

**PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT AND ACADEMIC
PERFORMANCE IN SELECTED SECONDARY SCHOOLS
IN KWA-ZULU NATAL**

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**PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT AND ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE
IN SELECTED SECONDARY SCHOOLS
IN KWA-ZULU NATAL**

by

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DECLARATION

I, Mageshni Narain, declare that this dissertation is my own. It is being submitted for the Degree of the Master of Education at the University of KwaZulu Natal (Edgewood Campus). It has not been submitted before, for examination at any other University.

Mageshni Narain
Signature

11 APRIL 2006
Date

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ABSTRACT

This research project attempted to examine the relationship between parental involvement and learner's academic achievement at two secondary schools in KZN. The purpose of the study was to determine whether there could be a relationship established between parents who are involved in the education of their children, and their children's academic performance. However, there are many factors that may influence academic performance. It may not be correct to attribute all influences on academic performance to parental involvement.

The methodology is one of triangulation i.e. making use of the 'mixed' method approach namely, using data instruments from both the quantitative (self-completion questionnaire) and qualitative (structured interviews) methods.

The subjects of the study were one hundred and fifteen parents. Data was gathered by questionnaire and structured interviews. A questionnaire was completed by learners' parents/guardians. The second phase saw me closely involved in posing questions to some of the parents and seeking clarification from them. After the collection of data from the questionnaire and an analysis of that data, the results were used as a springboard for my interviews.

The present research was undertaken to examine the relationship between different components of parental involvement and learner's academic achievement of secondary school learners. Four components of parental involvement considered were: parental aspirations for children's education, parent-child communication about school, at-home involvement and parental participation in school related activities.

The results of the study revealed that there is generally low parental involvement in children's education in both the secondary schools under study. However, the results showed that there is a relationship between parental involvement and learner's academic performance. A medium correlation exists between both variables i.e. parental involvement and learner's academic achievement. Parental involvement in their children's education varies according to the different types of parental involvement. Parents are involved the most in parent-child communication about school, and are least involved in school-related activities. The results indicate that there is no statistically significant relationship between educational attainment and parental aspirations.

This research project has also proposed possible recommendations to assist the school-based personnel and the parents in developing and sustaining a stronger and more positive relationship between the school and the parents.

This study concludes with recommendations for further research.

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ABBREVIATIONS

| | |
|-------------|---|
| NEPI | National Education Policy Investigation |
| SES | Socioeconomic Status |
| NELS | National Educational Longitudinal Study |
| PPI | Parent Participation Interview |
| PTO | Parent Teacher Organisation |

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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Aim of the chapter

The aim of this chapter is to serve as an orientation and justification for the study. It outlines the importance of parental involvement in children's education. It also highlights the reasons for the lack of parental involvement in children's education, and the need for the study.

1.2 Introduction

“When both parents and teachers work together, communicate and build a family and school partnership, parents, teachers and children benefit from the outcome” (Gelfer 1991:167).

It is difficult to read an article about school improvement, whether it appears in a scholarly journal or the daily newspaper, that does not mention parental involvement as one of the keys to school and student success. Unfortunately, parental involvement is rarely examined closely in these articles. Instead, the phrase is mentioned and then ignored. Like a buzzword, we trust that just repeating it will achieve some benefits. Unfortunately, saying it does not make it so.

Parents are the first and primary educators of children. The role of a parent is extremely important in the development of values, beliefs, interests and the identity of the child. Children need the ongoing support, guidance and encouragement of parents.

There is an urgent need for schools to find ways to support the success of all our children. One element that we know contributes to more successful children and more successful schools across all populations is parental involvement in children's education. When our focus is on improving the academic achievement of children, partnership with families is not just useful – it is crucial (Swap, 1993).

Parental involvement is a combination of commitment and active participation on the part of the parent to the school and to the student. Improved student achievement is the key objective (LaBahn,1995). If the parent shows concern, it will translate into greater achievement on the part of the student.

The more the parent learns about the way the school functions, the more the parent will understand the educational process and educational decisions. The parents and the school become allies and are able to be of mutual benefit when it comes to dealing with difficult students and situations. The parents are also more supportive of the school with financial support as well as support of bond issues and other leeway levies (Stouffer, 1992). The more the parent becomes involved and learns about the school, the more the parent can help the student. The parents are able to “increase their understanding of child development in areas of physical, social, emotional and cognitive development” (Gelfer 1991: 164). This helps to provide a bond between home experiences and the educational program. When the parents understand how the child develops, they are better able to provide a more positive and exciting home environment. The parents may even want to learn more and possibly attend the parent classes provided by the school. This type of situation can produce a positive spiral of success for the parent, school, and student (Gelfer ,1991).

Parents globally play a small role in the education of their children due to a variety of reasons. If parental involvement is so beneficial, why is not it being used to a greater extent than at present? There are many reasons from the parent for this lack of involvement. In this study, the researcher will attempt to identify the problems causing the lack of involvement and possible recommendations will be proposed.

According to LaBahn (1995), there are many reasons from the parent and also from the school for the lack of involvement. The reasons are as follows:-

- Shortage of time - There are simply not enough hours in the day to accomplish everything.
- Work constraints – due to financial difficulties, parents find themselves working long hours to meet their commitments.
- Lack of resources – television, newspapers, magazines, computers.
- Parents lack knowledge on the subject.
- Parents often feel un-welcomed at school. They may feel what they have to offer is unimportant and unappreciated. This is due to the low level of education of the parents.
- Another reason for lack of involvement is embarrassment. The parents may be illiterate or unable to speak English. This could make communication difficult, if not impossible.
- Another source of embarrassment is memories of the parent's failure in school. The parent would not have much desire to return to a place that only served to remind him of his own failures.
- Parents are afraid to interfere in the educational process in the event of the 'interference' being counter-productive.

School-Parent relationships take on different forms and are at different levels. To individual parents, the most important level is that at which parents and teachers have a direct relationship and are working together to improve their child or children's learning capacities and achievements. Most parents do not become initially involved in school activities to improve the progress of their own child. A second level is parental involvement at the whole class level and the third level in which fewer parents participate is that of influencing school policies and school management.

(Tomlinson, 1991)

Initiated through government legislation, parental involvement in the United States of America and the United Kingdom receives government support, and recommendations in government reports have led to an increase in the number of institutions that have promoted parental involvement (Mashishi ,1994).

In the face of a changed and changing South Africa, now more than ever South Africa recognizes and encourages parents to play a role in their children's education.

The South African School's Act of 1996 stipulates clearly that parents must serve on the governing body of a school. The Act states:

The number of parent members must comprise one or more than the combined total of other members of a governing body who have voting rights.(Clause 23 (1) p.18)

In the report of the National Education Policy Investigation (NEPI), parents were deemed to be a focal point in the success of education in South Africa. According to the UNISA Life Project , parents in South Africa will have to take far more responsibility for the education of their children than in the past (cited in Senosi, 2004).

Marjoribanks states that:

...the family is a powerful determinant of children's learning and when the school and home have divergent approaches to life and to learning, children are likely to suffer in their school learning (1986: 211).

According to Ngwenya (1996), the home, the child and the school form a tripartite that creates a special climate that is desirable for effective education. If a child sees that her/his parents are enthusiastic about education, s/he is far more likely to view her/his schooling in a positive light, and be more receptive to learning. To this end, parents should be seen as vital partners in a child's education.

The rationale behind home and school working together is to ensure they are promoting similar or complimentary objectives and not conflicting or contradictory objectives. Such an approach recognizes the “significance of families” and the “contributions of schools” as a “necessary framework” for working together in “complementary efforts toward common goals” to maximize success for students as learners. Christenson & Sheridan state that schools, communities and parents must cooperate and work collaboratively to improve the learning experience of all children (2001:507-517).

According to Govender (2004), the basic premise of the home-school relationship is that parents must recognize the obligation to complement the work of the school by active involvement, and that schools should recognize parents as equal educators of their children. Only when this level of understanding occurs between the school and the home, can a genuine partnership be created, which then paves the way for a constructive relationship.

It should be the desire of each and every parent to want to see their child achieve in school, and this can only be done with the assistance of parents. The child must understand that the intents of both parent and educator are similar. Children cannot function in isolation from the family or the school.

Van Schalkwyk (cited in Senosi, 2004) says that “...if parental involvement were a worthless exercise it would have long stopped functioning and been forgotten”. Trusty (1996) states that parents logically have the advantage - over peers, educators, counselors, and other professionals - of serving as a continual, and perhaps more stable, resource for their children over the life span.

It is crucial to uncover factors that contribute to gaps in educational achievement for all children. Only when these factors are understood will it be possible to design policies that will help improve the achievement of all children, irrespective of the underlying factors.

1.3 Context of the study

My topic for research is intended to examine the relationship between parental involvement and learner's academic performance. The motivation for this study originates from my experiences as an educator teaching at a number of schools in Kwa-Zulu Natal. My interest also deepened when I taught abroad. There was an obvious difference in parental involvement in South Africa and in Taiwan. It was important to me as a parent, then an educator, and now a researcher, to put this problem into perspective and to attempt to understand the dynamics involved with parental involvement in South Africa.

I found in Taiwan that although learners experienced difficulty learning English, parental involvement is at its maximum. Learners attended government schools from 8am-3pm and thereafter attended private English schools from 4pm-7pm. Parents would constantly visit us at school to enquire about the progress of their children.

According to Zang & Carrasquillo (1995), education is not a chore but a way of life in the Chinese family. Parents want to provide their children with the best education thus enhancing their future lives. One can assume that people of different cultures come from different socio-cultural backgrounds, live under different circumstances and experience life differently, hence their goals and values of achievement may vary accordingly.

The South African experience of parental involvement is unique and different from the rest of the world due to historical, political, social and economic factors. Furthermore, the experiences have to be classified according to the different race groups in South Africa. In this study, the majority of the participants are blacks.

It was anticipated that the outcome of this research would provide valuable insight into the relationship between parental involvement and learner's academic performance in the South African context.

1.4 Focus of the study

The study was set out to examine the relationship between parental involvement and learner's academic performance. The following research questions were focused on:

1. Is there a relationship between parental involvement and learner's academic performance?
2. What aspects of parental involvement contribute more to the relationship?
3. Is there a relationship between parent's educational attainment and parental aspirations for their children's education?

1.5 Research Methodology

The research approach was largely a quantitative investigation of parental involvement supplemented by the qualitative approach. The research was conducted in the form of a survey. A questionnaire was administered to parents to complete at two secondary schools in the Durban area.

Within the qualitative approach, the structured interviews were also conducted with some of the learners' parents from both the schools. According to Denzin & Lincoln (2003) the use of multiple methods or triangulation, reflects an attempt to secure an in-depth understanding of the phenomenon in question.

The data analysis and presentation states the statistical techniques to be used in data analysis and specifies how the data will be presented (McMillan & Schumacher, 2001). The form of data presentation is usually linked to each research question. For the purposes of this study, the researcher needs to ascertain if there is a relationship between parental involvement and learner's academic performance. From the responses in the parental questionnaire, the researcher identified the degree of parental involvement in children's education. The degree of involvement was categorized into high, average and low parental involvement. An analysis of the results was used against the learner's March and Mid-term marks. Thereafter, a correlation coefficient analysis between parental involvement and student's results was computed.

The second question is: which aspects of parental involvement contribute more to the relationship? The different components of parental involvement were analyzed namely, parent-child communication about school, school-home communication, at-home involvement and school-related activities.

The third question is: Is there a relationship between parents' educational attainment and parental aspirations for their children's education? A correlation coefficient analysis between parents' educational attainment and parental aspirations was computed to determine the relationship.

1.6 Definition of terms

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

1.6.1 ‘parent’

A parent is any adult whose role is to guide and accompany the child towards responsible adulthood. According to the South African Schools Act of 1996c, Act 84 (RSA 1996:4), the term parent refers to:

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

1.6.2 ‘parental involvement’

“Parental involvement” and “parent participation” are nebulous terms because there is an array of parent behaviours that these terms could include. As Ascher has stated, “Of all education issues, parent involvement is one of the vaguest and most shifting in its meanings. Parent involvement may easily mean quite different things to different people” (1988:109).

To define parent involvement more operationally, Hoover-Dempsey, Bassler, and Brissie (1987) theorized a two-way breakdown into home-based activities (e.g. parent-home tutoring) and school-based parent involvement activities (e.g. parent volunteering, attendance at parent-teacher conferences). Because of the difficulties in operationally defining “parental involvement”, many theorists have concentrated their efforts more on specific categorization of the different types of parental involvement.

For the purposes of this study, the researcher has proposed five components of parental involvement namely:

1. Parental aspirations for children's education.
2. Parent-child communication about school - how often children report talking to their parents about their experiences at school, school activities and future plans.
3. School-home communication –awareness of informative letters, contact between parent and teacher about child's progress.
4. Participation of parents at-home - monitoring activities at home - such as T.V. watching, play, reading and homework, actively tutoring their children at home.
5. Participation of parents in school-related activities – participation in parents' meetings, consultations with the teacher, volunteering with regards to school activities.

1.6.3 'academic performance'

'Academic performance' was based on the scholastic achievement of learners i.e. the March Standardized Test marks and the Mid-term Test marks were averaged and used.

1.6.4 'adolescent'

"A child changes into an adult during adolescence, a period lasting from about 12 to about 22 years of age. The changes that take place during adolescence include not only physical events but also psychological and social ones" Smart & Smart (1977:491).

"The adolescent is the youth at the stage between childhood and adulthood, termed adolescence." Marshall (1998:7). According to the Oxford Dictionary of Sociology (1998), the adolescent is considered to be unstable and flexible, one who stands on the brink of personhood looking for an image that he cannot yet envisage or attain.

In relation to this study, the concept 'adolescent' will refer to any child from the age of 13 to 18 years attending a secondary school in Kwa-Zulu Natal.

1.7 Delimitations of the study

The present study has been subjected to the following limitations:

- 1.7.1 Use of small and convenient sample places limits on the present study. Time constraints did not allow the researcher to include more schools in the study.
- 1.7.2 Selection was through returned consent forms. Those parents that received the parental questionnaires and chose not to complete them, for whatever reason, have invariably affected the research results. One of the possible reasons for the parent choosing not to complete the parental questionnaire is because of a general lack of parental involvement in children's education.
- 1.7.3 My choice of the five components of parental involvement was selective, but in no way exhaustive. Perhaps other components of parental involvement would attract varying data. Other components of parental involvement are possible such as the emotional quality of home environment, parental support for autonomy, disciplinary styles of parents, methods of motivating and so on (Singh, Bickley, Keith, Keith, Trivette & Anderson, 1995).
- 1.7.4 Perhaps a pre-test/post-test method would have made for a more reliable study. The results would not have depended on the returned consent forms. This has invariably affected the results.
- 1.7.5 Too few parents show high parental involvement. This may be due to different components of parental involvement other than the components asked in the questionnaire. Parental involvement in elementary school and parental involvement in secondary school are different.

1.8 Structure of the study

This study is divided into five chapters. The chapters are as follows:-

Chapter One: Introduction and Overview

This chapter is concerned with the identification of the problem to be investigated, placing the study in a context, the focus of the study, research methods, key terms are identified and explained.

Chapter Two: Literature Review and Theoretical Framework

Chapter Two is concerned with the theoretical framework and psychosocial theory underpinning the research followed by a thorough review of the literature study.

Chapter Three: Description of Research Methodology

This chapter discusses the various aspects of the procedure such as the nature and the selection of the sample, the area of investigation, the method of investigation and the research design. Included in this chapter are the ethics of research and the limitations of the research.

Chapter Four: Presentation of Data

Chapter Four includes the presentation of the results and the analysis of the data thereof.

Chapter Five: Summary and Recommendations

This chapter presents a synthesis of the main findings from the study. Recommendations are made on the basis of the findings. Finally, an evaluation of the research is presented. Further, the implications of the study as well as the setbacks that were encountered during the research proper are discussed. Recommendations for further research are outlined.

1.9 Summary

There is not enough emphasis placed on the importance of parental involvement in the education of the adolescent. According to Stouffer (1992), parental involvement actually declines as students grow older, so that it is less in secondary schools than in elementary schools. There is thus a definite need for more research and more consistent data based on secondary school learners. Research may help to establish the problems underlying the lack of parental involvement.

CHAPTER TWO

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK AND LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Aim of the chapter

Since the subject matter of this dissertation involves a particular developmental phase of a child (adolescence) it is imperative that this phase is scientifically discussed at the outset. Hence the aim of this chapter is to execute this task and outline the major characteristics of adolescence as envisaged by researchers and academics on the subject. This chapter revolves around the psychosocial development of adolescents. This chapter also provides a theoretical framework against which the dissertation should be read and understood. Further to this, a thorough review of the literature pertaining to parental involvement has been presented.

2.2 Introduction

Adolescence is an intriguing stage of development filled with many physical, cognitive, social, and emotional changes. At the same time, the increase in academic demands and the complexity of the school structure make the task of academic success for adolescents even more difficult. Because parental involvement has shown itself to be a very important positive force in a child's life (Patrikakou, Weissberg, Redding & Walberg, in press), one would expect that during such a critical and demanding phase the two most important environments in child development; home and school, would increase their collaboration. The opposite though is true: as children progress through school, parental involvement declines dramatically (Zill & Nord, 1994).

Several factors contribute to this paradoxical decline: the more complex structure of middle and high schools, the demanding curricula that can be intimidating to parents, and the fewer school outreach efforts to involve parents. Or, could this decline in parent involvement just be an indication of an underlying decline of parent influence over adolescents?

2.3 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

2.3.1 The Psychosocial Theory – Erik Erikson

Figure 1.1

| | | | | | | | | |
|-----------------------|----------------------|--------------------------------|------------------------|-------------------------------|----------------|--------------------------|--|-------------------------------------|
| I | Trust vs mistrust | | | | | | | |
| Infancy | | | | | | | | |
| II Early Childhood | | Autonomy vs shame, doubt | | | | | | |
| III Play age | | | Initiative vs guilt | | | | | |
| IV School age | | | | Industry vs inferiority | | | | |
| V Adoles- cence | | | | | Identity vs | | | |
| VI Young adult | | | | | | Intimacy vs Isolation | | |
| VII Adult- hood | | | | | | | Generativity vs self- absorption | |
| VIII Mature | | | | | | | | Integrity vs disgust, Hesnaiz |

The Eight Stages of Development and their corresponding Psychosocial Crises

Erik Erikson is best known for his concept of the identity crisis. At this stage, adolescents are in search of an identity that will lead them to adulthood. Adolescents make a strong effort to answer the question “Who am I?” Adolescents attempt to establish their own identities and see themselves as separate from their parents. In search for his identity, the adolescent interacts with the environment and develops (Donald, Lazarus & Lolwana, 2002)

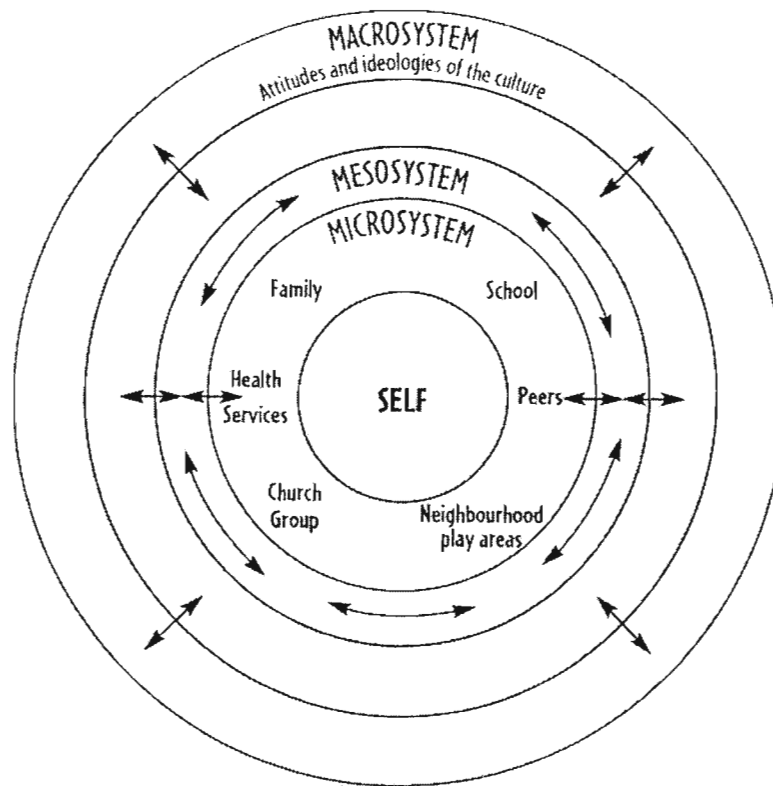
All human systems change and develop over time. Developmental changes in parts of the system influence the whole. For example, the development of children from infancy to childhood and through to adolescence has profound effects on how a whole family functions and develops (Donald, Lazarus & Lolwana, 2002).

In this regard, theoretical insights into how development takes place are important in this study. These insights give us a greater understanding of how development takes place and help us to relate to children in more effective ways.

2.3.2 The Ecological Theory

I will now provide an overview of the theoretical underpinnings of my research. For the purposes of my study, I have adopted the 'Ecological Theory' as a basis for my theoretical framework. In essence, the 'Ecological Theory' considers family influences as very powerful in producing change (Bronfenbrenner, 1986) and, therefore, provides a way to conceptualize interactions between adolescents and their parents and to examine how they relate to academic achievement.

Figure 1.2



Bronfenbrenner's ecological model for understanding social influences
 (from F.Philip Rice, *The Adolescent 9th ed.* 1996 by Allyn & Bacon)

The theory which systematizes and extends these notions of interactions is that of Bronfenbrenner (1979). Basic to Bronfenbrenner's model are four interacting dimensions that have to be considered in understanding child development:

- person factors (for example, the temperament of the child or parent)
- process factors (for example, the forms of interaction that occur in a family)
- contexts (for example, families, schools, or local communities)
- time (for example, changes over time in the child or the environment)

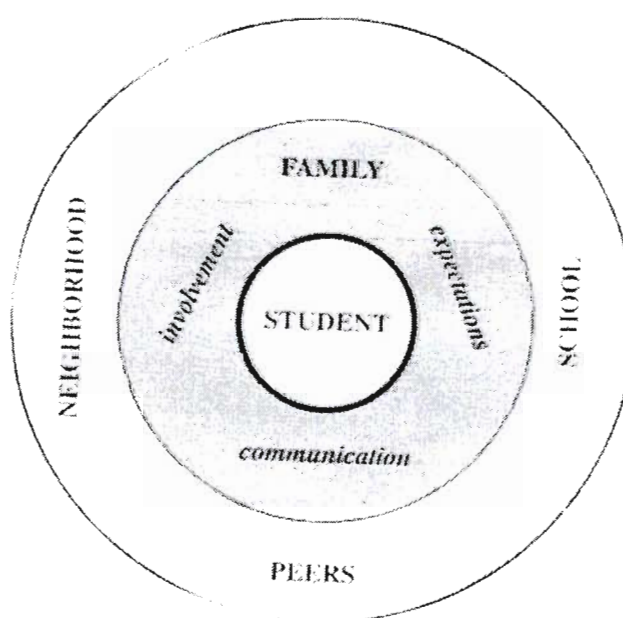
To Bronfenbrenner (1979) child development should be seen as happening within four nested systems, the microsystem, the mesosystem, the exosystem, and the macrosystem. These all interact with the chronosystem.

- The microsystem comprises systems such as the family, the school, and the peer group in which children are closely involved in continuous face-to-face interactions with other familiar people, which involve patterns of daily activities, roles, and relationships.
- In the mesosystems, peer group, school, and family systems interact with one another. For example, the insecurities that a child may experience at home because of lack of love and support will influence the child's response at school.
- In the exosystems, the child is not directly involved, but may influence, or be influenced by, the people who have proximal relationships with her in her microsystems. For example, if parents have high expectations of their child, the child will make attempts to strive for achievement. Children want to emulate their parents. Depending on the type of influence, this will determine the success of the child's education.
- The macrosystem involves dominant social structures, as well as beliefs and values that influence and may be influenced by all other levels of system. For example, a cultural value may include developing obedience to authority and respect for senior members of the community. This value would then influence the proximal interactions in the child's microsystem, and would probably run through the whole mesosystem in which she is involved. This level of system is equivalent to what we have referred to as the social system as a whole.
(Donald, Lazarus & Lolwana , 2002).

- Chronosystem – the interactions between these systems and their influences on individual development are all crossed by developmental time frames. For example, a family, or any of the systems in which a developing child is involved may be seen in a process of development itself. These, in turn, interact with a child's progressive stages of development.

Specifically, the psychological and sociological influences in the present model can be viewed as parts of the ecological structure of influences within the microsystem.

Figure 1.3



The microsystem

The adolescent is in the center of the system and, in general, psychological factors are to be found within the circle of the individual whereas sociological influences are represented in the outer circles. The filtering circle around the adolescent represents the individual's perception of various events which, in accordance with previous theoretical work, is instrumental in influencing outcomes related to academic achievement (Patrikakou,1997).

In order to investigate the relationship between parental involvement and academic performance of secondary school learners which is the focus of this study, the present model zooms in on the microsystem which encompasses involvement, communication, expectations, all microsystem variables. The distinct circle represents parental influences in a student's academic life underlines further the focus of the present model (Bronfenbrenner, 1986).

Contextualising parental involvement derives from the view that understanding the child becomes possible and effective when the child is seen against the backdrop of his family, the community and society. According to the theory of family functioning, the child interacts with, and is influenced by parents and siblings, while the child also influences their behaviour and attitudes. There is ongoing interaction between the home and school. The home and school are influenced by the economics and politics of the country. Hornby (1991) states that these levels of the social system influence the total development of the child.

The Ecological Theory relates to the interconnectedness within systems and that development is a result of influences within the ecological systems. In short, the Ecological perspective indicates that family, peers, school, and neighbourhood should be examined to better understand the academic achievement of secondary school students.

It is clearly evident from the above explanation of the "Ecological Theory" that children cannot develop in isolation. It is the duty of all concerned including the parents, the educators, and the community at large, to inculcate and educate children to the norms and values of society. For this reason, parental involvement in a child's education is crucial.

2.4 LITERATURE REVIEW

McMillan & Schumacher state that, “A *literature review* is usually a critique of the status of knowledge of a carefully defined topic”(2001:108). A review of literature is aimed at contributing towards a clearer understanding of the nature and meaning of the problem that has been identified (De Vos, 2002).

Literature reviews, if conducted carefully and presented well, add much to an understanding of the selected problem, and help place the results of a study in a historical perspective. Without reviews of the literature, it would be difficult to build a body of accepted knowledge on an educational topic.

According to McMillan & Schumacher, a review of the literature serves several purposes in research namely:-

- Defines and limits the problem
- Places the study in a historical perspective
- Avoids unintentional and unnecessary replication
- Selects promising methods and measures
- Relates the findings to previous knowledge and suggests further research
- Develops research hypotheses (2001:109).

The literature linking parental involvement to student achievement is extensive (Baker, 1996; Henderson & Berla, 1994 & Thorkildsen & Stein, 1998). Many different types of parenting practices and behaviours have been associated with positive student outcomes.

According to Christenson (1990), it appears that most definitions of parental involvement fall under four major categories:-

- Parental academic aspirations and expectations for children
- Participation in school activities and programs
- Home structure that supports learning
- Communication with children about school

The San Diego County Office of Education states that families whose children are doing well in school exhibit the following characteristics:-

1. *Establish a daily routine* – e.g. providing time and a quiet place to study, assigning responsibility for household chores, being firm about bedtime, and having dinner together.
2. *Monitor out-of-school activities* – e.g. checking up on children when parents are not at home, arrange for after-school activities and supervised care.
3. *Model the value of self-discipline and hard work* – e.g. communicating, demonstrating that achievement comes from working hard.
4. *Express high but realistic expectations for achievement* – e.g. setting goals, encouraging special talents.
5. *Encourage children's development /progress in school* – e.g. maintaining a warm and supportive home, discussing the value of good education.
6. *Encourage reading, writing and discussion among family members* – e.g. reading, listening to children read and talking about what is being read (1997:3-4).

That parental involvement improves student achievement is practically irrefutable. A report from the Southwest Educational Development Laboratory concludes that “when schools, families, and community groups work together to support learning, children tend to do better in school, stay in school longer, and like school more”. The report notes that:

Students with involved parents, no matter what their income or background, were more likely to:

- Earn higher grades and test scores, and enroll in higher-level programs
- Be promoted, pass their classes, and earn credits
- Attend school regularly
- Have better social skills, show improved behaviour, and adapt well to school; and
- Graduate and go on to postsecondary education (Henderson & Mapp 2002:7).

However, Seginer (1983) states that it is difficult to generalize across studies because researchers have used different conceptualizations of parental involvement. Parental involvement is a multi-dimensional construct, and research results vary according to different meanings attached to the term. One recent review of parental involvement research (Keith,1991) concluded that the effects of parental involvement may vary with: (a) the age of the students studied, (b) the definition of parental involvement used, and (c) the definition of learning used. Thus it is unclear which components of parental involvement affect student achievement (Singh et al,1995). Further to this, parental involvement may vary according to different race/ethnic groups.

Over the last few years, parents’ involvement in their children’s education and career development has received increased attention in education research (Chavkin & William, 1989; Grolnick & Slowiaczek,1994). According to Steinberg (1996), educators and policymakers are pressed to respond to the current crisis in American public education.

High rates of grade failure and school dropout reflect unprecedented levels of low educational achievement and high student and parent disengagement in education.

Concerns about the crisis in public education have led to the establishment of the National Education Goals. Goal 8 stresses the importance of parental participation in students' education, "Every school will actively engage parents and families in a partnership which supports the academic work of children at home and shared educational decision making at school" (National Educational Goals Panel, 1996: xvii).

A number of studies have suggested that parents of higher socioeconomic status (SES) are more involved in their children's education than are parents of lower SES, and that greater involvement fosters more positive attitudes toward school, improves homework habits, reduces absenteeism and dropping-out, and enhances academic achievement (Astone & McLanahan (1991) ; Epstein (1987) ; Fehrmann, Keith & Reimers (1987); Muller(1993) ; Stevenson & Baker (1987).

Jeynes(2004) states that although much research has focused on the importance of parental involvement in children's education, no detailed meta-analysis examines the influence of parental involvement on the academic achievement of the secondary-student population. This fact largely contributes to the limited body of knowledge regarding which aspects of parental involvement help student education, and just what components of this involvement are most important. A quantitative synthesis of 52 studies examined the effects of parental involvement on secondary students' academic achievement. The results of the meta-analysis indicate that parental involvement is associated with higher student achievement outcomes. This trend holds, not only for parental involvement overall, but for most components of parental involvement that were examined in the meta-analysis.

Keith and Keith (1993) used a form of path analysis to create a model that would test the influence of parent involvement on eighth-grade academic achievement. The variables that were included were ethnicity, family income and occupation, and the students' previous academic achievements. The results showed that parents with higher income appear to be more involved than those with lower income. They found that children of involved parents spend considerably more time doing homework and reading.

Rumberger and Larson (1998) focus on the question of why some minority students are successful in school and others are not. This study documented the extent of differences in educational achievement among a cohort of Mexican American language-minority students in a large, urban middle school, and assessed them using two theoretical perspectives namely socio-economic and socio-cultural. The findings suggest that SES can help explain the generally low educational achievement of Latino minority students.

The focus of this study (Desimone,1999) is based on how the effects of parental involvement vary for students from disparate racial-ethnic and economic backgrounds. Data from the National Educational Longitudinal Study: 1988 (NELS) were used to examine the relationship between 12 types of parent involvement and 8th grade mathematics and reading scores. The methodology was quantitative whereby questionnaires were administered to parents and students. Ordinary least-squares regression indicated that statistically significant differences existed in the relationship between parent involvement and student achievement, according to the students' race-ethnicity and family income. Consistent with previous research, SES had a statistically significant positive relationship with parental involvement.

The following research was undertaken by Singh et al (1995) to assess the effects of different components of parental involvement on the academic achievement of eighth graders. The underlying theory for this study was the substantive theory. The methodology was quantitative, whereby questionnaires were administered to both parents and students. The results suggest that educational aspirations of parents have a powerful influence on the eighth grade student's achievement. The study found a small negative effect of home structure on achievement, and no effect of parent-child communication and parental participation in school related activities, once other variables in the model were controlled. These effects appear age-specific, suggesting that parent involvement may affect learning more in elementary than in middle school.

Patrikakou (1997), utilized data from the NELS: 1988 to apply a model in an effort to better understand academic achievement among adolescents in four sample ethnic groups. The author concludes that the strongest direct impact on achievement was prior achievement, followed by student expectations. The greatest indirect effects were related to perceptions of parental expectations. The findings support the position that parental expectations, and perceptions of parental expectations are essential in raising the academic expectations and thus, the achievement of adolescents.

The study by Keith et al (1998) sought to determine the longitudinal effect of parent involvement on the grade point average of tenth grade students, and whether the effect varied by gender and ethnic group. Results indicated that parent involvement "has continuing and powerful effects on high school learning, as measured by grades, at least through the tenth grade level", with no significant differences between boys and girls. Among ethnic groups, stronger effects were noted for Native American adolescents, underscoring the value of parent involvement programs for these groups.

A study by Trusty (1998) examined the influence of family and parenting variables on expectations regarding education. Demographic, family and parenting variables were reported by adolescents (high school students) and parents. High socioeconomic status (SES) was most strongly related to educational expectations. Data from National Educational Longitudinal Study (NELS, 1988) were chosen from the present study because they quantify the variables in question. Parents' attendance at extra-curricular activities and adolescents' perceptions of parents' personal educational support seem to influence adolescents' educational expectations above and beyond the effects of SES.

Grolnick & Slowiaczek (1994) on the other hand, found that parents' school-related- rather than home-based involvement is more highly predictive of educational achievement. Grolnick & Slowiaczek measured three dimensions of parent involvement, namely: (a) parent behavior (parent- and teacher-reported participation in school activities), (b) personal involvement (student-reported parent involvement similar to home-based involvement), and (c) intellectual/cognitive involvement (student-reported educational activities with parents – similar to home-based involvement). Of the three dimensions, personal involvement had the weakest effects on academic achievement; parent behaviour had the strongest effects.

In their study, researchers (Hickman, Greenwood & Miller, 1995) examined the relationship between the achievement of high school students and the types of involvement of the primary care-giving parent. The study also included an analysis of student gender, socioeconomic status, and grade level. Participating parents were interviewed using the Parent Participation Interview (PPI). The analysis indicated that the only type of parental involvement positively related to achievement was the "home-based type" (monitoring homework, editing reports, etc.) as opposed to school-based involvement. The study also indicated that parents of average and low-achieving students are not actively involved in their children's education.

Using a nationally representative sample of American households, Stevenson & Baker (1987) examined the relation between parental involvement in schooling and the child's school performance. The findings were as follows: (1) The educational status of the mother is related to the degree of parental involvement in schooling, so that parents with more education are more involved. (2) Parental involvement is related to the child's school performance. Also, parents are more involved in school activities if the child is younger. (3) The mother's educational level and the age of the child are stronger predictors of parental involvement in schooling for boys than for girls.

A study conducted by Sui-chu & Willims (1996) identified four dimensions of parental involvement and assessed the relationship of each dimension with parental background and academic achievement for a large representative sample of U.S. middle school students. The four dimensions of parental involvement were: (1) discussing school activities; (2) monitoring a child's out-of-school activities; (3) contact between parent and school personnel and (4) volunteering at school and attending parent-teacher conferences. Student and parent questionnaires were administered. The findings provide little support for the conjecture that parents with low SES are less involved in their children's schooling than are parents with higher SES. The discussion of school-related activities at home had the strongest relationship with academic achievement. An important implication of these results for the study of school effects is that it is difficult to identify schools that have particularly high or low levels of parental involvement when the four types of involvement are considered together.

A review of the parental involvement literature has shown that some studies support the relationship between parental involvement and student achievement while other studies do not support the relationship. While research does support the positive effect of parental involvement on learning (Epstein, 1984; Walberg (1984a), research is limited in scope, and findings are often inconsistent. Thus, no clear guidance is available to parents and practitioners about what it means to be involved, or what forms of parental involvement are most effective in promoting learning.

Indeed, some researchers have found no effect of parental involvement on achievement of high school students (Keith, 1991; Keith, Reimers, Fehrmann, Pottebaum & Aubey, 1986).

Parental involvement in South Africa is unique and different from the rest of the world due to historical, political, social and economic factors. Furthermore, the experiences have to be classified according to the different South African racial groups. In this study, the focus is on education for black learners.

In the democratic era in South Africa, parents were encouraged by the Acts and White Papers to involve themselves in the education of their children. In March 1995 the White Paper on Education and Training was released. The paper is titled Education and Training in Democratic South Africa. Concerning the parents, the White Paper (1995a:21-23) highlights the importance of parent and community involvement:

The principle of democratic governance should increasingly be reflected in every level of the system, by the involvement in consultation and appropriate forms of decision-making of elected representatives of the main stakeholders, interest groups and role players. This is the only guaranteed way to infuse new social energy into the institutions and structures of the education and training system, dispel the chronic alienation of large sectors of society from the education process, and reduce the power of government administration to intervene where it should not.

The White Paper took parents and community involvement in the education of the child into consideration. Parents continue to be given a chance to involve themselves formally in the education of their children.

White Paper No.2, The Organization, Guidance and Funding of Schools, released in February 1996, included the following, “School Governing Bodies involve all stakeholder groups in active and responsible rules; encourage tolerance, rational discussion and attractive decision-making” (1996:16).

According to the White Paper (Department of Education.1996:17) each public school ought to have had a governing body by January 1997, which should have comprised:

Elected representatives of

- Parents or guardians of learners currently enrolled at school
- Teachers
- Learners (in secondary schools)
- Non-teaching staff
- The principal (*ex officio*)
- Members of the community, elected by the governing body

Although the above has been mandated, generally, parents are unaware of the formation of the Governing Bodies in schools and the role that parents should play in the education of their children.

In a study conducted by Van Wyk (1996) in a South African Township, the black parents under study were not involved in the education of their children due to various problems of a more practical nature such as illiteracy, working long hours and getting home late, children in the care of grandparents, or older brothers or sisters, and extreme poverty in the communities.

Mkwanazi (1994) also a South African Study, found that most teachers and principals attribute the lack of parent involvement to the parents themselves. She pointed out that teachers are not critical of themselves in the process of parent involvement. She added that most parents are extremely interested, and wish to assist in their children's progress but cannot do so because of the lack of stability in the broader social, economic and political context prevailing at the time of her research.

An empirical research project was conducted to determine the level of parental participation in school activities in South Africa by Heystek and Louw (1999). This research in the predominantly black schools investigates the parental involvement in school activities in primary and secondary schools in rural and urban areas. The research instrument employed was a structured questionnaire. The main findings from the statistical analysis were that parental participation in school activities is low. The most important reason why parents are not actively involved in school activities is their negative attitude towards school. The parents in urban primary schools are the group with the most negative attitude towards school. This highly negative attitude of the parents towards schools coincides with the low level of parental participation in school activities.

Research studies taken in South Africa especially in exclusively black communities indicate that the obstacles which hamper parents from becoming involved in the education of their children, are illiteracy, a lack of time, a negative school climate, a lack of parental involvement opportunities, urbanization, social circumstances, attitudes of parents, and the attitude of both educators and school managers.

Although results from the studies have provided evidence that parental involvement does indeed play an important role in students' academic progress, there is a decline in parental participation as children progress in adolescence (Snodgrass, 1991). Why is this so?

According to Hickman et al (1995), only a handful of studies have focused on the high school or middle schools level. The scarcity of research on secondary parental involvement, in contrast to the amount of research on elementary involvement, is a clue that secondary school parental involvement is a much less frequent phenomenon. However, parental involvement in the child's school life – usually his or her main social world – is important during the secondary years. The attitudes that students form during these years will probably determine much of their success in life.

It is also important to note that in addition to parental participation not being extensively researched for the age group of adolescents, the majority of the studies (especially overseas studies) investigated the issue using respondents of primarily white students.

Little research has been done at high school level, hence the researcher's preference to conduct research on adolescents. The purpose of this study was to examine the relationship between parental involvement and academic performance of learners in the secondary schools. The majority, if not all of the samples for this research were black students. Parent-child relations during adolescence undergo changes, and due to growing autonomy from parents at this stage, it is unclear how parental involvement in schooling, school activities, and programs would affect the secondary school students. Due to developmental differences, results from secondary school years may not be generalizable to junior school years.

Kettler, Valentine, Lucas & Miles (2002) state that making a broad generalization that parental involvement results in increased student achievement clearly understates the complexity of the issue. A review of the literature shows that student achievement outcomes differ based on:

- a) The particular component of parental involvement and whether this data was parent or student reported.
- b) The achievement measure(s) used (e.g. achievement test scores or grades).
- c) The cultural or racial/ethnic groups involved.
- d) The subject matter (e.g. mathematics, reading, science) being tested.
- e) Income levels of parents.
- f) Gender of the parents.

Most of the above research focused mainly on First World countries such as the United Kingdom and America. According to O'Toole (1989) and Ysseldyke, Lange & Gorney (1994) in developed countries such as the United Kingdom, parents participate in school governance structures, they are kept well-informed of their children's progress at school, and they influence decision-making, as well as the choice of schools for their children. In America, family resource centres were established near schools as a means of parent support. Parents are involved in assessment and the implementation of individual education programmes for children. In the Netherlands, parent co-operation between home and school is maintained through the provision of home counseling, and by allowing parents opportunities to draw up the curricula for their children.

In South Africa, parent involvement has been effected through co-operation between parents and teachers. Parents are now also part of the governing bodies at schools. It is clearly evident that parental involvement in the United Kingdom and America is vastly different from that in South Africa. There seems to be much more effort overseas with regard to parental involvement. Therefore, studies conducted in the United Kingdom and America will vary from studies conducted in South Africa due to differing circumstances.

The study thus focuses on the relationship between parental involvement and learner's academic achievement in a South African context. Previous research has not adequately focused on studies of this nature in a South African context, and from the theoretical perspective of the ecosystem. A Developmental-Ecological model provides a conceptual framework for understanding the multidimensional nature of family involvement (Bronfenbrenner, 1986). This perspective recognizes the family as the most important influence on the development of young children.

There has been extensive research done on this subject, however, not as extensive in the secondary school phase, and especially not in the South African context. Hence new ways for increasing parental involvement can always be discovered. Additional research and information in this area can do nothing but help all concerned.

2.5 Summary

A review of the parental involvement literature has shown that some studies support the relationship between parental involvement and student achievement, while other studies do not support the relationship. The findings are often inconsistent due to researchers using a number of different variables such as different components of parental involvement, the achievement measures, the subject matter, the age groups, income levels of parents, cultural or ethnic groups involved and gender of parents.

- According to the literature review, a number of studies have suggested that parents of higher SES are more involved in their children's education than are parents of lower SES.
- An analysis of the type of parental involvement related to achievement varies in studies:
 - (a) Parents' attendance at extra-curricular activities and adolescents' perceptions of parents' personal educational support seem to influence adolescents' educational expectations above and beyond the effects of SES.
 - (b) School-related rather than home-based involvement is more highly predictive of educational achievement.
 - (c) The analysis indicated that the only type of parental involvement positively related to academic achievement was the 'home-based type' as opposed to school-based involvement.
- In South African townships, the black parents under study were not involved in the education of the children due to various problems of a more practical nature such as illiteracy, working long hours, getting home late, children in care of grandparents and extreme poverty.

CHAPTER THREE

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 Aim of the chapter

This chapter focuses on a description of the research methodology. A research design describes the procedures for conducting the study, including when, from whom, and under what conditions the data was obtained. Included in this chapter are the ethics of research and the limitations of the research.

3.2 Introduction

“A research design indicates how the research is set up, what happens to the subjects and what methods of data collection are used” (McMillan & Schumacher, 2001:31). It is imperative to match the correct research design with the research questions as there are certain limitations and cautions in interpreting the results related to each design.

The study set out to examine the relationship between parental involvement and learner’s academic achievement. The following research questions were focused on:

1. Is there a relationship between parental involvement and learner’s academic performance?
2. What aspects of parental involvement contribute more to the relationship?
3. Is there a relationship between parent’s educational attainment and parental aspirations for their children’s education?

3.3 RESEARCH DESIGN

3.3.1 The Data Collection Technique

Research involves gathering information about the variables in the study. The researcher chooses from a wide range of techniques and approaches for collecting data from the subjects (McMillan & Schumacher, 2001). The methodology is one of triangulation i.e. making use of the 'mixed' method approach, by using data instruments from both the quantitative (self-completion questionnaire) and qualitative (structured interviews) approaches. According to Denzin & Lincoln (2003) the use of multiple methods, or triangulation, reflects an attempt to secure an in-depth understanding of the phenomenon in question. Neuman casts further light on the concept of triangulation as follows:

Surveyors and sailors measure distances between objects by making observations from multiple positions. By observing something from different angles or viewpoints, they get a fix on its true location (2000:124-125).

There are several types of triangulation. The most common is triangulation of measures. Researchers take multiple measures of the same phenomena. By measuring something in more than one way, they are more likely to see all aspects of it.

Triangulation of method means mixing qualitative and quantitative styles of research and data. Most researchers develop expertise in one style, but the two methods or styles have different, complementary strengths. Since there is only partial overlap, a study using both is fuller or more comprehensive. The approach for this study was largely a quantitative one supplemented by the qualitative approach.

McMillan and Schumacher define a quantitative study as:

an inquiry into a social or human problem, based on testing a theory composed of variables, measured with *numbers* and analyzed with *statistical procedures* in order to determine whether the predictive generalizations of the theory hold true (2001:15).

According to Reid & Smith (1981), the following can be added with regard to the quantitative approach:

- The researcher's role is that of objective observer.
- Studies are focused on relatively specific questions or hypotheses.
- Questions and hypotheses remain constant throughout the investigation.
- Data collection procedures and types of measurement are constructed in advance of the study and applied in a standardized manner.
- Data collectors are to avoid adding their own impressions or interpretations.
- Measurement is focused on specific variables that are quantified through rating scales, frequency counts and other means.
- Analysis proceeds by obtaining the statistical breakdown of the distribution of variables.
- Statistical methods are used to determine associations (or differences) between variables.

The first part of the study was conducted in the form of a survey intended to examine the relationship between parental involvement and learner's academic performance. A questionnaire was administered to the learners' parents. McMillan & Schumacher (2001:40) explain questionnaires to encompass a variety of instruments in which the subject responds to written questions to elicit reactions, beliefs, and attitudes. The researcher is simply interested in identifying feelings, thoughts, and behaviors of the parents.

In the first phase of the research, my role as researcher was quite distant and detached from those completing the questionnaires. My preference for choosing the survey was to be an objective researcher in the process. I did not want to 'contaminate' the data. I wanted to remain detached from the process in the hope of not prejudicing the data, or impose my views on the participants.

Qualitative research, on the other hand is a research strategy that usually emphasizes *words* rather than quantification in the collection and analysis of data. The second part of the study focused on the structured interview. A structured interview, sometimes called a standardized interview, entails the administration of an interview schedule by an interviewer. The aim is for all interviewees to be given exactly the same context of questioning. This means that each respondent receives exactly the same interview stimulus as every other. The goal of this style of interviewing is to ensure that interviewee's replies can be aggregated and this can be achieved reliably only if those replies are in response to identical cues (Bryman, 2004).

The second phase saw me closely involved in posing questions to some of the parents and seeking clarification from them. After the collection of data from the questionnaire and an analysis of the data thereof, I used the results as a springboard for my interviews. It is here that I required in-depth, rich data to complement and strengthen the data received from the questionnaires.

The following assessment instruments were used to obtain the data:

- A questionnaire designed by the researcher for parents in order to assess the degree and extent of their involvement in the education of their children.
- Structured interviews were conducted with parents to supplement information from the questionnaire.

- The researcher used the March Standardized test marks and the Mid-term test marks to determine the indices of academic performance. Both the test marks would provide a more continuous measure of student progress. The tests appeared to provide reliable and valid estimates of student achievement.
- These marks were used against the data obtained from the parent questionnaire to determine if there were any relationships between parents who were involved in their children's education, and the children's academic performance.

3.3.1.1 The Construction of the Research Instruments

A. The Questionnaire

The New Dictionary of Social Work (1995:51) defines a questionnaire as “a set of questions on a form which is completed by the respondent in respect of a research project”. The questions can be open (e.g. “Do you have any comments on this matter?”) or closed, with an option to respond either ‘yes’ or ‘no’. Alternatively, the questionnaire can contain statements to which respondents are requested to react.

The questions were largely close-ended and they prescribed a range of responses from which respondents could choose. They were quick to complete, and straightforward, especially since the majority completing the questionnaire were second language English speaking respondents. There were, however, a few open-ended questions that allowed for flexibility of response. Open-ended questions were to tap information that might not otherwise have been captured in the questionnaire.

The close-ended questions placed restrictions on the responses from the subjects, whereas the open-ended questions allowed subjects to respond freely, and to be uninhibited in their choice of responses.

The parent questionnaire was divided into the following sections namely:-

1. Part one:
Biographical information
2. Part two: Five components of parental involvement
 - 2.1 Parental aspirations for children's education – parents' hope or expectations with regard to the level of education their children would or should attain.
 - 2.2 Parent-child communication about school was designed to measure the degree of communication between learners and their parents about school and school-related activities. It included parents' rulings of the frequency of discussions about the child's experiences at school and educational plans for after high school.
 - 2.3 At-home involvement was designed to reflect the degree of home involvement.
The structure included help with homework, supervision of reading, assistance with preparation for the test/exams, monitoring of T.V. viewing, playing computer games and going out on school nights.
 - 2.3 School-home communication – awareness of informative letters, contact between parent and teacher about child's progress.
 - 2.4 School-related activities included parents' responses and the extent to which parents participated in school activities. It included parents' responses in relation to their participation in parent-teacher organizations, volunteering in some activities such as giving talks, acting as replacement teachers, helping in the school tuck-shop, cleaning, etc.

The questionnaire was used to gather data from 115 learners' parents of both the schools.

The researcher opted for the questionnaire for the following reasons:

- ✓ The parents could complete the questionnaire at their own convenience.
- ✓ It was less time-consuming than interviews.
- ✓ The researcher did not want to ‘contaminate’ the data. The researcher wished to remain objective throughout the process.

Further to the questionnaire, the researcher interviewed twenty parents using the structured interview technique to capture the varying responses of the parents.

B. The structured Interview

The structured interview comprised eight questions that allowed subjects to respond freely. The structured interview was conducted by the researcher using the telephone as a means of communication. This means of communication was chosen because it was far cheaper and also quicker to administer particularly in the case of personal interviews, where interviewers have to spend a great deal of time and money traveling between respondents. This factor is even more pronounced when a sample is geographically dispersed.

3.3.1.2 Validity and Reliability

To obtain valid and reliable data one must ensure, before implementing the study, that the measurement procedures and the measurement instruments to be used have acceptable levels of reliability and validity. Reliability and validity are two of the most important concepts in the context of measurement (De Vos, 2002).

Reliability refers to the extent to which independent administration of the same instrument (or highly similar instruments) consistently yields the same (or similar) results under comparable conditions. Reliability is primarily concerned not with what is being measured but with how well it is being measured (De Vos, 2002).

According to McMillan & Schumacher (2001:181), test validity is the extent to which inferences on the basis of numerical scores are appropriate, meaningful, and useful. The questionnaire was examined and commented upon by some experts from the Division of Educational Psychology, School of Educational Studies at the University of KwaZulu Natal (Edgewood Campus).

Pilot-testing is part of the process of validating an instrument. According to Singleton, Straits, Straits & McAllistar (1988), the pre-testing of a measuring instrument consists of “trying it out on a small number of persons having characteristics similar to those of the target group of respondents”.

In all cases it is essential that newly constructed questionnaires, i.e. in their semi-final form, be thoroughly pilot-tested before being utilized in the main investigation. This ensures that errors of whatever nature can be rectified immediately at little cost.

No matter how effective the sampling or analysis of the results is, ambiguous questions lead to non-comparable responses, leading questions lead to biased responses, and vague questions lead to vague responses. Only after the necessary modifications have been made following the pilot test, should the questionnaire be presented to the full sample (De Vos, 2002).

The researcher pilot-tested the questionnaire by administering a sample of fifteen questionnaires to parents in a school (other than School A and School B) having characteristics similar to those of the target group of respondents. The necessary modifications were made and then the questionnaires were administered to the full samples.

In order to examine the validity of the results, the researcher used the Standardized March test mark and the Mid-term test marks against the data of parental involvement. The March test was conducted before the research, whereas the mid-term exam was administered 3 months after the research was conducted. The researcher computed the average between the two marks. This average mark was used against the data obtained from the parent questionnaire to determine if there were any relationships between parents who were involved in their children's education and the children's academic performance.

The question of whether respondents completed questionnaires accurately, honestly, correctly and returned the completed questionnaire impacts on the validity of the questionnaire as a research instrument.

3.3.2 Population and Sampling

The population studied consisted of all parents who had children in Grades 9, 10 and 11 attending one of the two public secondary schools.

As a group, subjects are usually referred to as a sample. Subjects will be selected from the population so that all members of the population have the same probability of being chosen (McMillan & Schumacher, 2001). Simple random sampling was used in the study. The researcher used this sampling strategy for the following reasons:

- In random sampling, the chances of members of the wider population being selected for the sample are known.
- Every member of the population has an equal chance of being included in the sample.
- The random sampling is useful to the researcher who wishes to make generalizations from the wider population.

All learners from the above grades were issued with consent forms. Only those learners who returned the signed consent forms were allowed to participate in the study. As a result, the present study was limited to 115 learners' parents from both the schools hence a small-scale research project. These figures represent 20% of the consent forms handed out to learners. The sites chosen were School A and School B.

3.3.2.1 Problems with sampling

- Students had to be issued with consent forms by virtue of the fact that they were minors. Low returns on the consent forms were not anticipated. Students failed to return consent forms and as a result, only those students who returned the consent forms were allowed to participate in the study.
- It was not feasible for the researcher to conduct interviews by visiting parents in their homes because of the sample being geographically dispersed.
- Financial and time constraints limited the possibility of extensive travel. Hence the researcher's choice to conduct interviews telephonically. This means of communication was far cheaper and also quicker to administer.

3.3.2.2 Dependent and independent variables

In quantitative research, the aim is to determine the relationship between one thing (an independent variable) and another (a dependent variable) in a population. In descriptive studies, subjects are usually measured once, only to establish associations between variables. The dependent variable in this study was the learner's performance and the independent variable was parental involvement.

3.3.2.3 Ethics of Research

The fact that human beings are the objects of study in the social sciences, brings unique ethical problems to the fore that would never be relevant in the pure, clinical laboratory settings of the natural sciences. For researchers in the social sciences, the ethical issues are pervasive and complex, since data should never be obtained at the expense of human beings (De Vos, 2002).

Ethics are generally considered to deal with beliefs about what is right or wrong, proper or improper, good or bad. Naturally, there is some degree of disagreement about how to define what is ethically correct in research (McMillan & Schumacher 2001:196). However, the necessary procedures need to be adhered to in order to carry out the research.

Most studies require the investigator to secure informed consent from the subjects before they participate in the research. Consent is an important ethical issue in any study, more so with minors. Karlsson (2001:30) states that legitimate access to learners through parental consent is essential, to ensure that participation is a negotiated arrangement that is free of intimidation, and that the extent of the participation and researcher's purpose and control is clearly understood. If a subject decides not to participate, the decision must be respected. Confidentiality and anonymity is also important.

Cohen, Manion and Morrison maintain that:

Each stage in the research sequence may be a potential source of ethical problems. They may arise from the nature of the research project itself, the context of the research, methods of data collection, the nature of the participants, the type of data collected and what is being done with the data.
(2000:5)

The following ethical issues are relevant to this study:-

1. A copy of the research proposal was sent to the Ethics Council at the University of Kwa-Zulu Natal (Edgewood Campus) for approval and consent to continue with the research study.
2. A copy of the research proposal was sent to the Department of Education requesting for permission to conduct research at School A and School B.
4. The identity and background of the researcher was known to all participants.
5. The purpose of the research and the procedures to be followed was fully explained to all participants.
6. The outcome of the final study was made available to the Principal.
7. Informed consent was obtained from both the school principals.
8. Participants had a right to terminate their involvement at any time.
9. The dignity, privacy and interests of all participants was respected through the promise of confidentiality.
10. A letter of thanks for allowing the researcher to conduct the studies at their schools has been forwarded to the principals of both schools.

3.4 Limitations of the research

The present study has been subjected to the following limitations:

1. A possibility that some students completed the questionnaires instead of their parents.
2. Some questions on the questionnaire may have been of a sensitive nature. It would be possible that some parents responded in socially desirable ways, or some parents may have chosen not to answer the question e.g. income or educational qualifications.
3. Trustworthiness of information from parents is questionable.
4. The majority of the respondents were blacks and their first language is Zulu. The questionnaire was in English – hence the possibility that some of the respondents did not fully understand the questions.

3.5 Summary

This above chapter very succinctly described the procedure for conducting the study.

Chapter Four will focus on the results and the analysis of data. The data will be analyzed according to the three research questions posed in Chapter One of the study.

CHAPTER FOUR

RESULTS AND ANALYSIS OF DATA

4.1 Aim of this chapter

The aim of this chapter is to present the results of the study and the data analysis. The analysis will include a descriptive summary of Part One (biographical information) and Part Two (components of parental involvement) of the questionnaire. A further analysis and interpretation of the data will be completed, to establish the degree and extent of parental involvement in the two secondary schools in Kwa-Zulu Natal. Thereafter, a statistical analysis will be done to determine the strength of the relationship, if any, between parental involvement and learner's academic achievement.

4.2 Introduction

Kerlinger (1986) states that data analysis (in the quantitative paradigm) entails that the analyst breaks data into constituent parts to obtain answers to research questions, or to test research hypotheses. The analysis of research data, however, does not in itself provide the answers to research questions. Interpretation of the data is necessary. To interpret is to explain, to find meaning. It is difficult, or impossible, to explain raw data; one must first describe and analyze the data and then interpret the results of the analysis. Kerlinger further elaborates by stating that analysis means the categorizing, ordering, manipulating and summarizing of data to obtain answers to research questions. The purpose of analysis is to reduce data to an intelligible and interpretable form, so that the relations of research problems can be studied, tested, and conclusions drawn.

The purpose of this chapter is to analyze and interpret the data collected from questionnaires. The first part focuses on the analysis of the data and the second part focuses on the interpretation of the data. Questionnaires were administered to the learners' parents from both the schools.

The capturing and the processing of the data was effected using the STATS package, SPSS. The presentation and the discussion of the results are divided under the following:-

1. Presentation of results from the parent questionnaire.
2. The degree of parental involvement in children's education.
3. Correlation coefficient – Relationship between parental involvement and learner's academic performance.
4. The extent of parental involvement based on the different types of involvement.
5. Correlation coefficient- Relationship between parent's educational attainment and parental aspirations.

The parent questionnaire was divided into two sections. The first section consisted of biographical information, and the second section consisted of the different components of parental involvement namely:-

1. Parental aspirations for children's education
2. Parent-child communication about school
3. School-home communication
4. At-home involvement
5. School-related activities

4.3 PARENTS' RESPONSES TO THE QUESTIONNAIRE

4.3.1 BIOGRAPHICAL INFORMATION

Tables 1-4 present demographic information about the parent respondents.

Table 1: Respondents marital status and gender

| STATUS | ALTERNATE RESPONSES | TOTAL | % |
|----------------|---------------------|------------|--------------|
| MARITAL STATUS | single | 43 | 37.4 |
| | married | 67 | 58.3 |
| | widow | 5 | 4.3 |
| | Total | 115 | 100.0 |
| GENDER | female | 90 | 78.3 |
| | male | 25 | 21.7 |
| | Total | 115 | 100.0 |

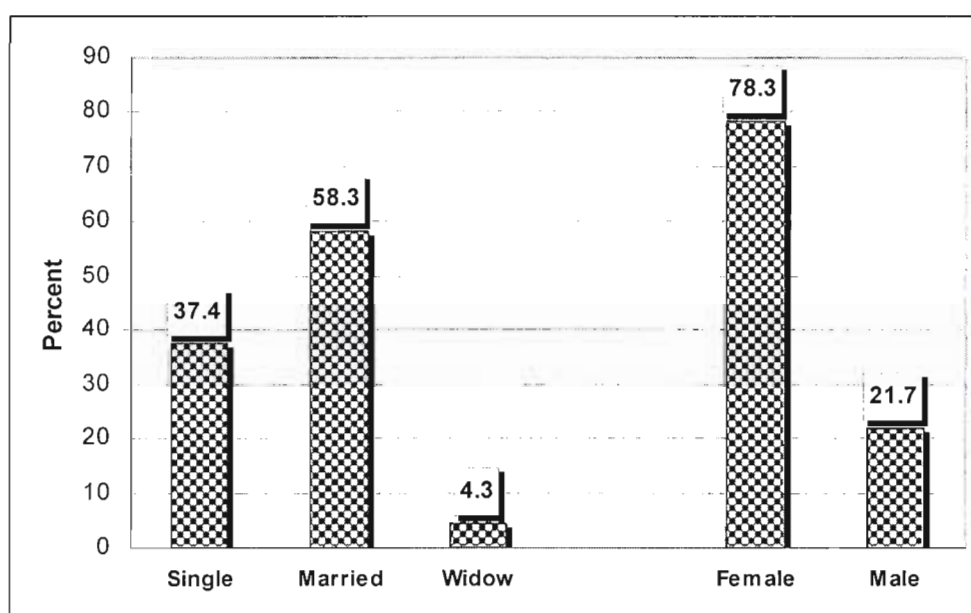
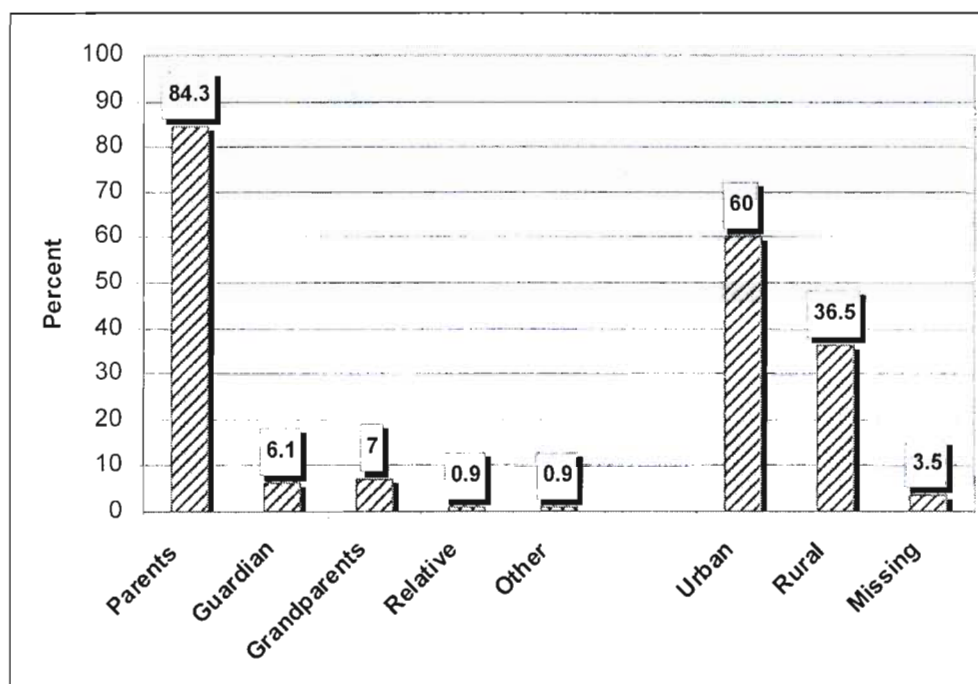


Figure 1.4 – Status and gender of parents (N=115)

Of the one hundred and fifteen respondents (115), 67 (58.3%) are married while 43 (37.4%) are single and the remainder of which, 5 (4.3%) are widowed. The majority of the respondents are female (90 or 78.3%) while the male respondents make up 25 (21.7%).

Table 2 : Relationship to learners and where they live.

| STATUS | ALTERNATE RESPONSES | TOTAL | % |
|-----------------------------|---------------------|------------|--------------|
| RELATIONSHIP TO THE LEARNER | Parent/s | 97 | 84.3 |
| | Guardian | 7 | 6.1 |
| | Grandparents | 8 | 7.0 |
| | Relative | 1 | .9 |
| | Other | 1 | .9 |
| | Missing system | 1 | .9 |
| | Total | 115 | 100.0 |
| URBAN/RURAL | Urban area | 69 | 60.0 |
| | Rural area | 42 | 36.5 |
| | Missing system | 4 | 3.5 |
| | Total | 115 | 100.0 |

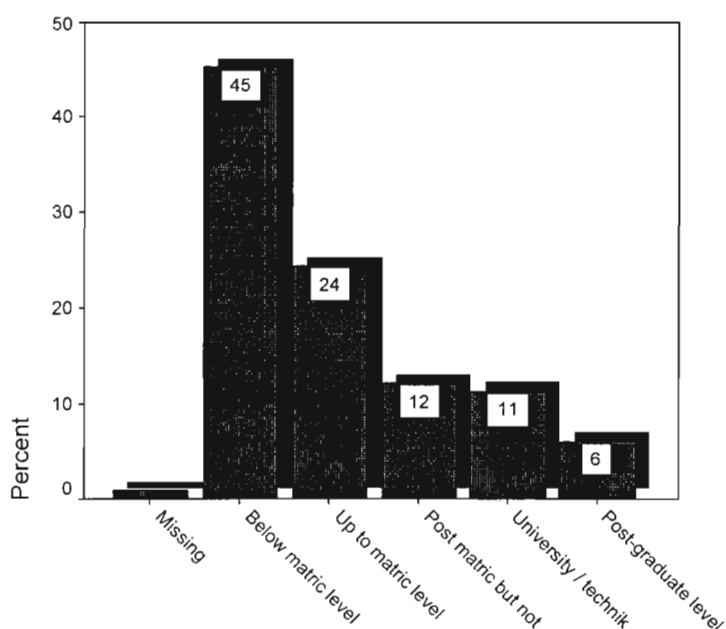
**Figure 1.5 – Relationship to learners and where they live (N=115)**

The questionnaires were completed by 97 parents (84.3%), 7 (6.1%) were completed by the guardians while 8 (7.0%) were completed by the grandparents.

The number of respondents living in urban areas was 69 (60.0%) as compared to 42 (36.5%) living in rural areas:

Table 3: Respondents by Educational Attainment

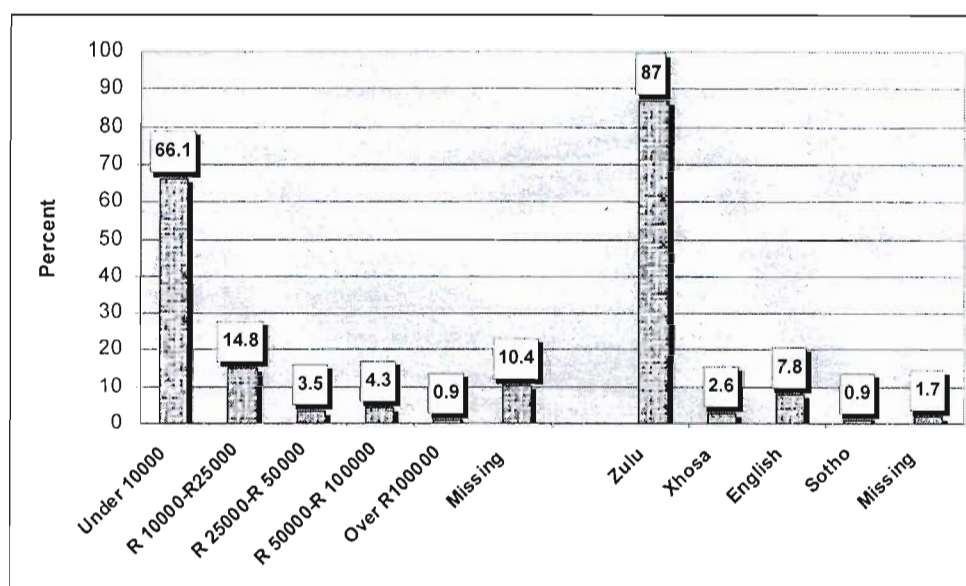
| STATUS | ALTERNATE RESPONSES | TOTAL | % |
|------------------------|--|------------|--------------|
| EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT | Below matric level | 52 | 45.2 |
| | Up to matric level | 28 | 24.3 |
| | Post matric but not up to tertiary level | 14 | 12.2 |
| | University/technikon degree/diploma | 13 | 11.3 |
| | Post-graduate level | 7 | 6.1 |
| | Missing system | 1 | .9 |
| | Total | 115 | 100.0 |

**Figure 1.6 - Educational Attainment (N=115)**

Parents with educational attainment lower than matric level comprised (52) 45.2%, while those parents who had completed matric made up 28 (24.3%). A minority of 13 (11.3%) parents had attended a University/Technikon. Seven (6.1%) of the respondents indicated that they had attained a post-graduate degree.

Table 4: Respondents by Income levels and Home language

| STATUS | ALTERNATE RESPONSES | TOTAL | % |
|---------------|---------------------|------------|--------------|
| INCOME LEVEL | Less than R10, 000 | 76 | 66.1 |
| | R10,000-R25,000 | 17 | 14.8 |
| | R25,000-R50,000 | 4 | 3.5 |
| | R50,000-R100,000 | 5 | 4.3 |
| | Over R100,000 | 1 | .9 |
| | Missing system | 12 | 10.4 |
| | Total | 115 | 100.0 |
| HOME LANGUAGE | Zulu | 100 | 87.0 |
| | Xhosa | 3 | 2.6 |
| | English | 9 | 7.8 |
| | Sotho | 1 | .9 |
| | Missing system | 2 | 1.7 |
| | Total | 115 | 100.0 |

**Figure 1.7 - Income level per annum and Home language (115)**

Of the one hundred and fifteen respondents, 66.1% of the respondents earned below R10,000, 14.8% earned between R10,000-R25,000, 3.5% earned between R25,000-R50,000, 4.3% earned between R50,000-R100,000 and 0.9% earned over R100,000.

The mother tongue language of the majority of the parents was Zulu (87%), while only 7.8% of parents' first language was English.

4.3.2 FIVE COMPONENTS OF PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT

The table below displays parents' responses with regard to their *aspirations for their children's education*.

Table 5: Parental aspirations for children's education

| STATEMENT | ALTERNATE RESPONSES | TOTAL | % |
|----------------------------------|--|------------|--------------|
| 8. EDUCATIONAL ASPIRATIONS | Less than grade 12 | 1 | .9 |
| | Grade 12 | 3 | 2.6 |
| | University | 36 | 31.3 |
| | Technikon | 28 | 24.3 |
| | Masters, Ph.D or other advanced degree | 47 | 40.0 |
| | Total | 115 | 100.0 |

Parental aspirations for children's education are the expectations, or hopes, with regard to the level of education their children would, or should, attain.

According to the information displayed on Table 5 above, 40% of parents want their children to aspire to complete Master's or PhD degrees or even higher qualifications if possible. On the whole, 31.3% of parents expect their children to go beyond the first degree qualification. In general, therefore, it would seem that parents of these two schools have very high expectations for their children's educational attainment.

The table below displays information with respect to parents' responses on the frequency of *parent-child communication* about school.

Table 6: Frequency of parent-child communication about school

| STATEMENT | ALTERNATE RESPONSES | TOTAL | % |
|---|---------------------|------------|--------------|
| 9. DISCUSS EXPERIENCES ABOUT SCHOOL | Never | 13 | 11.3 |
| | Twice weekly | 29 | 25.2 |
| | Twice monthly | 20 | 17.4 |
| | Everyday | 49 | 42.6 |
| | Missing system | 4 | 3.5 |
| | Total | 115 | 100.0 |
| 10.TALK ABOUT EDUCATIONAL PLANS FOR AFTER HIGH SCHOOL | Never | 5 | 4.3 |
| | Rarely | 4 | 3.5 |
| | Sometimes | 54 | 47.0 |
| | Often | 48 | 41.7 |
| | Missing system | 4 | 3.5 |
| | Total | 115 | 100.0 |

Parent-child communication about school includes parents' rulings on the frequency of discussions about the child's experiences at school and educational plans for after high school.

Forty nine (42.6%) of parents discussed their children's experiences about school on a daily basis. According to the information, thirteen (11.3%) indicated that they had never discussed their children's experiences about school. When you combine parents who indicated that they discussed their child's experiences about school at least twice weekly with those who did this everyday, it would seem that quite a high percentage of parents do actually take an interest in their children's education.

Of the total number of 115 parents, 48 (41.7%) indicated that they often talked to their children about their future educational plans. Fifty- four (47.0%) of parents indicated that they sometimes talked to their children about their future educational plans. Four (3.5%) of parents indicated that they rarely talked to their children about their future educational plans. It seems that parents generally talk to their children about their future educational plans.

The table below displays parents' responses to the different types of school-home communication.

Table 7: Types of school-home communication by parents

| STATEMENTS | ALTERNATE RESPONSES | TOTAL | % |
|--|---------------------|------------|--------------|
| 11. AWARE OF INFORMATIVE LETTERS | Yes | 107 | 93.0 |
| | No | 6 | 5.2 |
| | Missing system | 2 | 1.7 |
| | Total | 115 | 100.0 |
| 12. CONTACT WITH TEACHERS ABOUT PROGRESS | Yes | 61 | 53.0 |
| | No | 49 | 42.6 |
| | Missing system | 5 | 4.3 |
| | Total | 115 | 100.0 |
| 13. CONTACT WITH TEACHERS THIS YEAR ABOUT CHILD'S PROGRESS | None | 52 | 42.2 |
| | Once | 26 | 22.6 |
| | Twice | 20 | 17.4 |
| | More than twice | 14 | 12.2 |
| | Missing system | 3 | 2.6 |
| | Total | 115 | 100.0 |

For the purpose of this study, school-home communication would include parental activities, such as receiving correspondence from school, communicating with the school by contacting the educators about the progress of their children and to discuss learners' academic performances.

A positive response of 93% shows that parents are aware of and are receiving information from school about their children's educational progress. Only 5.2% of respondents are not receiving exam timetables, progress reports, consent forms and other informative letters. More than 90% of the parents interviewed stated that communication between the school and home is excellent. Parents receive the necessary correspondence and are well-informed about the happenings of the school.

Of the one hundred and fifteen respondents 61 parents (53%) have contacted the teachers about the progress of their children, while 49 parents (42.6%) have not contacted the teachers about the progress of their children.

For the current year, 2005, only 14 (12.2%) parents have contacted the school about their children's performance. Fifty-two (42.2%) parents are yet to contact the school about their children's performance.

Tables 8-10 below display parents' responses to the different types of *at-home involvement*.

Table 8: Supervision and help with homework

| STATEMENTS | ALTERNATE RESPONSES | TOTAL | % |
|--|---------------------|------------|--------------|
| 14. HELP YOUR CHILD WITH HOMEWORK | Yes | 100 | 87.0 |
| | No | 12 | 10.4 |
| | Missing system | 3 | 2.6 |
| | Total | 115 | 100.0 |
| 15. POSSESSION OF A HOMEWORK RECORD BOOK | Yes | 49 | 42.6 |
| | No | 60 | 52.2 |
| | Missing system | 6 | 5.2 |
| | Total | 115 | 100.0 |

At-home involvement would include parental activities, such as supervising and helping children with homework, preparation for tests/exams and reading, monitoring the amount of time your children spend watching TV or playing computer games and going out with friends on school nights.

A positive response of 87% of parents indicated that they helped their children with their homework. However, 52.2% of parents did not check and sign their children's homework record book on a daily basis. A high percentage of parents (87%) indicated that they assist their children to prepare for tests/exams.

Table 9: Supervision of tests/exams/reading

| STATEMENTS | ALTERNATE RESPONSES | TOTAL | % |
|--|---------------------|------------|--------------|
| 16. SUPERVISE STUDIES DURING TESTS/EXAMS | Yes | 100 | 87.0 |
| | No | 10 | 8.7 |
| | Missing system | 5 | 4.3 |
| | Total | 115 | 100.0 |
| 17. SUPERVISE WITH READING | Never | 24 | 20.9 |
| | Twice weekly | 22 | 19.1 |
| | Twice monthly | 14 | 12.2 |
| | Every day | 46 | 40.0 |
| | Missing system | 9 | 7.8 |
| | Total | 115 | 100.0 |

Of the one hundred and fifteen respondents, 46 (40%) parents indicated that they supervised their children's reading on a daily basis. Twenty four (20.9%) of parents have never supervised their children's reading, twenty two (19.1%) of respondents supervised their children's reading twice weekly, while fourteen (12.2%) of parents supervised their children's reading twice monthly.

Table 10: Monitoring of TV viewing, playing computer games and going out with friends on school nights

| STATEMENTS | ALTERNATE RESPONSES | TOTAL | % |
|--|------------------------|------------|--------------|
| 18. LIMIT THE AMOUNT OF TIME SPENT WATCHING TV | Never | 16 | 13.9 |
| | Rarely | 6 | 5.2 |
| | Sometimes | 55 | 47.8 |
| | Often | 30 | 26.1 |
| | Do not have a TV | | |
| | Missing system | 5 | 4.3 |
| | Total | 115 | 100.0 |
| 19. LIMIT THE AMOUNT OF TIME SPENT PLAYING COMPUTER GAMES | Never | 10 | 8.7 |
| | Rarely | 3 | 2.6 |
| | Sometimes | 17 | 14.8 |
| | Often | 10 | 8.7 |
| | Do not have a computer | 73 | 63.5 |
| | Missing system | 2 | 1.7 |
| | Total | 115 | 100.0 |
| 20. LIMIT THE AMOUNT OF TIME SPENT GOING OUT WITH FRIENDS ON SCHOOL NIGHTS | Never | 35 | 30.4 |
| | Rarely | 6 | 5.2 |
| | Sometimes | 27 | 23.5 |
| | Often | 42 | 36.5 |
| | Missing system | 5 | 4.3 |
| | Total | 115 | 100.0 |
| 21. PARENTS AT HOME AFTER SCHOOL | Never | 16 | 13.9 |
| | Rarely | 13 | 11.3 |
| | Sometimes | 51 | 44.3 |
| | Often | 31 | 27.0 |
| | Missing system | 4 | 3.5 |
| | Total | 115 | 100.0 |

Out of the one hundred and fifteen respondents, thirty parents indicated that they often limited the amount of time their children spend watching T.V., while sixteen parents indicated that they have never limited the amount of time their children spend watching T.V.

According to the table above, 73 (63.5%) parents do not have computers at home, which means their children don't have computer games to play with at home. Ten or 8.7% of the respondents often limit the amount of time their children spend on the computer.

The response from both schools indicated that 42 (36.5%) parents limited the amount of time their children spend going out with friends on school nights, while 35 (30.4%) parents have never limited the amount of time their children spend going out on school nights. Generally, 31% of parents are at home when their children return from school, while 16% of the respondents indicated that they are never at home when their children return from school.

The table below displays the parents' responses to different types of *school-related activities*.

Table 11: School-related activities

| STATEMENTS | ALTERATE RESPONSES | TOTAL | % |
|---|-----------------------|------------|--------------|
| 22. PARENTS VOLUNTEER AT SCHOOL | Yes | 18 | 15.7 |
| | No | 94 | 81.7 |
| | Missing system | 3 | 2.6 |
| | Total | 115 | 100.0 |
| 23. BELONG TO A PTO. | Yes | 25 | 21.7 |
| | No | 87 | 75.7 |
| | Missing system | 3 | 2.6 |
| | Total | 115 | 100.0 |
| 24. TAKE PART IN THE ACTIVITIES OF THE PTO. | Yes | 41 | 35.7 |
| | No | 69 | 60.0 |
| | Missing system | 5 | 4.3 |
| | Total | 115 | 100.0 |

For the purpose of this study, school-related activities would include parental activities, such as volunteering at school for various activities (teaching, acting as replacement teachers, giving talks e.g. careers, assisting in the tuck shop, cleaning, etc.) belonging to a PTO and taking part in the activities of the PTO.

The majority of the respondents 81.7% indicated that they do not act as volunteers at school, while 75.7% of parents do not belong to a parent-teacher organization. Furthermore, 60% of respondents do not take part in the activities of the parent-teacher organization.

Of all the parents interviewed, there was a 100% negative response to participation in the activities of the PTO. Some of the parents were unaware of a PTO in the school. The majority of parents are working parents, and due to time constraints do not participate in the activities of the PTO.

4.4 THE DEGREE OF PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT IN CHILDREN'S EDUCATION

The following steps were taken to establish the degree of parental involvement in children's education:

- The questionnaire comprised of 18 questions that were related to parental involvement. The 18 questions were coded into "yes" and "no" responses.
- The researcher added the "yes" responses and calculated it into percentage form .
- A range of :
 80-89% was categorized into high parental involvement.
 50-79% was categorized as average parental involvement.
 Below 50% was categorized as low parental involvement.
 This categorization was done at the discretion of the researcher.

The table below displays the degree of parental involvement in children's education.

Table 12: Degree of parental involvement in children's education

| Degree of parental involvement | Range | No. of parents | Percent |
|--------------------------------|-----------|----------------|-------------|
| High parental involvement | 80-89% | 5 | 4% |
| Average parental involvement | 50-79% | 56 | 49% |
| Low parental involvement | Below 50% | 54 | 47% |
| Total | | 115 | 100% |

According to the information, the degree of parental involvement differs. The degree of involvement can be categorized into high, average and low parental involvement.

On a scale ranging from 0%-100% of involvement, five or 4% of parents had their involvement in their children's education as between 80-89% (high parental involvement), fifty-six or 49% parents' involvement rated as between 50-59% (average parental involvement) while fifty-four or 47% parents' involvement rated as below 50% ((low parental involvement).

Overall, 61 parents (53%) are involved above 50% in their children's education, while 54 parents (47%) are involved below 50% in their children's education. Of the one hundred and fifteen parents, the data showed that not one parent was 100% involved in his/her child's education.

The results indicate generally low parental involvement.

The table below displays the marks of the students with high parental involvement.

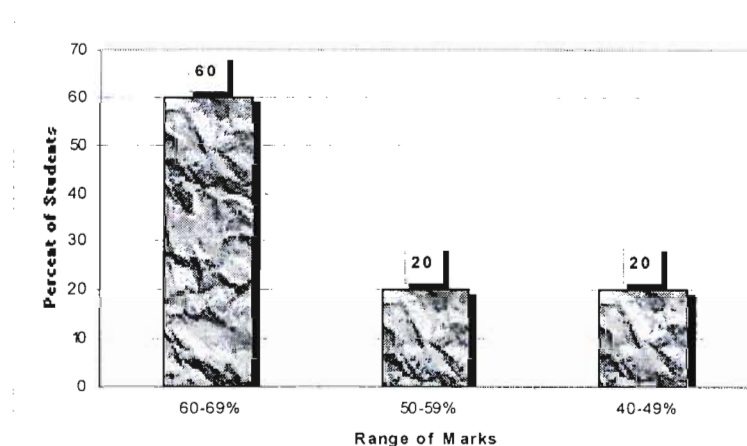


Figure 1.8 : High parental involvement – students marks

Of all the students (5) whose parents' involvement are rated as high, 3 (60%) scored between 60-69% , 1 (20%) scored between 50-59%, while the remaining 1 scored between 40-49% in the March/June tests (used as an index of academic performance).

The table below displays the marks of the students with average parental involvement.

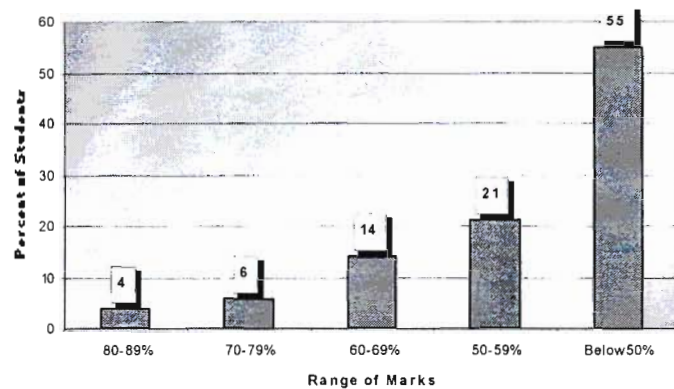


Figure 1.9 Average parental involvement – student's marks

56 (49%) children come from parents whose involvement in their children's education have been rated as average (that is, 50-79%). Of these 56 children:

- 2 scored between 80-89% in the March/June tests
- 3 scored between 70-79%
- 8 scored between 60-69%
- 12 scored between 50-59% and
- 31 scored below 50%.

The table below displays the marks of the students with low parental involvement.

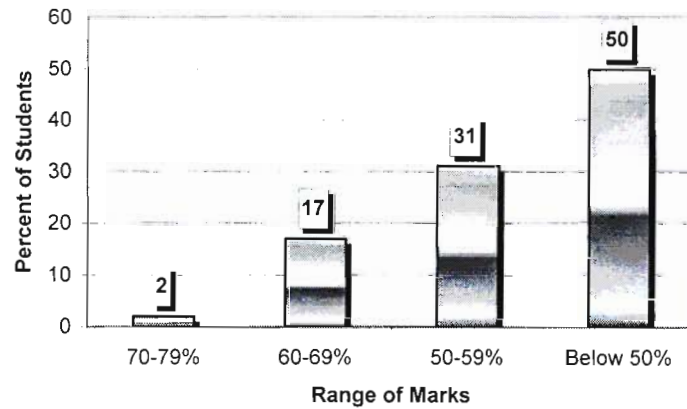


Figure 1.10: Low parental involvement – student's marks

54 (47%) children come from parents whose involvement in their children's education have been rated as low (that is, below 50%). Of these 54 children:

- 1 scored between 70-79% in the March/June tests
- 9 scored between 60-69%
- 17 scored between 50-59% and
- 27 scored below 50%.

Generally, only 20% of students (1) averaged below 50% from the category of high parental involvement, 55% of students (31) averaged below 50% from the category of average parental involvement, while 50% of students (27) averaged below 50% from the category of low parental involvement.

4.5 CORRELATION RESULTS: PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT VERSES STUDENTS RESULTS

Correlation analysis examines the strength of the identified association between variables (Wegner: 1995). Pearson's Correlation Matrix indicates the direction, strength and significance of the bivariate relationship among the variables in the study (Cooper & Emory: 1995).

Correlation coefficient (r) can only take on values from -1 to $+1$. The plus sign (+ve sign) in the front indicates whether there is a positive correlation (as one variable increases, so too does the other) or the minus sign (-) in the front indicates a negative correlation (as one variable increases, the other variable decreases). The size of the absolute value (ignoring the sign) provides an indication of the strength of the relationship.

A correlation can reveal the following conclusions or results:

1. Significance of correlation
2. If significant, whether it is positive or negative (direction of correlation)
3. Strength of the correlation – no correlation, perfect correlation

Correlation scale

1. If the significant value (p value) is $P \leq 0.05$ then the relationship is statistically significant.
2. Correlation (p) values start from -1 to $+1$.
3. This -ve means a negative correlation (if one variable increases the other variable will decrease).
4. This +ve means a positive relationship (if one variable increases the other variable will also increase).
5. -ve or +ve indicates the direction of relationship between two variables (Cooper & Emory, 1995)

Strength Relationship

| | |
|--|--------------------|
| $r = .10$ to $.29$ or $-.10$ to $-.29$ | small correlation |
| $r = .30$ to $.49$ or $-.30$ to $-.49$ | medium correlation |
| $r = .50$ to 1.0 or $-.50$ to -1.0 | strong correlation |

Table 13: Results of Correlation Analysis

| | Q1:Parental Involvement | Q2: Students results |
|--|----------------------------|-------------------------|
| Q1: Parental Involvement Pearson Correlation | 1 | .496** |
| Sig (2-tailed) | . | .000 |
| N | 115 | 115 |
| Q2: Students results Pearson Correlation | .496** | 1 |
| Sig (2-tailed) | .000 | . |
| N | 115 | 115 |

** Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level

The above correlation results reveal variable 1 (Parental Involvement) and variable 2 (students' performance) p value is 0.000, which is less than 0.05, so variable 1 and variable 2 have statistically significant correlation. +ve sign indicates both have a positive correlation and Pearson Product Correlation coefficient **r** value **0.496** indicates a medium correlation in both variables.

4.6 THE EXTENT OF PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT BASED ON THE FIVE COMPONENTS OF INVOLVEMENT

The table below displays the extent of parental involvement based on the different components of involvement.

Table 14: Extent of parental involvement

| STATEMENTS | EXTENT OF PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT |
|---|--------------------------------|
| Parent-child communication about school | 78.5% |
| School-home communication | 58% |
| At-home involvement | 48.6% |
| School-related activities | 24% |

Data seems to suggest that parents are more involved in parent-child communication, less involved in school-home communication and also, even less involved in at-home involvement, while they are least involved in school-related activities.

Parents were interviewed about parent-child communication. The majority of the parents responded positively to this question. Some of the responses about parent-child communication included, “talking about the child’s day at school, advice on choice of subjects for senior secondary school, future educational plans, career choices and the importance of education”.

4.7 THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN PARENT'S EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT AND PARENTS ASPIRATIONS

Table 15: Educational attainment and parental aspirations

| | Educational attainment | Parental aspirations |
|-------|------------------------|----------------------|
| High | 19 (16.5%) | 113 (98.2%) |
| Low | 96 (83%) | 2 (1.7%) |
| Total | 115 (100%) | 115 (100%) |

Of the one hundred and fifteen parents, 19 (16.5%) parents are highly qualified (a degree, or post-graduate level), while 96 (83%) parents possess a lower than matric level qualification, or a matric. Parental aspirations for children's education are positively high (98.2%). More than 40% of the parents want their children to aspire to attain a post-graduate degree.

Table 16: Correlation coefficient : Educational attainment Vs Parental Aspirations

| | | Educational attainment | Parental aspirations |
|------------------------|---------------------|------------------------|----------------------|
| Educational attainment | Pearson Correlation | 1 | .059 |
| | Sig. (2-tailed) | . | .530 |
| | N | 115 | 115 |
| Parental aspirations | Pearson Correlation | .059 | 1 |
| | Sig. (2-tailed) | .530 | . |
| | N | 115 | 115 |

The above correlation results reveal variable 1 (educational attainment) and variable 2 (parental aspirations) p value is 0.530, which is greater than 0.05. It indicates variable 1 and variable 2 do not have a statistically significant correlation. That is, there is no relationship between educational attainment and parental aspirations.

4.8 Summary

Of the one hundred and fifteen parents who completed the questionnaire, 78.3% were females. On average, 58.3% of the respondents were married, while 37.4% were single.

Forty-five percent of respondents completing the questionnaire stated that their educational attainment was lower than matric level, while 24.3% of respondents had received education up to matric level. The income level below R10,000 was high (66.1%). An extremely high percent of respondents' home language is Zulu.

According to this study, the results show that there is a relationship between parental involvement and learners' academic achievement in secondary schools. The correlation is significant at the 0.01 level. However, fifty-four out of one hundred and fifteen (47%) parents are involved below 50% in their children's education. Hence parental involvement in children's education is generally low in both the schools under study.

An analysis of the types of parental involvement shows that parents are involved 78.5% in parent-child communication about school, 58% in school-home communication, 48.6% in at-home involvement and the least involved in school-related activities. There is no statistically significant relationship between parent's educational attainment and parental aspirations.

CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Aim of this chapter

This final chapter of the study serves as a summary of the research findings followed by a discussion of the findings. The chapter also presents recommendations from the findings and recommendations for further research in the future.

5.2 Introduction

To reiterate what was mentioned in Chapter One of this study, the problem statement and the research questions were as follows:

The study set out to examine the relationship between parental involvement and learner's academic achievement. The following research questions were focused on:

1. Is there a relationship between parental involvement and learner's academic performance?
2. What aspects of parental involvement contribute more to the relationship?
3. Is there a relationship between parent's educational attainment and parental aspirations for their children's education?

5.3 Main findings from this study

According to this study, the results are as follows:

1. There is a relationship between parental involvement and learners' academic achievement in secondary schools. The correlation is significant at the 0.01 level. The level of involvement in their children's education is less than 50%. It is therefore inferred that the level of parental involvement in children's education in the location of the study is low.
2. On the components of parental involvement, the data analysis revealed that the level of involvement of parents in communication with their children is 78.5%, school-home communication is 58%, at-home involvement is 48.6%, while involvement in school-related activities is 24%. Of that, parents were more involved in parent-child communication, less involved in school-home communication and the least involved in school-related activities.
3. There is no statistically significant relationship between parent's educational attainment and parental aspirations.

5.4 Discussion of findings

According to the literature review, there is a definite relationship between parental involvement and learner's academic performance. However, the strength of the relationship varies in research studies. According to this study, there is a medium correlation between parental involvement and learner's academic achievement in secondary schools in Kwa-Zulu Natal. The medium correlation between parental involvement and learner's academic performance can be attributed to the fact that there is low parental involvement in both the schools under study. These results cannot be generalized to elementary schools because of the different developmental levels (as discussed in Chapter Two).

A number of factors that hamper parental involvement were mentioned by parents during the interviews:

1. Sixty-six percent of parents are earning below R10,000,00 per annum. This, in effect suggests that parents earn approximately R800,00 per month. It is these parents who work long hours, and do not have the time to spend helping and supervising their children's work. This is too time-consuming. Due to unfavorable circumstances, parents are unlikely to be enthusiastic about becoming involved in their children's education.
2. The earning capacity of these parents makes it virtually impossible for an increased income. This setback can only be rectified in generations to come when the SES of people in this country is uplifted.

3. Parents of a higher income level and higher educational level will appreciate and emphasize the value of parental involvement in children's education, hence higher parental involvement in children's education. Parents from low SES feel that they do not have the necessary finances to send their children to tertiary institutions, so why should they waste the time and effort in becoming involved in their children's education.
4. Due to low income, parents generally lack the motivation to encourage their children to pursue their studies, yet the respondents want their children to aspire to attain a post-graduate degree.
5. Forty-five percent of parents possess a 'lower than matric level' education. It is very difficult to make them understand the concept and value of parental involvement. Generally, parents lack knowledge as to how they can be involved in their children's education. It is only when the parents completed the questionnaire and were interviewed, that they were able to understand the different types of parental involvement, and some of the ways in which the respondents could help their children. Studies show that parents, particularly those who did not attend a post-secondary institute, often do not have the necessary tools, information, and resources to assist their children.
6. Of all the parents interviewed, there was a 100% negative response to participation in the activities of the PTO. The majority of the parents are working, and, due to time constraints, do not participate in the activities of the PTO. The mere fact that parents have to pay to commute to school makes participation virtually impossible due to financial constraints.
7. Added to the above problem of parents not attending school meetings, parents fear the embarrassment of being confronted by the school personnel for not paying school fees, hence they tend to avoid contact with the school.

8. Eighty-seven percent of parents' home language is Zulu. Parents/guardians experience problems understanding English, especially where children live with their grandparents. Many African parents in South Africa cannot read and write. Helping children in formal education will remain a problem for some time. Coetzee (1991) reported that the level of illiteracy in South Africa was estimated at 8.3 million people, the vast majority of which were black people. This could be the reason for low returns of questionnaires from parents.
9. Due to the fact that the medium of communication between parent and school personnel is English, it makes it difficult for those parents who do not speak English to communicate with school personnel.
10. Parents do not understand the subject matter e.g. Technology, Mathematics and Afrikaans.
11. Parents do not understand Outcomes Based Education, nor the content of certain subjects e.g. Technology, Mathematics and Afrikaans. This makes it difficult for these parents to assist their children with their homework and studies.

According to Ritter, Mont-Reynaud & Dornbusch (1993), many factors contribute to differences in the way parents relate to school, and how they view appropriate levels of involvement such as history of bad experiences with schools, a general lack of trust of institutions, a traditional deference to education, a tendency to equate teachers' questions with displays of disrespect, and a lack of English language skills. School staff must endeavour not to equate unfamiliarity with the curriculum and procedures of the school with a lack of caring about their children's education.

Data seems to suggest that parents are more involved in parent-child communication, less involved in at-school type of involvement and also even less involved in at-home involvement, while they are least involved in school-related activities. The reason for parents being least involved in school-related activities can be attributed to the fact that parents work long hours and do not have the time to become involved in school-related activities.

There is no significant relationship between parent's educational attainment and parental aspirations. Although a small percentage of parents possess a graduate or post-graduate degree, a high percentage of parents want their children to aspire to attain a post-graduate degree. There is often a discrepancy between parents' educational expectations for their children, and the ability to make these expectations a reality (Ogbu, 2003; Wimberly, 2002). In particular, parents who have not attended post-secondary education may lack the necessary tools to assist their children with effective planning. They may have high expectations, but neither the information nor the knowledge about what their children need for success. As a result, these parents are less likely to help their children. However, as much as it is the desire of a parent for his/her child to attain a post-graduate degree, these expectations must be realistic. If expectations are not met, this often leads to disappointment on the part of the parent and invariably leads to the child's low self-concept.

Taken together, the results of this study are very enlightening. Firstly, these findings are fairly substantial and support the notion that a relationship exists between parental involvement and learner's academic performance. Secondly, specific to this study, parents are most involved in parent-child communication. This could be due to the fact that while parents are busy with other tasks, the respondents can still maintain a conversation with their children about school. Thirdly, there is no relationship between parent's educational attainment and parental aspirations as evident in other studies mentioned in the literature review.

5.5 Implications for increased parental involvement

In so far as one can formulate recommendations for increased parental involvement, the recommendations need to be more practice-orientated and realistic, and consideration should be taken of the difficulties that parents experience in attempting to involve themselves in their children's education.

There are many things that can be done to improve parental involvement at the secondary school level however, following the findings of this study, the researcher needs to take cognizance of the fact that parents do experience a number of problems in making attempts to assist their children educationally.

- **Responsibility of the school to play a major role in improving parental involvement**

As a result of the problems that parents experience, schools ought to accept greater responsibility in helping these parents to become more involved in their children's education. By the school being more aware of the circumstances of families, better communications can be established. Also, by working with the parents more, the school will have a better idea of what the parents can and cannot do. More realistic expectations for out-of-school projects are an example of this (Wanat,1992).

- **Parents must feel welcome at school**

It is important for schools and teachers to develop attitudes and policies that are reflective of, and sensitive to, the community they serve. When they do (Zelazo, 1995), more parents become involved in ways that are recognized by the school as being engaged in the schooling process. However, before parents can be involved, they must feel comfortable with the staff and school.

- **Schools can assist by providing different ways that parents can be involved**

A key to involving all parents is creating an atmosphere in which teachers, administrators, and families are all seen as valuing parental involvement (Dauber & Epstein, 1989). Schools that are serious about developing partnerships with parents can provide information to parents about different ways they can be involved and understand the barriers that keep parents from being more active (Chavkin & Williams, 1993).

- **Increase communication including telephonic communication between school and home**

Another important item is communication. More communication between the school and home are needed, but specific types of communication are important. Two-way informal exchanges between teacher/parent are much more effective than one way communication from the teacher (Wanat, 1992).

- **Communicate telephonically**

According to the study, approximately 90% of the parents have a telephone. This was evident when the researcher requested telephone numbers from the learners to contact parents for the interview. A suggestion can be made that the school allocate a budget for teachers to contact parents once a term, to discuss the child's progress and other important issues. This would invariably ensure communication between the school and the parent. This would also help parents feel more confident about contact between the school personnel and the parents.

- **Community Involvement**

Seminars and workshops can be held by non-governmental organizations in the residential areas to help parents understand the concept of parental involvement, its importance, and the different ways in which parents can assist their children in their education. These workshops can be held in community halls or libraries close to home so parents do not have to travel distances which invariably leads to an added expense on the parent's part.

- **Library for parents in school to encourage school visits**

Having a room specifically designed for the parents may encourage visits. This room can have reading materials appropriate to the age group of the students, information about upcoming activities, and other announcements of interest to the parents.

- **Training of teacher**

The training of teachers in general and specific techniques to invite parents to participate in their children's education is necessary. This needs to be accomplished at both the pre-service level as well as during in-service training sessions.

- **Employ a teacher to handle duties pertaining to parental involvement**

Besides the teachers being trained in parental involvement, every school should employ one more teacher to handle all duties pertaining to parental involvement.

The duties would be as follows:

- To ensure maximum communication between parents and school personnel.
- To ensure that the 'parents' library' is up to standard with the most up-to-date and recent material, to help parents understand the concept and how to become involved in their children's education.
- To help educate the parents about 'parental involvement' by sending out newsletters in English and Zulu, which is the home-language of the majority of the parents.
- To keep parents informed of the happenings at the school.
- To request for parents' participation in certain activities of the school i.e. by getting parents involved in school-related activities
- To invite parents to attend parental involvement programmes organized by the school.

5.6 Recommendations for further research

Several important lines of research stem from this initial study. The outcomes of these future studies will be helpful to researchers interested in improving the quality of schools by incorporating parent involvement.

Some of the research areas are as follows:

- 5.6.1 This study needs to be replicated with a larger number of predictor variables that can be analyzed. Different kinds of populations need to be studied.
- 5.6.2 A longitudinal study following students and parents from elementary school through high schools – reasons for decrease in parental involvement in secondary schools.
- 5.6.3 A more detailed analysis of culture, family functioning, and child development would go a long way toward increasing our understanding of how family relationships affect learning and thus improve our ability to design programmes to facilitate the most positive outcomes for children. We need to develop a better understanding of the mechanisms through which parent involvement affects children's school success.
- 5.6.4 Student questionnaire – perceptions of parental involvement. Would secondary school students welcome parents being involved in their schoolwork? What are the adolescents' opinions about parental involvement? Do teens usually welcome their parents' help as they navigate the challenges of secondary school?
- 5.6.5 Identifying effective ways to help teens with school challenges and enhancing parental involvement.

- 5.6.6 Parents' responses to helping the adolescent child. Parents reveal how they feel about becoming involved when their children enter secondary school.
- 5.6.7 Research on parents and their understanding of how they can be involved in their children's schoolwork.

5.7 Summary

Flaxman & Inger(1991:2-6) point out that parental involvement at all grade levels is important. "The benefits of parental involvement are not confined to early childhood or the elementary grades. There are strong positive effects from involving parents continuously through high school", not only for enhancing the educational success of high school parents, but also because of a number of social changes which are occurring .

This study has definitely placed into perspective why parental involvement is low in secondary schools. The study has enlightened the researcher on the problems/difficulties that parents experience in their day- to- day lives. It does not merely state that parents need to become involved in their children's education, but takes cognizance of the number of other salient factors that come into play when one considers "parental involvement" as discussed in the study.

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7. ANNEXURE

ETHICAL CLEARANCE

The University Ethical clearance procedure was only implemented in April 2005. I had already commenced with the data collection hence my application is retrospective.

Due to the volume of applications I have not yet received notice of the Ethical clearance.

If anyone should wish to enquire about the Ethical clearance, they may find the certificate on file at the Faculty of Education, University of Kwa-zulu Natal (Edgewood Campus).

Thanking you

M. Narain (mrs)

**LETTER FOR PERMISSION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH:
DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION**

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Research Strategy, Policy Development and Education Management Information
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12 April 2005

Sir

PERMISSION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH

I hereby wish to request permission to conduct research towards the completion of my Masters in Education degree at the University of Kwa-Zulu Natal (Edgewood campus). The topic for research is to examine the relationship between parental involvement and learner's academic achievement at two secondary schools in KZN. The purpose of the study is to determine whether there can be a relationship established between parents who are involved in the education of their children and their children's academic performance.

The research will involve a survey. One questionnaire will be administered to parents. Consent forms will be issued to students to be signed by their parents granting students permission to participate in the study. Only those students who return the consent forms will be allowed to participate in the study. Interviews will be conducted with approximately twenty parents. The interviews will take place after school hours at prearranged times at the convenience of the interviewee.

I wish to reassure you that no student or parent will be identifiable in any way from the research results.

Find attached to this letter the following:-

- A copy of the research proposal.
- A copy of the parent questionnaire.
- A copy of the structured interview for the parents.
- A copy of the student's consent form.

Awaiting your approval in anticipation

Thanking you

.....

M. Narain

LETTER FOR PERMISSION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH: SCHOOL A and B

5 Gordon Pirrie Crescent
No. 18 Camilla Gardens
NEW GERMANY
3610

2 May 2005

The Principal
School A and B
Durban
4000

Dear Sir/Madam

PERMISSION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH

I hereby wish to formally apply for permission to conduct research at your school.

I am currently registered at the University of Kwa-Zulu Natal (Edgewood Campus) towards a Masters Degree in Education. My topic for research is to examine the relationship between parental involvement and learner's academic achievement at two secondary schools in KZN. The purpose of the study is to determine whether there can be a relationship established between parents who are involved in the education of their children and their children's academic performance.

One questionnaire will be administered to the parents of learners from both schools. Only those students who return the consent forms signed by their parents will be allowed to participate in the study.

I wish to assure you of the following:-

- Participation will be voluntary;
- The confidentiality and anonymity of all participants will be respected and ensured;
- No institution will be identifiable by name in the research results;
- A synopsis of the most important findings and recommendations will be forwarded to your school.

I trust that my request will be favourably considered.

Thanking you

.....

M. Narain

CONSENT FORM

My name is Mageshni Narain. I am a post-graduate student in the School of Psychology at the University of Kwa-Zulu Natal (Edgewood Campus). I am conducting research on the relationship between parental involvement and learner's academic achievement.

I would value your voluntary participation in this research. Participation will be in the form of a questionnaire for parents and permission is requested for the researcher to use the March and June marks of the learner. If you agree to be part of the research, please have the consent form below completed by your parent/guardian and returned.

All information will be treated as confidential. No names will be recorded to ensure anonymity.

CONSENT FORM

I ----- (full name printed),

parent/guardian of ----- (name of child/ward)

consent to his/her participation in the research project.

SIGNATURE

DATE

PARENT INVOLVEMENT (AT-HOME AND AT-SCHOOL) QUESTIONNAIRE

PARENT QUESTIONNAIRE

CODE: _____

The aim of this questionnaire is to gather information on parental involvement. The present research will be undertaken to examine the relationship between parental involvement and learner's academic performance. The four components of parental involvement are:

- Parental aspirations for children's education
- Parent-child communication about school
- At-home involvement
- Parental participation in school-related activities

Parental involvement may be seen as the coming together of the educational and social institutions that shape each individual's development. The home, the child and the school form a tripartite that creates a special climate that is desirable for effective education. The overall objective of this questionnaire is to gather information on the extent of parental involvement for the effective learning and development of the child.

The information being sought by this questionnaire is for research purposes only. Confidentiality of information will be maintained and respondents are not asked to identify themselves by name. Please provide as much accurate information to each question, or statement, as possible.

PART ONE – BIOGRAPHICAL INFORMATION

Indicate by a cross (X)

| | | |
|--------------------|-------------|--------------------------|
| 1. Your status | 1.1 single | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| | 1.2 married | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| | 1.3 widow | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 2. Your gender/sex | 2.1 female | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| | 2.2 male | <input type="checkbox"/> |

| | | |
|-------------------------------------|--|--------------------------------------|
| 3. Your relationship to the learner | 3.1 parent/s | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| | 3.2 guardian | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| | 3.3 sibling | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| | 3.4 grandparents | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| | 3.5 relative | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| | 3.6 other | <input type="checkbox"/> state _____ |
| | | |
| 4. Do you live in a | 4.1 urban area | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| | 4.2 rural area | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| | | |
| 5. Your income level per annum | 5.1 less than R10 000,00 | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| | 5.2 R10 000,00-R25 000,00 | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| | 5.3 R25 000,00-R50 000,00 | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| | 5.4 R50 000,00-R100 000,00 | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| | 5.5 over R100 000,00 | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| | | |
| 6. Your educational attainment | 6.1 below matric level | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| | 6.2 up to matric level | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| | 6.3 post matric but not up to tertiary level | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| | 6.4 university /technikon, degree/diploma | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| | 6.5 post-graduate level | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| | | |
| 7. What is your home-language? | _____ | |

PART TWO – AT-HOME AND AT-SCHOOL INVOLVEMENT**Indicate by a cross (x)**

8. How far do you/spouse expect your child to go in terms of studies?

8.1 less than grade 12

8.2 grade 12

8.3 university

8.4 technikon

8.5 Masters, Ph.D., or other advanced degree

| |
|--|
| |
| |
| |
| |
| |

9. How often do you/spouse discuss your child's experiences at school?

| | | | |
|-------|-----------------|------------------|----------|
| NEVER | TWICE WEEKLY | TWICE MONTHLY | EVERYDAY |
|-------|-----------------|------------------|----------|

9.1 What are some of the experiences you discuss with your child?

10. How often do you/spouse talk with your child about his/her educational plans for after High School?

| | | | |
|-------|--------|----------------|-------|
| NEVER | RARELY | SOME- TIMES | OFTEN |
|-------|--------|----------------|-------|

11. Are you/spouse aware of exam timetables, progress reports, consent forms and other informative letters received by your child?

| | |
|-----|----|
| YES | NO |
|-----|----|

12. Do you/spouse contact teachers about the progress of your child?

| | |
|-----|----|
| YES | NO |
|-----|----|

12.1 If no, why

13. Since school opened this year, how many times have you/spouse contacted the school about your child's performance?

| | | | |
|------|------|-------|-----------------------|
| NONE | ONCE | TWICE | MORE THAN TWICE |
|------|------|-------|-----------------------|

14. Do you/spouse help your child with his/her homework?

| | |
|-----|----|
| YES | NO |
|-----|----|

- 14.1 If no, what are your reasons for not helping your child with his/her homework?

15. Does your child have a homework record book which is checked and signed by you/spouse on a daily basis?

| | |
|-----|----|
| YES | NO |
|-----|----|

- 15.1 If no, why does your child not have a homework record book?

16. How often do you/spouse supervise your child with his/her reading?

| | | | |
|-------|-----------------|------------------|----------|
| NEVER | TWICE WEEKLY | TWICE MONTHLY | EVERYDAY |
|-------|-----------------|------------------|----------|

- 16.1 How do you supervise your child with his/her reading?

17. Do you/spouse supervise your child's studies during tests and exams?

| | |
|-----|----|
| YES | NO |
|-----|----|

- 17.1 If no, give a reason

18. Do you/spouse limit the amount of time your child spends watching T.V.?

| | | | | |
|-------|--------|------------|-------|-------------------|
| NEVER | RARELY | SOME-TIMES | OFTEN | DO NOT HAVE A TV. |
|-------|--------|------------|-------|-------------------|

19. Do you/spouse limit the amount of time your child spends playing games on the computer?

| | | | | |
|-------|--------|------------|-------|------------------------|
| NEVER | RARELY | SOME-TIMES | OFTEN | DO NOT HAVE A COMPUTER |
|-------|--------|------------|-------|------------------------|

20. Do you/spouse limit the amount of time your child spend going out with friends on school nights?

| | | | |
|-------|--------|------------|-------|
| NEVER | RARELY | SOME-TIMES | OFTEN |
|-------|--------|------------|-------|

21. Are you/spouse at home when your child returns home from school?

| | | | |
|-------|--------|------------|-------|
| NEVER | RARELY | SOME-TIMES | OFTEN |
|-------|--------|------------|-------|

22. Do you/spouse act as a volunteer at school?

| | |
|-----|----|
| YES | NO |
|-----|----|

23. Do you/spouse belong to the Parent-Teacher Organisation?

| | |
|-----|----|
| YES | NO |
|-----|----|

24. Do you/spouse take part in the activities of the Parent-Teacher Organisation?

| | |
|-----|----|
| YES | NO |
|-----|----|

- 24.1 If no, why
-

25. Do you/spouse think your involvement in your child's education makes a difference?

| | |
|-----|----|
| YES | NO |
|-----|----|

25.1.1 If yes, how?

25.1.2 If no, why?

THANK-YOU FOR YOUR CO-OPERATION!

PARENT INTERVIEW QUESTIONS ON 'PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT'

1. What do you understand by the term 'parental involvement' or home-school partnership?

2. How do you think you can help better your child's academic performance?

3. Do you communicate with your child about school experiences, his/her future plans, his/her academic progress?
If yes, what do you discuss?

If no, why not -----

4. Do you motivate your child to do better in his/her studies?

If yes, how -----

If no, why not -----

5. What are some of the problems you experience in trying to help your child with his/her homework/assignments/exams/tests?

6. Is communication between the school and home effective and efficient? Are you aware of exam timetables, progress reports, consent forms and other informative letters received by your child?

7. Do you act as a volunteer at school and/or take part in the activities of the parent-teacher organization?

If yes, what are these activities? -----

If no, why not -----

8. What do you think are the benefits of 'parental involvement?'

Does involvement make you to understand your child or school better?

Does your involvement help improve your child's performance?
