influence model on parental involvement.

Epstein's overlapping spheres of influence model on parental involvement was first developed by Joice Epstein. Epstein then developed the six types of involvement, which is sometimes called the school- family-community partnership model. The framework of six types of involvement has undergone revisions in the intervening years. However, the elements of the theory did not change, and there was a consistency. Moreover, to support the ongoing research and practice related to school, family, and community partnership, Epstein and colleagues founded the center on school, family and community partnerships and the national network partnership schools which form part of the center of social organization of schools in the school of education in

Johns Hopkins University. Basically, Epstein's theory of overlapping sphere of influence is as an elaboration of Bronfenbrenner's ecological theory, which simple means that, it is built from Bronfenbrenner's ecological theory. Epstein conducted research over several decades using a model of parent involvement that she based on Bronfenbrenner's (1977) social ecological model in order to be able to come up with the theory of overlapping sphere. She categorized parent involvement into six major types: (1) parenting, (2) communicating, (3) volunteering, (4) learning at home, (5) decision making, and (6) collaborating with the community. Basically, Epstein's inferred from Bronfenbrenner's ecological theory (Yamauchi et al., 2017).

Epstein (2007) developed a framework that looked at the child being the main character, arguing that; the community plays a huge role in the child's development, the school and also the parents. In 1995, Epstein established the National Network for Partnership Schools to assist in connecting research, policy, and practice s in education (Epstein et al., 2007). Epstein et al., (2007) created a framework of six typologies of involvement that included different challenges, practices, a redefinition of terms, and results for parents, students, and schools for each type. It is then the school's duty to choose a typology that suits them so that they can be able to achieve their goals.

### **2.3 Epstein's overlapping of spheres model**

This theory puts together psychological, educational, and sociological perspectives on social institutions to describe and explain the relations among parents, schools, and local environments. Basically, this theory suggests that even though there are activities the family, the school and the community perform separately but there are those that they should perform together. Those activities also contribute in building the child's future; this is because all these three spheres influence children's growth and development (Magwa & Mugari, 2017; Galindo & Sheldon, 2012; Palts & Kalmus, 2015)).

Yamauchi et al., (2017) further explains that the extent at which the spheres overlap is influenced by a lot of things such as time, the child's years, the child's class and also historic influences. Moreover, the degree of overlap could also be influenced by experiences, philosophies, and how the three spheres (which is the school, family and the community) do

things. For instance: if the parents believe that it is the educator's duty to teach, there they cannot assist at home, then the spheres will not overlap as they should. The spheres can either be separated or they can be brought closer together. Epstein et al., (2018) states that if the educators say that if the families can do their job, we as educators can also do our job, or if the families say that we have raised this child now it is your turn to educate her/him. therefore, the spheres are separated. However, the spheres can be brought closer together when the educators utter words like: I cannot do my job without the learner's family and the support from the community, and also the parents say: I really need to know what is happening at my child's school, so that I will be able to help where I can. Smit et al., (2001) further explains that it takes a lot of effort and time to build genuine partnership, it is not something that can be accomplished within a short space of time. All three spheres need to be more available in order for them to overlap nicely.



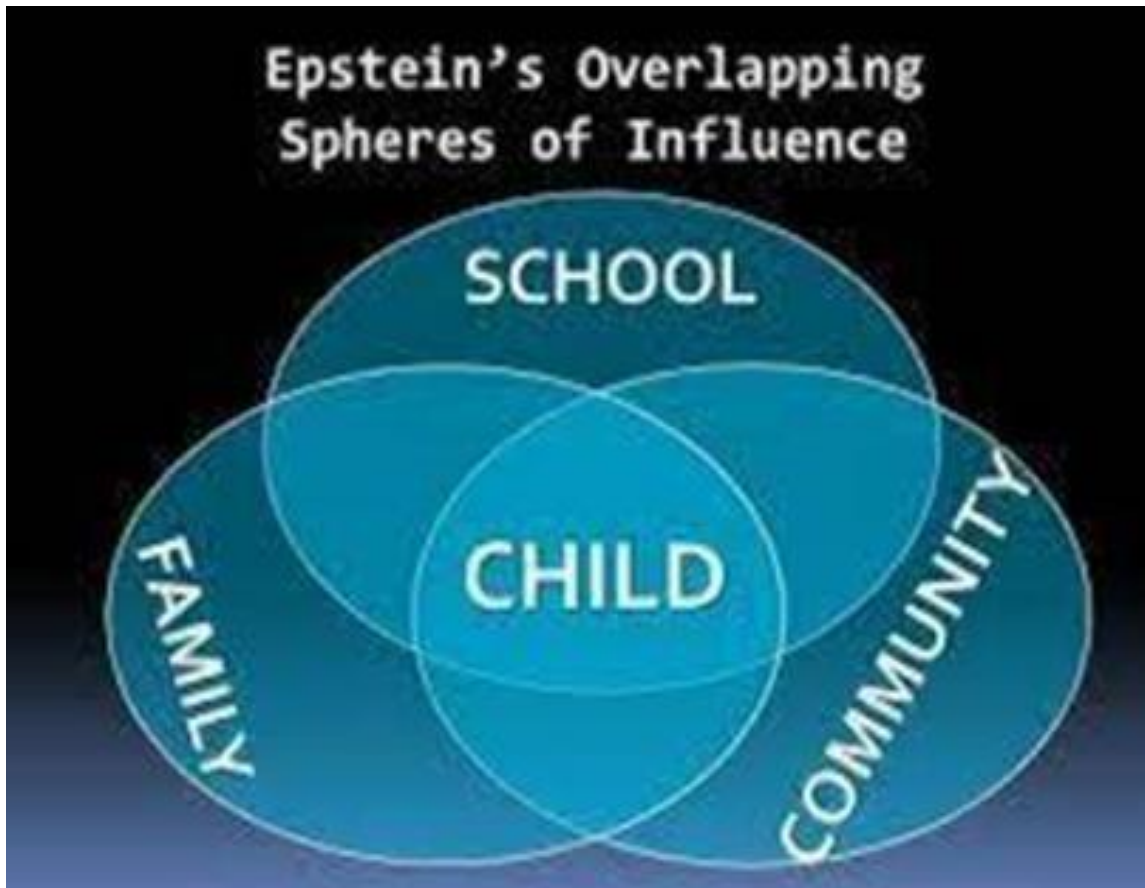
**Figure 1: Epstein's model of six types of parent involvement**

Source: [www.researchgate.net](http://www.researchgate.net)

Figure 1 above shows that there are six types of Epstein's family involvement namely: parenting, communication, volunteering, learning at home, decision making and community collaboration (Yamauchi et al., 2017; Epstein, et al., 2018; Caño et al., 2016). These six types of Epstein's family involvement are discussed below.

1. **Parenting:** in this type of involvement parents provides their children with basic needs such as health, housing and nutrition. Basically, here parents ensure that their children are healthy, if they are sick, they can be taken to the clinic or hospital, they also ensure that their children are eating well and they have proper shelter (Erdener et al., 2018); Epstein, et al., 2018).
2. **Communication:** Epstein et al., (2018) states that this type includes two-way communication between schools and homes, where they are talking about how the child is doing at school. This type of involvement can be achieved through phone calls, notes, face to face meetings or (depending on the affordability of parents), and also through report cards. The communication is about school programs and student progress (Newman, et al., 2019). The information between the schools and homes should flow.
3. **Volunteering:** Families can also be involved through volunteering to contribute to their children's education. This could be achieved by parents coming to schools to work or can involve families making contributions at home in ways to assist the educational program. Parents could also assist during sporting events, school performances and other activities.
4. **Learning at home:** parents may also be involved through assisting their children with homework, they may also assist their children by helping them choose courses that they would like to enroll. Parents may also create an environment that promotes learning. (Van Voorhis, 2013).
5. **Decision making:** The schools may involve parents when developing policies, they may also allow the parents to have a say or contribute in how the school functions.
6. **Community collaboration:** this type of involvement relates to families' use of community resources and services. The parents may accompany their children to the nearest community library or they may enroll their children in community programs that promote learning and development (Epstein, 2018).

Basically Al-Fadley et al., (2018) states that according to Epstein's Model, six different models of parental involvement should be evident in the relationship amongst parents, school teachers, and community stakeholders.



**Figure 2: Epstein's Overlapping Spheres of Influence**

**Source:** <https://theroadlesstravelledby.com/2017/09/28/schools-families-and-community-overlapping-spheres-of-influence/> Capacity-Building (theroadlesstravelledby.com)

Figure two shows that there has to be a collaboration between the school, the family and the community as they are the ones that influences how the child learns and what the child learns. When all these spheres overlap positive results are expected (Epstein, 2005; Magwa & Mugari, 2017). Therefore, I chose this theory in order to guide and explore the involvement of parents of learners with learning barriers. This theory assisted me in finding out how parental involvement assists in teaching learners with learning barriers. The benefits of this theory were also explored and it also assisted in how learners with learning barriers can be assisted in their academic work

and therefore, reduce the number of progressed learners in schools. This theoretical framework was discussed to address the following sub-questions: what does scholarly literature say about teaching learners with learning barriers? What are the challenges that teachers face when teaching learners with learning barriers? What strategies can be used in order for learners with learning barriers to achieve good grades?

Furthermore Westergård, (2013) states Epstein's theory of overlapping spheres of influence suggests that all these spheres should share the responsibilities in order to meet the needs of the learner. The educators must be in a position to share the responsibilities, for student learning with the parents and the people in the community (Epstein, 2005). Basically, this theory suggests that a child is not raised by one person, but it takes a village to raise a child. Therefore, I have chosen the Epstein's theory of overlapping spheres because this study focuses on parental involvement. So, it is suitable for this study because this theory says that the teachers should be willing to share responsibilities with the families, and the community by so doing the parents become more involved, assisting the children with homework and providing them with an environment that is suitable for learning and also be in a position to ask the children about school. The parents are then able to take part in everything that is taking place at school, such as attending parents' meetings and volunteering in SGB (Osanloo, & Grant, 2016; Epstein, 2018).

#### **2.4 Advantages of Epstein's theory**

This theory has an advantage if applied correctly, for example if the educators are teaching learners, the parents help the children at home, with what they are struggling with. If the parents also take part in developing school code of conduct, and their children's' extra mural activities. The communities also assisting in making sure that the children do not participate in drugs, crime, and other unacceptable behaviours. This is because Epstein and Sheldon (2016) states that a child does not only learn at school but also learns at home and in the community. Therefore, if all these spheres combine correctly, if all the responsibilities are shared correctly, then it becomes easy for teachers to teach learners with learning barriers, and therefore reduce the number of learners who fail at the end of the year and also the number of progressed learners in schools (Walker, 2017).

Silinskas & Kikas, (2019) emphasis that when parents are involved in helping their children with homework good academic results are produced, even though parental involvement differs with parenting styles. Goodall and Montgomery, (2014) further emphasises that when parents assist their children with homework good results can be expected, however, it was pointed out that parental involvement does not only mean helping their children with homework. It also means that the parents also take part in drawing up school code of conduct, attending school meetings, supporting their children during extra- mural activities. Such engagement does not only help the child academically but also boost his or self-esteem, and motivates the child to do better. Therefore, using Epstein's theory of overlapping spheres is of great advantage as it emphasised that parents, teacher and the community should share responsibilities. However, the main focus of this study is more on the parents and teachers having a good relationship in order to learners with learning barriers to perform at their level best.

Lemmer, (2007) states that Epstein theory suggests that there are when all spheres work together, they create a family- like school and school like a family. In a family like school, each child is recognised individually and makes each child feel special and included. In such school all types of parents are welcomed and not just those who have time to avail themselves or who are not too busy to be at school. Therefore, this theory was advantageous because it allowed me to find out the strategies that educators use in order to ensure that learners with learning barriers are included, and they feel special. Moreover, how the educators ensure that parents are more involved, not only those who are easily accessible but also that have hindering factors.

A school-like family recognises that each child is also a learner, and it reinforces the importance of school, homework, and the activities that build academic skills and feelings of success. This theory helped me to identify how the educators ensured that learners with learning barriers view themselves like other learners. This is because it is really hard for a learner with learning barriers to cope in a class full of learners without learning barrier. Moreover, this theory also helped me to see how the educators reinforced the importance of school in learners with learning barriers, how do they make sure that these learners participate in class. This is because for the fact that they are struggling, their self-esteem is already low (Lemmer, 2007).

Palts and Kalmus (2015) states that as the communication between school and home allows both parents and educators to get and give feedback, this makes the impact of overlapping

spheres of influence on the student's development more efficient and thereby supports the child's socialisation. Therefore, using Epstein's theory of overlapping spheres, enabled me to understand how educators communicate with parents, in order to make sure that there is a great overlap amongst the spheres. Basically, how do they communicate with the parents after they have identified a learner with a learning barrier and what are the steps that they take after that. How do educators in this school ensure that there is active communication, if there is any communication at all.

Moreover, even though the community, is regarded as the third sphere of influence, it is said that it can also create opportunities for the school to develop their programmes that strengthen, recognises and reward learners' progress (Epstein, 1995, p. 702). When educators, parents and community members view one another as partners, development and success within the school are assured (Van Wyk, 2010, p. 207). Therefore, using Epstein's theory of overlapping spheres of influence as a theoretical framework to frame this study, was an advantage. This due to the fact that I was able to find out how the community play a role on the academic performance of learners with learning barriers. It also assisted into finding out whether the third sphere does overlap with the others or it doesn't overlap and what are the challenges the educators face when it comes to the third sphere (Triegaardt & van Diermen, 2021).

## **2.5 Criticism of Epstein's theory of overlapping spheres of influence**

Regardless of the fact that this study relied on Epstein's theory of overlapping spheres of influence, her work has been criticised. Since Epstein's Six Types of Involvement framework provides different types of practices of partnerships, some researchers argued that this perspective may lead to individualistic and school-centric approaches (Warren, Hong, Rubin, & Uy, 2009). Although these typologies are conceptually useful, they still show a restricted vision of partnerships which focuses mainly on the school's agenda (Banquedano-Lopez et al., 2013). This simple means that even though this theory put an emphasis on partnership, the school has more power than the other spheres, the school is the one that informs parents what needs to be done, how it should be done and when it should be done (Nga, 2015).

Epstein's theory can be considered as an elaboration of Bronfenbrenner's ecological theory, specific to family-school partnership, Epstein states that her theory was based on Bronfenbrenner's and other's model of 'natural', nested and necessary connections between individuals and their groups and organization. Epstein's theory was therefore criticised by other scholars for continuing to put its focus mainly on school-based activities and perspectives and not giving families the power and the ability to voice out and also to share their perspective. Moreover, even though Epstein's theory emphasises the idea of partnership amongst these three spheres, which are the school-family-community (Yamauchi et al., 2017).

According to Yamauchi et al., (2017) the activities that are described are centered at school and the parents/families should support, whether they are against them or not, they have to participate. For instance, this theory says that educators should invite parents during school meetings; they should be included when drawing up school policies. However, it doesn't mention anything about parents also sharing activities with the educators that they might find useful. It is always parents supporting the activities organised by the school. Basically, parents are not given the power to decide on the type of activities that they would like to see being implemented. Instead, they are told that these are the activities that the school thinks are suitable for the learners and therefore assist us in ensuring that they are implemented.

Epstein's theory was also criticised for its one-dimensional emphasis on parents helping the children learn, basically this theory talks about parents helping their children with homework's. It doesn't show how all these spheres work collaboratively, what it is that educators need to do and what does the community do. Instead, it talks about involving parents in all the activities that takes place at school, parents are even encouraged to be present during their children's extra- mural activities (sports). Furthermore, this theory was also criticised for its narrow view of partnerships, it doesn't clearly state what each activity each sphere needs to do in order to ensure a great overlap, it focused more on that the community should work with the school, without being specific as to what exactly does the community need to do (Yamauchi et al., 2017).

## **2.6 Suitability of the chosen theoretical framework to the study**

This theory is suitable for many reasons; firstly, it assisted in answering the research questions. Since this theory suggests that the three spheres should overlap (the school, the parents and the community). Basically, these spheres should be in partnership, Yamauchi et al., (2017); Kuusimäki, (2022) defined partnership as working together in favor of the child which is the learner. The main purpose of partnership is to improve the attendance of learners in schools, to also improve learner academic performance and also improve learners' behaviour. This is because if all these spheres are working together, if there is communication. It is easy for all the spheres to know if learners bunk school, or doesn't do his work, or even when he is misbehaving at school, because the spheres will notify each other. Therefore, using this theory helped me to unpack the impacts that parental involvement has on learners with learning barriers. Whether if they are involved fully it could assist in the progress of these learners. Basically, it helped me to conclude whether parental involvement has a good or bad effect on the academic performance of learners with learning barriers. (Triegaardt & Diermen, 2021).

According to Nga, (2015) Epstein's theory of overlapping spheres does not focus much on the issue of power and status; therefore. It came in handy because it helped to be able to discover the factors that hinders parental involvement. This is because not only the people in power or who have a certain status within the school (such as the principal, deputy principal and departmental heads) were interviewed or given questionnaires but also PL1educators were allowed to participant and this was of good advantage since they are the ones who have a lot of personal encounters with the learners compared to the principals, deputy principals and DH's.

Moreover, the educators were free to share their opinions and personal experiences especially during focus group interview; they were not afraid of their superiors of what they are going to say or what they are going to think of them. No one was given special treatment just because he or she has a certain status or is in power. Everyone was given a fair and equal chance to speak during the discussion regardless of his or her status or rank within the school. Therefore, the fact that the issue of status and power amongst participants was ignored, relevant data was collected. No one thought that they have the power to dominate the discussion due to the fact that they held a certain status, for instance the principal was not the only person allowed to do the talking or rather more talking just because he is the principal, everyone was allowed to talk.

According to Maples, (2018) the emerging alliance between homes and schools comes from the recognition that not only are schools important to parents and families but that schools also need the support of parents in order to achieve optimum success". Basically, Epstein's overlapping of spheres model suggests that the school, the parents and the members of the community should work together. therefore, this allowed me to be able to find out the things that are making it difficult for the parents to support the school, such as not being involved in their children's school work. Furthermore, Epstein's theory of overlapping spheres also enabled me the to interact with the participants, since also the study uses interpretivism as a research paradigm, it was easy to find out what the participants are thinking or their views on the topic at hand. Basically, this theory encourages communication between all three spheres, therefore it was easy to put into practice interpretivism as a research paradigm find out the educators' personal experiences pertaining parental involvement, or rather the challenges that they come across when trying to get parents involved in their children's school work and also to find out what they do in order to try and overcome those challenges.

According to Yamauchi et al., (2017) Epstein's theory of overlapping spheres of influence states that when educators make parents part of their regular teaching practice, by so doing they are creating a great overlap and when parents increase their involvement in their children's school work, they are also creating a greater overlap, basically each member of the sphere must be willing to go an extra mile. Therefore, this theory is suitable for this study since it adopted qualitative as a research design, where its main purpose is to understand the underlying reasons why some parents may easily be willing to work with educators, while others may find it hard to do so. Therefore, it was easy for me to understand the challenges that the learners with learning barriers experience or come across, this is obtained through the educators who interact with them on daily basis. This theory also assisted in understanding the behaviours of learners with learning barriers, what causes them to behave in a certain way. Are there any factors that contribute to that type of behaviours and what strategies do educators use in order to assist these learners?

Westergård (2013) suggests that Epstein's theory of overlapping spheres focuses on the types of family engagement and what educators can do to create more overlap between the spheres, therefore this theory is suitable for this study as its participants are educators and talks about parental involvement. Therefore, it allowed me to get an idea as to what strategies are used by

the educators in order to get parents of learners with learning barriers involved and if there are challenges, how do they try to overcome them, so that there is partnership between them and the parents. Epstein's theory of overlapping spheres allowed me to see whether there is less overlap or maximum overlap or limited overlap in terms of parental involvement. Moreover, even though parents, schools, and communities can work together, the students are regarded also important, they also contribute to the overlapping of spheres. Therefore, the chosen theory assisted in uncovering the truth about learner, whether they take their school work seriously or not, and the things that they say to their parents about school. This is because it is through students that parents get to know about the things that happens in schools.

## **2.7 Summary**

This chapter looked at the suitable theoretical framework for this study: which is Epstein's theory of overlapping spheres of influence. This theory was discussed, what exactly it is, and how it can be used in order to help learners with learning barriers. The advantages of this theory, as to how it can benefit the learners with learning barriers, furthermore, also touched on the limitation such focusing on activities done at school that parents need to participate in them therefore the theory is one-dimensional. The next chapter which is chapter 3 looked at the literature of the study (literature review).

## CHAPTER 3

### REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

#### 3.1 Introduction

The previous chapter looked at the suitable theoretical framework for this study: which is Epstein's theory of overlapping spheres of influence. The aim of this chapter was to locate what other researchers said about parental involvement. Moreover, to also find out if there are any factors that hinders parental involvement, and also how is it like for teachers to teach learners with learning barriers or their experiences on teaching these learners. This study examined and compared how different scholars looked at the issue of parental involvement.

This present study aimed at understanding the educator's experiences on parental involvement of learners with learning barriers in a high school. It explored what parental involvement is, how learning barriers are defined, and the teachers experiences in terms of parental involvement in their school and how it is like to teach learners with learning barriers. This chapter further explored what hinders parental involvement, and how does these hinderances affect learner performance of learners with learning barriers.

#### 3.2 Understanding of learning barriers

It is not easy to define who exactly are learners with barriers, but in schools' learners with learning barriers are classified as learners who have challenges in learning (difficulty in understanding, writing and reading). These learners end up not performing well and they are progressed into another class. According to the National Policy Pertaining to the Programme and Progression requirements (NPPPR), the term progressed means the movement of a learner from one grade into the next excluding Grade R, regardless of the learner's non-compliance with all the promotion requirement NPPPR, 2011. The reason why the progression purpose was introduced, it was meant to avoid keeping learners in one grade or phase for a long period of time. Therefore, learners with learning barriers are victims of the progression programme, since they are struggling to read and write (Nkosi & Adebayo, 2021). Moreover, they are not able to pass on their own, they therefore need to be progressed into the class, when they reach matric, they are given an option to choose subjects, and they come back the following year to finish.

The Department of Education then realised that this strategy is not working, all learners are supposed to write all subjects, which then becomes a problem, these learners with learning barriers struggle to pass and then increase the failing rate in public high schools. Basically, learners with learning barriers are classified as progressed learners in schools (abbreviated to PROG).

### **3.3 Influence of parental involvement on learners' academic performance**

According to Mahuro and Hungi (2016); Maples, (2018); Kovács et al,(2022) parental involvement is very important as it is associated with learners obtaining good grades, moreover, parental involvement doesn't only refer to parents assisting their children with homework, but it goes a long way, parents should be involved in their children's school work, so that they will be motivated in doing their school work, because they will see that school is very important since their parents are also interested in what they are learning. Furthermore, when parents are involved in their children's school, communication between the parent and the educator becomes a positive one, which is then good for the child (learner) because wherever the child is struggling the parent can also assist the child when he or she is given extra work to do at home as a way of helping a struggling child (Kuboja, 2019).

According to Erdener and Knoepfel (2018); Đurišić and Bunijevac (2017). parental involvement is crucial because it has positive influence on learners' academic performance. This is because it can help in reducing the increasing number of progressed learners in schools. Most learners are progressed into the next grades due to the fact that they do not meet the requirements to pass into the next grade. Therefore, if parents together with the educators can work together, they can notice the learners who are struggling at the early stages. They can also notice the behaviour of the child and be able to instill control and discipline, and also work together in planning strategies that might help in assisting them (Joseph, 2014; Mahuro and Hungi, 2016). it could be easy to identify those learners who are just lazy to do their schoolwork, or lazy to study not that they have learning barriers, and therefore necessary steps can be taken, and learners who are repeating grades can also be reduced, because the progression procedure, doesn't allow learners within a certain age group to be progressed into the next grade,they are retained.

### **3.4 Factors hindering parental involvement**

According to Nkosi & Adebayo, (2021) almost all parents are not against the idea of parental involvement or the idea of being part of their children's schoolwork. They understand how important their involvement is towards their children's education. However, there are quite a number of factors that are hindering their involvement and it has been argued that these factors are affecting mostly the ones from ethnic minorities or facing economic challenges. Furthermore, it has been observed that some schools do not accommodate these families when they are setting meetings, which therefore becomes a barrier to active engagement. It was then suggested that when the department of education and the schools come up with strategies, they should look at them at different angles rather than one size fits all. In order for active parental involvement the educators should not make assumptions about a certain group of learners based on little actual knowledge about a situation.

On the other hand, Watson et al., (2016) pointed out some of the hindrance factors that seem to affect negatively the process of involving parents into their children's learning, they mentioned things like: parents' negative attitudes and being illiterate (Romsaitong & Brown, 2020). Watson et al., (2016) further argued that another factor that hinders parental involvement is that parents have multiple responsibilities of work, school, and family and this happens mostly to minority and low-income families. Basically, some parents may have interest in being involved to their children's schoolwork but they are limited by family responsibilities, having to take care of the family and work at the same time, this barrier affected mostly women. (Đurišić & Bunijevac, 2017).

Moreover, in order to ensure that all parents are actively involved in their children's schoolwork, teachers or the department should educate parents about the importance of fostering learning in the home, which will therefore benefit both the learners and the educators, there will be communication between the parents and the teachers which will benefit the learners (Thornton, 2015). However, Watson et al., (2016) pointed out that even though parents can be educated about the importance of fostering learning in the home, education becomes a problem, some of these parents are illiterate, they cannot read and write and then language becomes an issue when they try and assist their children. It was pointed out that even though some parents may be illiterate, that does not mean that they should be judged, instead a non-judgmental, supportive relationship must exist between parents and schools in order for effective engagement to take place.

### **3.5 Educator's experiences of teaching learners with learning barriers**

It is not easy to define who exactly are learners with barriers, but in schools' learners with learning barriers are classified as learners who have challenges in learning (difficulty in understanding, writing and reading). These learners end up not performing well and they are progressed into the next grade. According to the National Policy Pertaining to the Programme and Progression requirements (NPPPR), the term progressed means the movement of a learner from one grade into the next excluding Grade R, regardless of the learner's non-compliance with all the promotion requirement NPPPR, 2011. The progression process was introduced in school to minimize the number of learners who spends more years in one phase or grade. Therefore, learners with learning barriers are victims of the progression programme, since they are struggling to read and write (Nkosi & Adebayo, 2021). Moreover, they do not meet the promotion requirements and they are then moved into the next grade, without given proper assistance, when they reach matric, they are given a chance to choose subjects that they are comfortable in writing and then write the remaining subjects in the following year. The Department of Education then realised that this strategy is not working, all learners are supposed to write all subjects, which then becomes a problem, these learners with learning barriers struggle to pass and then increase the failing rate in public high schools. Basically, learners with learning barriers are classified as progressed learners in schools (abbreviated to PROG).

#### **3.5.1 Lack of support from the Department of Education**

According to Nel et al., (2016) firstly it has been observed that in many schools, educators are not well equipped to teach learners with learning barriers even though in some schools there are few educators that are trained to teach learners with learner's barriers. Therefore, in order to successful put inclusive education into practice, teachers feel that training is needed which is in line with inclusive education. it was stated that it is difficult to teach learners with learning barriers due to the fact that teachers do not get sufficient support and positive attitudes, this is because in order to successfully implement inclusive education there must be support coming from the officials. Schuelka (2018) this simple means that it is difficult to implement inclusive education when the teachers do not have support from the officials, by support we mean being provided with enough resources so that they can be able to accommodate the learners with learning barriers in their classrooms educators must also have positive attitudes towards inclusive education, this is because some of the teachers come with high expectations from learners with learning barriers

(Unianu, 2012). They think that it is impossible to teach learners together with those that are normal, therefore it will be impossible to implement inclusive education in schools.

### **3.5.2 Educator's attitudes towards inclusive education**

Russell (2022) and The American Psychological Association (2021) defined attitude as a relatively enduring and general evaluation of an object, person, group, issue or concept on a dimension ranging from negative to positive. According to Ewing et al., (2018) the implementation of inclusive education is an issue when the attitude does not support inclusive education in mainstream schools. Moreover, some of the educators feel that it is difficult to teach in a school where the principal has a negative mind-set about learners with learning barriers. This is because they will not even put an effort into trying to implement inclusive education, if the school is not well equipped for inclusive education they will not even try and put the pressure to the officials so that the school can get resources in order to accommodate learners with learning barriers. Some teachers say that they are able to identify these learners with learning barriers and the principals do not submit the names to SNES where learners could get proper assistance, because some learners need to be in special schools. Basically, even if the educators may be motivated to implement inclusive education in their classrooms, if the principal's attitude towards inclusive education is negative, their efforts will mean nothing, even if they can identify learners with learning barriers there is nothing that they can do on their own without the help of the principals. It was stated that in order for inclusive education to be implemented successfully in schools, the principals and the educators should work together with positive attitudes, and they must all working towards reaching the same goal (Ntombela, 2011).

### **3.5.3 Educators' attitudes towards teaching learners with learning barriers**

Both Gelenhuys and Wevers (2013) suggested that in order to implement inclusive education successfully various things should be considered, looking into the age group of educators. Therefore, some of the teachers say that it is difficult to teach with the educators that lack motivation, and they are no longer willing to learn new ways, some believe that it is best to keep learners with learning barriers in separate classrooms or special schools even if the learners are not severely impaired. Moreover, inclusive education says that a teacher should accommodate all types of learners in the

classroom, he or she should not exclude the learners with learning barriers, they should not be sent to remedial classes, but the educator should use the teaching methods that accommodate these learners.

According to Utami, (2018) some educators say that it is difficult to teach learners with barriers because some of these learners need more attention and therefore, they need to practice at home as well, and they say that getting parents involved is a challenge, due to the fact that some are illiterate and some do not have time they are working and therefore have a lot on their plates. Educators have pointed out that it is difficult to help learners with learning barriers due to the fact that the Department of Education does not accommodate these types of learners when they are planning the Annual Teaching Plans, it is not clear how the teachers are supposed to help or give extra-time to the learners with learning barriers, and the teachers are guided by the ATPs which also becomes a challenge if they want to help the learners with learning barriers, because they have to make sure that they have taught everything in the ATP. Furthermore, the fact that some of the educated cannot properly conduct a lesson can also be regarded as a barrier to learning (Maba & Mantra, 2018).

### **3.6 Learners' attitudes towards learning**

According to Moagi (2020), the challenges that the educators face when teaching learners with barriers is that they lack motivation, when they believe that something is hard, they then give up and are not motivated to work harder, therefore the educators say that it is then difficult to teach a learner that lacks motivation. These learners end up failing and then they are progressed into the next grade, because they do not qualify to pass but they meet the progression criteria, when these learners are progressed therefore the educators must come up with strategies to use in order to support these learners, which then becomes a problem to them, because some of these programs require the learners to have positive attitudes towards learning, of which it is something that they need in order to succeed, when some are given extra work they come back and say that they had no one to help them and therefore they couldn't do it. Another challenge that they face is the availability of extra resources to use in order to assist these learners, such as extra story books, they say that they don't even have enough story books in their schools.

### **3.7 The relationship between learners with learning barriers with their peers**

Lesenyane, (2018) pointed out that the relationship among the learners with learning barriers and their peers is bad in public school, these learners shared that they were laughed at by their peers, especially when they couldn't read or write. Some of the learners were even bullied and also undermined, it even went to an extent where they were even left out in peer-activities given in the classroom, and learners do not want them in their groups because of their learning disabilities. Moreover, due to the negative treatment that these learners were facing ended up developing a negative self-concept, they lacked self-esteem, they developed social and emotional problems, including psychiatric problems. They also pointed out that they did not have a bad relationship with their peers only, also their teachers were not patient with them, whenever they could not read and write they got angry and felt as if they are wasting their time and they are pulling back the rest of the classroom. They were even punished and shouted at for not being able to read and write.

It was then discovered that learners in public schools do not understand that as learners they are different and therefore, they have different abilities, what is even worse is the fact that even the educators are lacking information on inclusive education, which is why they end up ill- treating these learners causing them social, emotional, and psychiatric problems. Dyslexic learners preferred special schools than public schools because learners and teachers in special schools understood them and were patient with them, they were not laughed at by other learners and the teachers were kind towards them and also gave them a room to show case their abilities, without being judged and called stupid. Dyslexic learners also pointed out that they did not feel different in special schools because they could interact with other dyslexic learners, which boosted their self-esteem.

### **3.8 Summary**

This chapter looked at related literature, how other scholars defined parental involvement. It also aimed at finding out if there are any factors that hinders parental involvement, and also how is it like for teachers to teach learners with learning barriers or their experiences on teaching these learners. This study examined and compared how different scholars looked at the issue of parental involvement.

Literature has shown that parental involvement is indeed important, because when parents are involved, good results are obtained. Not only in terms of good grades, but also in terms of behavior. Children whose parents are involved tend to behave better and it is easy to discipline them.

Unlike those that their parents are not involved. The next chapter is chapter 4 which is about research methodology.

## CHAPTER 4

### RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

#### 4.1 Introduction

The previous chapter looked at literature review, as to what other scholars said about parental involvement, does it give positive or negative results in the academics of the learners with learning barriers. The focus was also on the experiences of the learners with learning barriers in attending school with normal learners. And also, the experiences of educators teaching learners with learning barriers. Therefore, this chapter looks at research paradigm, research design, research approach, sampling, data generation methods and data analysis.

#### 4.2 Research paradigm

According to Kaushik and Walsh, (2019) in social research, the term “paradigm” refers to the philosophical assumptions or to the basic set of beliefs that guide the actions and define the worldview of the researcher. The term paradigm originates from Greek meaning pattern (Kamal, 2019) (Kamal, 2019; Kivunja & Kuyini, 2017). This term (paradigm) was used to discuss the shared generalisations, beliefs, and values of a community of specialists regarding the nature of reality and knowledge. Another word for paradigm is “Worldview,”. Worldview is outlined as “a way of thinking about and making sense of the convulsion of the real world” (Kamal, 2019). The term paradigm has different meanings provided by different authors, Bertram and Christiansen, (2020) and Muzata, (2021) states that the research paradigm represents a particular worldview that informs what is acceptable to research and how research should be done. Basically, a research paradigm helps the researcher to know what kind of questions to ask, what can be observed, how one is going to collect or generate data and when data is collected how it is going to be interpreted. Research paradigms are a set of common beliefs and agreements shared by scientists on how problems can be understood and addressed (Hallebone & Priest, 2017; Kaushik & Walsh 2019; Perera, 2018).

Moreover, Rehman and Alharthi, (2016) states that there are different types of research paradigms that a researcher can choose from such as: positivist, interpretivist, feminist, critical paradigm, post

structuralist and postpositivism. Alharahsheh, and Pius, (2020), further states that each research paradigm has its own four elements known as: ontology, epistemology, methodology, and axiology.

The word ontology is derived from two Greek words (onto, which means 'being' and logia, which means 'science, study or theory' (Antwi & Hamza, 2015). Ontology is defined by Rehman, and Alharthi, (2016) as the nature of reality as given by our beliefs, this simply means that how we view the nature of reality, is influenced by what we believe in. Researchers may assume what reality is and whether it exist or not, and what can be known about it. It is the ontological question that leads a researcher to obtain information about what kind of reality exists: Whether "A singular, verifiable reality and truth or socially constructed multiple realities". Therefore, ontology is mainly concerned with the phenomenon in terms of its nature of existence.

Kaushik and Walsh (2019); Dammak, (2015) defines epistemology as how reality is being known by the researcher. Therefore, epistemology is more focused on how a researcher is planning to uncover knowledge to reach reality. Moreover, epistemology is considered as an internal factor within the researcher, as it is also concerned with how a researcher can differentiate between right and wrong. Epistemology is also about how a researcher's view the world around them, how nature and form can be obtained and how it can be communicated to other human beings" It is the epistemological question that leads a researcher to debate "the possibility and desirability of objectivity, subjectivity, causality, validity, generalizability" (Rehman, & Alharthi, 2016; Alharahsheh, & Pius, 2020;).

According to Rehman and Alharthi, (2016); Gog, (2015). methodology is "an articulated, theoretically informed approach to the production of data. It refers to how data will be collected and how it will be analysed. Which data collection methods will be used and which methods does the researcher plan on using in order to analyse collected data. Basically, methodology focuses mainly on discussing how a particular piece of research should be tackled. It serves as a guide for the researcher because it helps one to know what kind of data is suitable for his/her particular study and what data collection tools/methods are suitable (Kamal, 2019). This helps in ensuring that suitable data is collected from the participants. It is the methodological question that leads the researcher to ask how the world should be studied (Alharahsheh, & Pius, 2020).

Axiology is all about how a researcher understands values and having the knowledge of the role

of values when it comes to research. It looks at what is wrong or right, and measures how bias develop and the different types of perceptual bias (Blaikie & Priest, 2017).

According to Maree, (2010) post positivism is characterised by the assumptions of determination, reductionism, empirical observation, including measurement and theory verification. Maree, (2010) and Rahi, (2017) state that interpretivism is a type of paradigm where human beings construct meaning as they engage in the world, they are interpreting this assumes the meaning attributed to multiple participants (not clear). Multiple participants imply that different participants in a study come up with their own understanding in relation to the topic under study. Interpretivism is also known as constructivism, social constructivism or qualitative research paradigm. Therefore, this study was aligned to the interpretivist paradigm, because I believed that true knowledge can only be obtained by deeply interpreting the participants experiences. Furthermore, interpretivism paradigm does not on predicting what people will do or understanding regular causality but rather focuses on describing and understanding how people make sense of their worlds and how they make meaning of their particular actions. Which was therefore another reason for choosing this research paradigm because it allowed me to understand what were the teachers experiences in teaching learners with learning barriers. How do they ensure that parents are involved in their children's school, and what strategies do they use in order to ensure that academic performance of learners with learning barriers improves (Goldkuhl, 2012)

Another reason for choosing interpretivism as a research paradigm was also the fact that it adapts a relativist ontology (Pham, 2018). Meaning that reality is looked through participants perspective or experiences, which means that it is subjective and differs from person to person, and therefore each single phenomenon may have many interpretations instead of a truth that can be determined by a process of measurement through consideration of meanings as well as understandings of social and experiential aspects in the research (Scotland, 2012). Subjective epistemology: This approach is providing a clear link between the research and research subject as it assumes that humans cannot be divided from reality.

Moreover, another reason for choosing this research paradigm is because of the nature of the research topic, this topic aims to understand how parental involvement influence the performance of learners with learning barriers. Interpretivism allowed me to interact with the participants in order to understand what they are thinking. Since there was no controlled group and observed group, answers to the phenomenon were retrieved directly from the participants. Basically, this

paradigm allowed me to be able to understand the personal experiences of the participants in terms of the level of parental involvement towards learners with learning barriers. Using interpretivism as a research paradigm, allowed me to also understand what happens when parents are involved or not involved in their children's school work, specifically those with learning barriers. Basically, using interpretivism as a research paradigm for my study gave me an opportunity to understand whether parental involvement influences academic performance in a good or bad way. This is because interpretivism usually seeks to understand a particular context, and the core belief of the interpretive paradigm is that reality is socially (Thanh & Thanh, 2015).

### **4.3 Research approach**

Moagi (2020) states that a research approach serves as a strategy for getting from one place into another: it addresses the initial set of questions that need to be answered. There are three commonly used approaches when conducting research. Those approaches are qualitative, quantitative, and mixed methods. Maree, (2016) and Moagi, (2020) state that in qualitative approach the researcher has the ability to use questionnaires with questions that allows further probing, in order to get more information. A qualitative approach is primarily exploratory and plays a critical role in providing an understanding about underlying reasons, motivations and opinions to the researcher. Quantitative depends on numbers and mixed methods refers to both qualitative and quantitative. This means that it relies both numbers and words (Creswell, 2009). Therefore, this study adopted qualitative research approach.

Mahlalela (2012) further stated that a qualitative approach is adopted when the researcher wants to understand the real-life experiences of the participants. Therefore, I chose this approach because I was interested in gaining an understanding whether there is a link between the learner performing well and the parents being involved, helping the child where there is a need. Understanding how learners who experiences difficulty academically perform when parents are involved and when parents are not involved in their children's school work. Basically, do they perform well when parents are involved or do they perform badly when parents are not involved. Furthermore, the research designs used in qualitative research allows the researcher to obtain necessary data that will help the researcher to get to a good conclusion. Moreover, the issue of teaching learners with learning barriers requires more than just one participant to be part of the study where they will

share what is like to teach learners who experiences difficulty in learning. Which is also another reason why I opted for a qualitative approach.

Because qualitative approach allows the researcher to use open-ended questions, which allows researchers to ask further questions, is therefore another reason why this study adopted a qualitative approach. I was interested in finding more information from the participants by giving them a chance to express themselves, sharing their personal experiences and opinions. Basically, using a qualitative approach for this present study was of good benefit, because the participants expressed themselves as to how they feel about teaching learners with learning barriers. The educators also outlined the challenges that they always come across when teaching learners with learning barriers. Moreover, using open-ended questions assisted me to also get an insight on the type strategies that they use when teaching learners with learning barriers so that they can move to other grades.

#### **4.4 Research design**

According to Bertram and Christiansen, (2020) a research design is all about how the person conducting the study collects and do data analysis. Basically, how I collected and analysed data was guided by the type of research design that I chose. There are different types of research designs in qualitative approach that a researcher may choose from, such as: case studies, ethnographic research, life histories, action research, and experimental research. This study adopted a case study design. Bertram and Christiansen, (2020); Yin, (2009); Heale and Twycross, (2018) defined a case study as a systematic and in-depth study of one particular case in its context. A case study as a research design can be utilised by quantitative, qualitative or mixed methods researchers. Case studies focus on describing how it is like to be in a certain situation, a case may be an individual, a group or phenomenon, event or even a place or organisation.

Moreover, a case may be single, or it might be single but with embedded units or sometimes it can be multiple. An example of a single case study could be when a researcher aims at finding out the influence of parental involvement in a certain school and data is collected from the group of educators in that particular school, and when the researcher collects data from other schools then it becomes an example of multiple cases. An example of a single case with embedded units can be when one is doing research on women attending the same clinic within one hospital, the researcher now wants to look at sub-units. When a researcher uses multiple case study, he or she will be able

to analyse data within each setting and across setting, where as if it a single case. Therefore, this study is a single case study because I collected data from educators from one high school, not from different high schools in rural areas.

Baxter & Jack, (2008); Rahi, (2017) states that while a researcher is thinking about his or her research questions must also understand a case. Schoch, (2020) defined the case as, “aphenomenon of some sort occurring in a bounded context. The case is, “in effect, your unit of analysis”. Basically, in order for the researcher to be able to identify the case in his or her research, he or she needs to ask him or herself certain questions that will give him/her direction to follow in his or her study. Moreover, once you are able to answer the above questions, it is when you have identified your case. Once the researcher has identified what the case is in his or her study the next step binding the case this is done so that you do not include things that are not useful in your study. Furthermore, binding the case helps in creating boundaries, boundaries are important because they help the researcher to know what will be studied and what will be left out. For instance, in this study, it will be unreasonable for me to study all parents who have learners who are at high school level, but instead I will be to be specific as to not study all parents who have learners attending high school but only those parents who have learners experiencing learning barriers in a specific high school

Van Wynsberghe and Khan, (2007) states that once a researcher has understood when to use a case study, has identified the case and also considered binding the case, the next step is to now consider the type of case study that will be conducted. The chosen type of case study depends on the overall purpose of the study. Case studies are categorised as descriptive, explanatory, or exploratory.

1. **Explanatory:** according to Yin, (2003) this type of case study’s main focus is on explaining the problem. The results that the researcher obtains from explanatory case study are not up for being interpreted, this is because the results obtained from this type of case study are straight forward and cannot be changed., for example:  $2+2 = 4$ . Vos (2011) further explains that explanatory is mainly used when the researcher is interested in building and testing a theory. This means that explanatory case study may not be used when the study involves a person or a group of people because when people or humans are involved there will be variables.
2. **Exploratory:** Exploratory case study is used to explore those situations in which the

intervention being evaluated has no clear, single set of outcomes (Yin, 2003). Basically, exploratory case study aims to prove that further investigation is a necessity. In this type of case study, the researcher is aware of the problem and what might be the cause for that particular problem and therefore wants to prove if what causes the problem actually causes it and what could be other causes for the problem.

3. **Descriptive:** Usually, a descriptive case study is used when one wants to describe an intervention or phenomenon and the real- life context in which it occurred (Yin, 2003). Bertram and Christiansen, (2020), also argues that this type of case study is used when the aim is to describe what it is like to be in a particular situation.

Therefore, this study adopted descriptive case study, because I wanted to find out what it is like for educators to teach learners with learning barriers, what are their experiences with teaching learners with learning barriers. How is it like when parents are involved and when they are not involved. Basically, what is it like to teach learners with learning barriers whom their parents are not involved in their school work and how it is like when they are involved in their children's school work.

According to Schoch, (2020) case studies are also categorised into: intrinsic, instrumental, and collective. Furthermore, in intrinsic case studies a researcher conducts a certain study because it is interesting in itself, and in instrumental a researcher conducts a study to examine a particular case in order to gain insight into an issue or a theory. Multiple/collective case studies (groups of individual studies that are undertaken to gain a fuller or more general picture. Therefore, this study adopts instrumental case study because the researcher is interested in gaining an insight as to what happens to the academic performance of learners with learning barriers when their parents are involved and when they are not involved in their children's school work. I am interested in uncovering and understanding the educators' experiences in teaching learners with learning barriers.

Moreover, according to Yin, (2018) a case study can be ethnographic or naturalistic. Furthermore, case study design is chosen because in this study I look at how parental involvement influence the child's academic performance specifically those learners with learning barriers, what it is like to teach in a school where parents are more involved or not involved in their children's education and also their experiences on teaching learners with learning barriers. Moreover, this type of research

design allows the researcher to get a better understanding as to what happens when the parents are involved and what happens if they are not involved in their children's education, therefore my case study is ethnographic in nature.

#### **4.5 Sampling**

Mohsin (2016); Bakkalbasioglu, (2020) defines a sample as a small portion that is taken from a larger group of people for investigating purposes. sampling can be defined as the process where by a sample is taken from a larger population because they can best represent the entire population, this means that inferences can be made using a sample. Sampling is important because it makes it possible for the researcher to collect data, which may seem impossible or rather hard to collect from a large population.

Basically, Sharma, (2017) states that sampling involves making decisions about your participants, where the research will take place, the events or behaviours to include in the study. Singh and Beresovsky, (2017) further states that there are two broad categories of sampling procedures or methods of sampling or techniques which are probability and non-probability sampling, these two categories are used as the umbrella for the sub-techniques that fall under them. Pajo (2018), pointed out that under probability sampling there is simple random, stratified random, cluster and systematic sampling and under non-probability sampling there is convenience, quota and judgmental samples and purposive sampling, therefore this study uses purposive sampling.

Both Pajo (2018); Bertram and Christiansen (2020), state that in purposive sampling the researcher has an opportunity to choose the type of participants that he or she thinks they are good for his or her study. The researcher targets a specific group knowing that the group does not represent the wider population, it simple represent the sampled group and any group that share the same characteristics. Another reason for choosing purposive sampling, it is because it allowed me to take a small sample from a large population (Jawale, 2012).

Moreover, Van Hoeven, (2015); Etikan and Bala, (2017), states that purposive sampling allows one to choose participants who are easy to recruit, or it also allows one to select participants who meet their expectations and whether the participants are what the researcher is looking for in terms of being able to give suitable data. Therefore, reason for choosing purposive sampling for this study was because purposive sampling allowed me to choose a specific group that I thought was

suitable for the study which were the educators in a specific high school. This helped me to obtain data that is appropriate for the study because not everyone was chosen but only those that are in a position to provide valid data; teachers in a specific high school were chosen as the participants. These were able to articulate if being involved in the child's school work especially if the child has learning barriers, does his or her academic performance improve or remains the same.

Another reason for choosing purposive sampling besides being able to choose participants, it's that I did not intend to generalise the results beyond the group sampled. This means that the findings from this study may give an idea of what happens if parents are involved/ or not involved, however, not to conclude that if another study is conducted the finding will be the same. (Bakkalbasioglu, 2020; Obilor, 2023; Vehovar et.al., 2016).

According to Rai and Thapa, (2015) there are different types of purposive sampling namely: homogeneous, Maximum variation sampling, Typical case sampling, Critical case sampling, Total population sampling, Expert sampling. This study used the homogeneous sampling, this type of sampling aims to achieve a homogeneous sample; that is, a sample whose units (e.g., people, cases, etc.) share the same (or very similar) characteristics or traits (e.g., a group of people that are similar in terms of age, gender, background, occupation, etc.). A homogeneous sample is often chosen when the research question that is being addressed is specific to the characteristics of the particular group of interest, which is subsequently examined in detail. Therefore, in this study I have chosen educators from a certain high school who have been teaching in the school for more than three years. This is because they were able to share their experiences since they have the same characteristics (which is their occupation and experience of teaching learners with learning barriers). The sample was selected to explain how it is like to teach learners with learning barriers when their parents are involved and how does parental involvement influence the learner's academic performance. According to Andrade (2021) the greater the number of inclusion and exclusion sample selection criteria set. The more purposive the sample becomes; therefore, the participants were selected based on the fact that they were in a position to give me data that is relevant to the study. Educators were included in the study because, they are the ones who encounter day-today challenges with the learners with learning barrier. The school has 13 educators, who teach in this school but only 8 were selected, due to their teaching experience in this school, the teaching experience was from four years upwards. This is because I wanted to get a clear picture of the challenges that they have

encountered during those years. Furthermore, parents were not included in the study mainly because I could not offer psychological help should they feel emotional when certain questions were asked.

According to Andrade (2021) there are many sampling techniques that researchers can choose from when using purposive sampling, basically one is not limited when it comes to choosing techniques. Purposive sampling techniques starts from homogeneous sampling through to critical case sampling, expert sampling, and more. Moreover, whilst there are many purposive sampling techniques, they all have different goals, they can provide researchers with the justification to make generalisations from the sample that is being studied, whether such generalisations are theoretical, analytic and/or logical in nature. However, since each of these types of purposive sampling differs in terms of the nature and ability to make generalisations, it requires one to intensively read different articles on each of these purposive sampling techniques in order to gain an understanding of the advantages that each has (Rai, & Thapa, 2015).

According to Rai and Thapa, (2015) qualitative research designs can involve multiple phases, with each phase building on the previous one. In such instances, different types of sampling technique may be required at each phase. Egami and Lee, (2023) purposive sampling is useful because it has many techniques that the researcher can choose from. Moreover, due to the fact that it requires a small sample, it is therefore easy for the researcher to look thoroughly into each participant, whether he or she is suitable for the study. In most cases, purposive sampling is considered affordable, and it doesn't take much of the researcher's time, this may be due to the fact that it involves a small sample.

#### **4.6 Data Generation Methods**

According to Bertram and Christiansen, (2020) data generational methods are methods that are used to collect data, different research approaches have different data generational methods. There are different types of data collection methods that a researcher may choose from as means of gathering information, research methods depend on the type of research approach that they have chosen, if its quantitative, qualitative, or mixed methods (Rahi,2017). Interviews, questionnaires, observations, focus groups and document analysis are different types of data collection methods. Due to the fact that this study adopted a qualitative approach, as a result I therefore used focus

groups and questionnaires as tools that assist in gathering data. Since questionnaires do not involve social interactions therefore focus groups interview will assist in further information that was not obtained when using questionnaires.

#### **4.6.1 Questionnaire**

According to Bertram and Christiansen, (2020); Khaldi, (2017) a questionnaire is referred to as a list of questions that are to be answered by participants, questionnaires can either be open-ended or closed ended, where in closed-ended the participants are not given an option to explain further but they are only given possible answers that they have to choose from, for an example: do you check your child's school work, yes or no, whereas in open-ended questionnaires the participants are given an opportunity to explain further using their own words which they think will allow the researcher to obtain relevant data. An appropriate questionnaire is one which is capable of providing answers to the questions being asked (Sadan, 2017).

Yaddanapudi, and Yaddanapudi (2019) further elaborated that it is important that the researcher is very careful when designing a questionnaire and also ensure that it is checked before using it as a data collection method. Moreover, a questionnaire should be ensured throughout the development process that the focus does not drift from the research question. When designing the questionnaire, the researcher must ensure that it suits the purpose of the research, basically this means that the questionnaire should be designed in a way that it will assist in collecting data that is relevant to the study.

Therefore, the reason for choosing open-ended questionnaire is that I wanted to get detailed information, therefore since open-ended questions leave space on the questionnaire for participants to answer these questions in as much detail as they would like, this type of research method allowed the participants to explain further or to express themselves freely and therefore more data was obtained. Open-ended questionnaires allowed the participants to write their opinions or share their experiences in relation to the influence of parental involvement in a learner's academic performance without being limited by closed-ended responses.

#### **4.6.2 Focus groups**

Kothari (2004); Gundumogula and Gundumogula, (2020) defined focus groups interview as the type of interview where the researcher is free to ask any questions that are scheduled in any order, as long the sequence of asking these questions will assist in obtaining the relevant data. It is the researcher's duty to ensure that everyone gets a chance to speak, and there are participants dominating the meeting the researcher then tries to involve those that are speaking less (Paradis, 2016). Focus groups consists of between 6 and 12 people who meet in a specific setting to talk about particular or certain topic that has been set by the researcher. basically, the participants do not choose what to talk about but the researcher gives direction to what the discussion is about. The moderator tries by all means to keep the group together, in terms of discussing the topic but at the same time he or she doesn't direct them on what they should say, the group is allowed to explore the subject from as many angles as they want to provided it is still relevant to the topic (Gundumogula & Gundumogula, 2020).

Therefore, focus groups were chosen as a tool for data collection because it allowed me to ask follow up questions, because in questionnaires I gave the participants a set of questions to respond to and then write their opinions or answers, of which I thought that their responses will not give me clear picture of the phenomenon. Therefore, focus groups interviews gave me an opportunity to further ask probe questions that ensured that data provided is valid and relevant to the study. This was because the people that were taking part in the research study were given fair chances to share their experiences related to the topic. Focus groups were suitable for this study because when people write down, they tend to leave out some of the information that might be important (Khaldi, 2017). Therefore, using focus groups allowed me to ask more questions where it looks like more information was required.

#### **4.7 Data analysis**

Bertram and Christiansen (2020) defined the term analysis as a close or systematic study or separation of a whole into parts for the purpose of study, therefore when the researcher is analysing data he or she looks into the collected data and then make sense of it. Moreover, in qualitative research there are two broad approaches to analysis data, which are: deductive and inductive, where in inductive data analysis the researcher is not restricted by categories but they emerge along the way and on the other hand deductive data analysis the researcher starts with a set of categories.

Therefore, this study follows the route of inductive data analysis because it allows the inclusion of other categories/themes that might emerge along the way; the data will speak for themselves.

Furthermore, there are six ways in which data can be analysed in qualitative approach, there is qualitative content analysis, narrative analysis, discourse analysis, thematic analysis, grounded theory and interpretive phenomenon, this study adopted thematic analysis. According to Mjtaba et al., (2013) thematic analysis is a method for identifying, analysing and reporting patterns also known as themes within data. Clarke and Braun (2017); Morgan, (2022) further describes thematic analysis as a method for identifying, analysing and interpreting patterns of meaning, it has a six steps process that is followed: familiarisation, coding, generating themes, reviewing themes, defining and naming themes, and writing up. Therefore, I have chosen thematic analysis as a tool for analysing data that is collected in this study because it is flexible, it allowed me to change codes along the way and add new codes if I come across some.

Moreover, I looked at each transcript, read it thoroughly and while I was reading, of any important or interesting themes (Riger & Sigurvinsdottir, 2016). I noticed potential in theme that arises while thoroughly reading through each transcript. During the reading process of transcripts, I looked for patterns of responses from the participants and made a connection between them. All responses that fit under a specific pattern was identified and placed with the pattern that corresponds. I looked at direct quotes from the participants and also paraphrased their responses so that the themes can expand, contrast or even change while analysing the transcripts. I did this so that i may end up with the themes that best describes the purpose of the study, or the themes that help in answering the research questions.

After identifying these themes, I then combined and catalogued related patterns into sub-themes, for an example: all themes that came from the participants that is about parental involvement were put together to create a picture about the challenges that both teachers and parents come across in terms of parental involvement. The researcher finds out how different ideas fit together in a meaningful way when linked together. (Byrne, 2020). I then linked all the themes that identified to literature, I then inferred from the questionnaires and interview session (Kiger & Varpio, 2020; Terry, 2017).

#### **4.8 Trustworthiness issues**

According to Nowell et.al., (2017); Stahl and King (2020) trustworthiness is considered to be very important; it defined as a way of researchers convincing themselves and the readers that the findings that they obtained from their data is worth given an attention. There is a criterion that is used in order to measure whether trustworthiness has been met, and that criteria includes: credibility, transferability, dependability and confirmability. Basically, once a study meets all these four, it therefore means that trustworthiness has been met, which is why it is important that qualitative researchers ensure that the study meets the criteria so that trustworthiness is met.

#### **4.8.1 Credibility**

Nowell et.al., (2017); Stahl and King, (2020); Daniel, (2019) argues that credibility is all about the researcher knowing that the findings are true and accurate, its focus is on looking at the fit between the views of the participants and how the researchers presented those views. Credibility is achieved when a researcher includes activities like: lengthy engagement/prolonged engagement, tenacious observation, data collecting triangulation and researcher triangulation.

- **Prolonged engagement.** During the focus group interview, I asked many different but related questions with regards to the research topic. I encouraged participants to give examples when responding to the questions and follow up questions were asked. I carefully looked into raw data that I got from focus group interview, until I could identify a theory which matches the phenomenon that I was studying (Amin et.al., 2020).
- **Triangulation.** It is through triangulation in which the process of qualitative research is intensified because it uses many approaches. Methodological triangulation was used by gathering data by means of different data collection methods such questionnaires and focus group interview. Data triangulation was secured by using the various data sets that emerged throughout the analysis process: raw material, codes, concepts and theoretical saturation.
- **Persistent observation.** The developing of the codes, helped me to examine the characteristics of the data. I read data over and over again, analysed it, and I revised the concepts, in order to be in a position to come up with the codes. Then I recoded and labeled codes again in order to come to the final codes. I studied the data until the final theory provided the intended depth of insight.
- **Member check:** I did member check by taking all the data collected using questionnaires and focus group interview and returned them to my participants and feedback was given. I

also had a meeting with some of the participants to discuss what they have shared previously. The last step is to present the findings to the participants to confirm theory.

- **Peer debriefing:** Anney, (2014) states that as a qualitative researcher, when conducting research, you need to ask for support from other professionals who are willing to help with proving you with scholarly guidance. The professionals being the members of academic staff, the postgraduate dissertation committee and the department. Peer debriefing in this study was achieved by asking the staff (supervisor) and also my former undergraduate lecturer for scholarly advice, in cases where I encountered confusion and needed clarity.

Therefore, this study ensured that credibility is met by including activities such as lengthy engagement/prolonged engagement, tenacious observation, data collecting triangulation and researcher triangulation. Furthermore, peer debriefing was also considered, so that credibility can be increased and also it follows the process of member checking test, the findings and interpretations with participants (Gunawan, 2015). The participants confirmed that indeed in order for the spheres to overlap correctly, the school-parents-community should work together in order for the child to perform well academically.

#### **4.8.2 Transferability**

According to Anney, (2014); Korstjens and Moser, (2018); transferability is similar to external validity in quantitative research, it's all about if the findings within that particular research can be applied to another context. Basically, transferability is the ability to transfer research findings from one group to another (Daniel, 2019). It is therefore the researcher's duty to collect data that has all the information needed, it must have all the details so that other researcher may be able to transfer data and be able to do a comparison. Therefore, transferability in this study was achieved by ensuring that thick descriptions were provided. This means that everything was described in detail, description on how data was generated, and analysed, what research methodologies were used.

#### **4.8.3 Confirmability**

According to Elo et al., (2014) confirmability is achieved once credibility, transferability and dependability is met, the researcher shows how the conclusions and findings were reached. Firstly, in this study confirmability is ensured by making sure that credibility, transferability and dependability are met, basically, regardless of what I could see from gathered data, I ensured that I exercise persistent observation in order to achieve confirmability. Meaning I read data over and over

again, analysed it, and I revised the concepts, in order to be in a position to come up with the codes. Then I recoded and labeled codes again in order to come to the final codes. I studied the data until the final theory provided the intended depth of insight (Johnson et al., 2020). The researcher also provide clear steps of how the data is collected and analysed throughout the study, and also provide clear explanations are provided as to why a certain theoretical framework is chosen (Noble & Smith, 2015). This will provide understanding or a clear picture of why and how certain decisions were made and show that the interpretations of those data are not invented by the researcher.

#### **4.8.4 Dependability**

According to Loh, (2013) dependability is all about looking into how you gathered data, how safely it was kept and how relevant data is. Basically, the researcher needs to check whether the analysis process is in line with the accepted standards for a particular design (Korstjens & Moser, 2018). In this study collected data using questionnaires, I gave them to my participants so that they can respond to the questions (complete the questionnaire) and I also used focus group interview, where we had a schedule meeting, and I got a chance to ask probing questions. Data that was collected using the above- mentioned data collection methods was kept safe in a locked place, access was given to only relevant people.

#### **4.9 Ethical considerations**

According to Struwig and Stead (2011) the term ethics is defined as a system of morals, they are important in research because they provide guidelines to researchers, as to what they should do and what not do when conducting research. It helps the researchers not to engage in misconducts such as distorting data, basically researchers should pay attention to ethical consideration and in this study the following ethics were considered: confidentiality, informed consent, competence and deception to ensure that the participant's rights are protected. Chandra, and Nongkynrih, (2023) argues that there are some of the challenges that researchers may come across when trying to get ethical clearance such as: the lack of affiliation to an institute /organisation or lack of ethics committee, it then becomes a challenge to start collecting data because one has to obtain ethical clearance so that they will be able to proceed with their research this is because ethical approval is one of the mandatory requirements.

Data in this study was collected after I receive ethical clearance letter for the University of KwaZulu-Natal, which gave me permission to go ahead with data collection. Moreover, permission to conduct study in a high school was also requested from the provincial Department of Education in written form. I choose the participants that gave me relevant data.

#### **4.9.1 Informed consent**

According to Fleming and Zegward, (2018) informed consent is about asking for permission from participants to take part in your study, the participants are made aware of the procedures of the study and also what the research is about. I informed the participants about any form of harm, if there is any, therefore in this study all my participants were willing to be part of my study and they were well informed that they were allowed to withdraw at any time should they feel uncomfortable or not interested anymore, and they will not be any consequences. Moreover, the participants were made fully aware of what they are getting themselves into; they were made aware of what the study was about and what its purpose was. They were aware that data will be generated using questionnaires and also focus groups interviews; so that they prepare themselves and should they feel uncomfortable with the methods they can decide not to be part of the study. They were also informed on how the data will be used and reported and once they agree they signed the information sheet.

#### **4.9.2 Risk of harm, anonymity and confidentiality**

The participants should be assured of anonymity, confidentiality and risk of harm, therefore in this study ensures that the participant's information about them is kept a secret. The name of the school was not provided and also the researcher used pseudonyms. They were also informed that whatever information that they shared using questionnaires with me as a researcher, no one will know that they are the ones that shared that particular information. Assurance was given in terms of harm; participants were not to be exposed to any type of harm because their names were not be exposed when the data was published. Moreover, the participants were made aware that the questionnaires and recording from focus groups discussion will be stored in a locked cabinet and it can only be accessed by me and should someone else need access, permission will be required from the participants. Basically, all information shared by the participants will be confidential; in cases

where names were provided, they were be removed and information was adjusted so that it will not be easy to identify the participants.

### **4.9.3 Competence and deception**

Welman et al., (2005); Struwig and Stead (2011), state that competence and deception are something that a researcher should pay attention to because if not it can lead to causing harm to the participants and they may also feel embarrassed and emotionally uncomfortable. Therefore, in this study no misleading information was given to the participants and also no information was withheld, therefore they were not forced or deceived to take part or not. Moreover, there were no lies to the participants in terms of the skills that I have, basically there were no lies as to what skills I have just to make them participate in my research; the data obtained from this study is reported truthfully, I did not tamper with any data.

### **4.10 Summary**

This chapter looked at research paradigm, research design, research approach, sampling, data generation methods and data analysis. I explored each topic mentioned above, and shared the reasons why they are suitable for this study. The next chapter is data presentation and analysis which is chapter 5.

## CHAPTER 5

### DATA PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS

#### 5.1 Introduction

The previous chapter discussed research paradigm, research design, research approach, sampling, data generation methods and data analysis. This chapter looks at data presentation and analysis. Generated data is discussed in detail in this chapter, what the participants said during focus group interview and how they responded to the questionnaire. When analysing generated data, I kept in mind the research objectives and also the research questions below.

1. What are teachers' understanding of parental involvement towards learners with learning barriers? (Theme 1)
2. What are the factors hindering the parental involvement in a high school? (Theme 3)
3. How does parental involvement influence academic performance of learners with learning barriers in a high school? (Theme 2)

#### 5.2 Identification of themes

This study adopted thematic analysis, which therefore means that generated data was analysed using thematic analysis. According to Mjtaba et al., (2013) thematic analysis is a method for identifying, analysing and reporting patterns also known as themes within data. There is a six steps process that is followed when analysing data using thematic analysis: familiarisation, coding, generating themes, reviewing themes, defining and naming themes, and writing up (Clarke & Braun, 2017; Morgan, 2022).

Themes	Sub-themes
<b>Theme 1:</b> Understanding of parental involvement.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. Defining parental involvement.</li><li>2. Support from parents</li></ol>

<p><b>Theme 2:</b> Understanding of learning barriers.</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Curriculum as a barrier.</li> <li>2. Lack of parental involvement.</li> <li>3. Not being able to read and write.</li> </ol>
<p><b>Theme 3:</b> Factors that hinder parental involvement.</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Lack of motivation (parents' attitudes).</li> <li>2. Parents being illiterate.</li> <li>3. Socio-economic factors.</li> <li>4. Family structure.</li> </ol>
<p><b>Theme 4:</b> Effectiveness of parental involvement.</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. The importance of parental involvement.</li> </ol>
<p><b>Theme 5:</b> Challenges experienced by teachers when teaching learners with learning barriers.</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Teachers not well equipped.</li> <li>2. Curriculum structure.</li> <li>3. Strategies that are only on paper.</li> </ol>
<p><b>Theme 6:</b> Management approaches and strategies to assist learners with learning barriers.</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Professional development.</li> <li>2. Build more special needs schools.</li> <li>3. Remedial work</li> </ol>
<p><b>Theme 7:</b> Strategies to improve parental involvement.</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Professional development for parents</li> <li>2. Parents being part of decision making about learner's work.</li> </ol>

### 5.3 Participants' profile

Participant's name	Gender	Teaching experience
Mbongeni	Male	Six (6) years
Thandeka	Female	Four (4) years
Zodwa	Female	Five (5) years
Jabulani	Male	Eleven (11) years
Zakhele	Male	Four (4) years
Nontando	Female	Five (5) years
Thulani	Male	sixteen (16) years

### 5.4 Theme 1: Understanding of parental involvement.

#### 1.1. Defining parental involvement.

When each educator was asked to define what parental involvement is and what was common among their explanations is that they believed that parental involvement is when the parents are part of their children's education.

According to Heaton (2021) pseudonyms are mostly used to disguise participants and other people, organisations and places mentioned in interviews and other textual data collected for research purposes. Basically, when pseudonyms are used it becomes difficult to nearly impossible point out as to who gave that certain piece of information. Solanas (2022) further explains that pseudonyms are used in order to protect the participants, this is achieved by concealing the participants identities. Salimovna et al., (2024) states that pseudonyms are unofficial names that are given to participants. Therefore, in this study pseudonyms are used, meaning that the names that are given to participants are not real.

Mbongeni:

*According to my understanding, parental involvement is about parents being involved not*

*only in terms of teaching and learning but also being involved in extra mural activities, basically parental involvement is all about partnership between parents and the school.*

Thandeka:

*I think parental involvement it is about the relationship between the parent and the teacher, and the learner, we look at whether the parent is aware of what is happening in the education of the child, parents look at whether the child is doing his or her school work, it doesn't matter even if the parent is not educated but showing support is important. The parent also makes sure that the child gets assistance from other people who are able to assist.*

Zodwa:

*according to me, I think parental involvement is where parents are part and parcel of the education of their children, in terms of knowing what is happening in school, it could be homework, it could be learning in general, the parent knows what is happening and becomes involved in way that even in decision making the parents a part and parcel.*

Jabulani:

*Parental involvement is when the parent personally wants to know about everything that is happening in the school.*

Questionnaire 2:

*Parental involvement is where parents work together with the teachers with an aim of assisting their children to succeed in their studies.*

Questionnaire 1:

*It is when a parent engages him/herself in a learner's school activities, such as helping the learner with schoolwork, attending school functions and meetings. It also means that the parent communicates with the teachers in order to know the learner's academic progress.*

Questionnaire 3:

*I think it is where a parent participates in his or her child education, providing support as a parent where it is necessary.*

Questionnaire 6:

*It is when all parents come to school to support learners and teachers so that teaching and learning is done.*

Questionnaire 4:

*It is the involvement of parents in teaching and learning at school.*

Questionnaire 5:

*Parental involvement it is when parents are aware of what is happening in school, there must be positive teacher-parent relationship. Parents help their children with homework. Parents must also play a role in ensuring that the school is safe.*

Questionnaire 7:

*Parental involvement is when parents take responsibility for their children's education. It is important that teachers know what parental involvement is, because it is much easier to implement something that you have a clue about.*

## 1.2. Support from parents

When educators in this school were asked to define parental involvement, they mentioned that it has to do with getting support from parents. Basically, they meant that parents need to support their children, even if they are illiterate, them being supportive towards their children is regarded as parental involvement. Parents should not make being illiterate as an excuse of not being involved.

Questionnaire 5:

*What is more important is their support. Even if they are illiterate, but if the child sees that my mother/father or anyone supports me*

Zodwa:

*Parents should also should ask or question about extra-mural activities in our school.*

## 5.5 Theme 2: Understanding of learning barriers.

When the educators in this school were asked what they understood about learning barriers they

have mentioned that there are many barriers that affect the academic performance of learners. Therefore, without these barriers being overcome teaching and learning becomes difficult. Educators feel so much pressure as they are working alone trying to assist learners with learning barriers, and at the same time having to push the curriculum.

Thandeka:

*I think it's an obstacle or anything that hinders the process of learning.*

Mbongeni:

*It is when the child fails to do their work, even when they are given level 1 questions.*

Jabulani:

*Not being to understand what is expected of them.*

Below are barriers that teachers in this school experiences on daily basis.

### **5.5.1. Curriculum as a barrier.**

educators feel that the way in which the curriculum is structured is also a barrier to learning, this is because even if they do see that the child has a problem, it is not easy for them to help the child because they will be left behind in terms of curriculum coverage. The subject advisors will be on their case if they do not complete the curriculum. The way the curriculum is structured doesn't accommodate learners with learning barriers. Therefore, curriculum structure becomes a learning barrier.

Mbongeni:

*You try to help those learners with learning barriers, you check and see that you are behind in terms of the ATP and try to push and realise that they now do not understand.*

Jabulani:

*Even if you can have the strategy to help learners with learning barriers, there isn't much time, because in order to be able to implement strategies there must be time, I end up just going with the flow. Leaving behind those learners with learning barriers.*

Zodwa:

*The ATPs are here and we need to finish the content and then we do revision on time so there are no strategies that we put in place. And the teacher is judged by the results that he or she produces.*

It is crystal clear that there is a lot that still needs to change, if the ATPs do not accommodate learners who cannot read and write. The Department of Education still needs to sit down with all relevant stakeholders and design ATPs that will have time allocations that will allow the teachers to help those learners who have challenges when it comes to reading and writing.

### **5.5.2 Lack of Parental involvement.**

When the educators in this school were asked to share their understanding of learning barriers, they felt that parental involvement could also be identified as a learning barrier, because anything that hinders teaching and learning is a barrier. Therefore, parents in this school are not involved, and if they are involved it is only a very small percentage. Which then becomes difficult for educators to teach the learners.

Questionnaire 2:

*Lack of parental involvement is the biggest challenge. If learners were to receive support from both teachers and parents, teaching wouldn't be this difficult.*

Questionnaire 5:

*What makes it even difficult is lack of parental involvement, one doesn't have any one to discuss the challenges with.*

Questionnaire 4:

*They are not involved that much. Involvement is very limited*

**Questionnaire 3:**

*Very little involvement.*

The educators in this school pointed it out that it is devastating to see a child who has potential but not performing very well just because there is no partnership between the teachers and parents. At the end of the day, it is the child that suffers in the process. It is important that both parents and educators understand that in order for the child to perform well academically they need to work together, all the spheres must overlap as Epstein, (2005) says.

### **5.5.3 Not being able to read and write**

Educators in this school said that if a learner have challenges when it comes to reading and writing read and write that is said to be a learning barrier. This is because in order for teaching and learning to take place, learners must be in a position to be able to read and write the work that is given to them. Educators then find it difficult to conduct lesson because the learners who cannot read nor write, they cause chaos in class laughing at those that are able to read and write, more especially during English lessons. However, there are those that do not cause disturbance, they tend to have very low self-esteem and not associate themselves with others.

Mbongeni:

*The relationship amongst learners who cannot read and write and those that are able to read and write, is terrible. There is division amongst them.*

Zodwa:

*In this school we have many learners who cannot read and write, that becomes a challenge because you find that even if you can group a learner who cannot read and write, he or she doesn't participate.*

Questionnaire 5:

*I identify them through their inability to recall what I have taught. Some of them you can see that they struggle to read and write, some are very slow (they write slowly) and some cannot even write their names correctly.*

Questionnaire 6:

*I normally see them through their inability in reading and writing the tasks and class activities.*

Questionnaire 3:

*Learners are identified by looking at their formal and informal assessments and if they struggle to read and write, I then see that the learner has a learning barrier.*

Nontando:

*The learners who have struggles in reading and writing, they tend to disturb those that are focused in class and I wish they can be taught in separate classes.*

Zodwa:

*The learners with challenges in reading and writing they make classroom management difficult; we spend more time trying discipline them.*

We cannot shy away from the fact that reading and writing form a huge part in teaching and learning. Therefore, it becomes a challenge for educators when they have to help learners who cannot read and write.

### **5.6 Theme 3: Factors that hinder parental involvement**

There are a lot of factors that prevents or limit parents from being involved in their children's school work. There need to be strategies put into place so that there is positive partnership between educators and parents. This helps in ensuring that the child perform at his or her best interest.

Questionnaire 5:

*They are not involved; we struggle to get them involved. It is like they do not care about their children's school work, they only come at the end of the year to collect report and sometimes they just send their neighbors to collect their children's report card, without even asking anything from the teacher.*

Questionnaire 2:

*They are not involved.*

Questionnaire 3:

*Very little*

*involvement*

*Questionnaire 4:*

*They are not involved that much. Involvement is very limited.*

*Questionnaire 1:*

*Not much.*

Below are factors that hinders parental involvement in this school. Basically, the factors that prevents or limits parents in this school to be involved on the work of the children in this school. Epstein's theory of overlapping of spheres state that all parties should be involved, the school-parents-community. As a result, all the spheres will overlap, leading to positive results.

#### **5.6.1 Lack of motivation (parents' attitudes).**

When educators in this school were asked about the things that hinders parental involvement in their school, they outlined parents' attitudes as one of the factors that hinders parental involvement in this school. They believed that even though teachers may have weaknesses in term of making sure that there is positive partnership between teachers and parents. Parent's attitudes also contribute to the lack of partnership in this school.

Mbongeni:

*What I have noticed that most parents do not consider the school as something that will help their children. Lack of motivation is another hindering factor. There are very few people here who have passed their matric and went to further their studies, there very few role models, as a result they do not consider schooling important and then they do not get involved.*

Jabulani:

*Parents lack motivation, they just bring children to school just for the sake of passing time.*

Questionnaire 1:

### *Parents' attitude about school.*

In order for the child to perform well academically, Silinskas and Kikas, (2019) states that parents need to be involved, helping their children with homework and then good academic results are to be expected or produced. It is then a challenge if one of the spheres doesn't understand the role that it plays in ensuring that the child performs well academically. As a result, the educator now has to work alone, trying by all means to help the learners with learning barriers. If the spheres do not overlap correctly, no amount of work given by the educator can help the child because these spheres need to understand their vital roles, in the academic performance of the child. Palts, and Kalmus, (2015) state that communication between school and home allows both parents and educators to get and give feedback, this makes the impact of overlapping spheres of influence on the student's development more efficient and thereby supports the child's socialisation.

#### **5.6.2 Parents being illiterate.**

When I asked the educators to outline the challenges that they experience when teaching learners with learning barriers. Educators in this school believed that the fact that most parents in this school are illiterate it is a challenge for them when it comes to ensuring that learners with learning barriers perform better academically. This is because parents struggle to assist their children with homeworks, assignments or any kind of extra work given to the children. Furthermore, there are those parents who are semi-literate, who do not fully understand what is needed of them in order to assist their children. Therefore, as a result they experience difficulties because home - work form part of teaching and learning, teachers in this school felt like they are doing everything on their own. There is no partnership between parents and educators.

*Questionnaire 7:*

*Some parents are illiterate or semi-illiterate so they find it difficult to help their children at home/ with homework.*

*Questionnaire 6:*

*Yes, some parents do not understand what is taught at school because they are not educated themselves.*

*Questionnaire 5:*

*Most parents are illiterate and therefore becomes difficult for them to monitor their children's school work and it even becomes worse when they have to assist with homework.*

*Questionnaire 3:*

*Some parents are illiterate; they do not know how to assist their children.*

*Questionnaire 2:*

*Yes, some parents are not educated and cannot help their children with schoolwork even if they wanted to.*

*Questionnaire:*

*Parents educational background.*

*Zodwa:*

*Being illiterate also hinders parental involvement, therefore they do not know the role that they are supposed to play as parents. Sometimes they are not involved because they also do not know how they can assist.*

*Thandeka:*

*Some parents are illiterate, you find that the parents might be willing to help the child, but the problem is that they do not know where to start. I came across a case where A child was staying with her grand-mother, and therefore they had to move her closer to people who will help her academically.*

Parental involvement plays a crucial role in the development and the education of the child. However, it becomes a challenge as Watson et al., (2012) pointed out that even though parents can be educated about the importance of fostering learning in the home, education becomes a problem, some of these parents are illiterate, they cannot read and write and then it becomes an issue when they try and assist their children. It therefore, becomes a challenge if parents cannot be involved because as Epstein and Sheldon, (2016) states that a child does not only learn at school but also learns at home and in the community.

### 5.6.3 Socio-economic factors

Educators in this school also pointed out that socio-economic factors contribute to the performance of learners with learning barriers. It was pointed out that even though some teachers may think about inviting parents on one-on-one sessions at school, it may be difficult. This is due to the fact that the school is situated in the rural area, most parents work at the farms or very far from home. This therefore led to parents not being involved in their children's schoolwork and this has a negative impact on the learner's academic performance.

*Questionnaire 2:*

*Other parents do not have time. This is a poor community, where most parents work in farms. They work long hours and when they get home, they are tired and do not have time to help their children with schoolwork. These are parents who are not even able to attend school meetings because they do not get time off from work.*

*Questionnaire 3:*

*I think are: lack of time, lack of financial resources.*

*Questionnaire 6:*

*Lack of education of parents as well as distances where learners live is far from school.*

*Questionnaire 4:*

*Most of the parents especially in our school work long hours and come home late. The parent will have little or no time to check learner's work.*

*Questionnaire 5:*

*There is another hindering factor which is that most of the parents work at the farms and they work long hours, which makes it impossible to just visit the school to check their children's school work.*

*Zodwa:*

*By the fact that some learners do not stay with their parents, you find they work very far*

*from home, they only come home during December holidays and therefore they do not know what is happening with his or child in school.*

Thandeka:

*I came across a case where the child was staying with her grand- mother, and therefore they had to move her closer to people who will help her academically.*

Jabulani:

*Costs become a problem, even if the parent can be aware of his or child problem, there is no money to help the child.*

In order for the parents to be able to assist their children with school work, then need to have time allocated for that, however, it is challenging for them due to the kind of work that they do. Which then leads to not all the spheres overlapping correctly.

#### **5.6.4 Family structure**

When educators were asked about the factors that hinders parental involvement in their school family structure was also outlined as one of the factors that hinders parental involvement. Teachers stated that it was difficult for them get parents involved because you find that the child doesn't stay with his or parents but with grand-parents who are illiterate. Which then led to parental involvement limited.

*Questionnaire 4:*

*They are not effective because some parents send their adult children or relatives to represent them on meetings.*

*Questionnaire 2:*

*These are parents who are not even able to attend school meetings because they do not get time off from work.*

Thandeka:

*I came across a case where the child was staying with her grand- mother, and therefore they had to move her closer to people who will help her academically.*

*by the fact that some learners do not stay with their parents, you find they work very far from home, they only come home during December holidays and therefore they do not know what is happening with his or child in school*

If children do not stay with their parents, then it becomes difficult for teachers to ensure that parental involvement is implemented in the school, because a person who might be sent to stand in for the child during the meetings has little or no information about the learner.

#### **5.7 Theme 4: Effectiveness of parental involvement.**

Educators in this school are aware of what parental involvement is and its importance. Chowa (2013) defined parental involvement as taking part in a child's education by being actively present both at home and at school. Parental involvement doesn't only mean that parent/s are only involved in terms of helping their children with school work but they also can be supportive towards their children, be there for them emotionally (Alonso, 2017). Below are responses that I got when I asked educators' understanding of what parental involvement is.

Below are educator's responses when they were asked to share their understanding of what parental involvement is.

##### **5.7.1 The importance of parental involvement.**

When the educators in this school were asked about the importance of parental involvement, they felt that partnership between the teachers and parents is crucial. This is because when there is a positive relationship it becomes easier to help the child and therefore be able to perform better academically.

Questionnaire 5:

*It is important that the relationship between the teacher and parent is positive, so that they can work together in helping the child, identifying challenges that the child faces, and be able to put extra-work in assisting the child.*

Questionnaire 3:

*Working together as a team between parent, teacher and learner could benefit the child to achieve more.*

Questionnaire 1:

*The teacher-parent relationship is important in that it allows for open communication, so it becomes easier for parents and teachers to share relevant information about the learner.*

Questionnaire 4:

*It is important because learners can be helped easily and this can boost their confidence. The learners will feel welcomed and belonging to the entire society.*

Questionnaire 7:

*It plays a pivotal role because it improves or enhances performances when parents help children do homework.*

Questionnaire 6:

*It is to make sure that learners do their work.*

It is important that there is partnership in all spheres, as Westergård, (2013) states that Epstein's theory of overlapping spheres of influence suggests that all these spheres should share the responsibilities in order to meet the needs of the child. Which is why all spheres should understand their roles that they play in the development of the child. The educators should be in a position to share responsibilities with the parents. On the other hand, parents should also know that their input is important in the child's education and development. All spheres should understand that the development and education of the child relies on them (Epstein, 2005).

## **5.8 Theme 5: Challenges experienced by teachers when teaching learners with learning barriers.**

When I asked the educators in this school whether they are able to identify learners with learning barriers. There are quite a number of challenges that are experienced by teachers when teaching learners with learning barriers. It is with no doubt that one needs to know what kind of help to offer when dealing with learners with learning barriers.

### **5.8.1 Teachers not well equipped.**

When educators in this school were asked whether they are able to identify learners with learning barriers, they agreed but they said that the problem comes when they have to assist these learners especially those that struggle with reading and writing. They have pointed it out that even though there was a module about inclusive education that they did at school, they feel that it is not enough as they struggle to help the learners with learning barriers.

Questionnaire 5:

*Some of them are well-equipped in my school but many of them are not equipped including myself. Those that are equipped did other degrees such as psychology and they have an idea of how to treat learners with learning barriers.*

Questionnaire 2:

*Teachers are not equipped because even in teacher training, no module focuses on learners with learning barriers.*

Questionnaire 1:

No

Questionnaire 4:

No

Questionnaire 6:

*Not at all, because of inclusive education, I end up teaching them together.*

Mbongeni:

*We are not well equipped to deal with learners with learning barriers.*

It important that educators have a clear understanding that in order to be in a position to help learners with learning barriers they need to be well equipped.

### **5.8.2 Curriculum structure**

When educators in this school were asked about challenges that they experienced when teaching learners with learning barriers they in this school have pointed out that the way the curriculum is

structed doesn't allow them to assist learners with learning barriers. They stated that even if they can identify that the learner experiences difficulty in reading and writing, even if they can see that the child is not doing well academically, there isn't much that they can do because they have to follow the ATPs.

Thandeka:

*We are chasing the ATP. If the child doesn't perform well and meets the progression requirements he or she is progressed to the next grade.*

Mbongeni:

*We only focus mostly in grade 12, we do identify the learners and try to help the child not with the aim to help the child but to get a better percentage at the end of the year.*

Zodwa:

*The ATPs are here and we need to finish the content and then we do revision on time so there are no strategies that we put in place. And the teacher is judged by the results that he or she produces.*

Jabulani:

*Even if you can have the strategy to help learners with learning barriers, there isn't much time, because in order to be able to implement strategies there must be time, I end up just going with the flow. Leaving behind those learners with learning barriers.*

The Department of Education still have a lot of work to do when it comes to how the curriculum is structured. It needs to understand that there isn't much that the teachers can do if there is not enough time allocated on the ATPs. Teachers will continue chasing the ATPs and the problem will not stop.

### **5.8.3 Strategies that are only on paper.**

educators in this school felt that the Department of Education is not doing much in terms of helping them with learners with learning barriers. They feel that yes, the Department of Education has strategies that are meant to help learners with learning barriers, but those strategies are not implemented. They even made a few examples such as white paper 6, which talks about inclusive

education. They say they do not have resources at all, their classrooms are not even conducive for inclusive education.

Mbongeni:

*People from SNEs do not do their job, when they visit our school, they only come and say what they want to say. They do identify but also see that the child has a problem but they do not do any follow up.*

Zodwa:

*The department of Education is doing nothing about learners with learning barriers, I remember this other time we had a whole school evaluation team, they also noticed that there are learners with learning barriers but they did not do a follow up.*

Jabulani:

*Yes, I agree with participant 3. The department is aware of what is happening in our schools but they do nothing.*

Thandeka:

*LSA- in schools there are LSAs who are meant to help the children who have problems. But they are there but not doing anything*

Having a strategy that is only on paper, will not help no matter how excellent is that strategy. The Department of Education need to understand that in order for a strategy to work, it must be implemented and there must be a follow up. Other than that, the challenges that teachers are experiencing when teaching learners with learning barriers will not be overcome.

### **5.9 Theme 6: Management approaches and strategies to improve parental involvement.**

educators felt that teachers in this school are not well equipped in terms of dealing with learning barriers. They pointed out that sometimes they are able to identify that the learners have a learning barrier but they have no idea where they can start if they are to help the learner. They mentioned that most of the learners in their school struggle with reading and writing and that becomes a serious issue as they are not able to assist them.

They believe that if the following strategies are followed then maybe there may be improvement in terms of assisting learners with learning barriers.

### **5.9.1 Professional development.**

The educators in this school have pointed it out that if the teachers can be offered professional development such as workshop/trainings they may be able to help learners with learning barriers, especially those that are struggling with reading and writing.

Questionnaire 6:

*The workshops and training to the teachers is very important because it equip them on how to deal with these learners.*

Questionnaire 3:

*I think the Department should provide more trainings to teachers based on inclusive education.*

Questionnaire 4:

*The Department of Education can offer training workshops to the teachers*

Questionnaire 2:

*The Department of Education should facilitate workshops where teachers receive training on how to deal with such learners.*

Questionnaire 5:

*The Department of Education need to come up with programmes that are meant to help equip teachers to be in a position to teach learners with learning barriers. teachers should be provided with free short courses that they can do.*

Questionnaire 1:

*Provide training.*

If one doesn't have the necessary skills to help, identifying the problem on its own doesn't help that much. Therefore, it is vital that educators are well-equipped in terms of helping learners with

learning barriers.

### **5.9.2 Build more special needs schools.**

Teaching learners who struggle to read and write is a challenge. educators then believed that learners who struggle to read and write must be taken to special needs schools where they will be given undivided attention, and they can be able to even discover their talents. Moreover, educators in special schools are trained to deal with learners with learning barriers.

Questionnaire 7:

*In my budget I would set aside more funds to build more special needs schools in the province.*

Questionnaire 6:

*I can build special schools in each circuit, so that learners can learn using their syllabus.*

Questionnaire 3:

*I would develop facilities that could accommodate learners with learning barriers at least one per district.*

Questionnaire 4:

*Provide them with more support like providing more special schools. In these schools proper monitoring must be made.*

Questionnaire 5:

*I would ask schools to identify learners with learning barriers and from there be able to build special schools in those areas.*

Building more special school may help even though it might seem as some sort of isolating learning barriers. It is with no doubt that there are barriers that can be overcome with the implementation of inclusive education. However, there are those learners who are kept in normal school only to find that their time is wasted in those schools. They can perform better if they are in the hands of teachers who are well equipped to help them.

### **5.9.3 Remedial work**

Educators in this school believed that remedial work could also assist learners with learning barriers. They said that extra-work may help in improving the academic performance of the learners with learning barriers.

Questionnaire 2:

*More activities should be given to them.*

Questionnaire 3:

*I think teachers need to apply remedial education, give learners more time e.g., breaktime or after school give a child extra work.*

Questionnaire 6:

*It is to separate them form normal learners so that they can get more time to do remedial.*

Questionnaire 5:

*Another strategy could be to group learners with learning barriers into one classroom, in this case teachers will be able to give these learners undivided attention, come up with different strategies, such as give extra work.*

Mbongeni:

*If you can give him or her extra work, then be there for him or her as a teacher, motivate him or her. The learner can do better.*

Educators believe that if learners with challenges can be grouped in one classroom, where different strategies can be used, including but not limited to giving them extra work. This could help them to do better in their academics. Moreover, educators need to come to an understanding that it is better to fail when you know that you have tried your best than not trying at all. They need to know that learners with learning barriers rely on them for assistance. This is because you find that some do not stay with their parents and those that stay with their parents are either illiterate or do not have enough time to help their children.

#### **5.10 Theme 7: strategies to improve parental involvement.**

Since the educators in this school complained that there is little parental involvement, I then asked them to provide the strategies that they think can assist in improving parental involvement. Below are their responses.

#### **5.10.1 Professional support for parents**

Questionnaire 5:

*Also ensure that parents have information about parental involvement. Basically, they must be programmes provided both by the Department of Education and the schools where parents are taught or given information about parental involvement.*

Questionnaire 2:

*I would have programmes where parents are taught about the importance of being involved in their children's education.*

#### **5.10.2 Parents being part of decision making about learner's work.**

When educators were asked to share what they think is a good strategy to improve parental involvement. They have mention that parents need to be made part of everything that is happening in the school. They also mentioned the strategies that they use and of which they think are effective, regardless of the fact that they have a very small percentage of parental involvement. Below are their responses

Thandeka:

*Parents should be called to school; meetings should be called any time where the learner is also there. Parents should not only come when at the end of the year. Basically, every and term parents needs to be called to see how the child is doing, check the learner's exercise boo, to see if he or she do his work.*

Questionnaire 7:

*Arrange to have a parent-teacher meeting with that parent.*

Questionnaire 2:

*With the DH and the principal, we write a letter to the parent and ask them to come to*

*school so that we discuss the progress of their child. This is where we discuss the learner's progress and what is expected of the parent.*

### **5.11. Summary**

This chapter looked at data presentation and analysis. Generated data was discussed into detail in this chapter, what the participants said during focus group interview and how they responded to the questionnaire. The next chapter is chapter 6, which the final structure of this study. It is about: findings, limitations, recommendations, and conclusion

## CHAPTER 6

### FINDINGS, LIMITATIONS, RECOMMENDATIONS, AND CONCLUSION

#### 6.1 Introduction

The previous chapter looked at data presentation and analysis. Generated data was discussed into detail in this chapter, what the participants said during focus group interview and how they responded to the questionnaire. This chapter which is chapter 6 aims to present the findings, recommendations, limitations and conclusion. The reflection on the three research questions was done. I started this chapter by presenting a summary of the study. Then I presented the findings, discuss the recommendations and limitations, gave a conclusion about generated data from the participants.

#### 6.2 Summary of the study

This study was divided into 6 chapters. The main aim of the study was to understand how parental involvement influence the academic performance of learners with learning barriers. This study was guided by the research questions.

1. What are teachers' understanding of parental involvement towards learners with learning barriers?
2. What are the factors hindering the parental involvement in a high school?
3. How does parental involvement influence academic performance of learners with learning barriers in a high school?

The study was meant to find out the kind of influence that parental involvement has on the learners with learning barriers. Whether when parents are involved learners with learning barriers perform well academically or not. Therefore, this study explored the involvement of parents in this school. It also looked at the challenges that parents faced whenever they were willing to be involved in their children's school work and also the challenges that teachers encounter when teaching learners whose parents are not involved. The findings of this empirical study revealed that indeed parental

involvement is crucial in the learner's education. The participants pointed it out that there is a difference between those learners whose parents are involved in their children's education and those that are not involved, not just academically but also in terms of how they behave. Those learners whose parents are involved they tend to be more disciplined and as a result they perform well academically. These findings from the empirical study and the literature correlate, because most researchers also found out that parental involvement leads to good learner performance.

The study was conducted in one public school which is located in Umgungundlovu district, where 4 teachers were interviewed in a focus group interview and 7 who filled in questionnaires. The participants were meant to be 8, however, one had to withdraw on last minute. The focus group interview was utilized so that I could be able to ask follow up questions, in case where there was information that was left behind. It actually came in handy, because I was able to obtain more information. Below is the summary of findings.

### **6.3 Implications for the research questions**

In this chapter, the research questions were discussed.

#### **6.3.1 What are teachers' understanding of parental involvement towards learners with learning barriers?**

According to Chowa (2013); Alonso (2017); Epstein (2005) parental involvement is when parents take part in a child's education by being actively present both at home and at school. Parental involvement doesn't only mean helping the child with school related work, but also supporting the child, if maybe its sport day and the parents visit the school and watch the child play maybe soccer. Basically, parental involvement goes beyond school related work. The findings suggested that the teachers in a sampled school understood what parental involvement is, because they gave different but similar definitions of parental involvement that is in line with what other researchers have said about parental involvement. However, it was clear that regardless of the fact that they have such knowledge about parental involvement, the percentage of its implementation was very small. Some teachers pointed it out that they sometimes, do call parents meetings, but it is something that happens once in a very long time. They have mentioned a lot of things that causes the percentage of parental involvement to lack in this school.

Moreover, the teachers further showed that they also have knowledge of what learning barriers are.

They shared different information based on what they believed to be learning barriers. They have mentioned that learning barriers could be anything that hinders teaching and learning. The main thing that they all defined as a learning barrier, was not being able to read and write. They seemed to be more concerned about the number of learners in their school who struggle in terms of reading and writing. Most learners end up repeating the same grades because they are not getting necessary support from the teachers. It is also significant to acknowledge that even if the teachers may be able to define and identify learning barriers, however, the lack of appropriate training hinders teachers from assisting learners with learning barriers. The teachers in this school, there are those learning barriers that they are able to assist learners who are experiencing them, but they feel that they are not well equipped when it comes to teaching learners who struggle with reading and writing. They feel that keeping these learners in main stream school like this one, is disadvantaging them. This is because, they do not learn at their pace, because teachers want to complete their annual teaching plans, so that they will not be in trouble with their advisors. However, if they are in special needs schools, they can get all the necessary attention and assistance.

### **6.3.2 What are the factors hindering the parental involvement in a high school?**

According to Mahuro and Hungi (2016), parental involvement is very crucial as it is associated with learners obtaining good grades, and it also influences the behaviour of learners. However, we cannot turn a blind eye to the fact that even though parents might want to be involved, there are factors that hinders parental involvement. Some of the factors that hinders parental involvement are: parents' negative attitudes and being illiterate. Watson et al., (2012) stated that another factor that hinders parental involvement is that parents have multiple responsibilities of work, school, and family and this happens mostly to minority and low-income families.

In the findings it was discovered that in this school the parents experience similar hindering factors as the other scholars have mentioned. It was discovered that there is little parental involvement. The teachers said that the reason why there is little parental involvement in this school, it is because most of the parents are illiterate, and therefore struggle in terms of assisting their children with homework. Moreover, it was evident that some of the parents have negative attitude towards school, therefore, that led too little to no parental involvement. The educators in this school have pointed it out that, if the parents have negative attitudes towards school, it then leads to the learners with learning barriers to be less motivated about working hard in order to perform well academically. The educators have said that it becomes a struggle for them to work alone. However,

literature also advises that in order for the spheres to overlap correctly, all the spheres must play its role (Epstein,2005). Therefore, if parents do not play their role, it means the spheres will not overlap positively.

Working long hours, was also mentioned as a hindering factor in this school. The educators said that, most of the parents in this school work at the farms, and they work very long hours. When they get back home from work, they are tired, and they have to prepare food for their families, they end up not getting time to assist their children with school work, let alone to check it. In this regard, the child only relies on the teachers, even when they are struggling with something at home, they have to figure it out on their own. Moreover, Family structure was also outlined as one of the factors that hinders parental involvement. educators argued that it was difficult for them get parents involved because you find that the child doesn't even stay with his or parents because they work very far from home, as a result he or she is left to stay with grand-parents who are illiterate. This then led to no parental involvement and the child ends up not doing very well academically.

### **6.3.3 How does parental involvement influence academic performance of learners with learning barriers in a high school?**

When parents are involved in their children's school, communication between the parent and the educator becomes a positive one, which is then good for the child (learner) because wherever the child is struggling the parent can also assist the child when he or she is given extra work to do at home as a way of helping a struggling child (Mahuro & Hungi, 2016). Finding in this study revealed that indeed parental involvement plays a crucial role, just like other scholars have stated. Educators in this school, complained that there is very little, parental involvement due to many reasons that they have stated. They have further explained that, in that small percentage of parents who are involved in their children's school work, they were able to see the difference. They have said that the children whom their parents are involved, they were obtaining good grades, as compared to the ones whose parents are not involved.

They further explained that parental involvement is not only important in terms of school work, but it also maintains discipline in a child. They said that in most cases, learners whose parents are not involved, they cause trouble in school, while the other ones are well behaved. They said that this is because, when parents are involved, they child cannot do as they please, because they are scared what will happen if their parents find out of their behaviour. Moreover, it was evident

through the findings that the educators are having trouble when it comes to dealing with learners whose parents are not involved. They complained about the fact that, even if you can report to them about the behaviour of the child, they do not avail themselves.

It was therefore clear from the findings that the educators in this school do believe that parental involvement plays a crucial role in the development of the child. It is true that when all spheres overlap, which is the school, the community and the parents, good results are obtained. It was evident through the little percentage of parents who are involved.

#### **6.4 Recommendations**

The findings of this empirical study revealed that there is a need for the Department of Education to provide all the necessary support, to ensure that parental involvement is implemented in schools and that educators are well equipped in order to be able to assist learners with learning barriers. Through the findings it was clear that teachers are not well equipped in terms of assisting learners with learning barriers. Therefore, the Department of Education should offer workshops and trainings to educators who teaches in main stream school, so that for an example, the teachers will know what to do when they come across learners who is unable to read and write. There should be programmes provides for parents as well, where they will be taught about the importance of their involvement in their children's school work. They should also be informed that parental involvement, doesn't not only constitute of school work, but they should also be in a position to give any kind of support, such as emotional support, register the child for extra-classes if they afford to do so. Taking the child to the nearest library.

In order, to implement parental involvement in schools, especially the ones situated in rural areas, the school (educators) must ensure that they call a meeting where parents will sit with the teachers and discuss the learner's progress with the parents. This will help in saving them the hassle of coming to school now and then, since transport is an issue. Parents should be part and parcel of the decisions that making about the school, because they are the ones who faces the hindering factors. By so doing they will organise how they will do things. The Department of Education should involve teachers when creating ATP, so that they will have an input, because it was discovered that the curriculum structure, does not allow the teachers to assist the learners with learning barriers. There is no allocated time on the ATP, which speaks to learners with learning barriers, which then leads to these learners to be disadvantaged.

The most important part, is that the Department should do a follow up, on the implementation of strategies. They must not be only on paper, for an example, the strategy that is used to identify, learners with learning barriers, should not just end on the identification of those learners but there must be some sort of a follow up on what could be done to help them. It is therefore recommended that more special school are built. This is because learners with learning barriers who come from rural areas, they struggle to find a special needs school that is closer to them. Even if the parents may afford to take the child to a special needs school that is far from them. You find that the schools are full, which clearly indicates the shortage.

### **6.5 Limitations to the study**

During the conduction of this study, I have encountered few limitations, due to the fact that my participants were educators, it meant that their schedules were very tight. It was then difficult for me to get them to fill in the questionnaires for me, it then caused a delay in the collection of data, because it meant that, the teachers have to fill in the forms in between their free lessons, which was also hard because, usually they use those free lessons to prepare for the upcoming lessons. You find that even if I kept on reminding them, they kept on promising that they will them in, or else they are still busy with it. This even led to one participant withdrawing, because she claimed that she was very busy and couldn't not finish, and that meant things were not going according to plan. This meant that I now had to work with 7 participants instead of 8 participants as per plan. Moreover, some of the participants kept of promising to complete the questionnaire, and reminded them until I had to stop, because clearly, they were not willing to be part of the study.

Conduction a focused group interview, was a struggle as well, the problem being that some of the participants were school management team (SMT), and they are always busy especially the principal. It was difficult to get all the members together, because, you find that when the principal is free, one or two of the educators are very busy, I therefore had to work with the ones that are available at that particular time, I couldn't even get the HOD, to be part of the focused group interview, I had to swap him with another educator, which was a big limitation since he has been in the school for about 16 years. I believed that he had more information as compared to the rest of the participants.

### **6.6 Conclusion**

This chapter, provided an outline of findings, recommendations and limitations. It is clear from the

data that was generated in the previous chapter that educators do understand what parental involvement is and its importance. The findings of this study revealed how educators in this school are currently accommodating the learners with learning barriers. The factors that hinder parental involvement became explicit in the data that was generated. It is therefore crystal clear that in this school a large number of learners struggle with reading and writing, and it is clear that these learners have specific educational needs. So, it is important to take into consideration the need of having more special schools in the area.

I therefore hope and believe that the findings and recommendations of this study will be utilised in a positive way, and be able to address the issue of parental involvement and necessary programmes will be developed in order to help equip the educators with necessary skills to deal with learners with learning barriers.

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## Appendix A

**UKZN HUMANITIES AND SOCIAL SCIENCES RESEARCH ETHICS  
COMMITTEE (HSSREC)  
APPLICATION FOR ETHICS APPROVAL  
For research with human participants  
INFORMED CONSENT RESOURCE TEMPLATE**

Note to researchers: Notwithstanding the need for scientific and legal accuracy, every effort should be made to produce a consent document that is as linguistically clear and simple as possible, without omitting important details as outlined below. Certified translated versions will be required once the original version is approved.

There are specific circumstances where witnessed verbal consent might be acceptable, and circumstances where individual informed consent may be waived by HSSREC.

### **Information Sheet and Consent to Participate in Research**

Date: 15 May 2023

Greetings

My name is Zandile Mlambo student number: 216069134 from the university of Kwa-Zulu Natal, Department of Humanities: cellphone number: 0825264418, email address: [zandilemlambo22@gmail.com](mailto:zandilemlambo22@gmail.com).

You are being invited to consider participating in a study that involves research. The aim and purpose of this research is to find out whether parental involvement results into good academic performance or poor academic performance of the learners with learning barriers. The study is expected to enroll 8 participants, where all of them will fill in open ended questions and 4 of them will participate in focus groups interviews. It will involve the following procedures: the participants will fill in open ended questions and participate in focus groups interview. The duration of your participation if you choose to enroll and remain in the study is expected to be one week

The study may involve discomforts such as being shy to speak in a group since this study will involve focus groups interviews. We hope that the study will create the benefits to participants, they will get new shared information about how to teach or assist learners with learning barriers, since the study is focusing mainly on learners with learning barriers. Since teaching learners with learning barriers is still a challenge for many teachers, this study will benefit the participants by hearing other participants challenges and how they overcome those challenges.

This study has been ethically reviewed and approved by the UKZN Humanities and Social Sciences Research Ethics Committee (approval number\_\_\_\_\_).

In the event of any problems or concerns/questions you may contact the researcher at: 0825264418 or the UKZN Humanities & Social Sciences Research Ethics Committee, contact details as follows:

**HUMANITIES & SOCIAL SCIENCES RESEARCH ETHICS ADMINISTRATION**

Research Office, Westville Campus

Govan Mbeki Building

Private Bag X 54001

Durban

4000

KwaZulu-Natal, SOUTH AFRICA

Tel: 27 31 2604557- Fax: 27 31 2604609

Email: [HSSREC@ukzn.ac.za](mailto:HSSREC@ukzn.ac.za)

- Participating in this study is voluntary, you may withdraw at any time and in the event of refusal/withdrawal of participation you will not incur penalty or loss of treatment or other benefit to which you are normally entitled.
- Should you wish to withdraw there will be no consequences, however you are required to notify the researcher on time should you wish to withdraw, so that the researcher could look for another participant.
- The researcher may terminate participant should he or she not show up for scheduled

interview.

- No costs might be incurred by participants as a result of participation in the study.

There are no incentives or reimbursements for participation in the study.

- Shared information whether by questionnaires or interviews will be kept confidential.

As your inputs will not be attributed to you as a person, but reported only as a population.

- The researcher will make use of pseudonyms. However shared information may be shared with the supervisor.

- Information will be saved in the laptop and password will be required to open the file, and only the researcher and supervisor will have access to it.

- Questionnaires will be kept in a secure storage and only the researcher can share with the supervisor and after five years they will be destroyed by shredding. Digitally recorded data will be deleted after 5 years

---

## CONSENT

I ..... (Full names of participant) have

been informed about the study entitled: Educators' experiences on parental involvement towards learners with learning barriers: A case study of a high school in Mooi River by Zandile Linah Mlambo.

I understand the purpose and procedures of the study.

I have been given an opportunity to answer questions about the study and have had answers to my satisfaction.

I declare that my participation in this study is entirely voluntary and that I may withdraw at any time without affecting any of the benefits that I usually am entitled to.

I have been informed about any available compensation or medical treatment if injury occurs to me as a result of study-related procedures.

If I have any further questions/concerns or queries related to the study I understand that I may contact the researcher at: zandilemlambo22@gmail.com or 0825264418.

If I have any questions or concerns about my rights as a study participant, or if I am concerned about an aspect of the study or the researchers then I may contact:

HUMANITIES & SOCIAL SCIENCES RESEARCH ETHICS ADMINISTRATION  
BREC UKZN

Research Office, Westville Campus

Govan Mbeki Building

Private Bag X 54001

Durban

4000

KwaZulu-Natal, SOUTH AFRICA

Tel: 27 31 2604557 - Fax: 27 31 2604609

Email: [HSSREC@ukzn.ac.za](mailto:HSSREC@ukzn.ac.za)

I hereby provide consent to:

Audio-record my interview / focus group discussion YES / NO

Video-record my interview / focus group discussion YES / NO

Use of my photographs for research purposes YES / NO

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of Participant    Date

## **Appendix B**

### **Interview schedule**

The following questions will be asked during the focus group interview with the teachers

Academic Performance of learners with learning barriers.

1. In your own understanding what is parental involvement? And do you think parents and other teachers have a clear understanding of parental involvement?
2. In your school are parents involved in their children's schoolwork?
3. Are there any factors hindering parental involvement?
4. What are the strategies that the school uses in a case where parents cannot be not be involved?
5. How is the relationship between parents and teachers?
6. Do you think it is possible for learners with learning barriers to improve their academic performance when parents are involvement? Please elaborate further.
7. How would you define a learning barrier?
8. How do you as a teacher identify learners with learning barriers?
9. Once you have identified them, how then do you get parents involved?
10. Would you say that parental involvement goes beyond academic performance?  
Meaning do you think parental involvement also plays a role in how the child behaves and does things at school?
11. Would you say there is a difference between a learner whose parents are involved in his or her schoolwork and the one who is not involved at all?
12. Do you think learners with learning barriers can improve academically if they can be given extra work?
13. What is the relationship in the classroom between learners with learning barriers and normal learners?
14. What do you think are the factors hindering parental involvement?
15. How does parental involvement influence academic performance of learners with learning barriers?

16. What are the strategies given by parents to ensure that they are involved in their children's schoolwork.

Teacher's experiences and understanding of learners with learning barriers

1. What are the strategies that are used by teachers when teaching learners with learning barriers?
2. Does the school, parents and the community work together, how is the working relationship?
3. Do you think it is a good idea that learners with learning barriers attend in the same school with normal learners?
4. What are the steps that are taken by the Department of Education in terms of assisting learners with learning barriers?
5. How will the progression process of the learners with learning barriers affect the overall performance of the school in the future?
6. Do you think the teachers are well equipped to teach the learners with learning barriers?
7. What are your experiences in teaching learners with learning barriers? Explain further.
8. What suggestions can you give which you believe will help improve the performance of the learners with learning barriers?
9. What circumstances do you think force some of the learners with learning barriers not to participate in group works?
10. How should the educators' approach be when addressing the issue of learners with learning barriers

## Appendix C

### Questionnaire for educators

1. How long have you been teaching in this school?

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2. In your own understanding what do you think parental involvement is?

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3. Do you think parental involvement is important? Yes /No explain

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4. What role does parental involvement play in the academic performance of learners with learning barriers?

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5. How important it is that the teacher-parent relationship is good when teaching learners with learning barriers? Elaborate

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6. Do you think for some parents there are factors that are hindering their involvement in the schoolwork of learners with learning barriers. Yes No explain

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7. How involved are the parents of learners with learning barriers in your school?

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8. How do you as a teacher identify learners with learning barriers?

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9. When you have managed to identify that a learner/s has a learning barrier how do you get the parent involved?

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10. What are the hindering factors that parents hinders parents from being involved in their children's school work?

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11. Are there any strategies or programmes provided by the school to assist parents who want to be involved in the school learning barriers, but they have challenges that hinders their involvement? Yes \No

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12. If the answer is yes to the above question, are those strategies or programmes provided by the school effective?

Explain.

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13. In a case where the parent/s is illiterate how do you as a teacher get them involved?

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14. Do you think educators are well equipped in terms of teaching learners with learning barriers? Yes No

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15. If No to the above question what is it that should be done by the Department of Basic education to ensure that all educators are well equipped in teaching learners with learning barriers.

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16. What are your experiences with teaching learners with learning barriers?

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17. What suggestions can you give which you believe may help improve the performance of the learners with learning barriers?

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18. Do learners with learning barriers participate in class? Yes No

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19. Do you think parental involvement has an influence on the classroom participation of learners with learning barriers? What circumstances do you think force some of the

learners with learning barriers not to participate.

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20. How do you think the educators' approach should be when addressing the issue of learners with learning barriers?

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21. What is the attitude of the learners with learning barriers towards the school authorities? Do they adhere to the rules and regulations of the school?

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22. Do you think it is a good idea that learners with learning barriers attend in the main stream school or they should be sent into special needs schools?

Explain

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23. In a case where there are no special needs schools nearby what do you think should be done in order to accommodate learners with learning barriers in the main stream schools?

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24. If you were given a chance to be the MEC, what are the strategies that you can put into place in order to help learners with learning to also have a bright future?

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## Appendix D

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

### REQUEST FOR A PERMISSION TO CONDUCT A RESEARCH IN YOUR SCHOOL

Dear Mr. Madlala

I hereby write this letter to request the permission to conduct a research study in your school. Kindly receive hereof the details of how the study will be conducted:

My name is Zandile Mlambo. I am a Masters student at the University of KwaZulu-Natal. One of the requirements for the fulfillment of this degree is to conduct a research study and compile a thesis. My dissertation topic is: Educators' experiences on parental involvement towards learners with learning barriers: A case study of a high school in Mooi River. The purpose of this study is to find out whether parental involvement results into good academic performance or poor academic performance of the learners with learning barriers.

The study will include 8 participants which will be teachers teaching in the high school. This study will adopt a purposive sampling procedure, meaning that the participants will be chosen based on whether they are suitable for the study. Participants will be asked to fill in open ended questionnaires and that they can do it at their own time, whether at school or at home, depending on their schedule, and the focus group interviews will be conducted during lunch break. This study is not funded by any organisation. Should the participants feel a need to quit being part of the study, they should at least inform the researcher on time, so that the researcher can recruit a replacement.

For more information feel free to contact me at: 0825264418 (cell phone number), zandilemlambo22@gmail.com (email address), or the supervisor at or the ethics office at:

**HUMANITIES & SOCIAL SCIENCES RESEARCH ETHICS ADMINISTRATION**

Research Office, Westville Campus

Govan Mbeki Building

Private Bag X 54001 Durban 4000

KwaZulu-Natal, SOUTH AFRICA

Tel: 27 31 2604557- Fax: 27 31 2604609

Email: HSSREC@ukzn.ac.za

Yours sincerely

Zandile Mlambo (Miss)

**UKZN HUMANITIES AND SOCIAL SCIENCES RESEARCH ETHICS COMMITTEE  
(HSSREC)**

**APPLICATION FOR ETHICS APPROVAL**

**For research with human participants**

**INFORMED CONSENT RESOURCE TEMPLATE**

Information Sheet and Consent to Participate in Research

Date: 29 October 2022

Greetings

My name is Zandile Linah Mlambo student number: 216069134 from the university of Kwa-Zulu Natal, Department of Humanities: cell phone number: 0825264418, email address: zandilemlambo22@gmail.com.

You are being invited to consider participating in a study that involves research. The aim and purpose of this research is to find out whether parental involvement results into good academic performance or poor academic performance of the learners with learning barriers in a high school. The study is expected to enroll 8 participants, where all of them will fill in open ended questions and 5 of them will participate in focus groups interview. It will involve the following procedures: the participants will fill in open ended questions and focus groups interviews. The duration of your participation if you choose to enroll and remain in the study is expected to be two weeks. The study may involve discomforts such as being shy to speak in a group since this study will involve focus groups interviews.

We hope that the study will create the benefits to participants, they will get new shared information

about how to teach or assist learners with learning barriers, since the study is focusing mainly on learners with learning barriers. Since teaching learners with learning barriers is still a challenge for many teachers, this study will benefit the participants by hearing other participants' challenges and how they overcome those challenges. In the event of any problems or concerns/questions you may contact the researcher at: 0825264418 or the UKZN Humanities & Social Sciences Research Ethics Committee, contact details as follows:

## **HUMANITIES & SOCIAL SCIENCES RESEARCH ETHICS ADMINISTRATION**

Research Office, Westville Campus

Govan Mbeki Building

Private Bag X 54001 Durban 4000

KwaZulu-Natal, SOUTH AFRICA

Tel: 27 31 2604557- Fax: 27 31 2604609

Email: [HSSREC@ukzn.ac.za](mailto:HSSREC@ukzn.ac.za)

The researcher informs the participants about any form of harm, if there is any, participating in this study is voluntary, basically in this study all my participants are willing to be part of my study and they are well informed that they are allowed to withdraw at any time should they feel uncomfortable or not interested anymore, and they will not be any consequences. However, they are required to notify the researcher should they want to withdraw from the study.

Moreover, the participants are fully aware of what they are getting themselves into; they are made aware of what the study is about and what its purpose. They are aware that data will be collected using questionnaires and also focus groups interviews; so that they prepare themselves and should they feel uncomfortable with the methods they can decide not to be part of the study. They are also informed on how the data will be used and reported and once they agree they will sign the information sheet. Should be participant not avail him or herself for the study the research will be forced to terminate participation.

There won't be any costs by participants as a result of being part of the study, and also there won't be any incentives or reimbursements for participation in the study Confidentiality is guaranteed, meaning that all information shared will stay between the participant and the researcher; however the

supervisor will have access to the information. Names of the Participants will be kept anonymous. The recordings from the focus group interview will be stored in a USB, where password will be required to open the file. The questionnaires completed by the participants will be stored in a box that has a padlock, and the keys will be known by the researcher. All this data collected will be deleted after a specific time frame, and the questionnaires will be burnt. The password will be shared with the supervisor.

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## Appendix E



### KWAZULU-NATAL PROVINCE

EDUCATION  
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

#### OFFICE OF THE HEAD OF DEPARTMENT

Private Bag X9137, PIETERMARITZBURG, 3200  
Anton Lembede Building, 247 Burger Street, Pietermaritzburg, 3201  
Email: Phindile.duma@kzndoe.gov.za  
Tel: 033 392 1063

Enquiries: Phindile Duma

Ref.:2/4/8/156

Ms ZL Mlambo Thinasobabili White City  
**MOOI RIVER**

3300

Dear Ms Mlambo

#### **PERMISSION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH IN THE KZN DōE INSTITUTIONS**

Your application to conduct research entitled: **“AN EXPLORATION OF PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT TOWARDS LEARNERS WITH LEARNING BARRIERS IN A HIGH SCHOOL”**, in the KwaZulu-Natal Department of Education Institutions has been approved. The conditions of the approval are as follows:

1. The researcher will make all the arrangements concerning the research and interviews.
2. The researcher must ensure that Educator and learning programmes are not interrupted.
3. Interviews are not conducted during the time of writing examinations in schools.
4. Learners, Educators, Schools and Institutions are not identifiable in any way from the results of the research.
5. A copy of this letter is submitted to District Managers, Principals and Heads of Institutions where the Intended research and interviews are to be conducted.
6. The period of investigation is limited to the period from 31 January 2024 to 31 January 2027.
7. Your research and interviews will be limited to the schools you have proposed and approved by the Head of Department. Please note that Principals, Educators, Departmental Officials and Learners are under no obligation to participate or assist you in your investigation.
8. Should you wish to extend the period of your survey at the school(s), please contact Miss Phindile Duma at the contact numbers above.
9. Upon completion of the research, a brief summary of the findings, recommendations or a full report/dissertation/thesis must be submitted to the research office of the Department. Please address it to The Office of the HOD, Private Bag X9137, Pietermaritzburg, 3200.
10. Please note that your research and interviews will be limited to schools and institutions in KwaZulu-Natal Department of Education.

**Mr GN Ngcobo**  
**Head of Department:**  
**Education Date: 01**  
**February 2024**

**GROWING KWAZULU-NATAL TOGETHER**

**Appendix F**



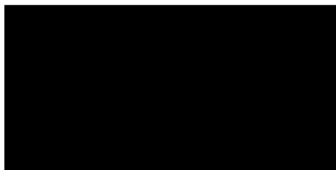
TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN

Please kindly be informed that Miss Z.L Mlambo as part of her Master's degree, she is supposed to conduct a research study under the topic: Educators' experiences on parental involvement towards learners with learning barriers: A case study of a high school in Mooi River.

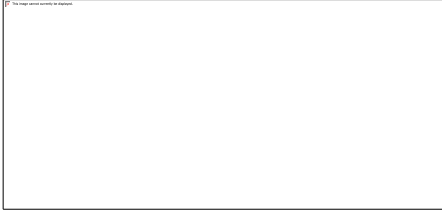
She has requested for permission to interview the following stakeholders with the school (teachers). Permission has been given to her.

You are therefore requested to participate should you be identified as one of the suitable interviewees.

Best wishes to her studies.



## Appendix G



06 July 2023

**Zandile Linah Mlambo (216069134)**  
School Of Education  
Edgewood Campus

Dear ZL Mlambo,

**Protocol reference number:** HSSREC/00005314/2023

**Project title:** An exploration of parental involvement towards learners with learning barriers in a high school.

**Degree:** Masters

### **Approval Notification – Expedited Application**

This letter serves to notify you that your application received on 27 February 2023 in connection with the above, was reviewed by the Humanities and Social Sciences Research Ethics Committee (HSSREC) and the protocol has been granted **FULL APPROVAL**.

**Any alteration/s to the approved research protocol i.e. Questionnaire/Interview Schedule, Informed Consent Form, Title of the Project, Location of the Study, Research Approach and Methods must be reviewed and approved through the amendment/modification prior to its implementation. In case you have further queries, please quote the above reference number. PLEASE NOTE: Research data should be securely stored in the discipline/department for a period of 5 years.**

This approval is valid until 06 July 2024.

To ensure uninterrupted approval of this study beyond the approval expiry date, a progress report must be submitted to the Research Office on the appropriate form 2 - 3 months before the expiry date. A close-out report to be submitted when study is finished.

HSSREC is registered with the South African National Health Research Ethics Council (REC-040414-040).

Yours sincerely,



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**Professor Dipane Hlalele**

(Chair) /dd

## Appendix H



This receipt acknowledges that Turnitin received your paper. Below you will find the receipt information regarding your submission. The first page of your submissions is displayed below

### Digital Receipt

Submission author: zandile Mlambo

Assignment title: An exploration of parental involvement towards learners wit...

Submission title: Turn it in (thesis)

File name: Turn\_it\_in\_thesis..docx

File size: 198.82K

Page count: 87

Word count: 28,536

Character count: 150,048

Submission date: 08-Feb-2024 08:34AM (UTC+0200)

Submission ID: 2289038895

## CHAPTER 1

### INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

#### 1.1 Introduction

This chapter aims at establishing the opinions of the educators in a chosen high school regarding the issue of parental involvement and how it influences learners' academic performance. This chapter looks at the background of the study, problem statement, research objectives, research questions, research methodology, theoretical framework, trustworthiness issues, significance of the study, rationale to the study, location of the study, ethical considerations, selection of participants. The chapter ends with a short summary.

#### 1.2 Background to the study

When I did background on this topic, it was evident that parental involvement is not something new, it is something that has existed for the longest time. Parents have always formed a great part of their children's education; they are the ones who taught their children at home before formal schooling was introduced. They are the ones who taught their children how to pronounce certain words, their children depended on them for learning certain words and how to pronounce those words (Oranga et.al, 2023). According to Govender, (2021) during apartheid, parents were not considered as important in South African school, basically the apartheid government abused the term parental involvement because the parents were partially involved in school. In a further attempt to promote the involvement of parents in South African education, the Policy on the South African Standard for Principals (PSASP) of 2015 drew attention to the duties and responsibilities of principals. The PSASP highlights that it is the responsibility of the principal of a school to integrate parents into the school environment as outlined in the policy (Republic of South Africa, 2015)

Watson et.al (2012) state that parental involvement was first created with the purpose of creating a relationship between educators and parents, so that learners may perform well at school. Sakaue