THE DYNAMICS OF PARENT–EDUCATOR RELATIONSHIPS ON LEARNER ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE IN THE FOUNDATION PHASE

by

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Submitted in fulfilment of the requirements for the degree

MAGISTER EDUCATIONIS

In the Faculty of Education

at the

UNIVERSITY OF PRETORIA

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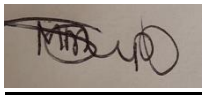
Signature:  Date: 3 October 2023

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DEPARTMENT	Early Childhood Education
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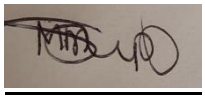
Signature: 

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DEDICATION

This study is dedicated to my late mother, Matshidiso Cathrine Shuping, who instilled in me the value of education. She is gone but will never be forgotten.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

It is with a humble soul that I present a statement of sincere appreciation to all participants who gave me the opportunity to collect data for my study to be a success. To begin with, I am exceedingly grateful to the Lion King of Juda. My Lord, who gave me strength, protection, wisdom, knowledge, patience and courage to carry through this work, and be a fruitful achievement. My sincere thanks and appreciation go to my dedicated, understanding and motivational co-supervisor, Dr Makwalate Malatji, whose wisdom, inspiration and patience guided me through this journey; moreover, he gave me priceless academic advice and supervised the thesis right from its beginning to its logical conclusion. I am not forgetting my supervisor, Dr. Susan Thukatane, for her priceless counsel and direction during my studies. I also sincerely thank my supervisors for their firm moral support in times of challenge.

To my sons, Kefentse and Reabetswe, for their moral support, encouragement and willingness not to give up on my studies, as well as the patience and help you have shown me during my study challenges and taking care of the chaos at home during my commitment to my research. I also want to thank my ex-husband, Amos, for cooking supper for us at times during the sleepless nights he shared with me during my research commitments. To my friend Kgomotso for encouragement and support through this journey of my study.

Finally, my appreciation also goes to my aunt Monica and my colleague Daphney for their support and motivation throughout my study.

ABSTRACT

THE DYNAMICS OF PARENT–EDUCATOR RELATIONSHIPS ON LEARNER ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE IN THE FOUNDATION PHASE

The study investigated the dynamics of parent–educator relationships on the academic performance of learners in the Foundation Phase. The purpose of the study was to establish how parents and educators comprehend their collaborative roles to produce possible tactics to advance learners' attainment in the Foundation Phase. The main research question investigated the contribution of parent–educator relations to learners' academic performance in the Foundation Phase (RQ1). The study employed a case study design and qualitative methodology as part of the interpretative research paradigm. Through a multiple case study approach, data were collected from two (2) primary schools in the Ekurhuleni South District. Fourteen participants were purposively selected from parents who had children in the Foundation Phase and educators with Foundation Phase teaching experience. The researcher selected these schools based on their quintile levels: one was quintile one (1), an impoverished school that did not pay school fees. The other was an affluent and quintile four (4) fee-paying school. The literature reviewed focused on parent–educator partnerships, discernment of parental involvement, barriers to parental involvement and learners' academic performance in the Foundation Phase. Epstein's parent–educator partnership theory (2018) grounded the study to strengthen participants' investigation of cooperative working relationships. Data were collected through semi-structured interviews, a quester-view with document analysis that was later transcribed. The study used thematic data analysis to make sense of the information and the main attributes were summarised. The study found a lack of collaborative working relationship between parents and educators in the quintile (1) school because of parents' low socio-economic statuses and a lack of knowledge of their parental responsibilities in their children's education. Some educators also had negative attitudes towards these parents. The lack of resources and tools to implement technology was evident in the quintile (1) school. In the quintile (4) school, technology played an important role in strengthening parental involvement and providing more opportunities for parental involvement in their children's learning experiences. Therefore, schools need to ensure

that parents receive information and are involved in their children's educational performance and school events. The study recommendations are that parents and educators receive professional and developmental training about the importance of parental involvement and collaborative working relations to promote learners' academic performance in the Foundation Phase. The study further recommends that schools should educate parents and educators about policies that involve parent–educator partnerships to improve learning in schools.

Keywords: Collaboration; parent–educator relationship, Foundation Phase; parental involvement; academic performance

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

BIP	Bangladeshi, Indian and Pakistani
CRSA	Constitution of the Republic of South Africa
DBE	Department of Education
DBST	District-based support team
DoE	Department of Education
ECD	Early childhood development
IE	Inclusive education
LER	Learner education ratios
NEPA	National Education Policy Act
SACE	South African Council for Educators
SBST	School-based support teams
SGB	School governing body
SIAS	Screening Identification Assessment and Support
SMT	School management team

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CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

1.1 INTRODUCTION

Diverse researchers indicate that, despite parents' socio-economic status and inability to read and write, parents wanted their children to do well in school and have bright future (Bornstein & Bradley, 2014; Lareau, 2011; & Malatji, 2021). In addition, it was evident**,** as stated by Epstein (2011), that learners progressed maximally in class when their parents supported them academically and when parents and educators had a good functioning relationship and communicated effectively. The development of solid bonds between parents and educators ensured benefits for the children, their parents and the educators (Connelly et al., 2018). Epstein et al. (2013) state that parents might not have been aware of which activities to carry out and how to conduct them to support their children's learning at home. Epstein (2011) highlights the importance of educators and parents possessing specific skills to foster adaptive parent–educator relationships. These skills included effective communication, mutual respect and collaboration. In addition, when parents actively engaged in their child's educational development, it contributed significantly to a positive learning environment. In this study, the researcher explored different definitions of parental involvement and its impact on learners during the Foundation Phase. When parents actively cared about their children's education, this was referred to as parental participation (Ntekane, 2018). To ensure that their child received assistance in developing their learning, parents fulfilled their parental responsibilities (Ntekane, 2018). According to Leenders et al. (2019), educators are successful in involving parents during the Foundation Phase, and this involvement continues to be significant as children progress through their academic years. Beyond academic performance, parental involvement also involves maintaining healthy relationships with their children. Clinton and Hattie (2013) emphasise that genuine encouragement, mentoring and inspiration are essential components of this process.

According to Hornby and Lafaele (2013, 37), parental involvement was a significant element in education and could also be achieved through home-based parental involvement, such as listening to the child as they read, helping them with their homework and participating in school-based activities, including attending school meetings. In this study, the researcher investigated the extent to which parents and educators worked

together to assist learners in achieving a sound academic grounding in the Foundation Phase.

Parental engagement, as described by Axford et al. (2019) in their research, parental engagement refers to educators and schools involving parents in supporting their children's academic learning. This includes encouraging parents to support their children with homework (Wilder, 2014). In addition, parental engagement was seen as a mutual responsibility in which schools, community members or non-government organisations dedicated themselves to reaching out and connecting parents in significant ways, while parents actively supported their children's learning and development (Smith et al. 2011). Parental engagement was measured as dynamic and was seen as an important participation in children's learning. Such learning could take place in a diversity of settings, including early learning and childcare settings, schools, the community, family learning and learning at home (Goodall & Montgomery, 2014). Parental engagement represented a more outstanding obligation and possession of action than parental involvement within educational settings, such as early learning and childcare settings or schools. Although existing evidence highlights the positive effects of parental engagement on learners' outcomes, further exploration is necessary. This study differentiates between parental engagement and involvement, emphasising dynamic participation and mutual responsibility. By examining the impact of engagement beyond traditional classrooms. This study aims to inform policies and practices that enhance children's learning experiences.

In exacting the idea that the school belongs to the community, this fosters a strong sense of belonging. When decisions are made collaboratively by learners, educators, parents and local entities, this ensures shared ownership. This collective approach aligns decisions with the community's needs and goals, reinforcing a sense of belonging and investment in the educational process. However, it was found in South Africa that, among other factors, learners were performing poorly academically due to overcrowded classrooms, lack of mutual partnerships between educators and parents, and a lack of resources (Makgopa & Mokhele, 2013; Segoe & Bisschoff, 2019). It was for this reason that the researcher suggests strategies for both parents and educators on how best they could work together.

In the context of Russian education, educators played a vital role during the Foundation Phase by collaborating with parents to establish a shared understanding of early education and child development (Savinskaya, 2015). However, it was essential to recognise that educational training institutions did not exclusively prepare educators to address issues related to family, school and community partnership. This gap highlighted the need for targeted training institutions and support to enhance collaboration between educators and the broader community in fostering learner success (Epstein, 2018). Their responsibilities extended beyond curriculum delivery, as they aimed to foster an engaged relationship between learners and the curriculum content (Goralnik et al. 2012). However, some educators had little knowledge about how to partner with parents on programmes that would inform and involve them in their children's education throughout the academic year.

Petrone (2016) reported that educators were concerned, and they blamed Latino parents for the failure rate of their children in the United States of America. There was a necessity to structure a strong home-school partnership as there were language and cultural differences. In contrast, educators and parents often blamed each other for the underperformance of their children (Gernetzky, 2012). According to a study conducted in the United States of America (Dor & Naidu, 2012, pp. 252), "We had a similar aim, which was to educate a healthy, well-rounded human being to be successful in this complex world". This implies that some parents were committed to collaborating with the school about their children's education. The study revealed that learners' performance significantly improved when educators and parents collaborated effectively. Consequently, the study recommended implementing improved approaches to foster a cohesive team between educators and parents, ultimately positively impacting learner success. Figure 1 below displays the outline of Chapter One.

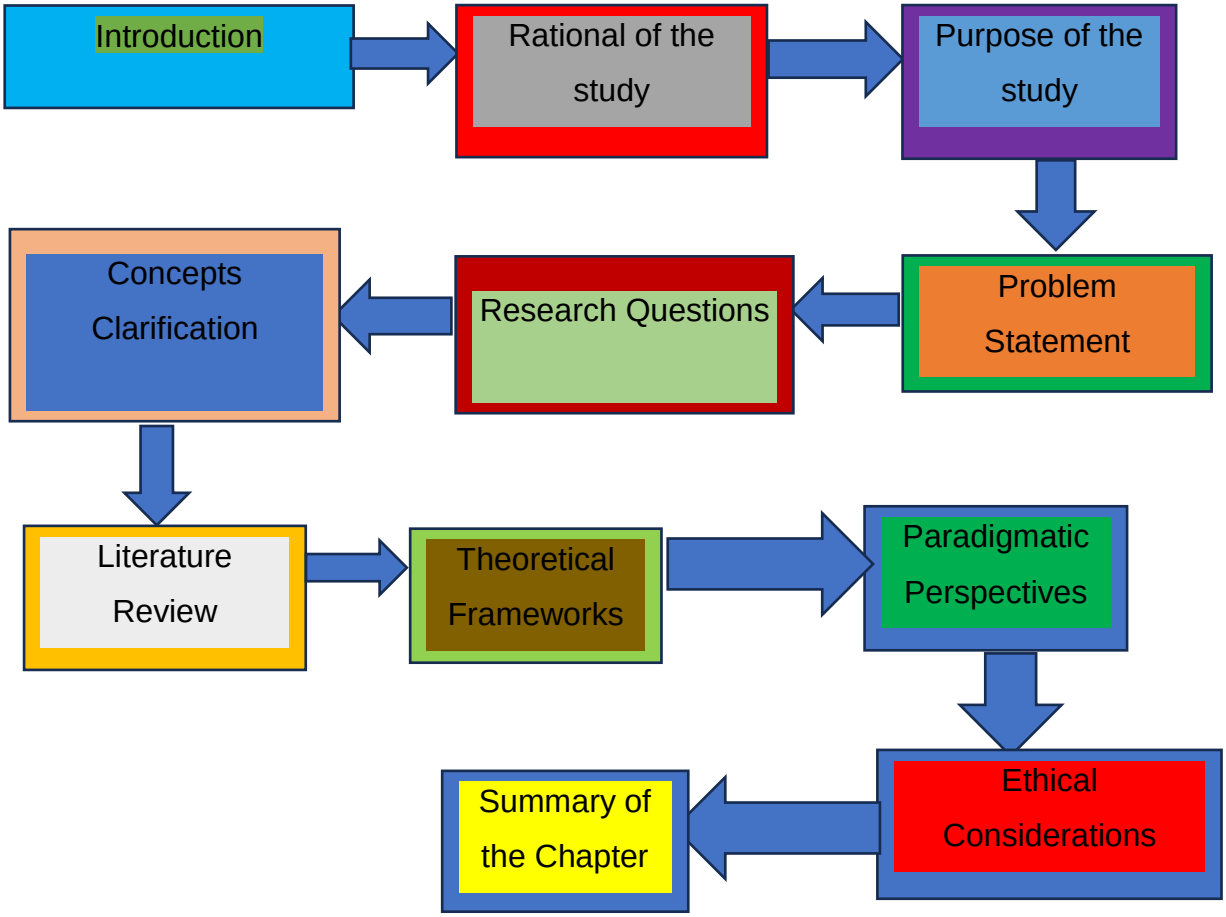

Figure 1: Layout of Chapter 1

1.2 THE RATIONALE OF THE STUDY

The study was encouraged by the researcher's observations as a Foundation Phase educator. The researcher was concerned by the insignificant lack of a mutual partnership between educators and parents in the learning and teaching of children in the Foundation Phase. Specifically, there was a lack of partnership between parents and educators. The issue of parental involvement never ceased to be a topic of discussion in the school staff meetings.

The Foundation Phase is recognised as the cornerstone of child development, and grade retention failure is a serious concern among children and their parents. The overcrowding of Foundation Phase classes in South Africa, with an educator ratio of 1:33.5, leads to the failure to achieve educators' and learners' outcomes. The study conducted by the Progress in International Reading Literacy Study (PIRLS) revealed that Grade 4 learners

in South Africa could not read for meaning. South Africa took the last position of 50 countries that participated (Howle et al. 2017). This demonstrates a huge need for interventions in Foundation Phase classes or within schools. Educators teach in overcrowded classes, which also negatively impacts the teaching process. This situation disadvantages children who need additional help or more attention, as classroom disruptions increase. This study identifies the existing state of the parent–educator working relationship concerning learners' academic performance during the Foundation Phase. It proposes mutual strategies that parents, and educators could employ to encourage learning both within and outside the school. Specifically, the study findings focus on enhancing learner academic performance by fostering effective collaboration between parents and educators. By proposing these mutual strategies, the study bridges the gap between challenges faced in overcrowded classrooms and low reading proficiency.

1.3 THE PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

The study investigated the dynamics of the parent–educator relationship concerning learners' academic performance during the Foundation Phase. By exploring parent–educator relations and proposing collaborative strategies, the study provides valuable insights for enhancing learners' academic achievement.

1.4 PROBLEM STATEMENT

It has been recognised that the lack of mutual partnership between educators and parents affected learners' success in the Foundation Phase and contributed negatively to the academic progress of learners (Morinaj & Hascher, 2022). Thus, learners in the Foundation Phase performed poorly academically. Educators often thought that parents were not paying attention to their children's education (Sianturi et al., 2023). Some parents believed that educators were superficial and wanted to focus on problems rather than working toward solutions (Sianturi et al., 2023). During school governing body (SGB) meetings, principals made decisions giving parents only a limited amount of time to make decisions (Mncube, 2013). Parents felt that their liability was only to send the child to school, and that the school must take over from that point.

When the language of instruction was not the parents' first language, the communication between home and school was not effective, which increased parents' lack of self-assurance and non-intervention (Hornby & Lafaele, 2011). Mavhungu (2013) ascribed poverty to the non-involvement of parents in school matters that involved learners' performance. Parental involvement was a key factor that influenced the quality of education and the academic outcomes of learners. Lacking parental support, educators faced more challenges in delivering effective instruction, and learners may have lacked the motivation and guidance to achieve their full potential. Therefore, it was vital to improve the ways that parents could participate in their children's schooling and foster a positive relationship between home and school. The problem arises when parents are not actively involved in their children's education, potentially leading to academic struggles. Additionally, a lack of communication between home and school could exacerbate these challenges.

1.5 THE MAIN RESEARCH QUESTION

What are the dynamics of parent–educator relations on learners' academic performance in the Foundation Phase?

1.5.1 Sub-questions

What is the effectiveness of parent–educator relations in the Foundation Phase?

Why are there no good parent–educator working relations in schools?

What are the challenges faced by parents and educators when working together?

What are the critical components to strengthen a successful parent–educator partnership?

1.6 CONCEPT CLARIFICATION

The following section defined the keywords used in the study.

1.6.1 Parental Involvement

In this study, parental involvement referred to forms of parent participation in the education of their children. Parental involvement entailed the parents' knowledge and their role in children's schoolwork. Parental involvement also included engaging parents in homework and activities that were done at school to intensify children's academic achievements (Chidanya, 2011).

1.6.2 Educators

In this study, an educator was defined as a person who gave intellectual, moral and social instructions. Educators made it their goal to ensure that learners fully understood what they were taught. Educators sought to instil deep understanding in learners – the kind of learning that they would carry with them for the rest of their lives. Educators often inspired learners to pursue certain learning areas (Miller, 2021).

1.6.3 Parents

For this study, parents were referred to as people who were responsible for a child's welfare, upbringing and education. Besides the biological parents of a child, a parent might have received help from family members, such as grandparents, older siblings, aunts, close family friends, neighbours and members of the community who were taking care of a child's schooling (Maluleke, 2014). It was from the perspective above that the study encompassed caregivers as parents of children in schools.

1.6.4 Foundation Phase

The Foundation Phase in this study refers to the first three years of schooling: Grades 1 to 3 in the South African school system. Generally, one educator was responsible for teaching all learning areas, and it was a foundational period where learners were taught reading, writing and numeracy. The medium of instruction in the Foundation Phase was the learners' home language, and learners were taught all learning areas in their home language. The Department of Education in South Africa mandated offering a choice of a first additional language, in addition to mathematics and life skills (Maddock & Maroun, 2018).

1.7 Literature Review

The researcher exploration of new developments in the field of comparative education discovered compelling evidence supporting a more significant role for partnership between parents and educators in enhancing learners' academic performance during Foundation Phase. Learners in this phase often faced academic challenges due to insufficient mutual relationship between parents and educators, overcrowded classroom and resource limitations. Consequently, the researcher recommended that schools established an integrated support system for learners and actively fostered partnership with parents, emphasising shared responsibility for children's success within the educational system.

The researcher drew insight from the Epstein theory of partnership and the model of parental involvement to identify important aspects of parent- educator collaboration in school settings. The literature revealed that both parents and educators lacked awareness of the Department of Basic Education (DBE) legislation and policies related to parental involvement. These partnerships significantly influenced the overall culture of learning and teaching.

The literature review emphasised the need for targeted development programmes to enhance parent-educator partnership, with focus on motivation. It explained various perspectives, including elaborating on the concepts of parent-educator partnership, South African policies regarding parent-educator collaboration, discernment on parental involvement, learner performance, the impact of class size and overcrowded classrooms, barriers to parental involvement and parental empowerment.

1.7.1 ELABORATION ON THE CONCEPTS OF PARENTS—EDUCATORS PARTNERSHIP

Parental involvement encompasses various roles at home, while school involvement focuses on active participation within the educational setting. Both direct and indirect involvement contribute to supporting children's education (Epstein & Sheldon, 2016). School involvement included parents' participation in school activities, which involved volunteering, educators' assistance and family communication (Madzinga, 2021). Getting parents to volunteer to do something, such as helping with sports coordination in the

school, and educators' assistance in the classroom also formed part of parental and community involvement. There was direct and indirect involvement if the intention was to support the child's education (Nokali et al., 2011).

Garcia and Thomton (2014) showed that the involvement of family in learning helped to improve learners' performance, decrease non-attendance and reinstated parents' confidence in their children's education. Learners with parents or caregivers who were concerned about their education produced higher grades and test scores (Ntekane, 2018). Parental involvement also enhanced learners' social skills and illustrated improved behaviour that the community needed. The socially acceptable behaviour of children contributed to reducing crime and poverty within the community. Ideally, it would help to have a more significant percentage of parental involvement in the children's education. Parental and community involvement was essential for children's learning and attitudes about school aspirations.

1.7.2 South African Policies on Parent–Educator Partnership

The educational policy implementation is generally an intent, a set of rules and principles, adapted to ease governance within the school or organisation. Parents and educators need to know the implementation of policies as they form a link between themselves, schools, learners and the rule of law (Ulla, 2018). The recognition of parental engagement as an integral part of educational reforms aligned with a supportive stance. African literature aligns with a supportive stance toward parental engagement, emphasising its impact on learners and advocating for effective collaboration between parents, educators, and policymakers (Rammbuda, 2024).

Studies have shown that the National Centre for School Engagement (2004) recognised education where school districts focused on implementing strategies to endorse parental involvement in schools. Therefore, the National Centre for School Engagement collaborated with the school district to support children and their families to be engaged at school. However, despite this endeavour, South Africa still had a lack of mutual partnership between educators and parents (Lemmer,2012).

Section 3.4 of the National Education Policy Act 27 of 1996 emphasises parental choices and responsibilities to encourage parental participation at home and school and to

effectively link home and school. The policy also addresses parental involvement in the monitoring of home education by observing their child as they learned, checking completed class work and homework available and establishing daily homework schedules. The National Education Policy Act 27 of 1996, section 3.4 states that parents have to keep evidence of continuous assessment of the learner's progress towards achieving the outcomes of the learning programme.

The South African Council for Educators (SACE, 2000) recognises parents as partners in education and encourages the promotion of a harmonious relationship with them. However, studies have shown that there was no pleasant relationship between parents and educators (Dor, 2012). Learners were still deteriorating, children's work habits were not improving, positive attitudes about school and grade improvement were still missing, communication between parents and educators was insufficient and skill development to support children's behaviour and learning was still lacking (Sheridan, 2018).“The educator should refrain from offering a bribe in any form to parents and do what is practically possible to benefit the well-being and progress of the learner”(SACE, 2000,:3). However, educators should build mutual partnerships with parents to find better solutions that will support learning by positively interacting with the children about school.

The South African Schools Act (SASA), 1996 (Act No. 84 of 1996**)** emphasises parental involvement in schools. It encourages parents, educators, learners and the broader community to actively engage in two ways. Parents can serve on the SGB, contributing to decision making and governance. Parents can support the SGB by participating in day-to-day school activities. It is further stated that parents are obliged to take their children to school from the first school day of the year in which such a learner reached four and a half years of age. Therefore, educators had well thought out the significance of parent participation and involvement in school performance as they developed learners' performance, decreased absenteeism and re-established parents' confidence in their children's education (Garcia and Thorn, 2014). Consequently, parental involvement in the education of learners was seen as beginning at home with parents providing a safe and healthy setting, suitable learning experiences, support and a positive attitude about school (Durišic, 2017). As a result, educators are seen as excellent informants in providing all-inclusive information to parents regarding the tuition given to children by the school so that they could support their children better (Shezi, 2012). Subsequently, the

schools with empowered educators and parents have outlined constructive attitudes towards the involvement of parents in learning (Majozi, 2014). Dor and Rucker-Naidu (2012) mention that the optimistic attitude of educators towards parental involvement was extremely significant to learners' academic performance.

1.7.3 Family Obligation

Family duty is a sense of responsibility to uphold, honour and support family members (Milan, 2015). Taking care of children and working to support the family financially are obligations of the family. Thus, parents are overburdened with childcare and employment duties that make it challenging to collaborate with schools and leave them with no time to concentrate on their children's academics (Torres-Buigo, 2010; Vera, 2017). According to Chu and Garcia (2014) and Gonzales (2017), parents' educational backgrounds might also be a deterrent to parental involvement since they often ended up in part-time jobs that took up a lot of their time.

The family, on the one hand, is viewed as an educational institution that oversees bringing up and teaching the children. The school, on the other hand, offers formal learning contexts pertinent to each child's balanced growth. To provide each learner with appropriate learning experiences that match their educational interests and learning requirements, a partnership between school, home and the community is required (Marin, 2018).

1.8 THE THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

A theoretical or conceptual framework is an essential component of research that shapes the quality and scope of the investigation (AERA, 2006). To examine how the learners' academic performance was influenced by the partnership between parents and educators, the researcher used Epstein's theoretical framework of parent–educator partnership (2018) as the theoretical basis for the study. Epstein (2018) identified six types of involvement that the school could use as strategies to involve parents in education: parenting, communicating, volunteering, helping learners at home, decision making and collaboration. Epstein's (2018) six types of involvement are interpreted below and linked to the study. Below is a brief discussion of Epstein's theoretical lenses on how parents could be involved in their children's education.

1.8.1 Parenting

Epstein (2018) maintains that educators assist parents and families to comprehend the school and the needs of schooling. Epstein used the example that, through parent meetings, educators could acquire the opportunity to speak about the significance of parental involvement and how parents could involve themselves in their children's education. The parent had to assist the educator in including knowledge of the surroundings, customs and rationale of the family for the child. Educators were required to help families understand their children's progress and provide a home environment that sustained them as learners at every age and grade level (Feasley, 2017). In this study, parents were viewed as pioneers who enhanced the educators' work at home by assisting their children with learning.

1.8.2 Communicating

Parents and educators are two essential contributors to learners' academic performance. When parents and educators correspond well with one another, they could support learners' education jointly. As such, communication between home and school is very important. Malatji, Mavuso and Malatji (2018) found that educators tended to communicate with parents when a child had behavioural problems or when issuing term progress reports without any form of dialogue. To make the most of the opportunity for parent–educator partnerships, communication should have been joint with the possibility of both parties conveying information precisely (Sarmento & Freire, 2012). This study encouraged parents and educators to communicate and encouraged parents to open and discuss several challenges they experienced with their children's development that might have been disturbing their academic achievements.

Volunteering

Working collectively with the school management team, educators have to persuade parents to volunteer at school, such as being educator assistants and events assistants, including roles such as sports coordinators or coaches (Shezi, 2012). Parental participation in volunteering in school activities determines and permits educators to work willingly where the child's success and the school are supported (Epstein, 2018). This

study encouraged parents to be involved as volunteers at schools to support and improve learners' academic progress and school programmes.

Learning at Home

Epstein (2018) emphasises that parents should have facilitated children's development at home. Maluleke (2014) persists that early involvement in the child's schoolwork, for example, the Foundation Phase, has optimistic effects on educational achievement, particularly when parents have been directly involved with the child. The National Education Association (2011) states that every parent could help their children's academic success, and the successful involvement of family could occur inside every home. This study encouraged learning at home as it benefitted children to complete their homework, develop confidence and advance their assessment marks with parents as the facilitators of their children's progress.

Decision Making

Epstein (2018) envisions resolution as a partnership of collective views and actions towards joint goals and not the results of a control struggle between conflicting ideas. Cabus and Aries (2017) observe that parents could take a dynamic responsibility in decision making in schools by becoming involved in school governing bodies (SGBs) and other organs of the school community. This study encouraged parents in the decision-making process through the school committee as they had been tasked to do and to be accountable for the use and possession of the education service.

1.8.3 Collaboration

In the context of schools being situated within communities, it is essential to establish a strong working relationship between the school and the community. Parents residing in communities play a crucial role by collaborating with educators to strategies on effective teaching and learning approaches. Mahlangu (2014) highlights the community influence on shaping learners' cognitive environments. Epstein's perspective further emphasises the constructive development of children within their community.

This approach recognises that an educationally conducive environment equips children with vital information. Community resources, such as libraries, parks and even churches,

serve as valuable learning spaces for Early Childhood Development (ECD). Consequently, schools needed to make thoughtful decisions about the factors that would best support their educational goals (Erlendsdóttir, 2010).

1.9. Research Methodology

The research methodology was the systematic, theoretical analysis of the methods applied to a field of study; it comprised the theoretical analysis of the body of methods and principles associated with a branch of knowledge (Chinelo, 2016). The researcher illuminated how they would acquire their data and turn it into a study, which in turn constructed suitable and consistent results that followed the aims and objectives of their research.

The research methodology was understood as a systematic approach to addressing research problems. Essentially, it involved studying how research was conducted methodically. Researchers follow a series of steps from inception to completion, typically adopting them to investigate fundamental research questions and understand their underlying rationale (Chinelo, 2016). The purpose of this study's research methodology was to explain the reasoning behind the researcher's approach to their research and the need to support the collection methods, methods of analysis and other key points of their work.

1.9.1 PARADIGMATIC PERSPECTIVES

In my research, the research paradigm served as a philosophical framework that underpinned my work. It shaped my beliefs about reality and influenced my approach to knowledge. The paradigmatic perspectives helped me as the researcher to navigate the complexities of parent-educator collaboration, considering qualitative insights. By acknowledging diverse viewpoints and ethical considerations, the study enhanced learners' academic performance through effective partnerships.

1.9.2 Epistemology

Epistemology is the study of the nature of knowledge and justification of beliefs held to be true; it could be thought of as justification of knowledge. The theory of knowledge is inescapable, as it is impossible to engage in knowledge creation without tacit

assumptions about what knowledge is and how it is constructed. It influences the relationship between the researcher and participant, how the quality of methods is demonstrated and how the researcher communicates with the intended participant (Harmon, 2013).

The researcher in this study determined a research paradigm as a perception that guided the researcher to commence the research (Kivunja & Kuyini, 2017). It is a worldview that put the researcher in the picture to acquire the significance of the research data. It helped the researcher to establish the method that was used in data collection and how to interpret the data (Kivunja & Kuyini, 2017). The researcher placed this research in the interpretive research paradigm as it provided flexibility in stipulations of the possibility of reformulation of the researcher's prior acquaintance as a researcher and understanding through the research period (Serhun, 2013). The interpretive paradigm is described by Maree (2010) as the realities that people construct about their world.

In the interpretive paradigm, there is no accurate answer (Laws et al., 2013). The researcher chose interpretivism for the proposed study as the researcher was investigating the perceptions and experiences of parent–educator relations regarding Foundation Phase learners' academic performance. Interpretivism is not apprehensive about attaining generalisations but instead allows one to construct a rich local understanding of life world experiences (Taylor & Medina, 2013). Interpretivism recognises that principles and reality cannot be detached. Thus, the social world cannot be understood in terms of objective truths. During this study, the researcher kept in mind that acquaintances were subjectively constructed and that each participant interpreted experiences differently.

In following this epistemological framework, the researcher considered the requirements and outlooks of parents–educators to gain insight into their subjective experiences and indulge in their distinctive social environments and contexts (Kelliher, 2011).

1.9.3 Methodological Approach

The researcher employed a qualitative approach to answer questions about the multifaceted nature of phenomena, with the goal of reading and considering the phenomena from the participants' points of view (Tracy, 2019). Qualitative research is

defined as the study of the nature of phenomena (Guillen, 2019). It is especially appropriate for answering questions about why something was not observed, assessing complex multi-component interventions and focusing on improvement (Bussetto et al., 2020). The researcher followed a qualitative methodological approach. In this study, qualitative research focused on parent–educator relations regarding children's education in the Foundation Phase. The qualitative approach was a suitable way to explore this phenomenon. The qualitative approach involved compiling data in participants' natural states (Teheroni et al., 2015). In following this approach, the researcher attempted to describe parental involvement in education. In that way, it aligned the interpretive paradigm with investigating the impact of parent–educator relations on learners' academic performance in the Foundation Phase. The researcher also discussed the formulated research questions (Bentley, 2016).

Qualitative research is a market research method that focuses on obtaining data through open-ended and conversational communication for in-depth investigation. Further, it provides, and questions participants based on their responses. The researcher also tries to understand participants' motivations and feelings. In this study, the researcher chose qualitative research as it can be generally used to understand the views and perceptions of parents' and educators' working relations. It offers visions to various problems and assists in developing concepts with an investigation to look deeper into problems as well as to find new opinions (Carroll, 2016). Undertaking the qualitative research, the researcher aimed to create a general understanding of performance.

The researcher used qualitative research methods to ask pre-arranged questions, "but the researcher also adapted to the interviewees' responses and probed for more information as needed" (Nusbaum et al., 2017). Depending on whether the researcher's hypothesis was confirmed or disconfirmed by the data, they either presented the findings and drew conclusions or proposed a new hypothesis based on what the researcher had learned (Williams, 2021).

The most important focal point in qualitative research is to acquire a deeper meaning of a situation and the people's behaviours in their natural settings (Teheroni et al., 2015). The advantage of qualitative research is that it is flexible. The qualitative research in this study was used on 13 participants, who were well-informed about the phenomenon under

study. The researcher gained a prosperous detailed account of proceedings as they were able to participate actively (Pietklewicz & Smith, 2014).

1.9.4 Research Design

According to Fouché and De Vos (2017), research design is a collection of compactly developed formulas that allow the researcher to accomplish a set of predetermined aims and objectives. In this study, the researcher applied a multiple case study method as it offers a comprehensive and deeper methodical investigation that explores a phenomenon even if it uses only a few participants (Stake, 2013). The multiple case study allowed participants to give comprehensive information for the interviews to assist in understanding how the participants perceived parental involvement in education. Furthermore, it enabled the researcher to have a deeper perception of the investigative topic. The confirmation generated from multiple case studies was well-built and consistent, and the researcher was competent in identifying whether the findings were valuable or not (Gustafsson, 2017). The multiple case study approach lent itself well to capturing information on more explanatory “how”, “what”, and “why” questions (Bennett, 2011). The case study approach could offer additional insights into what gaps existed in its delivery (Crow, 2011). The type of case study used in this research was an exploratory case study. It aimed to explore and understand the multifaceted nature of parental involvement in education during the Foundation Phase. By examining multiple cases, the researcher gained insights into how parents and educators perceived their working relations and its impact on learners’ academic performance.

1.9.5 The Research Sites

This study collected data from two primary schools in the Ekurhuleni South area of Gauteng province. The schools had different socio-economic profiles, as one was a non-paying school in quintile 1 and the other was a paying school in quintile 4. Quintile 1 schools serve the poorest communities and face significant resource challenges. They require additional funding to address educational disparities. Conversely, quintile 4 schools are located in more affluent areas and have better resources and financial stability. The quintile system aims to allocate funding equitably based on the socio-economic context of each school. Quintiles are groups of equal size that divide a

population according to the distribution of values for a specific variable (Kristen, 2010). The first school had 1069 learners and 31 educators, while the second school had 1650 learners and 49 educators. The participants of the study included three educators and four parents from the first school (school A) and three parents and three educators from the second school (school B). The total number of participants was 13.

1.9.6 Population and Sampling

A population refers to all the people measured in research, while a sample is a small representative taken from a study population (McMillian & Schumacher,2010). The population for this study consisted of selected parents and educators from both School A and School B. These participants were chosen based on parents with learners in the Foundation Phase and educators with experience teaching Foundation Phase. Sampling involved selecting participants for the study from the larger population. The sampling method used in this study was non-probability sampling. The sample used by the researcher was undersized and convenient, and viewed individuals as those with information that was valuable in this research (Ngozwana, 2018). When determining which educators to select, the researcher relied on criteria that guided them to participants who held the relevant information and experience that could assist in addressing the research questions (Mukheri & Albon, 2018).

This study involved 13 participants from two schools: seven parents and six educators. School A had four parents and three educators, while school B had three parents and three educators. The educators had experience in teaching the Foundation Phase (Grades 1 to 3), and each grade had one representative. The parents had children who were enrolled in the Foundation Phase at the same schools (Hadi, 2020).

1.9.7 Data Collection

Christopher (2020) described data collection as a procedure of gathering and measuring information on variables of interest. This happens in a recognised orderly manner that enables one to respond to known research questions and assess the outcomes. The researcher collected data to evaluate the outcome of the problem, arrived at a solution and understood the participant's responses (Singh, 2022). The researcher used multiple

data collection techniques, namely semi-structured interviews, document analysis, which contained parental involvement policies in the schools, and questerview.

The researcher collected and processed the data using descriptive research as it focused on the ‘’what’’ question and described the status of the factor studied.

1.9.8 Document Analysis

Document analysis is a form of qualitative research technique that uses a methodical procedure to analyse documentary evidence and answer specific research questions (Frey, 2018). Documents about parent–educator working relations were also investigated. The newsletters, policies, agenda, communication books and empirical evidence were supported by document analysis to check how educators worked with parents at schools (O’Leary, 2014). The researcher included document analysis such as letters supporting parental involvement; staff meeting reports; parent–educator meeting reports; and intervention forms showing communication between parents and educators. O’Leary (2014) states that, as a researcher and observer during fieldwork, the researcher maintains a research journal to record personal observations, reflections and notes of perceived body language shown during interactions with parents and educators.

1.10 SEMI-STRUCTURED INTERVIEW

The semi-structured interview is open and flexible and assists in gathering the correct information to help fine-tune the data. Semi-structured in-depth interviews are the most common qualitative data starting point in educational research. Semi-structured interviews involve engaging in face-to-face interviews, which consist of a one-on-one conversation between the researcher and the participant to explore the participant’s thoughts, feelings and beliefs about a topic (Kriller & Conradin, 2018). In this study, the discussion centred on parent–educator partnership and parental involvement within the Foundation Phase to improve learners’ academic performance. The researcher also proposed a questerview. Six semi-structured individual interviews were conducted with educators in the Foundation Phase and with seven parents with learners in the Foundation Phase on the condition that the COVID-19 regulation restrictions allowed. If not, the semi-structured interviews took place online to ensure compliance with the relevant COVID-19 regulations. The duration of the semi-structured sessions was 45

minutes as this provided enough data for the analysis (West, 2020). This semi-structured session was audio recorded and transcribed. The evaluation instrument that was used was an open-ended questionnaire. The participants in the semi-structured interviews were asked a set of predetermined questions about the questerview, and the participants were encouraged to converse on the items that were valid and relevant. In the following paragraphs, the researcher discusses the data analysis and interpretation method intended to be used for this study.

1.10.1 Questerview

A questerview is a research instrument that consists of a set of questions or other types of prompts that aim to collect information from participants (McLafferty, 2016). The dynamic between a questerview and open-ended questions is crucial for data collection in interviews or surveys. The questerview is tasked with guiding the dialogue and eliciting detailed responses, while open-ended questions allow respondents to share their thoughts and feelings in depth, providing valuable qualitative insights (McLafferty, 2016). In addition, open-ended questions facilitate a deeper sharing of personal insights, yielding richer and more intricate data. An open-ended questerview was forwarded through WhatsApp to seven parents and six educators. Participants were given seven days to complete the questerview. A questerview was used as it allowed open-ended, long-form questions that offered the participants the ability to elaborate on their thoughts. Silverton (2016) contends that open-ended questions can be administered to small samples. The questerview was composed of open-ended questions that sourced data on specific issues concerning parent–educator partnerships and parental involvement within the Foundation Phase. Among other things, the questions solicited data on parents' and educators' partnership experiences; aspects that promoted parental involvement; educational policy on parental involvement; challenges faced by educators; awareness about parental involvement; and suggestions for effective programme implementation in schools. All seven parents and six educators in the sample completed the questerview to submit their experience at a personal level.

1.10.2 Data Analysis and Interpretation

An inductive thematic data analysis of all identified documents and transcribed audio recordings was conducted by the researcher (Poole, 2017). The inductive thematic analysis relied on identifying and growing themes and patterns within data (Roestenburg et al., 2021). This approach to data analysis and interpretation allowed the researcher to understand parents' and educators' relationships and experiences with learners' academic achievement, which was necessary as the participants' views on the phenomenon under study were unknown**.**

According to Maree and Pietersen (2014), thematic coding is mainly used in qualitative research analysis. It involves preparing and organising the generated data from numerous sources by producing codes and then presenting data in the form of discussions. As a researcher, it is essential to make decisions during the analysis process, from selecting analysis strategies to deciding which data to attend to and how to code the specific data (Leedy & Omrod, 2015). The researcher in this study used triangles to measure multiple data sources and sought feedback from the participants through member checking. The researcher also documented analyses measures in detail, although this may have influenced a way of interpreting the data (Leedy & Ormrod, 2015).

1.11 ETHICAL CONSIDERATION

Ethical consideration is a compilation of principles and ideals to follow while researching human affairs. The ethical considerations are constructed to ensure that no one acts in such a way that is destructive to society or an individual. It refrains people and organisations from indulging in inhuman conduct (Bhasin, 2020).

1.11.1 Volunteering

Volunteering refers to a human research subject's use of free will in deciding whether to participate in the research activity. The researcher in this study asked the participants to volunteer to take part in the study (Ginting, 2022).

1.11.2 Right of Withdrawal

The right to withdraw is a concept in educational research ethics. It states that a study participant in the educational trial has a right to end involvement in the trial at will. In this study, a person could withdraw from the research at any point in time, and the participant was not required to reveal the reason for discontinuation (Niewenhuis, 2016).

1.11.3 Permission

To adhere to ethical considerations, the researcher applied to the University of Pretoria Ethics Committee within the Faculty of Early Childhood Development. Subsequently, the researcher sought permission from the Gauteng Department of Basic Education to conduct the research. Once permission was granted, fieldwork commenced. The researcher received a letter from the Director at the Department of Basic Education, which allowed them to visit the schools where the research would be conducted and to obtain approval from the principals (Josephson & Smale, 2021).

1.11.4 Respect

The researcher demonstrated unwavering respect for the participants' privacy and maintained strict confidentiality regarding all documented information. In addition, the researcher ensured that participants were informed of any changes before, during and after data generation, as outlined by Mukherji and Albon (2010).

1.12 SUMMARY OF THE CHAPTER

This chapter introduced the issue of the dynamics of the parent–educator relationship on learners' academic performance in the Foundation Phase. The background and concerns of parent–educator relations in this study were provided. Following the background, the rationale of the study, the purpose of the study and the detailed problem statement were outlined. After the problem statement, the research questions were presented. A preliminary literature review was provided, and the theoretical framework that informed this study was presented in outline form. The key terms used were conceptually defined. The methodology approach was described, followed by the research design, sampling, data collection and identifying research participants. The issue of trustworthiness was

addressed, followed by research ethics, conclusion and, also, capturing the references used in this study.

CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 INTRODUCTION

In the last chapter, the researcher discussed the background, problem statement and research questions. This chapter provides the reader with a review of the literature related to the investigation of parent–educator relations on learners' academic performance in the Foundation Phase. The researcher begins by defining the concepts of the parent–educator partnership. This is followed by an exploration of educators' and parents' perspectives on parental involvement. The researcher illustrates how parents can encourage learning at home by assisting with homework and actively participating in their children's academic journey. In addition, the types of parental involvement that schools can use are described. Subsequently, the researcher discusses positive changes and barriers to parental involvement, while also presenting the theoretical framework adopted for the study. This section concludes with the application of Epstein's theoretical framework to the current study.

The researcher divides Chapter 2 into two sections: a literature review on parental involvement and the theoretical framework that informed this study. Figure 2 depicts the outline of Chapter 2.

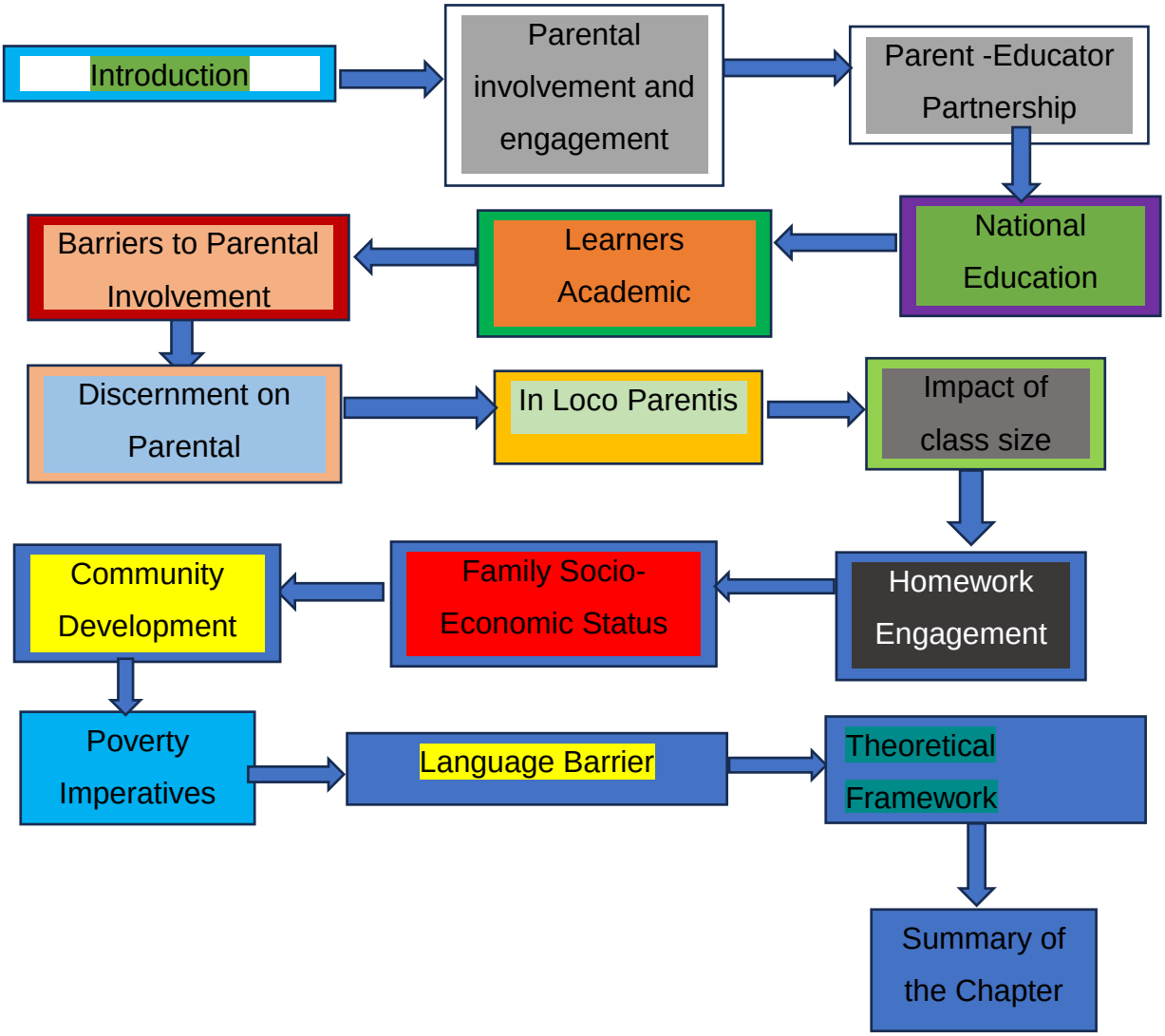

Figure 2: Layout of Chapter 2

2.2 PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT

Parental involvement encompasses various ways in which parents contribute to their child's educational journey and experiences at school, as highlighted by Posey-Maddox and Haley-Lock (2020). These actions include assisting with schoolwork, attending school functions, engaging in discussions with teachers and actively fostering their child's learning and educational progress, as also emphasised by Gokturk and Dinckal (2018).

Parental involvement in education is crucial and extends beyond academic support to a proactive partnership that enriches children's learning and outcomes (Kong, 2018).

Parents' presence in their children's education involves emotional and intellectual engagement, not just assisting with homework, but instilling the value of education and work ethic (Levinthal et al., 2022). Education is a joint journey that involves parents and schools to create a supportive network that strengthens the educational framework and meets learners' needs. Parents attend meetings and support extracurricular activities to contribute to children's development. This aligns with school objectives and builds resilience and self-esteem. Effective parental involvement relies on positive relationships between parents and educators, fosters communication, problem solving and supportive strategies (Geesa et al., 2022). Parental involvement is a key element of education, empowering parents as co-educators and allies in their children's educational journey, which makes it successful, fulfilling and transformative (Kearey-Moreland, 2023).

2.2.1 Parental Engagement

Parental engagement is indeed a multifaceted concept that extends beyond mere involvement in school activities (Chan, et al., 2022). It represents a more dynamic and proactive approach where parents actively participate in shaping their children's educational experiences (Davis-Kean et al., 2021).

Research conducted by Thomas, Utley, Hong, Korkmaz and Nugent (2020) consistently showed that parental engagement positively impacted children's academic outcomes. Engaged parents were more inclined to support learning at home, assist with homework and foster an educational environment that emphasised the value of education.

Parental engagement also had a significant impact on learners' behaviour. Engaged parents were more attuned to their children's social interactions and school life, enabling them to guide their children through challenges and reinforce positive behaviour (Kelty & Wakabayashi, 2020). The social aspect of a child's development was strongly influenced by parental engagement. Through parental involvement, parents modelled social behaviour, encouraged participation in extracurricular activities and assisted children in developing the necessary skills to navigate social situations (Costley et al., 2020).

When parental engagement extends to community activities, it aids in building a sense of belonging and strengthening the support network for children. This communal effort

results in a more inclusive and supportive environment for all learners (McWayne et al., 2022).

Parental engagement is not just beneficial but essential for the holistic development of children. It establishes a supportive network that not only enhances academic success but also contributes to the overall well-being of learners (Kartel et al., 2022). Through prioritising this engagement, parents work towards a more collaborative and effective educational system.

2.3 PARENT–EDUCATOR PARTNERSHIP

Parent–educator partnerships have been widely discussed by various researchers (Einarsdottir & Jónsdóttir, 2019; Hedeen et al., 2011). However, in South Africa, evidence suggests a need for intervention to improve the parent–educator partnership (Huynen, 2021). The realistic evidence about the parent–educator partnership, its effect and self-determining evidence about the partnership between parents and educators in South Africa remains inadequate (Grace, 2022; Hughes, 2021). Sheridan (2018) defines the parent–educator partnership as a transformed partnership between educators and parents who are required to work mutually in the best interest of learners. Contrary to the definition, studies in South Africa have found that parents and educators in South Africa do not know how to collaboratively work as a team to improve learners' academic performance (Huynen, 2021; Malatji, 2021). This is supported by their statement that there was a need for intervention to improve the parent–educator partnership. Moreover, parents and educators could not educate children in the best way by working on their own; they had to work in partnership and together with parents for the best learning experience.

The South African schools need to intervene by assisting educators to collaborate with parents through the implementation of technology (McKnight et al., 2016). They use Google Classroom and Moodle, forums introduced by the Department of Education, which are free. School principals are required to utilise these services and implement them in their schools. This implementation was thought to be useful in fostering partnerships between educators and parents. The implementation of Google Classroom and Moodle as learning management systems in schools aligns with the goal of fostering

partnerships between educators and parents. These platforms facilitate communication, collaboration and efficient management of educational resources.

Parents are well versed in their child's development history, interests and lifestyle, while educators have knowledge of teaching strategies, assessment strategies, rules and the child's academic performance. Consequently, parents and educators should distribute this knowledge in a mutual manner to support the child's academic performance (Llamas & Tuazon, 2016). Academic performance includes relating what the child is learning at school to how they learn at home (Llamas & Tuazon, 2016).

Researchers such as LaRocque, Kleiman and Darling (2011) show that parents and educators need to work in partnership to better regulate their responsibilities, their roles and their performance to constantly improve learners' academic performance in the Foundation Phase. Sheridan (2010) argues that parents and educators in mutual relationships depend on one another equally and reciprocally. Epstein (2018) emphasises that educators and parents need to be acquainted with their shared interests, responsibilities and relationships with the learners and to work collaboratively to produce better opportunities for the learners.

Factors such as uncertain role definitions between parents and educators could obstruct the educator–parent partnership and reduce process efficiency (Schweizer et al., 2017). The role of parents has always been an important topic in their children's education. Past researchers have indicated the reasons for parental involvement in the child's education, the different ways parents could become involved and how parental involvement improves learners' scholarly outcomes (Wanat, 2010).

In the past environment of educational challenge in South Africa, researchers focused on the factors that strengthened quality education and improved learners' academic performance (Okeke, 2014). The school management team (SMT) and school governing body (SGB) were tasked with educating and capacitating parents with knowledge of educational laws and principles. Captivating parents with knowledge on how they could be implicated in education allowed them to become acquainted with their roles and responsibilities concerning the partnership with educators to develop the child holistically.

Researchers argue that there is a perceptual gap and inadequate consideration between parents and educators concerning the types of performance needed for an effective partnership (McLeskey, 2017). This study investigated the challenges related to parent–educator partnerships and their impact on learners' academic performance during the Foundation Phase.

2.3.1 Elaborating on the Concepts of Parent–Educator Partnership

It has been established that parental involvement is a crucial factor that could either have a favourable or negative influence on children's educational outcomes (Lara & Saracostti, 2019). The performance of the learners both inside and outside of the classroom might have suffered from a lack of or excessive involvement, which could ultimately harm their ability to study and succeed in school (Turayevna, 2022). Parents and educators both had the child's best interests in mind, according to Trame (2020), but they may have had different ideas on how to support the child in their academic endeavours. According to Lareau (2019), some schools might have expected parents to assist their children with their schoolwork, while other schools might have viewed involvement as showing up to parent–educator meetings. Moreover, some educators thought that parents' lack of education was a contributing factor.

Chiang (2010) defines parental involvement as the actions that were carried out by parents and children at home or between the educator and the parent, both of which were intended to improve a child's educational result. Parental involvement was seen as the development of a solid partnership between parents and educators that would help learners succeed in their academic endeavours (Larocque et al., 2011). Parental involvement, according to Lemmer et al. (2012), is the action that links the home and the school for the benefit of the child's academic achievement.

Subsequently, parents supplemented the educators' work at home by helping children with homework. In support of parental homework involvement, Mncube (2010) added that parental involvement entailed knowledge that a parent must have been concerned about a child's education. Parental involvement could influence children's educational commitment in the Foundation Phase. Knisely (2011) alludes that parents need to feel the necessity to enquire about their children's work, contact an educator and inspect

every progress a learner makes. In most schools' studies, educators involved parents in their children's academic performance when there was a problem, to come to school to discuss poor academic performance or behavioural problems that they encountered with the child.

Lau (2013) shows that Bangladeshi, Indian and Pakistani parents (BIP) had experiences and perceptions of behaviours that contributed to their children's academic performance. BIP parents contributed to their children's academic achievement by providing a safe and friendly home environment, communicating high expectations and becoming involved in their children's school-based activities (Lau, 2013). BIP parents were among the highest educational and financial achievers in the United States with distinctive educational and behavioural patterns (Lau, 2013). Conversely, despite reliable support from federal and local education agencies and policies, school officials were still facing challenges in defining and measuring parental involvement in a manner that would help in the development of parental policies and programs (Lau, 2013). However, the value of parenting and the home learning environment were the most significant factors in children's development. This was applicable in this sphere of influence as a person's attitude was linked to choosing a certain behaviour (Ajzen, 2015). This meant parents' attitudes directed their behaviours to be engaged in their children's education at home and in school-based activities. This relationship was comprehensively studied (Rasool & Zhang, 2020). Parents were required to spend time and be involved not only in academic achievements but also in the growth of their children's personalities. The two important factors that engaged in the facilitation of parental involvement and children's academic achievement were family environment and family background (Roy & Garcia, 2018).

Marcenaro and Lopez (2017) maintain that well-informed and successful families encourage children's non-cognitive capabilities and social development, and that a good family atmosphere and a parent-child relationship contribute to the development of physical and mental health. Parents who struggled for high-quality educational opportunities for their children discovered that enhanced educational opportunities led to better academic performance (Bempechat, 2019). Families influenced children's learning behaviours and academic achievement in significant ways, as they were the primary and most considerate environment that the children were exposed to (Li & Qiu, 2018). Family social and economic circumstances might have affected the children's academic

performance more than the effects of school (Li & Qiu, 2018). It was for this reason that investigating family socio-economic circumstances was recommended to provide an improved strategy for parents and educators to work effectively.

As a result, this study investigated and promoted an exploration of parental involvement in learners' academic performance in the Foundation Phase and developed strategies to enable the collaboration of parent–educator relationships to influence good education for children and their academic success.

2.3.2 South African Policies on Parent–Educator Partnership

A policy is generally an intent**,** a set of rules and principles that are adopted to ease governance within the school or organisation (Ulla, 2018). Parents and educators need to know the implementation of policies as it forms a link between themselves, the school, the learners and the rule of law (Ulla, 2018). Parental involvement is increasingly recognised by policy makers as one of the integral parts of educational reform (Wilder, 2014).

2.3.2.1 National Education Policy Act (NEPA) 27 of 1996

The National Education Policy Act (NEPA) 27 of 1996 in South Africa guides the country's education and mandates parents to be part of school governance (NEPA, 1996). Furthermore, NEPA mandates that the school governing body (SGB) should determine admission policies. This allows parents to be directly involved in school policies. NEPA stipulates that parents have to be consulted if a child is to be reprimanded. Parents are obliged to pay school fees, and the school has a code of conduct that establishes expectations for children's behaviour (NEPA section 40). Parents should be allowed to educate their children at home. To ensure that their children obtain an education that meets both their needs and their human dignity, parents have a responsibility to educate their children. Also, since it is legal, and parents could be effective instructors without special training, they should be allowed to teach their children in their homes. This has a demonstrably positive effect on the academic performance of the children. The importance of NEPA section 3.4(h), which constructs the stipulation for obligatory school education, could certainly not be overemphasised.

The practical comprehension of NEPA depends on the direct involvement of parents, who are to ensure that their children regularly attend schools. This requires parental involvement in their children's learning processes as well as management and assistance with homework, providing lots of support and motivation. The Department of Education also requires parents to attend parent–educator meetings and, jointly with schools, to set high presentation standards for their children (Nyarko, 2011). Parents are directly involved in meetings, and parent–educator meetings are required of them. Parents are to motivate and inspire their children to put in extra effort in the classroom (Selolo, 2018).

The National Education Policy Act 27 of 1996 also addresses the parent–educator partnership in the monitoring of home education. In support of home education, parents set up family routines, including healthy eating and sleeping habits, as well as providing a place and time at home for homework, checking the availability of homework and projects, and communicating with their children about school activities. According to this study, home education was beneficial for learners' academic performance, and learners whose parents helped them at home scored highly and performed well academically in school.

The National Education Policy Act of 1996 states that parents have to keep evidence of continuous assessment of the learners' progress towards achieving the outcomes of the learning programme and the little knowledge that exists regarding the part that the children played in the progress of parental involvement in education. As this would provide opportunities for parents to comprehend and be grateful for their children's efforts, symbols of development and achievement over time, involving parents in assessment could provide educators with helpful information to assist with each child's learning progress (Lopez, 2019).

The National Education Policy of 1996 guides with suggestions to promote parental involvement by encouraging parents to ensure their children attend school. It further encourages parents to motivate and assist their children with homework to improve their education.

2.3.2.2 The South African Council for Educators (SACE)

In terms of the SACE Act, a Code of Professional Ethics was developed that sets out the ethical standards that have to be adhered to when educators register with the South African Council for Educators.

The South African Council for Educators SACE Act 3.1 of 2000 has a “Conduct of the Educator and the Learner”, which states that, according to attempts to support learners in developing a set of values that are consistent with the fundamental freedom protected by the constitution, Item 3.14 of the SACE clearly implies that parents are to be held responsible for assisting and guiding their children. It recognises the need for a partnership between educators and learners and encourages children to be responsible contributors to their education.

Parents need to be empowered to carry out their roles as partners in education, and joint respect between education partners has to be evident, with educators being particularly aware of the value inputs of parents as the primary caregivers (De Waal & Serfontein, 2015). Through encouraging parents to become involved and participate in school activities, all points of view are to be valued in the classroom. Furthermore, by giving parents a voice, it might be possible to break down barriers between parents and educators.

Studies have shown that there is still no pleasant relationship between parents and educators as learners’ achievements are still deteriorating. Children’s efforts and behaviour had not improved, as their attitudes about school and grade improvement were still negative. Communication between parents and educators was insufficient and skill development to support children’s behaviour and learning endeavours was still lacking due to the lack of a harmonious relationship between educators and parents (Sheridan, 2018).

The South African Council for Educators (SACE, 2000) recognises parents as partners in education and encourages the promotion of a harmonious relationship between them. The harmonious relationship that was the goal to achieve in this study required that parents and educators communicated effectively to build a stronger relationship with one another and develop skills to support children’s behaviour and learning (Epstein, 2018).

Epstein (2019) maintains that when a partnership is formed between parents and educators, it becomes evident that children's behaviour is positively influenced and their attitudes about school and their grades improve. The school should refrain from offering a bribe in any form to parents and rather do what is practically possible to keep the well-being and progress of the learner intact (SACE, 2000). SACE (2000) states that educators must have well-built personality characteristics, including determination, truthfulness, respect, lawfulness, fairness and unity (Magidigidi, 2021). The SACE code of conduct states that an educator should have recognised that an educational institution serves the community. Furthermore, parents should ensure that their children attend school. It should also have been acknowledged that there would be differing customs, codes and beliefs in the community. An educator should therefore have conducted him/herself in a manner that did not show disrespect to the values, customs and norms of the community as this protects the rights of learners.

This study used the SACE policy in designing a harmonious guideline for parents and educators. When there is a harmonious relationship between parents and educators, learners' performance, behaviour and attitude improve.

2.3.2.3 The National Screening, Identification, Assessment and Support (SIAS) Policy Document

The Screening, Identification, Assessment and Support (SIAS) was implemented by the Department of Education in 2014. The SIAS plan was an essential part of navigating inclusive education (IE) in South Africa as it focused on the needs of all learners. It identified areas which were likely to be excluded and those intended for improved access to quality education and support for all learners (DoBE, 2014). The plan focused on the early identification of barriers to learning and correct assessment strategies for the barriers that learners might have experienced (Robinson & Persky, 2020).

SIAS (2014) involved parents in the early identification of learning difficulties. This policy assisted educators and schools to determine the support needs of all learners. SIAS also encouraged flexible work preparation to permit parents to spend time with their children. It further ensured good communication between schools and parents; parental involvement by sharing learning at home and made available concrete guidance and equipment for parents to lend a hand in their children's learning (Belfali, 2020). Adele

(2017) further supports that SIAS provided features on the levels of support required by learners.

SIAS (2014) Section 12 stipulates the responsibility of parents in children's education. Parents are implicated in the early identification of barriers, helping educators to identify the struggles that learners experience. SIAS highlights that parents are equal partners in the process. SIAS (section 12.2) goes on to give parents the flexibility to get in touch with an educator relating to a learner's progress.

This policy was helpful in this study as it informed parents and educators that the SIAS policy aimed to improve access to excellent education for vulnerable learners and those who faced learning barriers. Educators were to have a mutual relationship with parents, as they were supposed to consider parents when making choices about their children's supportive needs. The needs of learners were based on an Individual Support Plan as individuals differed and needed support according to their learning barriers.

2.3.2.4 The Role of District-Based Support Team

The District-Based Support Team (DBST) is a transdisciplinary team that has members from several units in the district, such as Early Childhood Development and Inclusive Education. The DBST structures are a key factor in successful education institutions and various community resources in the area (DoE, 2005). DBST is part of the conduct in the SIAS policy that includes a protocol as well as a set of official forms to be used by DBST. It is a crucial component of the implementation of an inclusive education support system. The DBST was recommended by the SIAS policy. Furthermore, a DBST is described as an integrated group of professionals operating at the district level, comprising providers employed by the Department of Education (DoE) with expertise drawn from education institutions and various community resources in the area.

The relationship between the DBST and parents–educators serves to support educators in schools by including greater flexibility in their teaching methods, learning support material and assessment instruments. It stipulates a direct interventionist programme to learners in a range of settings and serves as consultant and mentor to school management teams, classroom educators and school governing bodies.

Mahoney et al. (2020) argue that it is imperative for parents and educators to have a collective understanding of learners' educational outcomes to promote their learning development. In addition, schools need to correspond with parents on a variety of issues, not merely on the educational process.

To help educators in schools develop more adaptable teaching strategies, learning aids, assessment tools, to offer direct interventionist programmes to learners in a variety of settings and to serve as consultant-mentors to school management teams, classroom educators and school governing bodies, the DBST must have a relationship with parent–educators (SAIS, 2014).

Beyond its district-wide responsibilities, the DBST collaborates closely with the school-based support team (SBST). The SBST's duties include pinpointing and mitigating obstacles to learning within schools, orchestrating the delivery of support and executing the SIAS policy in the educational environment (DoE,2005). Collectively, they constitute an extensive network of support, which is crucial for the effective enactment of inclusive education strategies and protocols (Hess, 2020). The next section discusses the role of the SBST.

2.3.2.5 The Role of School Based Support Team

The school-based support team (SBST), previously known as the institutional level support team (ILST), is responsible for determining the need for support of the school educators and learners and coordinating support provision within the framework of the SIAS (Maphumulo, 2019). The conceptual and operational guidelines for the implementation of IE DBSTs (DoE, 2005) state that the SBST consists of staff members, such as administrators, educators with specialised knowledge and skills in areas such as guidance, counselling or learning support, and learners (Makhalemele & Nel, 2014). The principal of the school oversees setting up SBST ensuring it functions properly and receives enough assistance. The SBST is crucial for providing in-service training and improving educators' assessment abilities. The SBST oversees the support requirements outlined in the school's SIAS policy, coordinating support as required and guaranteeing parental engagement (DoBE, 2014).

The efforts of the SBST are essential in fostering an educational setting that is welcoming and supportive for every student, helping them to overcome any personal obstacles and achieve success both in their studies and in their social development (Mkwanazi, 2023). The SBST's commitment to partnership with both parents and educators ensures a united effort in aiding learners, thus reflecting the core goals of the SIAS policy to promote active involvement and a sense of belonging within the educational community (Hess, 2020). The subsequent section explores how parental support contributes to the work of educators.

2.3.2.6 Parental Support

Parents are the source of information for educators in determining the exact nature of a child's barrier to learning and should therefore be involved in the assessment process and be made aware of their ability to make choices regarding additional support services and alternative placements (Gibson & Martin III, 2019).

SIAS (2014) section 12.5 advises that schools have to obtain the consent of parents to understand how to academically develop their children. Parents are also involved in the outcome on the level of learners' learning barrier support needed (Selolo, 2018). If a learner was assessed to have learning barriers, it is important for the parent/district-based support teams to take the child to applicable specialists for further diagnosis of the cause of the learning barrier for the learner (Dreyer, 2013).

SIAS (2014) encourages educators to see parents as learner supporters in education and to provide them with flexible work encouragement to allow parents to spend time with their children. Thompson et al., (2014) note supporting parental involvement by encouraging collaborative homework that requires parents and children to work jointly, mainly in the Foundation Phase, and by establishing formal school programmes that promote learners' learning. Parents still require acquaintance on the issue of parental involvement in their children's work (Okeke, 2014; Selolo, 2018). Duncan (2012) supports parents as equal partners noting their involvement in education as meaning to assist schools in promoting learners' performance.

The SIAS policy (2014) is a guide with suggestions to promote partnerships between parents and educators. This serves to encourage parents and educators to work collectively to assist learners in the Foundation Phase to perform academically.

2.4 LEARNERS ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE IN THE FOUNDATION PHASE

Academic performance is defined as fulfilment relating to learning (Thesaurus, 2015). Academic performance requires individual learners to progress from one grade to another. The poor partnership between parents and educators affects learners' academic performance in the Foundation Phase (Malatji, 2021).

The complexity of academic performance stems from school readiness, academic achievement and school performance. Several researchers hold the same opinion that academic performance is the result of learning that is encouraged by teaching activities of the educator and is produced by the learners (Van Zyl, 2011).

Researchers state that there is still a lack of parent–educator relationship as learners are still failing, grade improvement is still missing, and learning is still lacking due to a lack of partnership between parents and educators. Segoe and Bisschoff (2019) further mention that, in South Africa, they found that, along with other factors, learners were performing poorly due to lack of parental involvement within the schools.

In South Africa, the low learner performance level was revealed by both national and international assessments such as the Annual National Assessment (ANA) and the Progress in International Reading Literacy Study (PIRLS) (Govender & Hugo 2020). South Africa performed inadequately in the Foundation Phase. The test conducted in 2014 in the ANA Home Language, as referred to by the Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statement (CAPS), revealed that Grade 1 learners reached an average of 63%, Grade 2 learners had an average of 61% and Grade 3 learners had an average of 56%. In the PIRLS assessment, the South African literacy results were also disturbing. On the PIRLS range, Grade 4 learners averaged a reading score of three hundred and twenty (320) out of one thousand (1000), which correlated to failing because it was below the PIRLS lowest international standard of four hundred (400) (Millis, 2017). This is an alarming depiction of teaching and learning and its outcomes in South African schools (Madisaotsile, 2012). These results point to the necessity for enhancement in the quality

of education, particularly during the Foundation Phase, as it is one of the phases that directly influences learners' academic achievement later in life (DBE, 2014, p. 42).

In the South African context, the research by Cascio (2013) found that educators played a significant role in learners' academic performance. For example, if an educator lacked experience or passion for teaching, the learner might not have been able to develop a comprehensive understanding of the learning area material. It was further assumed that, if an educator did not have effective classroom management skills and applied extreme authoritarianism, the classroom environment might have hindered fruitful class discussion and collaborative learning from learners. This also deterred learners from applying themselves to the best of their abilities.

It is therefore clear from the existing research that educators influence the deficient performance of learners in the Foundation Phase; if an educator does not have good learning area knowledge and pedagogical content knowledge, an educator might have delivered incorrect content or skipped content, which could lead to poor performance (Asikhia, 2010). Educators tend to use learners' home language during teaching and learning, so that learners often fail to understand the language used in the official examination papers and consequently fail to answer correctly (Asikhia, 2010).

Parental-related matters also play a critical role in learners' performance (Cascio, 2013). Studies showed that parents who were too occupied to care about their children's academic performance contributed to children losing their academic focus. Poverty-stricken families were found to be negatively affected in their children's academic performance.

It is therefore imperative to investigate the cause of poor learners' academic performance in the Foundation Phase to make recommendations that could enhance academic performance.

2.5 BARRIERS TO PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT

The following section describes the barriers that hold back the smooth running of parental involvement. Despite various researchers showing the advantages of parental involvement, it has been found that there were those who discovered the disadvantages

of parental involvement. This is evident in the statement of El Nokali et al. (2010) that parents might have given their children incorrect information while assisting them to complete their homework due to a lack of an appropriate understanding of certain learning areas. Also, parents became indirectly involved as they were obligated to attend parent–educator meetings (Nyarko, 2011).

Studies indicate that parents were not sure how to become involved in their children's education while educators saw some parents as being responsible for learners' low performance in their schoolwork as they were not supporting learning at home (Lechuga-Pea & Brisson, 2018). Low-income families had less trust and felt inadequate in communicating with educators and, therefore, were reluctant to include themselves in their children's education (Lareau, 2019). Parents became involved in their children's education if they believed that it was an important and required part of the success of their child's development (Epstein, 2019). Parents would also get involved if they felt they were capable and knowledgeable and if the educator encouraged their participation. Educators perceived a minority of parents as not having time or interest to support classroom learning (Hornby & Lafaele, 2011). Furthermore, educators needed to encourage parents by providing them with information about the classroom schedule, curriculum and extra-mural activities as well as teaching expectations so that there was no disconnection when parents came to school to receive their child's quarterly report card (Savacool, 2011).

However, there were parents who did not visit the school as they were illiterate. They felt uncomfortable talking or did not know what to talk to educators about. They also had no knowledge of the school operation system. Educators saw this as parents using their illiteracy as an excuse to neglect their children's education. Savacool (2011) added that parents were not aware of the significance of education and just did not feel responsible for their children's education. Moreover, parents believed that only educators were responsible for their children's education, and they did not understand their responsibilities towards their children's learning.

The present study looked at possible ways that parents could be involved in schools to support their children's learning. Parents in this study were encouraged to participate in their child's school activities and have a positive working relationship with the educators.

In addition, the school needed to create a parental involvement policy for parental involvement to be encouraged for their children's education and to ensure that parents were encouraged to talk and discuss their children's problems if there were any. Supplementary challenges to parental involvement are described below.

2.6 DISCERNMENT ON PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT

2.6.1 Educator's Discernment on Parental Involvement

Studies show that when educators viewed parents as the expectant parents of their children and asked for their contribution from the get-go, they created well-built working relationships and collected insight that could reinforce the school experience for everyone concerned (Harrison, 2017). It was not always a truth that educators did not value parental input. However, Dor and Naidu (2012) highlight that educators have optimist discernment on parental involvement. Educators need parents' support if they are to educate and teach well (Mokhele & Makgopa, 2013). Moreover, parents are enthusiastic to assist, since it is the future of their children at stake.

Dor and Naidu (2012) note that educators value parental discernment in children's education. Okeke (2014) recommends that parents be made aware of the plans for their involvement in their children's education if such plans are to be successful. Educators are enthusiastic about working in partnerships with parents and they give homework to parents to help children at home (Madzinga, 2021). The establishment of positive communication between educators and parents requires a provider to provide adequate information to the family with the aim of identifying parents' expectations, higher learner achievement and developing lasting support and attention (Epstein, 2011). Aslan (2016) argues that when educators experience challenges communicating with parents, dialogue with learners becomes limited, learner success is stalled and effective teaching processes are not implemented.

Since educators' discernment has an impact on their actions (Hong, 2010), educators who viewed home-school collaboration as crucial to learners' success would inevitably develop sustained and persistent lines of communication between schools and parents. Smith and Wingate (2016) arrived at a similar conclusion that educators were more likely

to support home–school collaboration if they observed that it positively affected learning and learners' success.

Aslan (2016) assures that educators are very constructive and work in an indulgent manner with parents. The parents were said to approach educators with respect and in a tranquil way. Aslan (2016) conducted a study in Turkey and observed that attitudes of the stakeholders influenced the smooth issue of parental involvement. In the Aslan (2016) study, six educators were used, and those educators were not happy and were unenthusiastic about the behaviour of parents. Aslan further said that, in Turkey, parents phoned the department of education's toll-free number to complain about educators. Moreover, it was noted that parents overstated issues and intimidated educators to act in ways they anticipated of them. Dor and Naidu (2012) state that educators also complained that some parents anticipated educators to be child minders and nannies and that parents thought they had the right to get in the way of the educator's work.

2.6.2 Parents' Discernment on Parental Involvement

An explanation of parent discernment on parental involvement in South Africa was considered because, in South Africa, some parents are compassionate, but others believe that it is the educator's liability to take full responsibility when it comes to teaching children (O'Toole, 2018). However, many schools have been challenged to get parents actively involved in their children's education as they were not actively involved, and they missed the school parental meetings (Paulynice, 2020). Paulynice (2020) further states that the causes of low parental involvement might be challenges related to low social, economic and language barriers that parents face in the system and which prevent them from participating in their child's education.

2.7 IN LOCO PARENTIS

The term "in loco parentis" is a Latin phrase that refers to "in place of a parent" (SASA, 1996). SASA (1996) further explains that "in loco parentis" refers to the lawful liability of a person or organisation to acquire the various functions and duties of a parent. Educators are substitutes in the position of a parent as they are entrusted with the supervision and management of children at school (SASA, 1996).

The responsibilities of school educators in children's education are enlarged, even though those of school institutions such as home, church and community are reduced**.** Educators carry out academic tasks with learners and are also accountable for the emotional, psychological and physical well-being of the learners, as stated by the CRSA (1996). The CRSA (1996) further states that this liability, known as the "in loco parentis" principle, tasks educators to perform in the position of a parent by carrying out lawful responsibilities and functions in accordance with the fundamental rights of children as noted in the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa (1996). Educators are required to always show care and supervision to learners in school. This care is to be exercised in the same way as rational and sensible parents would take liability for the emotional, psychological and physical well-being of the learners. Educators are to ensure there is no anticipated danger of wounding a child. This parent–educator relationship requires educators to implement care that ensures protection of learners from hurt and wounds so that they are not rendered inattentive while performing their tasks.

The significant feature of "in loco parentis" is to ensure that there is no negligence in the execution of duties with learners (Bremmer, 2013). Bremmer (2013) further states that the negligence law ensures learners are always protected and that schools are conscious of what is good enough and what are intolerable customs when caring for learners. The most likely reason an educator would consider legal action is negligence; however, "in loco parentis" is a significant responsibility imposed on educators who have to account for any injury to a child while inside the school (Mampane, 2018).

Educator carelessness is an issue that involves factors signifying that an educator exhibited negligence toward a learner, resulting in injury or harm (Panlilio et al., 2022). Panlilio et al., (2022) further state that an educator could be accountable for the accident or injury sustained by or committed by a learner while under their custody. However, they also note that negligence is concluded only if an educator failed in his or her duty to keep learners safe. Thus, when a child is injured while in the care of an educator, that educator could be held responsible for any physical or emotional trauma that happened as a result. Educators' negligence could occur in many forms, such as when an educator overlooked or failed to notice bullying, fighting or assaults (Panlilio et al., 2022). Incidents of negligence tend to occur more frequently when an educator has numerous learners under

his or her supervision and is unable to provide complete attention to every child (Hill, 2015).

2.8 THE IMPACT OF CLASS SIZE AND OVERCROWDED CLASSROOMS

Studies have shown that overcrowded classrooms affect learners' academic performance in the Foundation Phase. Poor performance of learners in the Foundation Phase is a threat to parents and community and calls for proper investigation. Unfortunately, overcrowded classrooms are a feature of South African education, and are known to be the track of educators' disturbing challenges in teaching overcrowded classrooms (Ntsala et al., 2021). Researchers such as Osai, Amponsah, Ampadu and Commey-Mintah (2021) consign what educators experience in overcrowded classrooms as inadequate learning environments, safety and health concerns, scarce contact between learners and educators, disruptive behaviour, greater workload and deficient time in the classroom. Davis (2013) supports this declaration by referring to how teaching in overcrowded classrooms makes it extremely difficult to promote dynamic learning in a setting where effective teaching and evaluation techniques are crucial. As there are greater opportunities for individualised instruction from the classroom educator in smaller classrooms, the researcher was confident that learners would learn more in those settings. In addition to this, research has shown that parents embraced lower class sizes as they believed their children would perform better in settings with fewer learners (Baker & Chingos, 2019). These researchers went on to say that learners did better academically and felt more included in small class settings. Ayu (2019) provides support for this idea, pointing out that greater quality education correlates with lower educator-to-learner ratios.

According to Meier and West (2020), the introduction to learner education ratios (LER) was among the most crucial elements in the context of improving academic performance in the classrooms and had a major impact on educational excellence. Marais (2016) is of the view that overcrowding is one of the most familiar factors leading to didactical neglect, which refers to the educator's helplessness to pay enough attention to each learner's educational requirements.

Consequently, learners' academic performance in the Foundation Phase of education has been considered as key to decreasing the attainment gap in schools and having a

generation equipped with skills that enable them to contribute to the society in which they live (UNICEF, 2020). Although schools and educators were major contributors to the achievement of these goals, they could not be successful without the parents' partnership.

According to the Department of Basic Education (DBE), in 2014 the learner–educator ratio for public schools in South Africa was scaled with the average educator-to-learner ratio at 30.4:1. DBE (2014) stated that when the learner-to-educator ratio was exceeded, this resulted in an overcrowded classroom.

It is therefore necessary to investigate how to find solutions or strategies to overcome the problem of overcrowded classrooms in order to improve learners' academic performance in the Foundation Phase for them to be successful.

2.9 HOMEWORK ENGAGEMENT

Homework is schoolwork that is assigned at school and finished at home. Educators frequently prepare homework for learners (Peseta, 2022). Homework is a realistic study that helps learners modify and remember what they learned (Chang, 2019). According to Dettmers et al. (2019), parents are usually expected to assist their children with their homework and children are obligated to complete homework. One should not undervalue the importance of homework. Most learners are unable to complete their schoolwork at home. Fortunately, there is not a simple fix for this growing issue. Children are expected to complete their homework to help them develop character traits that could influence positive behaviour throughout their life (Bempechat, 2019).

Bempechat (2019) has generally discovered that parents helping their children with their homework could enhance learners' academic achievement. For learners to study more effectively, parents' help with homework is essential (Myende & Nhlumayo, 2022). It is thought that learners who complete more homework succeed more**.**

When learners fail to turn in their homework, educators become upset. Studies show that most learners performed poorly because they were unable to finish their homework in an efficient manner (Auxier & Anderson, 2020). This highlights the importance of parental involvement in helping learners to finish their homework to improve their academic achievement (Epstein, 2019).

Parents in rural locations are likely to have had lower levels of education and, consequently, are less equipped to support their children, assert Livingstone and Byrne (2018). Giving children a choice in literacy work could be detrimental to their learning, even though the children might read proudly in front of their parents later. After school, children are expected to help around the house rather than do their homework (Bempechat, 2019).

Family socio-economic position was another important element for learners' academic achievement, in addition to parental participation, according to Thomas et al. (2020). Studies show a favourable relationship between learners' academic achievement and their family's socio-economic position (Gobena, 2018). Accordingly, socio-economic position and academic achievement seemed to be strongly correlated (Gobena, 2018). Furthermore, studies conducted by scholars such as Zhang et al. (2018) demonstrated that children from low socio-economic backgrounds in their early school years had greater issues as they grew older. According to Van den Hurk et al. (2019), these children were more likely to drop out of school early and were less likely to pursue higher education. Learners from disadvantaged socio-economic backgrounds did better academically when their parents were active in the educational system.

The impact of the home and family environment on academic achievement has not received the attention it deserves, as asserted by Toropova et al. (2021). The obstacles of poverty, single parenting and social and cultural segregation frequently stand in the way of parents becoming active in their children's education, rather than it being a lack of interest. Children's learning is thought to be significantly influenced by two factors: the home environment and parental engagement in education. According to Ross et al. (2010), the greatest influence on accomplishment comes from the ongoing care that families provide for their children at home.

According to Fesi and Mncube (2021), parents in impoverished areas primarily did not converse in the language of teaching and learning, and this determination had an influence on communication between parents and children when it came to homework instruction. Research has suggested that schools should include a homework policy that describes a criterion of opportunity for homework (Lareau, 2019). The homework policy is to clearly define what kind of homework is effective, how homework is suitable at the

Foundation Phase level, who would oversee formative assessment, how much homework would be coordinated among different Foundation Phase educators and parents' responsibilities regarding homework (Lareau, 2019).

This study intended to create awareness and understanding of how parents and educators perceive parental involvement in their children's homework and the importance of parental involvement in learners' learning, such as when parents supported their children in doing homework.

2.10 FAMILY SOCIO-ECONOMIC STATUS

Socio-economic status is reflected and is determined by the socio-economic status of family members (Beard et al., 2019). People consider that there is a strong and constant relationship between socio-economic status and children's academic performance and cognitive development (Darling et al., 2018). Okeke (2014) shows that a lack of mutual partnership between parents and educators is the biggest challenge facing public schools in South Africa.

Impoverished parents lack the means to provide essential resources for schools. Okeke (2014) further highlights that parents face multiple demands, including juggling work and caring for other children. This struggle extends beyond American-Latino families and also affects parents facing economic challenges in African countries (Vera, 2017).

Many parents striving to make ends meet find themselves juggling dual employment, leaving little time to oversee their children's schoolwork. Research by Selolo (2018) highlighted that time constraints due to work schedules posed significant challenges to parental involvement in schools. These factors hindered parents from establishing strong partnerships with educational institutions. In addition, some parents lacked transport to visit schools, while others grappled with personal survival issues in harsh economic conditions (Lareau, 2011).

In Lareau's study (2011), the term classism was used to differentiate behaviour based on social class, which emerged as a significant barrier to parental involvement. School staff may have undervalued poor parents, assuming they lacked knowledge. Consequently, these parents were not actively consulted on school matters due to the perception that

they paid less attention. In Dockett's study (2012), it was noted that underprivileged parents were rarely acknowledged as school partners and were excluded from the empowerment process.

Savacool (2011) highlights that parental involvement enhances parents' self-esteem and fosters a positive view of their child's diligent efforts. It brings satisfaction to parents to recognise that their contributions significantly support their child's academic and social development (Jeynes, 2012). If parents actively engage and collaborate with the school, it leads to improvements and fosters institutional alignment through genuine parental empowerment. According to Kurtulmus (2016), parents have the potential to drive positive changes within the school. Those who actively participate in school affairs positively impact the school, unlike parents who remain distant and uninvolved.

2.11 COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

If the parents and schools work together and share accessible resources, the communities improve (Gwija, 2016). For the schools to become deeply ingrained in the communities, the community should have a voice in how the schools are strengthened in their localities. Parental partnership with schools is essential (Jasis & Ordoez-Jasis, 2012).

Another factor that could help a society become more democratic and rational is community and parental involvement in schools. Parental involvement was one of the reasons for community development identified by Baquedano-López et al. (2013).

2.12 POVERTY IMPERATIVES

Poverty is a state that prevents parents from dynamically participating in their children's education (Munje & Jita, 2020). Even though extended family members and grannies are regarded as pillars of support for these children (Mtshali, 2015), poverty compels many parents to provide only for their households' fundamentals while ignoring their children's educational needs. Ferreiar (2017) explains that while social grants normally helped to lift many disadvantaged households out of the poorest quintile and improved school attendance, they had little effect in terms of alleviating poverty holistically.

The present study suggests that to evaluate whether the parent–child relationship could reconcile the relationship between socio-economic status and children's academic performance, parental involvement in socio-economic status needs to be investigated.

2.13 LANGUAGE BARRIER AND PARENTS' LEVEL OF EDUCATION

Parents who have not had much schooling or who do not speak English well find it difficult to get employment and are unable to support their children, according to Chu (2014) and Gonzales (2017). Language barriers create communication issues. When the language of instruction is not the parents' first language, the communication between home and school is not effective, which increases the parents' lack of confidence and non-involvement (Horby & Lafaele, 2011). Parents avoid school as they do not understand what the educator said, which leaves the parent feeling embarrassed (Naicker, 2013).

2.14 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

This study was grounded in Epstein's principles of parent–educator partnerships, which emphasises stakeholder relationships (Epstein, 2018). These principles recognise that stakeholders share educational goals. By maintaining strong parent–educator partnerships and tapping into untapped parental resources, learner performance is ensured**.**

Since parents know their children's educational aspirations and how to encourage them to reach success, educators could decide to make choices that are positive to school functioning by sharing them with parents (Kemal, 2011). A theoretical framework identifies the significance of a study and provides a strong case for it. According to Adom et al. (2018), a theoretical framework gives a study life; it supports and motivates the research that provides knowledge. This research was firmly based in Epstein's theoretical model, which is outlined underneath.

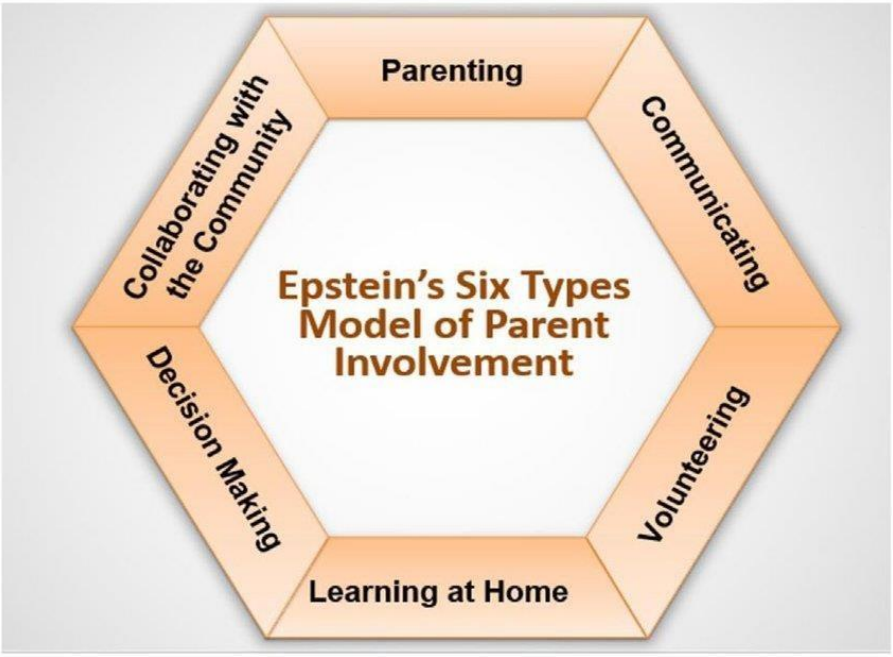

Figure 3: Epstein's (2018) six strategies of parental involvement

2.15 EPSTEIN'S (2018) SIX STRATEGIES OF PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT

Six strategies of parental involvement as laid out by Epstein (2018) were used in this study as they applied to the school to be able to include parents in the process of learning. There was interaction in parenting, communicating, volunteering, helping learners at home, decision making and collaboration as illustrated in the Figure 3. Epstein's six types of involvement are interpreted below and are linked to this study.

2.15.1 Parenting

According to Epstein (2018), educators help parents and families understand the school and the requirements of education. Epstein provides the example of parent meetings, which give educators a chance to discuss the value of parental involvement and offer advice on how parents might become more involved in the education of their children. The parent is required to assist the educator by indulging in the surroundings of customs and rationale of the family for the child. Educators are required to help families comprehend their children's progress and create a home where they are supported in their learning at all ages and academic levels (Malatji, 2021). In this study, parents were viewed as pioneers who enhanced the educator's work at home by assisting their children with learning. Mncube (2010) reaffirms that good parenting involves keeping an eye on

children and supporting them by creating a supportive home environment. This helps children succeed in school by increasing their self-reliance and confidence.

Epstein (2018) asserts that parenting fosters learners' intellectual, social and personal development. Learning occurs in the classroom more smoothly, and educators do not have to deal with learners who cry on the first day of class because they want to go home with their mother or experience inseparable syndrome when these skills were well-developed at home. Well-parented children acquire time management skills and learn how to do household chores and homework on schedule. Research has shown that retention and attendance among learners both rose with effective parenting.

Through discussing their parenting issues with other parents, parents learned about parenting challenges and developed their problem-solving skills. According to Yamamoto and Brinton's (2010) transmission model, parents with lower academic status also played a part in their children's achievement. To better understand parenting and child development, which served as the solid foundation for effective parental involvement in academic work, and to develop methods for parent–educator cooperation, it was for this reason that parents were to be examined (Epstein, 2018).

2.15.2 Communicating

This study suggests that parents and educators are two main contributors to learners' academic performance. When parents and educators correspond well with one another, they could uphold learners' learning jointly. Communication between the home and the school is therefore crucial. Malatji (2018) discovered that educators frequently spoke with parents in a non-dialogue manner while providing term progress reports or when the child exhibited behavioural problems.

Beveridge (2013) underscores the critical role of effective communication between home and school. This connection serves as a vital conduit for enhancing a child's learning experience. Building upon this foundation, Chu and Garcia (2014) delved deeper into strategies aimed at promoting effective communication between families and educational institutions. Their research shed light on collaborative approaches that fostered a supportive environment for students. In addition, Aslan (2016) contributed to the discourse by exploring various communication methods that bridged the gap between

families and schools. By understanding these dynamics, educators and parents could work together harmoniously to ensure the holistic development of each child.

O'Toole (2016) emphasises that effective communication between homes and schools serve as the bedrock for fostering positive parental engagement. To facilitate this, educational institutions and families should use diverse communication channels such as newsletters, progress reports and verbal exchanges.

Parents who are difficult to reach create obstacles for effective communication between educators and parents, leading to challenges (Chu & Garcia, 2014). This issue primarily arises from parents who excessively monitor and interfere with their children's educational experiences (Jackson & Harbison, 2014).

Naidu (2012) highlights the importance of communication with parents in schools and further emphasises that such communication should not be limited to addressing only misbehaviour or failure but should also include discussions about positive behaviour and achievements.

To fully use the potential of a parent–teacher collaboration, there should be cooperative communication that allows both sides to accurately express information (Sarmento & Freire, 2012). Parents and educators need to talk to one another about the difficulties they are having with their children's growth and how it might have affected their academic performance.

2.15.3 Volunteering

There are various purposes for which a school requires parent volunteers to serve as school governors, plan fundraisers and act as chaperones on field trips or at sporting activities (Weinstein, 2021). Schools should ask parents for suggestions on how they might assist**.** To assist and enhance learners and school programmes, schools should enlist parents as volunteers. In addition, schools need to recognise the value of parental involvement and establish supportive environments for it.

Working collectively with the school management team, educators had to can persuade parents to volunteer at school, for example as educator assistants, events assistants, sports coordinators or coaches (Shezi, 2012). Parental participation in volunteering for

school activities determines and permits educators to work willingly where the child's success and school are supported (Epstein, 2018).

This study encouraged parents to become involved as volunteers at schools by acting as school governors, organising fundraisers and acting as chaperones at sporting events or field trips to support and improve learners' academic progress and school programmes. This helps to promote and enhance learners' academic achievement and educational initiatives.

2.15.4 Learning at Home

Epstein (2018) argues that parents should assist their children at home. According to Maluleke (2014), a child's academic achievement is positively impacted by early parental involvement in their education, such as during the Foundation Phase. The National Education Association (2011) states that every parent has the power to support their child's academic achievement and that effective family participation could take place in every home.

The school should have an established homework policy and provide parents with information to help them fulfil their parental responsibilities as stipulated by the school. One benefit of home learning for children was that they did their assignments, gained self-assurance and got better grades. Parents see their direct involvement as beneficial to school involvement, according to Dor and Naidu (2012).

It is advantageous for children to do their homework, develop confidence and raise their assessment scores. Parents are accountable for helping with their children's homework to support academic achievement by their children.

2.15.5 Decision Making

This study suggests a partnership of shared opinions and initiatives geared towards common objectives rather than the outcome of a power struggle between opposing viewpoints (Epstein, 2018). According to Cabus and Aries (2017), parents who participate in school governing bodies (SGB) and other school community organisations could play a vital part in school decision making.

Since they oversee making sure that the educational service is delivered with the utmost quality, the school should involve the community in decision making through the school committee. In agreement, parents ought to be involved in school governance, according to Selolo (2010).

2.15.6 Collaboration

Since schools are constructed in communities, there could be a positive working relationship between the community and the school. To determine the most effective ways for teaching and learning to take place, parents in the community and educators in the schools have to collaborate. According to Mahlangu (2014), the community shapes the cognitive environment of learners.

Epstein's theory inspires the inclusion of the community. This study investigated a child's healthy development within the community. This suggests that an environment that supports learning, such as community libraries, parks and the usage of churches as learning places for young children, provides the child with crucial information. As a result, the variables that would be most useful to the schools have to be carefully chosen (Erlendsdóttir, 2010). Partnerships with parents and educators in the community need to be spearheaded by the schools.

2.16 APPLICATION OF EPSTEIN'S (2018) SIX STRATEGIES OF PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT

The researcher intended to incorporate a few of Epstein's (2018) six parental participation strategies into the research. The foundation of the study was Epstein's (2018) six parental engagement techniques, which were used to support the study's justification, that is, to motivate parents to take an active role in the education of their children. Epstein's theoretical framework helped the researcher by providing guidance on the most effective study design, qualitative research methodology and data gathering tools. The Epstein (2018) theoretical framework assisted the researcher. A multiple case study research design was selected by the researcher that would be used to conduct the qualitative investigation. The researcher continued to refer to this framework, and it was simple to present the study in an academic and scientific manner. All other study sections, including

the problem description and research questions, were connected by the theoretical framework.

2.17 SUMMARY OF THE CHAPTER

This chapter emphasised research on the South African educational system as well as the significance of parent–educator connections worldwide. Epstein's (2018) model of parental involvement (theoretical framework) illustrated the relationship between six principles or strategies of parental involvement and how they affect the collaboration between parents and educators with respect to their children's educational and academic performance in school.

Chapter 3 clarifies the process involved in answering the researcher's questions that investigated the impact of parent–educator relations on learners' academic performance in the Foundation Phase. The researcher clarifies the research paradigm, approach and design as well as describes the data collection and interview schedule for parents and educators. The analysis procedure is also elaborated.

CHAPTER 3: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 INTRODUCTION

In the preceding chapter, the emphasis was on providing an outline of parent–educator partnerships. It also included information about South African policies, learners' academic performance in the Foundation Phase, obstacles to parental involvement, parent and educator discernment on parental involvement, the concept of "in loco parentis", the effects of class size and crowded classrooms, homework engagement, family socio-economic status and an exploration of Epstein's (2018) six strategies of parental involvement.

In this chapter, the researcher outlines the research process. Specifically, the chapter delves into the methodology employed for this study. It includes a discussion of the qualitative approach in general, as well as the case study approach. Furthermore, the researcher elaborates on the sampling procedure to provide insights into how the participants and sites were selected.

The researcher further justifies the data gathering techniques and data analysis procedures that were employed to build the mutual relationships between parents' and educators' experiences and learners' academic performance in the Foundation Phase. The study concludes with an explanation of how ethical consideration satisfied the criteria necessary for this investigation. Figure 4 displays the outline of Chapter 3.

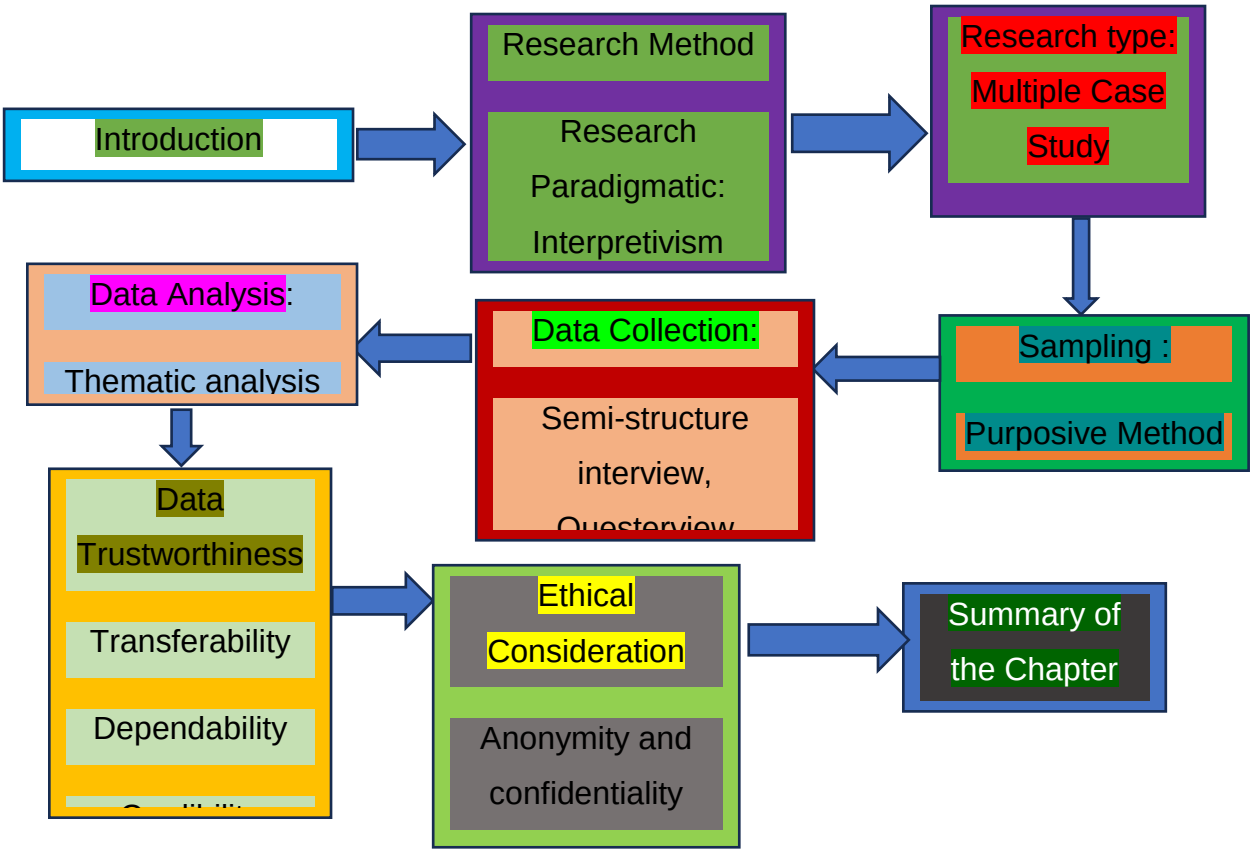

Figure 4: Layout of Chapter 3

3.2. Research Paradigmatic: Interpretivism

In the previous section, I explored the research paradigm that guided this study. A research paradigm is a collection of presumptions and viewpoints that guide methods of data interpretation and investigation. As Pleines (2020) defines, a paradigm is “the search for certainty that is based on the relative position a researcher chose in constructing knowledge”. Different paradigms reflect different ways of viewing the world and seeking truth.

To acknowledge the investigation of parent–educator relations on learners’ academic achievement in the Foundation Phase, the study adopted an interpretivism research paradigm, also known as a constructivist paradigm. People’s genuineness serves as the cornerstone of their ideas, experiences and perceptions according to interpretivism. As a result, this study’s theoretical and methodological framework was interpretivism (Anderson & Holloway, 2020). Theories that explain how and why something worked the

way it did include those of Anderson and Holloway (2020). The researcher for this study believed that this paradigm was relevant to the research as it illustrated the consequences of parents' and educators' lack of partnership. According to interpretivism, people create the realities in which they engage and, thus, determine the significance of events and processes (Cuthbertson et al., 2020). Parents and educators provided a variety of interpretations of parental involvement and parent–educator relationship in the Foundation Phase for this study. From this preliminary position, the study sought to ascertain how research participants formulated their individual and shared interpretations of the phenomenon of interest, as well as the impact of their cooperative experience on students' academic performance in the Foundation Phase.

The idea that researchers' interpretations of the phenomena they were studying are constructed is known as interpretivism (Ivey, 2022). The interpretivist paradigm was appropriate for the study as the researcher was able to get parents and educators to converse about their experiences in considering partnership towards learners' academic performance in the Foundation Phase (Venketsamy et al., 2021). The contemplative nature of researchers was required for the co-construction of their analysis in interpretivist research (Venketsamy et al., 2021). The researcher was able to assemble a sense of parents' and educators' real-world understandings and experiences of partnering to assist learners in the Foundation Phase to achieve academically through interviews or conversations with parents and educators. Holmes (2020) argues that an interpretivist researcher depends on how participants perceive the situation under study.

It was for this reason that this study acknowledged that the lack of parent–educator partnership was perspective-based and that strategies to deal with it should also be perspective-based. Interpretivism assumes that all human accomplishments are significant and have to be interpreted and understood within the context of social practices. In keeping with the interpretive tradition, the researcher sought to understand individuals' interpretations of the world around them in relation to parental involvement in their children's education at the foundational school level (Larkin et al., 2019).

The researcher engaged with participants who produced knowledge that was transactional and subjective in nature, and they granted permission for the researcher to use the meanings that participants gave to the subject under investigation (Hong & Cross

Francis, 2020). Viewed alternatively, the investigator and the participants possessed the same characteristic of being interpreters or logicians. As an interpretative researcher, it was anticipated that the research would necessitate a shared understanding with the participants of what parental participation entailed, what obstacles stood in the way of parental involvement techniques, and how those obstacles could be overcome. While seeking this shared understanding, the research took into consideration the potential for historical, cultural and social influences to shape participant and researcher perspectives and interpretations (Husband, 2020).

3.2.1 Qualitative Methodology

The research used qualitative methodology. According to Asper and Corte (2019), qualitative research delves into the meanings, concepts, definitions, traits, metaphors, symbols and descriptive elements that give them significance. Since a qualitative research approach supports both fundamental human connections and a thoughtful explanation of meaning, it was chosen as the methodology for this study. According to Hameed (2020), qualitative research is a multimodal research methodology that takes an interpretive, naturalistic approach to the topic at hand. Because qualitative research is complex, it allows researchers to develop a comprehensive understanding of the topic they are studying (Rashid et al., 2019). Thus, to aid in the creation of hypotheses, qualitative research gathers participant experiences and behaviour (Wolff et al., 2019).

In qualitative research, the objective is more investigative and expressive than descriptive (Howells et al., 2021). Due to its descriptive character, qualitative research enables researchers to provide an explanation of participant experiences that either confirm or refute the theoretical underpinnings of the study (Mukumbang et al., 2020). Qualitative research allows readers to understand the significance of the issue and its effects (Linneberg & Korsgaard, 2019). This study identified the issue that learners in the Foundation Phase were performing academically poorly due to a lack of communication between parents and educators.

A further subtle thoughtfulness of qualitative research is captured by Vreuls et al. (2022) who argue that this research approach typically studies people or systems by interacting

with and observing the participants in their everyday environments, with an emphasis on their meanings and interpretations.

3.2.2 Advantages of Qualitative Research Approach

Qualitative research is highly regarded for its in-depth exploration of societal and behavioural complexities, revealing underlying motives and processes (Dehalwar & Sharma, 2024). Although it doesn't provide broad statistical generalisations, it excels at forecasting specific behaviours and outcomes. Moreover, qualitative methods are often more cost-effective than quantitative approaches, as they don't necessitate expensive tools or large participant groups. Additionally, qualitative research contributes to the development of new theoretical frameworks through its rich narrative data (Dehalwar & Sharma, 2024).

3.2.3 Disadvantages of Qualitative Research Approach

Qualitative research offers rich insights but faces limitations, such as potential subjectivity due to researcher bias, small sample sizes that might not reflect the larger population, and the intricate, resource-intensive process of data analysis (Dehalwar & Sharma, 2024). In addition, its findings often lack generalisability, there is a possibility of response bias and ensuring confidentiality could be difficult. To mitigate this limitation, this study employed a purposive sampling strategy.

3.2.4 The Research Site

I illustrate the perspective of the study, specifically with a focus on the illumination of the map of Ekurhuleni South in Gauteng Province (highlighted in yellow on the map). This area served as the research site where data gathering occurred, and it was also the location of the research schools.

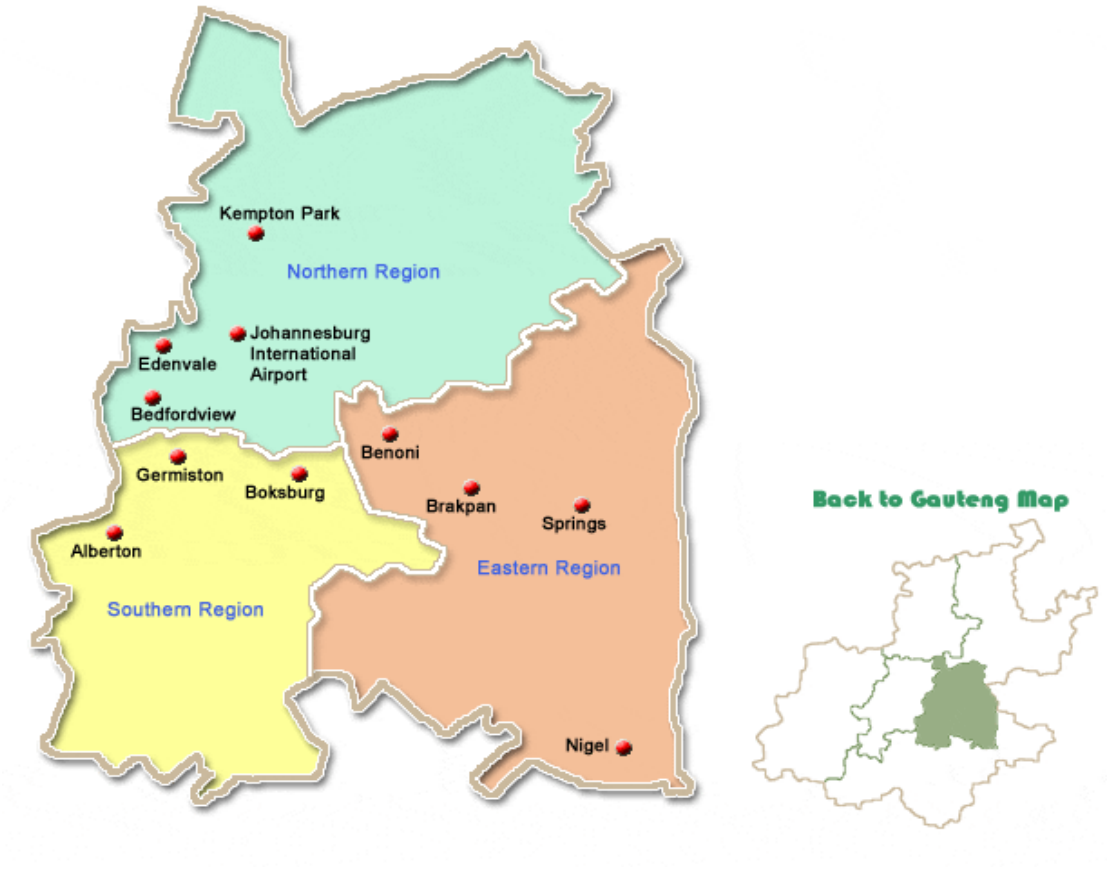

Figure 5: Ekurhuleni Map

Source: Dining Out Web Services CC. (n.d.). All Rights Reserved. https://www.researchgate.net/figure/Map-of-Ekurhuleni-Source-Dining-Out-Web-Services-CC-nd-All-Rights-Reserved_fig1_341923766

3.2.4.1 Description of the Research Schools

The research schools were primary schools located in the Ekurhuleni South District in Gauteng province. Schools A and B were on separate sites. The first description is of school A, followed by school B. School A had 1069 learners during the research period. There were 10 Foundation Phase educators, of whom two were departmental heads, one deputy principal and one school principal. The Foundation Phase included subjects such as English (home language), Sesotho and Setswana (first additional languages), mathematics and life skills. The Foundation Phase classrooms numbered 13, including three Grade R classes. There was a playground that was behind the senior phase classes. There were separate toilet blocks for boys and girls, which were well kept.

During the research period, school B had 1650 learners**.** There were 19 Foundation Phase educators**,** of whom three were departmental heads, two deputy principals and one school principal. The subjects offered at the Foundation Phase were English (home language), Sesotho (first additional language), mathematics and life skills. The Foundation Phase classrooms numbered 19, including five Grade R classes. A playground was located near the Foundation Phase class centres. Quintile 1 served the poorest communities and faced significant resource challenges. They required additional funding to address educational disparities. Meanwhile, quintile 4 was in more affluent areas and had better resources and financial stability. The quintile system aimed to allocate funding equitably based on the socioeconomic context of each school.

3.3 RESEARCH DESIGN

A research design is a detailed plan that guides a study's data collection, analysis and overall execution, aligning with its aims and goals. It acts as a guiding framework for the research process (Tobi & Kampen, 2018).

3.3.1 Case Study

Yin (2011) mentions that a case study involves the preparation and process of a researcher's intentions, focusing on the investigation of a specific topic. It necessitates the gathering and reviewing of data from multiple units in relation to the study. According to Shiddike and Rahman (2020), a case study technique is a pragmatic investigation that examines an existing phenomenon in its real-life setting, where multiple sources of evidence are present, and the connections between the phenomenon and its context are not immediately clear.

Allan (2020) views a case study as being effectively connected with qualitative research, partly because case studies allow the invention of multiple perspectives through multiple data collection methods or through the creation of multiple accounts from a single method. Allan (2020) provides an environment for a qualitative case study that is within reach of research that facilitates the investigation of a phenomenon within its context. Therefore, a case study design endorsed the decision of the researcher to investigate educators working in the Foundation Phase and the complexity of functioning in challenging environments. Surroundings of parents implies that the parental environment is an

integral part of the context in which these educators operate. It suggests that the interactions and relationships between parents and educators are significant factors that influence the educational experience and outcomes for learners in the Foundation Phase (Adewumi & Mosito ,2019).

Merriam and Tisdell (2016) describe a case study as an in-depth investigation that explores a phenomenon. In this instance, the phenomenon involved parents and educators collaborating to improve the academic achievements of learners in the Foundation Phase.

Kumar and Bervell (2019) argue that a research design should detail the methods by which the researcher gathered data. A case study offers evidence of procedures that the researcher, as well as other researchers, used and it links the data to the study's results (Yin, 2011).

To address the research issues, this study employed several case studies and a qualitative research design. The benefit of using multiple case studies was that they allowed the researcher to capture diverse views from different contexts of the partners, such as the relationship between parents and educators for the academic achievement of learners in the Foundation Phase. The researcher used the multiple case study method to explore the challenges and complexities faced by parents and educators in difficult situations (Artiles, 2019). Guangul et al. (2020) explain that a multiple case study is suitable when the focus of the study is to address "how", "what", and "why" questions. This enabled the researcher in this study to understand the background factors that influenced how parents and educators perceived and supported each other for the academic success of learners.

Rashid et al. (2019) state that the multiple case study approach is of greater significance when the researcher has less control over the events that took place. They note that a multiple case study possesses various characteristics: it is apprehensive, presenting rich and vivid descriptions of case-related occurrences, and it also offers a sequential explanation of case-relevant events. This proves particularly true for the study in question, as the researcher was able to gather in-depth accounts of parent–educator partnerships and their impact on learners' academic achievement in the Foundation Phase, along with

the practices that supported the use of these partnerships to aid children's academic success. According to Mttus et al. (2020), a multiple case study technique allows individuals and situations to express themselves, at least in part, as opposed to being primarily interpreted, assessed or judged by the researcher. Langley et al. (2019) define a "case study" as a process that involves drawing boundaries to separate certain case elements, thereby giving rise to diversity. Consequently, in the current study, it required characterising parents and educators according to their fundamental traits and their experiences as Foundation Phase parents and educators with Foundation Phase teaching experience.

A multiple case study had the benefit of using a multiplicity of sources of confirmation (triangulation), such as interviews, documents and observation of participant actions during the interview (Shin & Miller, 2022). Consequently, two schools were chosen for this study, with a manageable sample size of 13 participants: four parents and three educators from one school (school A), and three parents and three educators from another school (school B), for a total of six and seven participants per school, respectively.

A multiple case study was chosen for this specific study. A multiple case study is a type of research design with historical-hermeneutic roots that examines the same phenomenon in two or more cases and demonstrates how it manifests itself in each of them (De Vries, 2020). A multiple case research design modifies the aim from understanding a single case to the differences and similarities between cases (Zangiacomi et al., 2020). Thus, it is not just about conducting more case studies; but it is the next step in developing a theory about factors driving differences and similarities. From the above, it was evident that a multiple case study approach was appropriate to the current study, as the focus was to bring parents and educators to the forefront, to provide details and to make clear how they could partner to improve learners' academic performance in the Foundation Phase.

The study employed the triangulation technique and multiple case studies. The methodology of triangulation is promoted for its use of several data collection methods, such as interviews and observations (Noble & Heale, 2019). A multiple case study was

chosen because the research approach and analysis of a variety of data that arose from participants allowed for assumptions to be made about the model (Noble & Heale, 2019).

3.3.2 The Relevance of a Multiple Case Study

Reynaers (2022) elucidates that using multiple case study research through reports of prior studies expedites the investigation while being cognisant of intricate concerns. A various case study approach is more than adequate because this statement offers a chance to investigate and comprehend the complex concerns. Thus, when concerns regarding education and community-based issues are involved, the multiple case study approach's function in research becomes increasingly vital (Kaden, 2020). As a result, this study concentrated on education, particularly on how raising awareness of the importance of partnerships between parents and educators could enhance students' academic achievement during the Foundation Phase. Multiple case study approaches have also been widely employed in various fields, particularly in government, management and education, according to Ferri et al. (2020).

3.4 SAMPLING AND POPULATION METHOD

This research involved measuring people – a population – and taking a small part of them – a sample (McMillian & Schumacher, 2010). The researcher chose the participants from the population for the study. This is called sampling. This study used non-probability sampling, which means the participants were not randomly selected, but rather chosen based on their convenience and relevance to the research topic (Ngozwana, 2018). The researcher used criteria to select educators who had the necessary information and experience to answer the research questions (Mukheri & Albon, 2018). The study had 13 participants from two schools: six educators and seven parents. School A had three educators and four parents, while school B had three educators and three parents. The educators taught Grades 1 to 3 in the Foundation Phase, and each grade had one educator. The parents had children who attended the same schools in the Foundation Phase.

3.5 DATA COLLECTION

Data collection is an organised method of accumulating data to serve a goal, such as research or informed decision making (Andersen et al., 2022). It plays a crucial role across various sectors, including business, healthcare and government, enabling the acquisition of direct knowledge and unique perspectives on research issues. Data collection involves establishing research objectives, selecting suitable methodologies, organising the approach and executing data gathering (Andersen et al., 2022). Interviews with parents and educators at nearby population schools were made possible through qualitative research. Thus, the researcher was able to acquire an important comprehension of the contextual realities that parents and educators encountered during the Foundation Phase of primary schooling.

Data collection is employed to ensure that the obtained data are pertinent, precise and form a robust basis for analysis and decision making (Wang, 2021). It proves instrumental in comprehending phenomena, evaluating theories and formulating judgements based on tangible evidence. The literature presents different types of data collection strategies, including methods such as surveys, interviews, observations, experiments and document analysis. In this study, I used semi-structured interviews, questerviews and document analysis (Galletta, 2013).

Therefore, the study set out to investigate Foundation Phase parents' and educators' opinions on their relationships with learners and their academic achievement. The research aimed to explore meaning without presenting the findings as the limited truth, recognising that a parent–educator partnership could be constructed in various ways.

3.5.1 Semi-Structured Interview

With the aim of determining which available instruments were best suited for examining the study's subjects, the researcher concluded that, in addition to the literature review, questerview and interviews would be employed to gather the necessary data.

To collect data for the study, the researcher conducted semi-structured interviews with parents and educators. Husband (2020) describes semi-structured interviews as an unconventional but often effective method for researchers to gather data for qualitative

research. This is particularly relevant when the researcher wishes to explore participants' viewpoints and their interpretations of a phenomenon. The researcher asserts that the semi-structured interview allowed participants to be questioned about their beliefs and opinions, which was crucial when using a constructivist approach to investigate the subjective interpretations that participants gave to concepts. Such probing could also obtain approval for the interview to be re-enacted along new ideas that helped achieve the study goals, even though they were not originally thought to be part of the interview. Morris et al. (2019) recommend recording responses through note-taking or by using a recording device.

To gather information from parents whose children were in the Foundation Phase and educators who had experience in teaching the Foundation Phase, open-ended, semi-structured interview questions were employed by the researcher. The best method for this study was semi-structured interviews as this gave participants the opportunity to answer as they saw fit. It also allowed for a predetermined list of questions to be asked of each participant, with the option to include "unplanned" questions that enabled the researcher to ask additional questions in response to the participants' answers in order to obtain more details and understanding (Pleines, 2020). Furthermore, since the questions were kept open-ended, the researcher could delve further to elucidate and clarify points further. Galletta (2013) characterised "semi-structured interviews" as a practice in which the interviewer deviated from a predetermined set of questions. While not required, the interviewer prepared a list of questions. This allowed the researcher to evaluate how the participants collaborated to improve their children's academic performance during the Foundation Phase.

The interviews were flexible and adaptable, and involved direct communication between the participants and the researcher. The researcher in this study served as the primary instrument of data collection, and numerous methods were used to compile the data for this study. The interview method had advantages for the following reasons: it reduced interview bias and led to easier analysis; it was context-dependent and free from the influence of the interviewer, so that a more objective view of the social world could emerge, and it was conducted individually.

The recording of data was well thought out when conducting semi-structured interviews. The researcher realised that it would be difficult to record everything and took notes during the interviews. In this study, the researcher used face-to-face interviews and WhatsApp (online) interviews as they were requested by interviewees and arranged to the best advantage of this study. The researcher made use of WhatsApp voice recording for interviewing parents who insisted that they preferred to be interviewed using online WhatsApp voice recording chats. To follow the COVID-19 procedures, parents chose this technique of chat because it was handy for them and did not take up much of their time. For educators and other parents, a phone recording app was used when interviewing them. Before the recording of participants during the interview, the researcher asked for their permission. The researcher also made use of handwritten notes, particularly when the researcher needed to probe further for clarification or elaboration. As soon as the researcher had finished the interviews, a written report of the recorded interviews was prepared. The benefit of this method of interviewing was that it allowed the researcher to obtain more detailed information through data collection, as also noted by Gut et al. (2014). When a researcher collects data through an interview and audio-records the responses, it is important to make notes to remember what was said. According to Alonso-Rorís et al. (2014), a semi-structured interview emphasises the factors to consider when conducting an interview.

The researcher in this study set up a relaxed environment for the semi-structured interviews, making the participants feel that conversing with the interviewer was more enjoyable than completing a form. The researcher began the interview with the participants by discussing their experiences from the Foundation Phase to make them feel at ease. By not rushing the interview or speaking for the participants, the researcher made every effort to allow them to express themselves. In doing so, the researcher enabled information to flow easily from one topic to another.

Throughout the interview process, the researcher provided guidance. The researcher steered the conversation towards the purpose of the study to learn about parents' experiences with parental involvement in their children's education and collaboration between parents and educators. Oplatka (2017) states that the main aim of the semi-structured interview is to acquire the participants' objective responses to a known

situation from their lived world. The researcher in this study was able to acquire descriptions of the parents' and educators' experiences within the Foundation Phase.

Conversely, the primary goal of a semi-structured interview is to uncover the interviewee's subjective perspective, or their composite body of knowledge about the topic under investigation derived from their own subjective experience and everyday life (Mahat-Shamir et al., 2021). According to Thille et al. (2021), the researcher has to persuade participants to engage in in-depth conversation with the scientifically interesting issue without resorting to a predefined set of conventional questions. Using a purposeful interview guide or framework, the researcher encourages the participants to speak in-depth about the scientifically interesting issue without using a predetermined set of questions (Mezmir, 2020).

3.5.1.1 Advantages of Semi-Structured Interviews

Semi-structured interviews ae highly regarded in qualitative research for their ability to elicit detailed and nuanced understanding through open-ended questioning and responsive dialogue (Belina,2023). They provide a balance of structure for comparability and flexibility for in-depth exploration, fostering a conversational environment that could yield candid and comprehensive insights from participants (Belina, 2023). This makes them an ideal choice for studies aiming to delve into the complexities of individual experiences.

3.5.1.2 Disadvantages of Semi-Structured Interviews

Semi-structured interviews, while beneficial, present challenges such as potential validity issues due to their flexible nature, which could complicate response comparison (Agarwal, 2020). They are often time-intensive, necessitating open-ended dialogue and demanding considerable resources, including skilled interviewers. In addition, the risk of interviewer bias affecting the outcomes is notable. These factors should be weighed when opting for this interview format in research (Agarwal, 2020).

3.5.2 Questerview

A questerview is a printed form that asks subjects to write their responses to collect data (Roth et al., 2016). Nardi (2018) also defines a questerview as a set of questions that aim to understand the views, experiences or feelings of participants. A questerview could be

used to collect qualitative data (Iyamu, 2018). If the questions are identical, the data obtained through a questerview are like that obtained through a semi-structured interview (Ahlin, 2019).

The researcher used questerview to investigate the impact of parent–educator relations on learners' academic achievement in the Foundation Phase. The questerviews were distributed to 13 participants: seven parents of children in the Foundation Phase and six educators with experience in the Foundation Phase. These participants were also selected from schools A and B for the study. The questerview was administered in English.

The questerview had two sections, A and B. Section A asked for demographic information, such as age, education and employment. Demographic information played a crucial role in assessing participants' understanding of parental involvement in schools. It shed light on the factors that facilitated parental engagement during the Foundation Phase, as well as the challenges encountered in the relationship between parents and educators.

The data helped the researcher understand the findings. Section B assessed parent–educator cooperation and parental involvement. The purpose of the questerview was to evaluate respondents' knowledge of parental involvement experiences in schools, factors that encouraged parental participation during the Foundation Phase, challenges faced, the relationship between parents and educators, and methods for engaging parents (McIver & Lepisto, 2017).

The participants answered eight questions. The researcher used the data from the questerviews to modify the interview questions to obtain the appropriate data for the study. The questerviews provided the researcher with insights into the participants' thoughts and feelings about self-reflection and how the relationship between parents and educators could assist learners in the Foundation Phase to achieve better academically. Similar open-ended interview questions were posed to all the interviewees. There were no right or wrong, yes or no answers. Comprehensive replies with explanations were encouraged.

The researcher chose to use a questerview as it allowed participants to express themselves more freely than in an interview and it offered anonymity since the subjects' names were not required on the completed questionnaire. The questerview required written responses, but it also included open-ended questions that let respondents expand and answer in their own words (McLafferty, 2016).

To collect data from the participants, the researcher used questerviews, a method that combined questionnaires and interviews. This method allowed the researcher to assess the accuracy and quality of the responses. The researcher tested and refined the questerviews before conducting the study. The researcher also ensured that the parents could comprehend the questions and write their answers, either independently or with help. This enhanced the reliability of the results. The questerviews involved asking the participants to complete a survey and then clarify their understanding of the questions. The researcher recorded both their answers and their clarifications. This enabled the researcher to establish rapport with the participants and gain more insight into their perspectives. The parents' reading and writing skills and their ability to understand and interpret texts may have differed based on their education level.

3.5.3 Document Analysis

Document analysis is a structured approach to evaluating documents for secondary data in qualitative research. Mamabolo's (2021) study emphasises the effectiveness of using a variety of documents, such as parent-teacher communications, for data collection in qualitative research, noting that such multi-method approaches were typical in the field. The use of these documents for triangulation enhanced the study's trustworthiness.

Document analysis, initially proposed as a research method in social sciences, involves a systematic procedure. According to Mayring (2014), it encompasses the screening, counting and coding of content within documents to gather evidence. Similarly, Kutsyuruba (2023) likens the comparison of documents to the way an anthropologist might consult an informant, or a sociologist might conduct an interview. This process serves as a critical tool for extracting meaningful data from textual information.

Document analysis is a methodical approach used in qualitative research to interpret documents (Tracy, 2019). It involves a detailed process where documents are not just

viewed as containers of information but as products of collaborative and structured human efforts (Tracy, 2019). The main goal is to uncover the underlying meanings, trends and motifs within the documents' content, prioritising this qualitative understanding over quantitative measures, such as how often certain topics appear or statistical evaluations. Essentially, it is about comprehending the depth and nuances of the information presented in the documents (Tracy, 2019).

The process starts with a clear, focused research question that directed the document selection (Schoch, 2020). The range of documents analysed could include anything from books, newspapers and personal letters to official reports, diaries and visual materials such as maps and photos (Kellehear, 2020). The analysis entails sourcing, contextualising, questioning and drawing conclusions from the documents, while also verifying their reliability and authenticity (Kellehear, 2020). This approach yields rich, qualitative insights that enable a deep understanding of complex issues.

In this study, document analysis proved invaluable when direct or participant observation was not feasible. It offered unique perspectives on historical events, situating current happenings and setting a foundation for future research (Gawali, 2023). This is a critical component in case studies that encompasses a broad spectrum of materials, providing a thorough perspective on the topic at hand. A sample of the documents used in this study is included in Annexure F.

3.6 DATA ANALYSIS

According to McKinney and Renk (2011), data analysis is the process of turning gathered information into significant themes and patterns. Pietkiewicz and Smith (2014) also stress that data analysis can be inspiring and valuable, but it can also be difficult and time-consuming**.**

In this study, the researcher transcribed each interview since, to fully study the content, it needed to be in written form. This involved writing everything down and providing details about how the analysis focused on identifying regular themes across transcripts.

3.6.1 Method Used

The analysis of data in this study was thematic. Data analysis was defined by Smith (2010) and Strydom (2011) as the process of creating and evaluating information. In this study, thematic data analysis was employed to produce comprehensive and comprehensible data for readers. The actions listed in Caulfield (2019) were carried out.

3.6.1.1 Stage 1 Familiarisation with Data

Before recording the data, the researcher listened to the recorded information multiple times to familiarise themselves with it after data collection. The investigator needed to familiarise themselves with audio recordings, one-on-one interviews, transcripts, gathered paperwork and field notes. For anonymity, the researcher first identified individuals using codes such as P1 (parent), E1 (educator), and school A and B. In addition, the researcher used headers to categorise the many data sources that were gathered. The researcher conducted a thematic analysis and verbatim transcription of all the interviews before setting aside the raw material for audit. The researcher reviewed the transcripts several times, even after transcribing, to thoroughly comprehend them before beginning the coding process, which is detailed below.

3.6.1.2 Stage 2 Generating Initial Codes

Thematic coding is a common method of data analysis in qualitative research that entails analysing, investigating and noting patterns or themes in the data, as noted by Maree and Pietersen (2014). The steps the researcher took included searching for patterns in the participant data, putting similar data into groups, assigning labels or categories to the groups and creating thematic groups (Pietkiewicz & Smith, 2014). By creating codes, the researcher collaborated with the data. The data from several individuals was used to create the codes. Coding aided the researcher in streamlining the data from the manual analysis. The codes and the topics that emerged from the coding were connected by the researcher (Clarke & Visser, 2019).

3.6.1.3 Stage 3 Searching for Themes

Following the discovery of relationships, the researcher organised the data into categories that were both relevant and reflective of the interviews with participants. From the material gathered at the outset of the study, the researcher developed themes, from

which the codes were connected. The themes provided context and identification to the coded data groupings once the codes were identified (Nowell et al., 2017). Sub-themes derived from the original themes were also identified by the researcher. Similar motifs kept emerging throughout the process. More importantly, the facts gathered rather than the subjective opinions of the researchers determined the codes.

3.6.1.4 Stage 4 Reviewing Themes

Even when themes are established, they still require differentiation. The researcher made sure the codes and concepts were consistent. A few themes needed adjustments because they were not relevant to the entire dataset. In addition, the researcher added a few absent codes to the information. If the researcher found duplicate codes, some of these were removed. Themes that lacked significant relevance were removed from the data.

3.6.1.5 Stage 5 Defining and Naming Themes

Under each theme, the researcher gathered information and assessed its importance. After analysing the themes, the researcher produced a thorough report (Nowell et al., 2017). Themes had to inform readers of the conclusions drawn from them. After that, the researcher categorised themes by grouping data and arranged themes in order based on the data.

3.6.1.6 Producing the Report

Pietkiewicz and Smith (2014) state that the write-up is the last step in the thematic analysis process. The analysis is developed considering the participant and researcher interpretations of the phenomenon. In this qualitative study, the investigator was directly involved in the data to provide insights into the interview process and nonverbal cues during data analysis (Pietkiewicz & Smith, 2014).

The language used, and the content were systematically examined. The researcher was cautious about repetition, explanation, justification, implicit and explicit assumptions and new phrases to establish consistency and logic in an attractive way. Quotes from the participants were included in the write-up. This was done to improve the analysis with first-hand information to give value and richness to the data.

Field notes were reviewed to provide a context for the analysis. The contributions made by participants to the literature review were also mentioned by the researcher. This was completed to enhance the analysis with first-hand knowledge and provide the data with depth and value. To provide the analysis with more context, the field notes were also reviewed. Parental participation was improved to confirm or refute results about the experiences and views of parents and educators regarding partnerships between parents and educators (Nowell et al., 2017). Chapter 4 provides a detailed description of the data presentation.

3.7 MEASURES TO ENHANCE TRUSTHWORTHINESS

Trustworthiness is defined as the truthfulness of the researcher's findings, including all the work the researcher did to plan, conduct and report the study to make the findings trustworthy (Shufutinsky, 2020). Solikhah and Budiharso (2019) argue that there are conflicting views on what makes for good quality social science research.

Lincoln and Guba (1985) note the standards of excellence the researcher uses to determine trustworthiness. There are four factors to determine if someone is trustworthy: transferability, dependability, credibility and confirmability. The researcher in this study used trustworthiness-assuring techniques, which satisfied the criteria of transferability, dependability, credibility and confirmability. Triangulation and observation were the tactics used in these cases. The researcher used these techniques to demonstrate reliability. Creswell (2013) asserts that the techniques the researcher uses are enough to ensure the validity and accuracy of the investigation.

The steps or criteria that were taken to ensure the trustworthiness of the study are discussed below.

3.7.1 Transferability

The researcher ensured that the findings of qualitative research were not limited to a single study. Despite the small sample size, the researcher enhanced transferability by thoughtfully reporting and considering the broader applicability of the study beyond its immediate context (Tracy, 2019).

3.7.2 Dependability

Dependability is the degree to which study findings hold up when the same thing is observed twice. The researcher needs to adapt to the changing context of the research and report how these changes affect the study (Tuval-Mashiach, 2021). The researcher furthermore has to describe the changes in the settings and how they influence the way the study is conducted (Drolet et al., 2023; Gorard et al., 2020). The researcher can enhance dependability by using rigorous and well-documented data collection and analysis methods and by using strategies such as triangulation of data sources.

3.7.3 Credibility

Determining whether the findings of qualitative research are credible or authentic from the perspective of the research participants is part of the credibility criterion. Considering that the basic principle of qualitative research is to represent or comprehend the phenomena of awareness from the perspective of the participants, only the participants have the right to fairly assess the veracity of the findings (Joram et al., 2020).

Accurate descriptions of the participants' perceptions, views and meanings are employed as an approach to ensure credibility. Recording accurately and completing notes or observational data is a research methodology that was employed to ensure the credibility of this study (McMillian, 2015).

3.7.4 Conformability

According to Moon et al. (2016), conformability refers to how much the research findings reflect the perspectives of the participants rather than the researcher's biased viewpoints. At this point, if other researchers started a similar study with the same setup, they should be able to show that the findings were impartial. The findings ought to accurately reflect the opinions of the participants and should not be biased (Moon et al., 2016).

Conformability is known as the degree to which the results could be independently confirmed or validated. There are numerous approaches to attaining conformability that are appealing. Throughout this study, the researcher recorded the inspection procedure and double-checked the results.

The researcher might have conducted a dynamic investigation and presented negative examples that defied previous findings. Following a study, a data audit could have been carried out to assess the process of gathering and analysing data and to determine whether bias or distortion might have occurred (Joram et al., 2020).

The researcher thoroughly explained in this study every step that was done to increase the study's conformability (Moon and Blackman, 2014). To prove conformability, the researcher also provided a thorough technique explanation (Moon et al., 2016). Moreover, the researcher documented every facet of the study by maintaining a journal for field notes, which enhanced conformability. Throughout the study, the supervisor and the researcher kept in touch, and the researcher gave input as directed by the supervisor.

3.7.5 Triangulation

The term triangulation refers to the practice of employing multiple methods or data sources in qualitative research to develop a comprehensive understanding of phenomena (Quintão et al., 2020). Triangulation is viewed as a qualitative research strategy to test validity through the convergence of information from different sources (Santos et al., 2020).

Triangulation is the process of collecting data for a study using a range of methods, which aid in establishing reliability (Cohen, 2011). Triangulation also increases the data's trustworthiness. Data collection methods might lead to bias or distortion if a researcher only relied on them. Triangulation, thus, lessens the problem of bias and relies more on data acquired in the study using a variety of data collection techniques. To increase this research's credibility, data were gathered from a variety of sources. The researcher used field notes, document analysis, online interviews via WhatsApp, in-person individual interviews and document analysis to ensure the data were trustworthy (Cope, 2014).

3.8 ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

Research ethics are vital for the protection of participants and the credibility of a study. This involves informed consent, confidentiality, harm minimisation, equal treatment, conflict of interest disclosure and unbiased reporting (Friedrich-Nel & Ramlaul, 2020).

These principles ensure that the rights and well-being of subjects are prioritised and the research is conducted with integrity.

It is the responsibility of the researcher to obtain approval from the relevant authorities to carry out research. For this research, the University of Pretoria College of Education ethics committee granted the researcher permission, as evidenced by registration number EDU137/22. In addition, the Gauteng Department of Education granted ethical clearance as detailed in Annexure C. Consent from both parents and educators was also a prerequisite, as documented in annexures A and B. The Department of Education's authorisation facilitated the researcher's access to schools for data collection and ensured principal approval, as referenced in the annexures. Consent was also obtained from educators and parents, as mentioned in the respective annexures. The researcher adhered to ethical considerations such as informed consent, confidentiality, voluntary participation, anonymity, respect and transparency about the study's objectives (Taquette & Borges da Matta Souza, 2022).

The ethical principles that were adhered to as guiding values throughout this study are the following**:**

3.8.1 Informed Consent and Voluntary Participation

Parents and educators were participants in this study. Participants were provided with adequate information about the study to consent to participation.

The consent forms were completed after parents and educators had been provided with all the information concerning the research and expressed their enthusiasm to voluntarily participate. The participants were informed that they had an option concerning whether to participate in the research as they were not being forced to participate. They were also informed of their right to withdraw from the study at any point if they no longer desired to participate.

3.8.2 Anonymity and Confidentiality

The privacy and confidentiality of participants was maintained throughout the semi-structured interview. The researcher kept the recordings and notes in a strictly confidential manner. Since the research dealt with human beings, the names and identities of the

participants and the research sites were not made known in the reporting of the findings. Codes were used to conceal the names of participants; therefore they were addressed as “participants”, “parents”, “educators” and “schools A and B”. The use of codes ensured that any person who read the research report would not be able to link the responses to a participant, even though the researcher would. The above ensured that participants’ personal information remained anonymous.

3.9 SUMMARY OF THE CHAPTER

Throughout the research procedure, the researcher employed a qualitative approach in this study. The technique and research design that underpinned this study were the main topics of this chapter. Parents and educators from each school were randomly selected for this study to represent all stakeholders in the educational system. In this chapter, the multiple case study general characteristics and applicability to this study were examined. Ethical guidelines for research were followed and anonymity and confidentiality were preserved throughout the interviews.

The research paradigm, research approach and research designs were all covered in this chapter. Information about the participants, sample procedures and demarcation areas were presented. The researcher discussed the methods used to acquire the data, including field notes, individual interviews, online chat via WhatsApp and documents.

The methods suggested in the previous chapter were expanded upon in this chapter by explaining the suggested methods for data analysis and presentation. The objective of this chapter was to summarise both the methodology and the data collection.

CHAPTER 4: DATA ANALYSIS AND RESEARCH FINDINGS

4.1 INTRODUCTION

To provide strategies that would improve academic performance for learners in the Foundation Phase, the study looked at the interaction between parents and educators. The research paradigm, design, population and sampling, data collection tools and data analysis were discussed in Chapter 3, which also included the research technique. The data gathered through semi-structured interviews, document analysis and questerview are presented, interpreted and analysed by the researcher in this chapter. Data were gathered from educators with Foundation Phase teaching experience as well as from parents of children in the Foundation Phase. To acquire information for the semi-structured interview questions, a questerview was used and documents such as newsletters, policies and communication books were accessed to verify that educators worked with parents in two schools. This enabled answering of the main research and sub-questions delineated in Chapter 1 of the study.

The main question of this study was the following: What are the dynamics of parent–educator relations on learners' academic performance in the Foundation Phase. The sub-questions were: What is the effectiveness of parent–educator relations in the Foundation Phase? Why are there no good parent–educator working relations in school? What are the challenges faced by parents and educators when working together? What are the critical components to strengthen a successful parent–educator partnership? The themes and sub-themes emerged from the questions. Figure 6 displays the outline of Chapter 4.

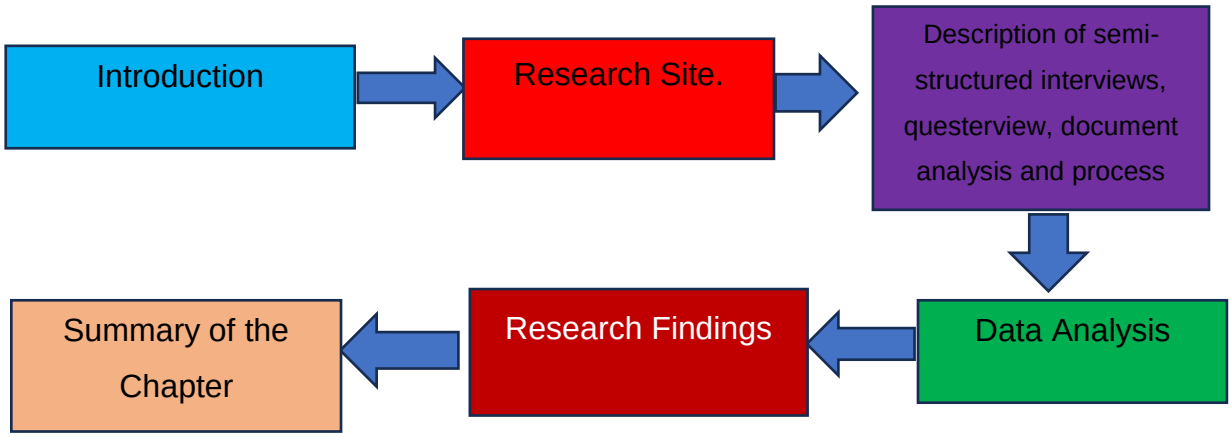

Figure 6: Layout of Chapter 4

4.2 THE RESEARCH SITES

Two public primary schools were chosen from the Gauteng province Ekurhuleni South District for their research locations. These educational institutions were chosen since the researcher could easily get to them and they were nearby. The researcher selected these two schools based on quintiles; the schools differ with one falling into quintile one (a poor school that is not paying school fees) and the other falling into quintile four as a fee-paying school.

The rationale behind using two different quintiles was that the researcher wanted to find out if there was a lack of parental support for children's education that influenced learners' learning in school A, where learners did not perform well. In school B, there was a higher pass rate than the other, and the researcher wanted to confirm if parental involvement influenced learners' pass rates.

Most learners from school A travelled 23 kilometres to school for free through the Gauteng Department of Education's transport bus system. Many parents who had children at school A were unemployed, and those who were employed worked as farm employees on surrounding farms, domestic workers, temporary workers and recyclers of paper and plastic. Circumstances at school A were difficult as families were the main targets of poverty, meaning that families of learners attending school A were experiencing poverty

due to the unemployment of many parents and the low-paying jobs that some parents had.

There were six educators and seven parents who took part in this study. Every participant in this study was a female who gave her free and informed agreement to take part. Table1 details the participants' biography. Most of the participants in Table 1 were parents of children in the Foundation Phase.

Table 1: Overview of Parent Participants' Biographical Information and Coding

Parent Code	Participant	Ethnicity	Gender	Age	School	Employment and Qualifications
P 1	Participant 1	African	Female	29	S-A	She had no work experience, has diploma in Financial Accounting and was studying BCom Accounting
P2	Participant 2	African	Female	39	S-A	She has diploma in Business Administration and worked as a college administrator
P3	Participant 3	African	Female	46	S-A	She has matriculated and was employed as a florist
P4	Participant 4	African	Female	35	S-A	She has Grade 11 and was unemployed
P5	Participant 5	African	Female	36	S-B	Studying BEd Foundation Phase and resigned as a branch manager
P6	Participant 6	African	Female	44	S-B	Matriculated and was employed as a retail cashier
P7	Participant 7	African	Female	39	S-B	She has a diploma in Health Care Nursing, was employed as enrolled auxiliary nurse

Table 2: **Overview of Educators and Participants with Coding and Research Sites**

Educator code	Educator Participant	Profile	School
E1	Educator 1	She was a 36-year-old black female with BEd Foundation Phase qualification with 8 years' experience of teaching Foundation Phase	School A (S-A)
E2	Educator 2	She was a 52-year-old black female with BEd Foundation Phase qualification with 20 years' experience of teaching Foundation Phase	School A (S-A)
E3	Educator 3	She was a 50-year-old black female with BEd Foundation Phase qualification with 13 years' experience of teaching Foundation Phase	School A (S-A)
E4	Educator 4	She was a 55-year- old black female with a diploma in teaching Foundation Phase and an Advanced Certificate in Education qualification with 30 years of experience in teaching Foundation Phase	School B (S-B)
E5	Educator 5	She was a 27-year-old black female with BEd Foundation Phase qualification and 5 years' experience in teaching Foundation Phase	School B (S-B)
E6	Educator 6	She was a 29-year-old black female with a BEd Foundation Phase qualification with 3 years of experience teaching Foundation Phase	School B (S-B)

Table 2 describes the educators who participated in the study. It was found from the participants that they were educators who have experience in the Foundation Phase.

4.3 DESCRIPTION OF THE SEMI-STRUCTURED INTERVIEWS, QUESTERVIEW, DOCUMENT ANALYSIS AND THE PROCESS

Data for this study were gathered through semi-structured interviews, questerview and documents. The participants and the researcher had meetings at different times to conduct a semi-structured interview. Some participants received four weeks' notice before the interview, while others received three weeks' notice; this arrangement was based on participants' availability and readiness as requested by the participants. The researcher explained the ethical guidelines that had to be followed, described the study's objectives and made it clear to the parents and educator participants what was expected of them during these encounters. It was made clear to participants that the researcher would keep their identities anonymous. Pseudonyms were employed, as mentioned above, to protect individuals and the institutions they represented.

The interview technique was explained to each participant once more and their consent was obtained to record the interview on audio. There were four recorded educators, and two of them completed a questionnaire since they did not feel comfortable being recorded. To guarantee that voices were recorded impartially and that the data was accurately transcribed, audio recordings were used. All individuals agreed to participate in the study and granted the researcher their consent. The interviews were captured using a smartphone for recordings. For parents and educators who were audio recorded the interview lasted between 15 and 20 minutes. The semi-structured interviews were scheduled both in person and over the phone using WhatsApp, based on the participant's preferred time windows. Since the interview sessions for the educators' participants took place after school, they did not disrupt classes or other learning opportunities. Likewise, the family time of the parent participants was unaffected. All parent and educator participants signed the consent papers to indicate their acceptance (see Annexure A). The researcher visited the educators/participants at their respective schools as agreed and participants' voice recordings were used via WhatsApp. To minimise interfering with teaching and learning time, all semi-structured interviews were conducted after school.

4.4 DATA ANALYSIS

Drawing implications of gathered data is a key component of the data analysis process. According to Nieuwhuis (2016), using a qualitative methodology embedded inside an interpretivism paradigm is an inductive data analysis method to define multiple realities that might be presented from data. Figure 7 enumerates the phases or procedures that were followed to analyse the data.

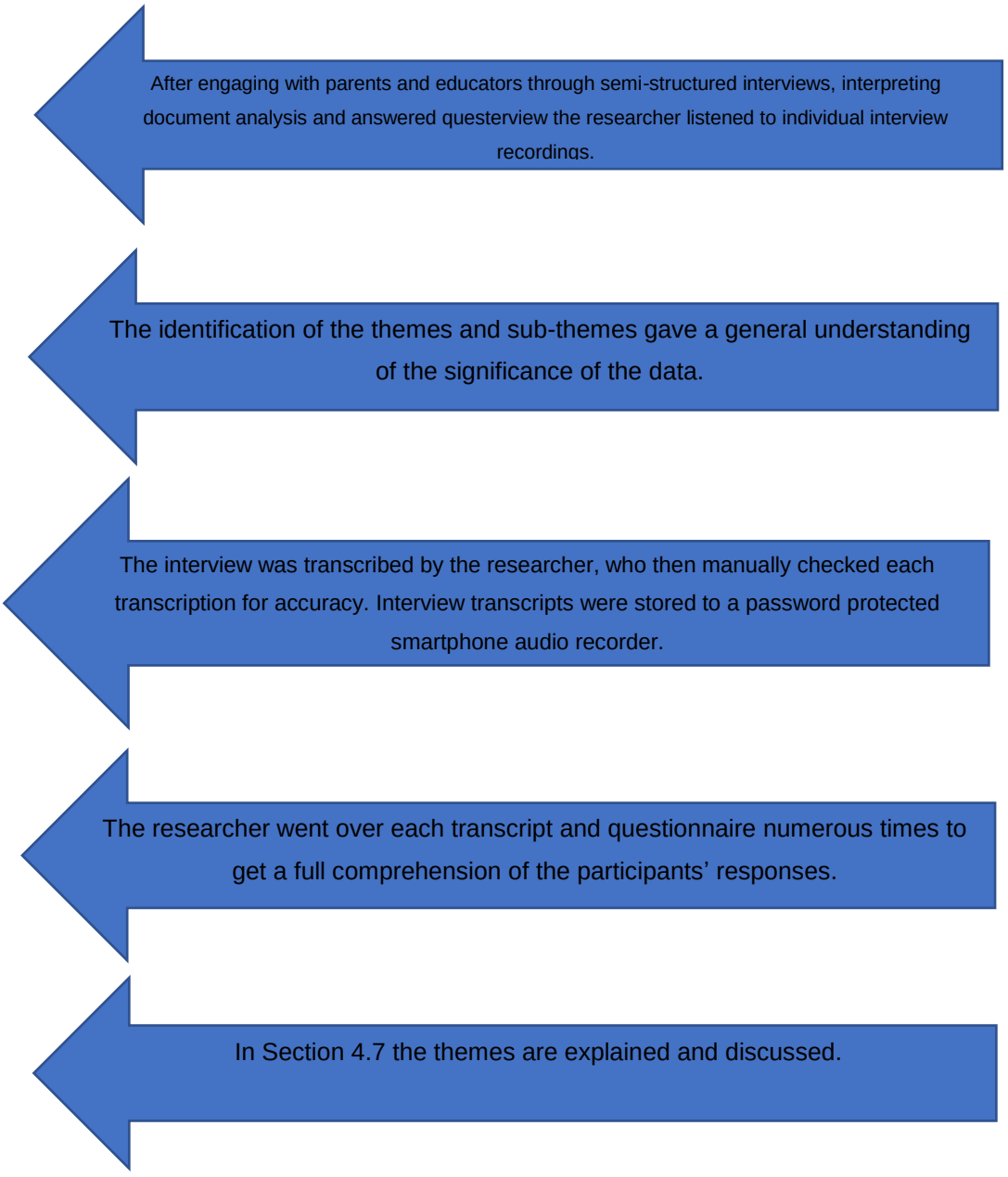

Figure 7: Phases in the Process of Gathering Data

4.5 RESEARCH FINDINGS

The data analysis revealed four (4) major themes and, within these major themes, the researcher identified sub-themes. Through explanation, several sub-themes emerged to produce a complex perception of the participants' experiences within the Foundation Phase. Table 3 below offers a presentation of the themes and sub-themes.

Table 3: **Presentation of the Themes and Sub-Themes**

Themes	Sub-themes
1. The effectiveness of parent–educator relations in school	• Regular Meetings • Communication • Attitude • Volunteer • Homework
2. The promotion of parental involvement	• School Governing Body • Parental Training • Resources
3. Challenges of parental involvement	• Socio-economic status • The use of technology
4. Mutual partnership between parents and educators	• Partnership • Academic performance

The theme and sub-themes that arose from the study are displayed in Table 3 above. Although there are many direct statements used in the presentation of findings, the researcher provided an overview of the data. The content is displayed verbatim using the "black quote" technique.

4.5.1 Theme 1: The Effectiveness of Parent–Educator Relations in School

Parents and educators have different experiences with parental involvement at school. The participants' experiences as parents with children in the Foundation Phase and educators with experience teaching in the Foundation Phase are used to discuss the experiences parents and educators have had with parental involvement in schools.

Various responses were given regarding how parents and educators viewed their relationship. To go into further information regarding the findings, parents and educators were questioned about their experiences with the following themes:

Table 4: Theme 1: The Effectiveness of Parent-Educator Relations in School

Theme1	**Sub-theme**
The effectiveness of parent–educator relations in school	Regular meetings
	Communication
	Attitude
	Volunteer
	Homework

Sub-theme 1.1. Regular Meetings

Parents and educators who participated in the study had different experiences of parental involvement at school. Most parents were of the view that there should be regular meetings between parents and educators on learners' progress. P1 from school A and P6 from school B mentioned that they preferred regular meetings with the educators about their children's schoolwork. It was found by the parent participants that educators only had meetings with parents when there was a negative issue that they had to discuss with the parent. P2 from school A stated that:

> "Educators invite parents to meet when the situation has gotten worse to discuss the academic life of the child."

The above finding shows that parents would like to be updated about their children's situation at school before it gets worse. Even though some parents wanted to be kept updated during school meetings, it was found by P5 and E4 from school B that most parents in their school did not attend school meetings. Conversely, some participants felt that it was necessary to work as a team for the benefit of the learner's academic performance and for parents and educators to meet with parents one-on-one. The issue of parental involvement in schools and one-on-one meetings between parents and educators to discuss learners' academic progress was proven to improve learners'

academic performance when the findings from E1 from school A and E5 from school B stated that:

> E1: “Meetings improve academic performance and school attendance, and meetings between parents and educators may be one-on-one.”

> E5: “Meetings between parents and educators are a great way to discuss a child's progress and address any concerns. Educators should provide clear explanations of learner’s performance, including what interventions have been put into place and how parents can help at home.”

The above findings show that parents and educators must have regular meetings and one-on-one meetings where they discuss learner progress, regardless of whether it is poor or bad. While some parents believed that the school was one of the most significant settings in a child's life and that educators were not enough to guarantee that children's educational progress was going in a better direction, others believed that parents should attend meetings and take part in them. Some individuals stayed away from meetings due to a lack of interest or involvement, while others were forced to stay away due to work obligations. The findings mentioned are supported by Supangan (2014), who describes the variety of opportunities for success that parental involvement in their children's education offered, including improvements to the children's behaviour, attitude and academic performance across all learning areas. Educators believed that parent/educator meetings were a great opportunity to establish closer ties and ensure that each child received support from a dedicated, highly effective educational team.

Sub-theme 1.2. Communication

It was confirmed in data collected from participants that good communication between parents and educators was essential for the children's performance. P1 and E3 from school A; and P5; E4 and E5 from school B concurred that communication between parents and educators was essential as it provided an environment in which learners could excel academically and encouraged teamwork and trust, so learners could reach their greatest potential. Educators can better manage their classrooms by communicating with parents, which fosters cooperation between them and the parents. The findings from P1 from school A stated that:

> "Continuous communication with parents through online and in-person interactions, feedback from educators when children improved if they were having difficulties in their academic performance."

The above finding shows that P1 recommended continuous communication with parents through online and in-person interactions as essential for the academic success of children. The importance of feedback from educators when children are having difficulties at school has been shown to have a positive influence on their academic success.

P5 from school B stated:

> "If the school sends newsletters to parents informing them of yearly events that will take place, the parents should be informed of upcoming events."

According to the above from P5, she indicated that parental involvement was positively correlated with learner achievement. By using newsletters to communicate with parents, schools could increase parental involvement and improve learners' outcomes.

Most of the educators were of the view that a WhatsApp group with parents was a good way to communicate between parents and educators. E1 and E3 were both from school A. They mentioned that they had created a WhatsApp group with parents to communicate matters concerning teaching and learning and were open to input and suggestions from parents. E4 from school B encouraged parents to use the A3 book as a means of correspondence with parents. Findings from E1 and E3 indicated that WhatsApp groups and A3 books were the best ways to interact with parents. However, E4 from school B indicated that parents should use the A3 book as a form of correspondence with educators.

According to responses from E1 and E3, WhatsApp was an effective tool for educators and parents to communicate throughout the year, and communication lines were an effective tool for enabling learners to perform academically by allowing parents to provide suggestions and input. E4 stated that she encouraged parents to buy their children an A3 book, which was used as a written form of communication between parents and educators. The above responses were supported by P1, who reported that she had received feedback from educators regarding her child's academic performance both

online and face-to-face to help him perform academically. WhatsApp was a popular messaging application that was used by parents and educators to communicate about children's academic performance. This mode of communication seemed to be working for parents who were willing to be part of their children's academic performance and who could afford to buy data. The use of WhatsApp has several benefits for both parents and educators. For instance, it allows parents to stay informed about their children's academic progress and to communicate with educators in real time. It also allows educators to share information about projects, tests and other important events with parents quickly and easily. Some parents expressed their dissatisfaction over the fact that they could not afford to purchase data due to the high cost and lack of timely information, and others complained of not having access to a smartphone to be able to have WhatsApp. When they had enough money to purchase data, they could access the information provided by educators and, by that point, it would be too late to respond to WhatsApp messages with information. Communication is an essential part of any educational programme, and parents who are unable to read and write must not be left behind. However, not all parents supported the use of the WhatsApp device and A3 book for communication, as WhatsApp required data. Some parents stated that they did not have data to see communication from the educators, while other parents said using an A3 book to write information for illiterate parents could be difficult for them to read or to get assistance from literate neighbours to assist them.

According to scholars Makgopa and Mokhele (2013), letters, communication books and the telephone are vital for the smooth operation of parental involvement. Based on the participants' responses to the educators' experiences at school, it was revealed that educators created WhatsApp groups with parents as a form of communication between themselves and parents.

Sub-theme 1.3. Attitude

Parents and educators were asked about their experiences when working as a team. It was revealed that there were both negative and positive attitudes toward working as a team. It was found in the study that most parents had negative attitudes when it came to working with educators to support their children. Some parents and educators felt that it was the sole responsibility of the educator to teach the child. Some participants were of

the view that positive attitudes between educators and parents would be beneficial to the learners' academic performance. P1 from school A stated with frustration that:

> "Some educators take on the concerns of parents who are not actively involved in the lives of those learners, and those learners ultimately tell their parents what the educators stated, causing some friction between parents and educators as well as an uneasy learning environment for the child. Respect between parents and educators, in the researcher's view, would help children enjoy school and do well academically. The way that other educators handle children and their parents is not helpful: they use negative language that prevents children from enjoying school."

It was also revealed that parents' negative attitudes influenced the relationship between the learner and the educator. Moreover, it was discovered that some educators would be negative to the learner because of their parents' attitudes towards the educator. Negative attitudes are the result of educators expressing their frustrations to the children, who then inform their parents about the educator's negative attitudes towards them at school. It was found that educators' mindsets led to conflict between themselves and parents and created an unconducive learning environment for the child. P1 continued by saying that she believed in her point of view that respect between parents and educators could improve learners' achievement and that learners could enjoy schooling.

P2 stated that:

> "Some parents are also career-driven, leaving their children's education in other people's hands without following up, or their attitude is not positive and does not allow progress in wanting to involve themselves in their children's education."

According to the above response, it was evident that some parents worked far from home and did not have time to look at their children's schoolwork.

Some parents expressed their frustration that they had difficulties receiving help from educators since they lacked respect towards parents. P4 from school A stated that:

> "None of the educators are always on board to help parents when parents need their help, and both parents and educators should respect each other."

According to the above response, it was evident that parents were unable to receive assistance from educators when they sought help from them. P4 also mentioned that there should be respect between parents and educators. The statement of P4 based on respect between parents and educators was supported by P1 from school A, who stated that respect between parents and educators could improve learners' academic achievement.

P5 from school B thought that educators expected parents to complete their work by giving children too much homework. P6 from school B thought that some parents could think that since educators were expected and could impart the essential information and abilities, they should be the only ones to teach children. It was found from the participants that some parents believed that they were not qualified to teach their children at home as they were not taught how to do so, and some participants believed that parents could help their children with teaching and learning at home.

The Majozi (2014) study, which found that schools with empowered educators had positive attitudes toward parental involvement in learning, was mentioned by the researcher in the literature review. Dor and Rucker-Naidu (2012) say that a learner's academic achievement is greatly impacted by educators' positive attitudes towards parental involvement.

Sub-theme 1.4. Volunteer

It was found in the study that participants were supportive of the idea that parents must volunteer for certain activities at the school. It was not all participants who indicated and showed support for parents volunteering at the school. Some participants saw it as a waste of time, while others saw it in the light to help learners to perform academically. This is supported by Epstein (2018) who states that parental involvement in school volunteering determines and enables educators to work enthusiastically in an environment that encourages the academic performance of the learners at school. It was evident in the study that some parent participants wanted to volunteer at the school.

P4 strongly emphasised that:

> "When there are fundraising activities at the school, I reach out to some parents and offer to pay for their children to support the school initiative."

It is evident that there were parents who understood collaboration and teamwork at school. Volunteering at school plays a critical role as it fosters positive working relationships. P5 from school B stated that she would prefer the school to inform all the parents when there were fundraising activities at the school so that they could either contribute or assist with finding donations for the school.

From the responses given above, some parents were concerned about other parents and wanted to help the school accomplish its goals. Schools receive financial support via fundraising and, if parents participate, this would assist learners to perform well academically. Parents work together to raise money to support the school's academic mission. The institution's resources can be secured by parents and the school to assure success. The South African School Act 84 of 1996 advocates this, which expressly mentions fundraising and entails that all public-school governing bodies should make every determination to elevate the educational standard in their schools by raising additional resources to supplement those that the state provides.

It was found in the study that there were parents and educators among the participants who promoted homework as a tool to encourage learning at home and that parents should be given responsibilities to help children at home with learning. Some parents saw homework as an opportunity to inspire their children to read independently. It was evident in the study that some parents and educators recognised the importance of homework as encouraging learning at home.

P1 said:

> "When they ask us as parents to help our children with homework, I then encourage learning at home for my child to make education easy for my son."

P2 stated that:

> “Giving parents minimal tasks that they can do at home with their children as part of the child learning process so that they can see the importance of being a part of the children’s learning process.”

P6 stated that:

> "When I check my children’s schoolbooks to see if they have homework and check if they are participating in their schoolwork in class, and by seeing if there is daily classwork as well, educators are marking children’s work to get children to respond to their work and be able to assist where necessary."

The findings from P1 and P2 in school A, and P6 in school B demonstrate that parents can be given minimal tasks to complete at home with their children as part of the child's learning process and that doing so will help them realise how important it is to be involved in their children's education. Some parents monitored their children's academic progress by looking through their schoolbooks as this enabled them to see where their children might need additional support or assistance.

Some parents had seen the need to help children with homework in the Foundation Phase, which inspired children to love reading. This was supported by P7 from school B and E2 from school A.

> P7 stated: “By helping my child with homework enables me to encourage reading using DBE book in English and Sesotho.”

The above finding shows how P7 was dedicated to helping her child with homework. In addition, by making sure the child understood the DBE book better and was more likely to read it independently in both English and Sesotho, helping her child with homework encouraged the development of good study habits and enhanced the child's overall academic performance.

E2 stated that:

> “As an educator, I give learners homework, especially reading of sounds and sight words that are done in class to go and read them at home for parents to be there in their children’s education.”

The data presented above demonstrate that E2, an educator at school A, thought homework was a crucial component of the learning process. She assigned reading homework to her learners that included sounds and sight words that they were taught in class. Children could enhance their reading fluency and comprehension skills by reading these words at home, which also helped to reinforce what they had learned in class and gave parents a chance to be active in their children's education. Reading also encouraged children to love reading, which is crucial for academic achievement. E2's assertion that by assisting her child with homework she might encourage him to do well in school was supported by P7 from school B.

Sub-theme 1.5. Homework

Homework was viewed by some educators as an important indicator of classroom learning. It reinforced and helped learner's retain information taught in the classroom, as well as increasing their general understanding of the language. Homework develops study habits and independent learning. E3 from school A and E4, E5 and E6 from school B indicated the following:

E3 stated:

> "By involving parents in school curriculum and co-curriculum activities…."

The findings above display that involving parents in school curriculum and co-curriculum activities helped improve learners' performance and engagement, and that involving parents helped to create a more supportive learning environment for learners.

E5 said:

> "I gave learners homework and projects to do so that parents become aware and involved in helping their children at home."

The findings reveal that if educators are giving children homework and projects that require parental involvement and support, parents become aware of what their children are learning and can help them at home as the educator had communicated the homework and project with parents.

E4 said:

> "As a foundation phase educator, I need to know the background of each learner in my class and also encourage parents to take responsibility for their children's education. I make sure that all learners feel free in the classroom."

The findings above show that the educator created a safe and inclusive environment for all learners in her class. By knowing the background of each learner, she could better understand their needs and tailor her teaching approach accordingly. She also encouraged parents to take responsibility for their children's education, which helped to create a partnership between the school and parents and could lead to better outcomes for the child.

E6 stated that:

> "Parents must support and assist the children with their homework and projects at home."

The above findings show that parents should help and support their children with their homework since it improves their self-esteem and keeps them motivated in school. In addition, it provides interaction between parents and their children.

The findings above demonstrate that parents and educators agree on the value of homework for children's learning and support. This finding is supported by Dor and Naidu (2012) who state that children would be more motivated to study if parents were involved. Furthermore, Dick (2016) comes to the same conclusion, noting that children who have parents who actively assist with learning at home are motivated to learn and have self-confidence in school.

4.5.2 Theme 2: The Promotion of Parental Involvement at School

It was found from parent participants that schools should promote parental involvement in schools and that schools must welcome parent suggestions and invite parents to support and be part of the planning of school events and other activities to increase parental involvement at school. According to Epstein (2019), parental participation is a

partnership between parents and the school that aims to enhance the educational environment and academic performance of the children. Various participants indicated that parental involvement should be promoted in different schools. As participants were elaborating on the issue of promoting parental involvement, the following sub-themes emerged:

Table 5: Theme 2 The Promotion of Parental Involvement at School

Theme 2	**Sub-theme**
The promotion of parental involvement at school	School governing body
	Parental training
	Resources

Sub-theme 2.1. School governing body (SGB)

The study revealed that some parents were aware of the important role that parents in public schools played as members of the school governing body (SGB), while others were unaware of this. The SGB oversees and encourages parental involvement in education by enhancing learning outcomes, taking part in elections for the SGB, achieving the objective of quality education in schools, ensuring and monitoring learner attendance, and supporting the school code of conduct. Some educators were aware that the school must have an SGB, but they were unaware of the function that the SGB served. Other parents and educators knew that a code of conduct for learners must be implemented in schools. This finding is supported by Section 8 of the SASA Act of 84 of 1996, which states that a code of conduct for learners must be adopted by the governing body of a public school. Furthermore, it states that schools should have a parent component in the SGB to represent parents, and the parent component should be part of planning school policies and overseeing the teaching and learning of children.

It was found in the study that P5, P7, E4, E5 and E6 from school B agreed that the school should have a parent component that was elected by parents in a parent meeting to form part of the school stakeholders who would oversee school policies, such as the learners'

code of conduct, finances, admission and how parents could be part of their children's educational support and work together with educators. This parent component would make sure that parents contributed and had a say in the decision-making process. This statement was supported by E2 from school A, who stated that every school should have a code of conduct so that parents and learners could follow what the school had ruled out, and the SGB should be elected as it was their duty as parents to draw up rules for their children's education.

Some parents and educators were unaware of the significance of being familiar with the duties of the SGB, which involved parental involvement in the school. It was evident from the findings from E1, P3 and P4 from school A as follows:

E1 said:

> "I am not familiar with SGB responsibilities that involve parental involvement at school. However, I do know that every school must have a school governing body."

P3 and P4 said:

> "We are unaware of the SGB responsibilities that involve parents in our children's education, we need training on such responsibilities."

According to the findings above, some educators may not have been aware of the SGB obligations that required them to involve parents in their children's lives and parents who needed training on these obligations. Some educators were aware that governing bodies are required for schools, but they were unaware of their responsibilities.

Some parents and educators stated that learners who attended school regularly developed good study habits and strong relationships with classmates and educators and performed well at school. The following findings were reached as reported by P6 from school B, E5 from school B and P1 from school A:

P6 said:

> "Regular and punctual attendance of children at school is the responsibility of the parents. This involves ensuring that children are

> ready for school each day and that parents make sure that their children don't miss school without a legitimate excuse, such as an illness. It is significant since a child's academic achievement depends on consistent attendance at school."

E5 stated:

> "Education is a constitutional right for every child and no child should stay at home."

P1 went on to indicate that:

> "For parents to show their involvement, parents must encourage their children to go to school."

These findings are consistent with section 29 (1) of the South African Constitution, which states that every child has a right to a fundamental education and that school attendance is mandatory for all South African children beginning at the age of six. Further, this is supported by SASA Act 84 of 1996 which states that every school should have an SGB representative to ensure that it promotes the best interests of the institution, ensures that all learners receive the best education possible and oversees the way teaching and learning are carried out in the school. In addition, the school governing body should develop its learner code of conduct for the school as the basis for fostering a culture of positive behaviour among learners and how they should conduct themselves in the school, and oversee that other school policies are aligned with the school vision and mission as well as with the Department of Basic Education.

Sub-theme 2.2. Parental Training

It was found in the study that there were parents who needed parental training to be able to know about when and how they should be involved in school and their roles as parents in their children's education, and to work together with their children's educators. This was evident from P2, P3 and P4 from school A who mentioned that the schools never provided training to parents on parental involvement at school; they should be involved and that the schools needed to have the training to educate parents on parental involvement; and that the training should cater for both parents and educators to be able

to know about the value of being involved in the children's education. P6 from school B stated that parents needed to form support groups with educators to encourage parental involvement.

The findings above revealed that to get parents involved in their children's education the school should promote parental involvement in a variety of ways, such as providing training for parental involvement and educating both parents and educators on the value of being involved in the children's education. Scholars such as Marphatia et al. (2020) have endorsed this, stating that including parental involvement in educator training and curricula can act as educators' partners by helping both parents and educators to maximise learners' academic potential and keep an eye on the effectiveness of their learning.

Sub-them 2.3. Resources

It was revealed by participants that a lack of resources affected learners' academic performance. Numerous responses from educator participants were given that overcrowding of classrooms had a negative impact on learners' academic performance and was a significant factor contributing to learners' poor academic achievement in public schools. Some educators stated that the overcrowding of classrooms affected effective teaching and learning, while other parent participants mentioned that schools did not provide extra classes for learners who had learning problems and children did not have reading books to extend their knowledge. This was evident from P3, E1 and E2 in school A.

P3 stated:

> "The school lacks educational resources and stimulation."

E1 stated:

> "Overcrowded classes make it difficult for educators to reach all learners in the classroom and support learners who experience learning barriers."

E2 stated that:

> "There is not enough teaching material in classrooms, which affects teaching and at times frustrates educators."

The finding above shows that schools with a lack of resources and stimulation in education had negative effects on learners' education. Overcrowded classrooms made it difficult for educators to reach all learners in the classroom and support learners who experienced learning barriers. Educators did not have enough teaching material in their classroom, which frustrated them and affected their teaching ability. This is supported by scholars West and Meier (2020) who state that overcrowded classrooms can have a negative impact on learners' academic performance in the Foundation Phase, and that overcrowded classes in the Foundation Phase have no individual learner support.

4.5.3 Theme 3: Challenges of Parental Involvement

It was revealed from the participants that they were experiencing various challenges when they had to work together as a team. A variety of opinions were presented, and the following sub-themes emanated from the question regarding how parents and educators perceived the difficulties they had with parental involvement at school:

Table 6: Theme 3: Challenges of Parental Involvement

Theme 3	**Sub-theme**
Challenges of parental involvement	Socio-economic status
	The use of Technology

Sub-theme 3.1. Socio-Economic Status

Some of the parent participants alluded that parents had different experiences of socio-economic status which affected their involvement as parents at the school and their support of their children with learning at home. Parent participants with experiences of socio-economic issues were engaged to discuss the challenges parents had with parental involvement in schools. Various responses were given regarding how parents and educators experienced the challenges of parental involvement. E1, E2 and E3 from school A stated the following:

E1 said that:

> “Insufficient time of parents who fail to commit themselves to parental involvement due to work-related matters to maintain the financial standing of their families without having leave and without being permitted by their employees. While other parents fail to be involved in their children's education due to their educational level or being illiterate. Language challenges as parents and educators are factors in the low level of parental involvement in the school.”

The above finding shows that time was a key barrier to parental involvement, as most parents were at work when schools and educators required them to be present at parent meetings and were unable to assist their children with their educational needs as they lacked education.

E2 said that:

> “Some parents did not go to school; some children are orphans staying with grandparents.”

The findings above reveal that some parents did not attend school themselves, and children who were orphans stayed with grandparents which could make it difficult for them to support their grandchildren’s education.

E3 stated that:

> “Parents fail to get involved as they stay far from school not working and they cannot afford the transportation costs to come to school. Most learners travel to school by bus which is a challenge for parents to be involved with the school, as parents who are from disadvantaged areas stay away from school.”

The findings above reveal that parents failed to get involved in their children's school activities as they stayed far from school and parents who were not working could not afford the transportation costs to go to school. In addition, most learners travelled to school by bus as they were from disadvantaged areas.

P1 stated that, even though some parents might want to be involved in their children's education, they found it difficult due to their challenges. This was evident when P1 from school A stated that she found it difficult to be involved as she and the child's educator did not get along. After trying to prompt more questions about that, she noted that it was better not to go into detail about it.

Despite challenges between the school and the parents, some participants mentioned that single parenting was a reality for some parents, which could make it challenging for the child's schooling and for parents to be involved in and develop a connection with their children's education. As a result, single parents needed to continue to be active with and become involved with their children's education. P3 from school A supported the statement as follows:

P3 said:

> "Single parents find it difficult to be involved in their children's education and educators' support is important."

The finding above revealed that single parents found it difficult to be involved in their children's education. It was clear that the partnership between educators and single parents helped learners to do better academically.

Some parents stated that parental involvement in their children's education mattered for their children's achievement, motivation and well-being at school, but they felt that they lacked the knowledge and skills to help their children with their education. They also felt intimidated by the education system and were unsure of how to approach educators. P6 from school B said the following:

> "Some parents decide not to participate in their children's education because they feel uneducated and not confident enough to approach educators."

In Chapter 2 of the study, the researcher emphasised the findings of El Nokali et al. (2010) who found that parents may provide incorrect information to their children while helping them with their homework as they lack a proper understanding of certain subject areas due to being uneducated. The researcher illustrated that there were parents who did not

go to their children's school because they were illiterate, felt uncomfortable talking or did not know what to talk to educators about.

Sub-theme 3.2. The Use of Technology

The use of technology came up as a sub-theme during parent interviews about the school's increased parental involvement. Some educator participants mentioned that technology could be used to incorporate rapid learning, which promotes communication between learners and their educators. Projectors, smart tablets and smart boards were a few examples of technology methods that were used in schools to enhance teaching and learning. They further stated that the implementation of an integrated learning system ensured a curriculum that was more carefully developed. Some parents who responded to the question said that the use of technology in education could also be very beneficial for them as parents and schools, by carefully developing a curriculum that incorporated technology and fostered collaboration between parents and schools. Education could be made more accessible, engaging and effective for learners. Where a significant number of learners came from low-income homes, modern technology could help to include parents provided that the school or Department of Education provided them with unpaid services to be able to be involved in their children's education. Some parents saw the use of technology to involve parents in school as an exclusion for those parents who would be unable to afford to buy gadgets and maintain the services required to be able to access the technology used at school. The school could implement a technology lending programme where their school loaned devices to learners for the academic year, much like textbooks, to accommodate every learner regardless of their socio-economic status.

E5 from school B and E1 from school A stated the following:

E5 said that:

> "The school must be consistent with its plans for including parents and it must choose to use technology to do so."

The finding above shows that the school should have a clear plan for how it will use technology to engage parents and ensure that it is consistent with that plan.

E1 said:

> "A school needs to have a technology app like D6 to send parents messages on important matters about children's education and a smart board in the classroom to advance teaching and learning in the classroom."

The findings above reveal that some schools needed to have a technology app like D6 to communicate with parents by sending messages through their mobile devices in addition to the suggestion of smart boards in the classroom to advance teaching and learning.

Some parents mentioned that the use of technology could be beneficial for parents. Parents could use smartphones and digital devices to stay connected with their children's school and receive communication through technology. P5 from school B stated that:

> "My child's school sends me messages on my phone, and the school has a Facebook account where we access events that have occurred in school."

The above finding shows that the school used multiple channels to communicate with parents as they sent messages to parents on their phones and had a Facebook account to post information about events that had occurred in school.

The above findings reveal that technology played a crucial role in education. The recent report by Yeung et al. (2021) found that education technology can have a positive effect on learning outcomes. Technology can close achievement gaps and improve learning outcomes. Integrating technology in schools rests on effective educator education programmes that help educators create new teaching and learning methods (Carrillo & Flores, 2020).

4.5.4 Theme 4: The Mutual Partnership between Parents and Educators

Some participants agreed that both parties should share a desire for a nurturing environment and collaboration between parents and educators to establish a good working relationship in supporting their children's academic performance as well as to open lines of communication between the home and the school. The discussion of the advantageous cooperation between parents and educators served as inspiration for the succeeding sub-theme, focusing on the mutually beneficial relationship between parents

and educators. The following sub-themes emerged from the question of mutual partnership between parents and educators:

Theme 4Table 7: Theme 4: The Mutual Partnership between Parents and Educators

Sub-theme 4.1. Partnership

During the semi-structured interviews, parents and educators were asked about their experiences when working together as partners for the benefit of their children's academic progress. It was revealed that there were both good working relationships and a lack of partnership between parents and educators. It was found in the study that there was still a lack of partnership between parents and educators; most parents did not receive feedback from other parents; and some parents failed to partner with educators to support their children's education. Schools also did not provide adequate educational programmes that could involve parents in their children's education. P1 and P2 from school A responded with confidence as follows:

P1 said:

> "There is a mutual partnership because parents help their children with schoolwork at home as instructed by educators. Educators involve parents in their children's academic performance by allowing parents to view their children's books and give suggestions on where their children are lacking, and areas needed to improve and methods on how to improve those areas by both parents and educators."

The findings stated above highlight how important parental participation is to the academic achievement of children. It was discovered that parents, as social actors, played a crucial role in the growth of children's academic achievement by inspiring them. In addition, it was shown that educators involved parents in their learners' academic success by allowing parents to view their children's work and providing feedback on their weaknesses, places for improvement and strategies for doing so from both parents and educators.

P2 stated that:

> "Yes, both parents and educators want the children to progress in their educational programmes."

The findings above imply that both parents and educators had a common goal of helping children succeed in their education and that parents and educators worked together to ensure that children progressed academically.

Some parents felt that there was insufficient cooperation between parents and educators and a lack of collaboration between parents and educators. Most parents did not receive feedback from educators, and other parents did not assist with their children's education. P4 from school A stated with dissatisfaction that:

> "There is an absence of partnership because most schools do not provide adequate educational programmes that can involve parents in their children's education. As a result, many parents lack familiarity with the educational system and cannot work together with their children's educators as there is a non-existence of interaction between parents and educators there is also a total lack of partnership. The only time a parent and educator work together in a classroom is when an educator invites a parent to visit the classroom when a learner does poorly academically. Even when a child fails some schools do not call parents to attend meetings to talk about the child's growth and plans to assist."

In the above findings, P4 indicated that there were certain schools where there was a lack of parent–educator partnerships, as most schools did not offer enough learning opportunities that enabled parents to be involved in their children's education. Due to the absence of engagement between parents and educators, many parents lacked the knowledge necessary to collaborate with their children's educators. She continued by saying that the only time parents and educators could collaborate was when an educator brought a parent to the classroom when the learner performed poorly academically. She went on to say that some schools did not contact parents, when a child failed, to meet with them to discuss the child's development and strategies for helping the child succeed academically. While P3 supported this statement, it was indicated that there was a lack

of collaboration between parents and educators and that, occasionally, she did not get enough feedback from educators as a parent.

From the interview transcripts, the researcher noted that participants P5, P6 and P7 from school B agreed on the following:

P5 said:

> "Mutual partnerships can only exist between parents and educators who are involved and who attend to their children's schoolwork. Some of the parents do not care if their children have failed; they did not even go to the educator to find out if there is anything that they can do so that their children can do better next time. They just sit and do nothing, which lacks partnerships and challenges for the educators."

P6 stated that:

> "There is a mutual partnership at times as the educators inform parents about their children's progress and if the child is not doing well as a parent you are called to school so that the educator and parent can see how they can assist the child."

P7 said:

> "Yes, there is a mutual partnership between both parents and educators yet there are some parents who are not interested in their children's education."

The findings from the data show that collaboration between parents and educators enhances the academic achievement of learners. It also emphasises how some parents who do not care about their children have not worked with educators. According to the study, educators frequently let parents know how their children were doing. If the child was not doing well, the parent would be invited into the classroom, so they could discuss ways to help the child. Some parents were not concerned about their children's education, even in situations when parents and educators worked together to ensure that children received an outstanding education.

Looking at the responses from E2 from school A and E4 from school B when they were asked about this question of the mutual relationship between parents and educators, they responded as follows:

E2 said that:

> "Educators need to invite parents whether the learners' are performing well or not."

Findings reveal that educators should involve parents in their children's education regardless of their academic performance.

E4 stated that:

> "By informing parents of events that have occurred or may occur in school through quarterly meetings with parents and a monthly newsletter will not only let them know when their kids are misbehaving."

The findings above suggest that informing parents of events that have occurred or may occur in school through quarterly meetings with parents and a monthly newsletter would not only let the parents know when their children were misbehaving but also would keep them updated about school affairs.

The findings presented above show that effective parent–educator collaboration results in better educational outcomes for children. This is supported by Epstein (2018) who states that to plan the most effective teaching and learning environments, educators and parents must collaborate in the educational setting.

Sub-theme 4.2. Academic Performance

Some parents and educators who participated in the interview mentioned that when parents actively promoted their children's education without attempting to exercise any kind of control over them, children performed better academically. The researcher asked parents and educators to share their experiences of mutual partnership between parents and educators at schools. Some parents responded by saying that parental involvement in children's education had been shown to have a positive impact on children's academic performance and motivation. P1, E1 and E3 from school A and P6, E6 and E5 from school

B agreed that when parents were involved in their child's education, it could help the child to perform to their ability by providing support and encouragement at home, and this led to better academic results and improved attendance at school.

The findings above reveal that a child's academic performance is predicted to improve with parental participation as agreements are reached between parents and children at home or between the parent and the teacher (Chiang, 2011).

According to some participants, parental involvement in education was linked to better learning outcomes for learners, and children who had parents who were actively involved in their education were more likely to have positive feelings towards learning and school. Parental participation offered the child support at home and in the classroom. P3 from school A responded to the interview by revealing that:

> "It helps build their skills as well as improve their abilities at school."

According to the finding above, parental involvement in education was linked to beneficial outcomes for learners. Children who had parents who were actively involved in their education were more likely to have favourable attitudes towards learning and school. Parental participation offered the child support at home and in the classroom.

Some parents and educators held the opinion that parental involvement in a child's education could aid in and identify any learning challenges or difficulties that their child may be experiencing, as parents usually become aware of a child's problems before others do. To identify the precise areas where their child needed support, parents who were actively involved in their child's education could work with educators. They could then provide more assistance at home. P2, P4 and E2 from school A and P5 from school B stated the following:

In her response, P2 said:

> "You can tell as parents if your child is a slow learner in the early stage. Find teaching methods that will aid the child's learning process and parents will be able to evaluate their children's learning at home, the child's progress in school events like awards for the best achievers."

P4 said:

> "Parents get to know if their children have certain problems, and they can know if their children need special education at an early stage."

P5 stated:

> "Is that they get to know how their children are learning so that if there are any challenges, they will be able to get assistance and they get to know if their children are progressing or not so that they can also intervene."

E2 further said:

> "Parents get to know that their child excels or has challenges in class."

It is clear from the findings above that, from the perspectives of the participants from P2, P3, P4 and E2 from school A and P5 from school B, parental participation enabled parents to learn about their children's educational challenges and be able to intervene.

Dreyer (2013) alluded to the fact that parents are also involved in the outcome at the level of learner's learning barriers and the support needed. If a learner is assessed with learning barriers, the parent or district-based support team needs to take the child to applicable specialists for further diagnosis of the cause of the learning barriers.

4.6 SUMMARY OF THE CHAPTER

This chapter offered the research findings to answer the primary research question: investigating parent–educator relations on learners' academic performance in Foundation Phase. The themes and sub-themes that emerged from the participants' responses during the interviews were presented. In the next chapter, the results presented in Chapter 4 are interrelated and associated with existing literature. Chapter 5 highlights the comparisons and inconsistencies found in the data about the literature. Chapter 5 features new knowledge that results from this study.

CHAPTER 5: INTERPRETATIONS OF RESEARCH FINDINGS, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 INTRODUCTION

Chapter 4 of the research paper presented the data analysis, which included methods for data analysis as well as newly discovered information. The themes and sub-themes on which the research findings were presented. Participants' responses as well as pertinent data from the literature review were given to support the findings. Chapter 5 presents the interpretation of the research findings with reference to the study's purpose (see section 1.3), pertinent literature on the topic (see Chapter 2) and the theoretical framework (see Chapter 2). In addition, Chapter 5 uses the findings to answer the research questions that guided the study (see Chapter 1). This chapter also underlines the limits experienced and provides recommendations for further research. Figure 8 displays the outline of Chapter 5.

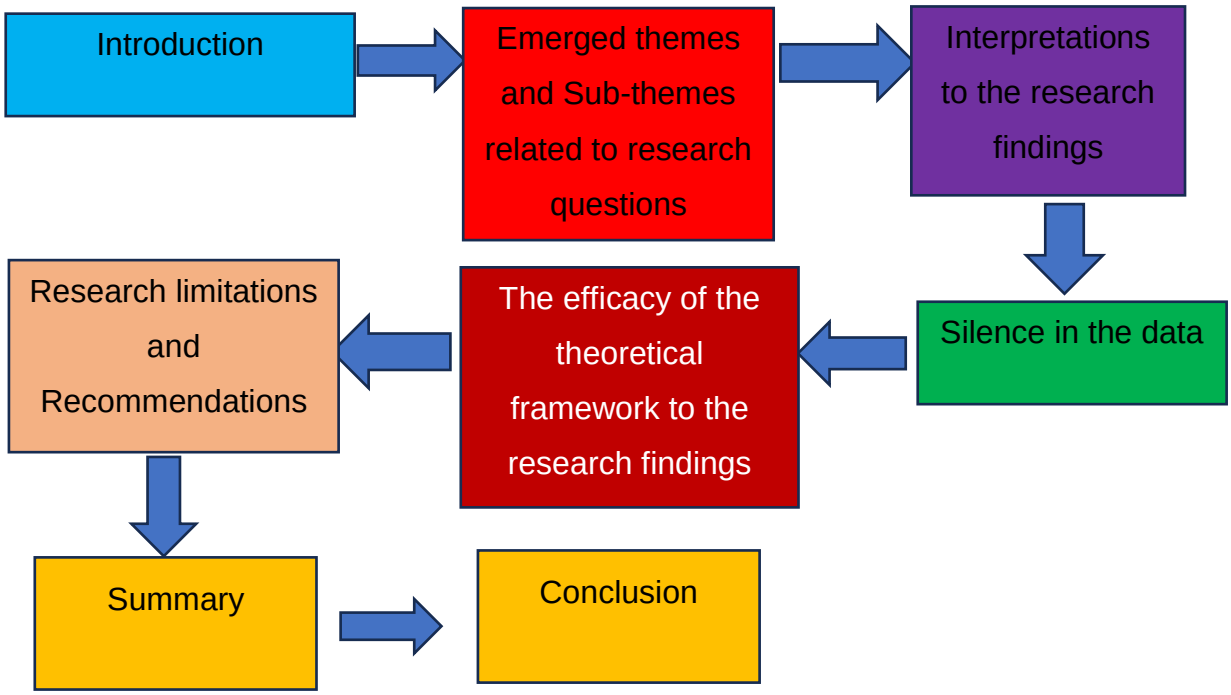

Figure 8: Layout of Chapter 5

5.2 THE RESEARCH QUESTIONS

The study framework comprised five research questions. Based on the responses to the main research questions, the main research topic was formulated. The effectiveness of parent–educator interactions in the Foundation Phase and the scarcity of productive parent–educator working relationships in schools were the subjects of study sub-questions one and two, respectively. The sub-questions three and four concentrated on the challenges that parents and educators had when working together as well as the necessary components for a parent–educator partnership to be successful.

5.2.1 Main Research Question

What are the dynamics of parent–educator relations on learners' academic performance in the Foundation Phase? (RQ1)

5.2.2 Sub-Research Questions

- What is the effectiveness of parent–educator relations in the Foundation Phase? (RQ2).
- Why are there no good parent–educator working relations in schools? (RQ3).
- What are the challenges faced by parents and educators when working together? (RQ4).
- What are the critical components to strengthen a successful parent–educator partnership? (RQ5).

The themes and sub-themes that emerged from the research findings were used by the researcher to form an in-depth understanding of the research findings and an extensive understanding of the subject under investigation (see Chapter 4). In addition, parents and educators were alerted to how policies were being applied in tandem with them as this connected them to the school, learners and the rule of law (Chapter 2). Finally, the researcher concluded the study, reached conclusions about the findings and made recommendations. In Chapter 2 the literature review was presented with international and national perspectives and necessities for the effective implementation of strategies to promote partnerships between parents and educators – this with the aid of encouraging

parents and educators to work collectively to assist learners in the Foundation Phase to achieve academically.

5.3 EMERGED THEMES AND SUB-THEMES

Precise interpretation of the research findings is essential. Therefore, the emerging themes and sub-themes from the data analysis are supposed to be replicable. This means that these findings should be able to be reproduced in other similar studies or settings. Replication involves the process where an independent researcher (or research team) follows the same methodology and, under similar conditions, conducts a new study to see if they arrive at the same themes and sub-themes. This is a way to verify the reliability and validity of the original research findings. The themes permit the research findings to be constructed in a way that makes recommendations for each of the themes feasible. Table 7 below indicates the emerging themes and sub-themes.

Table 8: Emerged Themes and Sub-Themes

Themes	Sub-themes
1. The effectiveness of parent–educator relations in school	• Regular meetings • Communication • Attitude • Volunteer • Homework
2. The promotion of parental involvement	• School governing body • Parental training • Resources
3. Challenges of parental involvement	• Socio-economic status • The use of technology
4. Mutual partnership between parents and educators	• Partnership • Academic performance

5.4 INTERPRETATION OF RESEARCH FINDINGS

5.4.1 The Effectiveness of Parent–Educator Relations in School

The researcher used two different quintiles to compare the effects of parental support for children's education on their academic performance. The underlying premise of the study was that the level of parental support could significantly influence learners' academic outcomes. It was hypothesised that learners at school A, receiving less parental involvement, might exhibit lower academic performance compared to their counterparts at school B, who benefitted from greater parental engagement. The researcher analysed the data collected from both schools to uncover insights into how socio-economic status, academic achievement and cultural factors are intertwined with the extent of parental participation in the educational process. This analysis intended to shed light on the broader implications of parental involvement and its potential as a lever for enhancing learners' success.

5.4.1.1 Regular Meetings

The findings in the study show that regular meetings between parents and educators are essential to discuss learners' progress, regardless of whether it is poor or good. These meetings should be both one-on-one and group meetings where possible. The study also suggests that such meetings can help improve learners' academic performance and social skills. The study highlights the importance of communication between parents and educators in identifying and addressing any issues that may be affecting learners' progress and the importance of parents and educators working together to create a supportive environment that fosters learning and growth. In addition, these meetings can help build a strong relationship between parents and educators, which can benefit learners in the long run. Some individuals stayed away from meetings due to a lack of interest or involvement, while others were forced to stay away due to work obligations. This finding is supported by Islam (2017) who states that parent–educator meetings induce parents to spend more time assisting their children and monitoring their schoolwork, which also improves their children's behaviour and social skills (see sections 1.4 and 2.3).

5.4.1.2 Communications

According to the research, newsletters, WhatsApp groups and A3 books were among the communication channels that could be used to boost learners' performance and parental involvement. Educators agreed that WhatsApp was a popular messaging application that was used by parents and educators to communicate about children's academic performance. This mode of communication seemed to be working for parents who were willing to be part of their children's academic performance and who could afford to buy data. The use of WhatsApp had several benefits for both parents and educators. For instance, it allowed parents to stay informed about their children's academic progress and communicate with educators in real time. It also allowed educators to share information about projects, tests and other important events with parents quickly and easily.

Some parents expressed their dissatisfaction over the fact that they could not afford to purchase data due to the high cost and lack of timely information, while others complained about not having access to a smartphone to be able to have WhatsApp. Some parents confirmed that when they had enough money to purchase data, only then could access the information provided by educators and, by that point, it would be too late to respond to WhatsApp messages with information. Communication is an essential part of any educational programme, and parents whose children are unable to read and write must not be left behind. However, not all parents engaged the use of WhatsApp and A3 books for communication. According to scholars Makgopa and Mokhele (2013), letters, communication books and the telephone are vital for the smooth operation of parental involvement. In addition, the findings suggest that educators were proactive in communicating with parents when they noticed that their children were struggling academically or behaviourally.

5.4.1.3 Attitude

The findings show that the attitudes of parents and educators towards working together affect the academic performance and well-being of learners. Some parents and educators had positive attitudes and saw the benefits of collaboration, while others had negative attitudes and blamed each other for the learners' difficulties. Negative attitudes can lead to conflict, frustration and a poor learning environment for the learner. Positive attitudes can lead to respect, support and enjoyment of schooling for the learners. The findings suggest that factors that influenced the attitudes of parents and educators were the

distance and time of parents' work; the availability and quality of educators' assistance; the amount and difficulty of homework; and the parents' confidence and skills in helping their children at home. The findings imply that parents and educators need to communicate effectively, share responsibilities and respect each other's roles to improve learners' achievement. Dor and Rucker-Naidu (2012) state that a learner's academic achievement is greatly impacted by educators' positive attitudes toward parental involvement.

5.4.1.4 Volunteering

The findings showed that most parents agreed that volunteering at school was good for their children's academic achievement. However, some parents disagreed and thought it was a waste of time. The findings also suggested that volunteering at school helped to create a positive and collaborative environment for educators and learners and that it contributed to the school's financial and material resources. The findings supported the theory of Epstein (2018) that parental involvement in school volunteering influences the academic performance of learners.

5.4.1.5 Homework

The findings suggest that homework can be a useful tool to foster learning at home and strengthen the partnership between parents and educators. Some parents and educators viewed homework as a means to encouraging children to read independently, practice skills taught in class and get parental support and feedback. However, some parents may have needed guidance on how to help their children with homework effectively and minimally. The findings also indicate that educators can create a safe and inclusive environment for learners by knowing their backgrounds and needs and involving them in school activities. Homework can be a means of communication between parents and educators, as well as between parents and children, to enhance their academic progress and engagement. This finding is supported by Dor and Naidu (2012) who state that children would be more motivated to study if parents were involved.

5.5 THE PROMOTION OF PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT AT SCHOOL

5.5.1 School Governing Body

The findings suggest that parents and educators had varying degrees of knowledge of and participation in school governance and policies. This is supported by Verger et al. (2019) who state that parents and educators have different levels of awareness and involvement in school governance and policies. Parents want more opportunities to participate in school events and decisions, while educators may not know how to engage them effectively. Both groups in this study agreed that regular school attendance was beneficial for learners' academic and social development. The findings imply that schools need to improve communication and collaboration with parents, as well as provide training and support for both parents and educators on their roles and responsibilities in school governance.

5.5.2 Parental Training

According to the study, some parents needed parental training to know when and how they should be involved in school and their roles as parents in their children's education, as well as how to work together with their children's educators. Some parents agreed that the schools never provided training to parents on parental involvement at school; that they should be involved; that the schools needed to have training to educate parents on parental involvement and the training should cater for both parents and educators to be able to know about the value of being involved in the children's education. Participants agreed that parents needed to form support groups with educators to encourage parental involvement.

According to a study by Yulianti et al. (2022), parental involvement in education can be promoted in a variety of ways. One way is to provide training for parental involvement. Educating both parents and educators on the value of being involved in the children's education is another way to promote parental involvement.

5.5.3 Resources

The findings suggest that poor learning environments hinder the quality of education for Foundation Phase learners. Parents implied that educators struggled to teach effectively

and meet the diverse needs of their learners in overcrowded and under-resourced classrooms. This was cited as evidence by West and Meier (2020) who noted that overcrowded classrooms negatively affect learners' academic performance in the Foundation Phase.

5.5.4 Challenges of Parental Involvement

5.5.4.1 Socio-Economic Status

The findings suggest that parents face various challenges that affect their involvement in their children's education, such as socio-economic status, time constraints, lack of education, distance from school and single parenthood. These challenges may limit the parent's ability to attend school meetings, assist their children with homework and support their children's learning needs. The findings also imply that educators can play a role in facilitating parental involvement by establishing partnerships with parents and providing them with guidance and resources. Parental involvement may have positive effects on the children's academic performance and motivation.

5.5.5 The Use of Technology

Technology can solve gaps and improve learning outcomes. Integrating technology in schools supports effective educator and education programmes that help educators establish new teaching and learning methods (Carrillo & Flores 2020).

The findings suggest that some schools should use a technology app like D6 to communicate with parents via their mobile devices and that smart boards could enhance teaching and learning in the classroom. The findings also indicate that parents valued the use of technology to stay in touch with their children's school and to receive updates through various channels, such as phone messages and Facebook posts. The findings imply that technology can have a positive impact on education by closing achievement gaps and improving learning outcomes, but that this requires effective educator education programmes that help educators to adopt new teaching and learning methods.

5.6 THE MUTUAL PARTNERSHIP BETWEEN PARENTS AND EDUCATORS

5.6.1 Partnership

The findings show that parental involvement is a key factor in children's academic success, as parents can motivate and support their children. The findings also show that educators can foster parental involvement by sharing feedback and strategies with parents on how to help their children improve. However, the findings reveal that some schools lacked effective parent–educator partnerships because they did not provide enough opportunities for parents to be engaged in their children's education. Some parents also did not collaborate with educators or care about their children's academic performance. The findings imply that both parents and educators need to work together to create a positive learning environment for children and to address the challenges and barriers that prevent parental involvement. The findings highlight the role of educators in providing feedback and guidance to both parents and children. Epstein (2018) states that to plan the most effective teaching and learning environments, educators and parents must collaborate in the educational setting.

5.6.1.1 Academic Performance

The findings imply that parents can improve their children's academic performance and motivation by being involved in their education without becoming overbearing. The researcher gathered information from parents and educators about how they cooperated in school. Some parents claimed that, by providing their children with support and encouragement at home, their children's performance and attendance in school improved. Academic performance is complex, shaped by readiness for school, achievements in learning activities and school outcomes. It is widely agreed that success in academics is driven by the learning process and is supported by teaching and learner's engagement. Findings also suggest that parental participation can aid in identifying and resolving any potential learning issues or obstacles that their children may experience. Involved parents can collaborate with educators to determine and meet the requirements of their children. Academic success is influenced by a learner's preparedness, their educational achievements and school performance. Vital to this success are quality teaching, learner engagement and the educational environment.

5.7 THE EFFICACY OF THE THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK TO THE RESEARCH FINDINGS

The literature uncovered ideas and details that were supported by the theoretical framework of the six parental participation strategies outlined by Epstein (2018), which served as the study's foundation. The six parental involvement techniques indicated areas that needed to be addressed to promote and maintain parent–educator relationships and learners' academic achievement in the Foundation Phase. The six parental engagement tactics place a lot of emphasis on the school's ability to use them to engage parents in the learning process.

To demonstrate the value of the theoretical framework in this study, the principles of parenting, communicating, volunteering, helping learners at home, decision making and teamwork were highlighted (Epstein, 2018).

5.7.1 Parenting

The findings of the study contributed valuable insights into the reasons educators must help parents and families understand the importance of education and school. Epstein (2018) gives an example of how educators should speak about the value of parental involvement and ask parents how they might get involved in their children's education through parent meetings. In the case of this study, parents needed to work with the educators to encourage and support their children to achieve academically, and educators should have provided parents with guidance on how to create a supportive learning environment at home. In this study, parents were trailblazers who improved the work of the educator at home by helping their children learn.

5.7.2 Communicating

According to the study, parents and educators were two of the key factors that significantly influenced how well learners succeeded academically. Together, parents and educators could support learners' learning when they communicated properly with one another. The study confirmed that educators used tools such as newsletters, WhatsApp groups and A3 books which were among the communication channels that could be used to boost learners' performance and parental involvement. As a result, communication

between home and the school was crucial as it also allowed educators to share information about projects, tests and other important events with parents quickly and easily.

The findings indicate that educators communicated with parents when their children did not do well or if there was a behavioural problem about the child. This is confirmed by Malatji (2018) who discovered that educators frequently spoke with parents when a child exhibited behavioural issues or when they gave term progress reports devoid of any kind of interaction. Therefore, there needs to be a plan to foster effective communication between parents and educators, which is crucial to any child's education. A friendly school environment is produced by two-way communication (Chu & Garcia, 2014). Schools should employ a variety of communication techniques to foster effective contact with families (Aslan, 2016).

5.7.3 Volunteering

A school may need parent volunteers for several reasons, including serving as school governors, organising fundraisers and supervising field trips or sporting events (Weinstein, 2021). The findings suggest that volunteering at school helped to create a positive and collaborative environment for educators and learners' and that it contributed to the school's financial and material resources. The findings in the study show that most parents agreed that volunteering at school was a good idea for their children's academic achievements; however, there were those parents who disagreed with being part of parents who volunteered at school as they saw it as a waist of their time. Parents should be consulted for ideas on how they may help, according to the school. For the sake of learners' and school initiatives, schools should enlist parents as volunteers. Schools should also recognise the efforts of parents and foster an environment that encourages parental involvement.

5.7.4 Learning at Home

Both Epstein (2018) and Maluleke (2014) concur that parents should support their children at home and be involved in their educational pursuits. According to the National Education Association (2011), every parent has the power to support their children's academic growth, and every home has the potential to foster strong family ties. The study

found that homework could enhance at-home learning and foster better communication between educators and parents. To ensure that parents fulfil their obligations as specified by the school, the school should communicate information to the parents. There ought to be a homework policy at the school. The findings demonstrate that involving parents in the school curriculum and co-curricular activities helps to improve learners' performance and engagement, and that involving parents helps to create a more supportive learning environment for learners.

It was found in the study that there were parents and educators among the participants who promoted homework as a tool to encourage learning at home and that parents should be given responsibilities to help children at home with learning. The research shows that educators can foster a secure and welcoming environment for learners by getting to know their needs and background information and by including them in classroom activities.

5.7.5 Decision Making

This study advocated collaboration of shared ideas and actions aimed towards common goals rather than the consequence of a power struggle between divergent points of view (Epstein ,2018). It was found in the study that the school should have a parent component that was elected by parents in a parent meeting to form part of the school stakeholders that would oversee school policies, such as learners' code of conduct, finances, admission and how parents could be part of their children's educational support and work together with educators. This parent component would make sure that parents contributed and had a say in the decision-making process. Cabus and Aries (2017) assert that parents who are active in SGBs and other school community organisations can contribute significantly to decision making in schools. The school governing body oversees and encourages parental involvement in education by enhancing learning outcomes, taking part in elections for the school governing body, achieving the objective of quality education in schools, ensuring and monitoring learner attendance and supporting the school code of conduct. According to the findings, some educators may not have been aware of the SGB obligations that required them to involve parents in their children's lives and of parents who needed training in these obligations. Some educators were aware that governing bodies were required for schools, but they were unaware of their responsibilities.

5.7.6 Collaboration

Since schools are incorporated into their surrounding communities, there may be a positive working relationship between the school and the community. Planning how the finest teaching and learning may take place requires collaboration between parents in the community and educators in the classrooms. According to Mahlangu (2014), the community creates the learners' cognitive environment. Some participants in this study agreed that both parties should share a desire for a nurturing environment and collaboration between parents and educators to establish a good working relationship in supporting their children's academic performance as well as to open lines of communication between home and the school. It was found in the study that there was still a lack of partnership between parents and educators; most parents did not receive feedback from educators; and other parents failed to partner with educators to support their children's education. Schools also did not provide adequate educational programmes that could involve parents in their children's education.

5.8 RESEARCH LIMITATIONS, STRENGTHS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.8.1 Limitations and Strengths of the Study

In cooperation, strengths and disadvantages were shown using a semi-structured interview qualitative research study (O'Connor & Joffe, 2020). It was difficult to conduct semi-structured interviews as participants differed in their cooperation to share their experiences. It was somewhat challenging for the researcher to collect qualitative open-ended data and codes, and to group the data to give it meaning.

First, since only two schools participated, it was challenging to extrapolate broad implications from the data (Rute & John, 2011). There was no proof that the situation was different in other schools, but the statistics were consistent with the research that has already been published in correlation with poor working relations between parents and educators that affect learners' academic performance in the Foundation Phase (Malatji, 2021). This study's goal was to analyse and fully comprehend parent–educator partnerships regarding learners' academic achievement in the Foundation Phase. This study was not to generalise the findings as that is not a qualitative research principle. Thus, the results may not apply to other districts in South Africa since the study was only

conducted in one district. The scope of future research can include understanding how parent–educator collaborations are perceived in different South African regions.

Second, the study focused on seven parents and six educators; therefore, the results are only true for these 13 participants. As with any social and phenomenological study, the research findings relied heavily on the experiences of parents and educators. Although 13 different cases were studied, the participants did not all have the same parental involvement circumstances. To create a comprehensive understanding of how parents and educators' partner to improve learners' academic performance in the Foundation Phase, it is recommended that further investigations be undertaken with participants from different educational contexts.

Third, this research investigation was carried out by a single researcher. Therefore, the case studies could be selective, biased and vulnerable to the opinions of the researcher.

Fourth, the use of a variety of data collection methods to ensure triangulation strengthened the trustworthiness of the study. Additional data collection strategies, such as observation and focused groups, have been used together to gather more comprehensive data from participants on their answers to the questions. The researcher included a validation technique for exploring the credibility of results to confirm the emerging themes and thus reflect participants' responses as true. The validation technique was included to ensure that findings accurately represented the participants' views and experience. This was a critical step in qualitative research to confirm that the themes and interpretations were authentic and credible.

The study's limitations are related to the data collection sites' exclusivity, which was restricted to public schools. This may limit some of the interpretations to the public context of education and may contrast data from earlier research in other areas of education. Transferability is conceivable if there are additional participants with similar experiences with parent–educator collaboration in schools from different contextual backgrounds.

Finally, as already mentioned, these difficulties might benefit from additional research. The next section discusses recommendations for potential future research on parent–educator cooperation. In addition, it is noted that transferability is not a characteristic embedded in a qualitative research approach.

5.8.2 Recommendations

For this study to create significant responsiveness, the researcher provides recommendations for further research on investigating parent–educator relations and learners' academic performance in the Foundation Phase. The recommendations below are based on the research findings (Chapter 4) and the literature review (Chapter 2). The recommendations are intended for the Department of Basic Education in South Africa, policy designers, schools, parents and other stakeholders.

5.8.2.1 Recommendations for the Effectiveness of Parent–educator Relations in Schools

Educators

- Educators should have regular meetings with parents as meetings are essential to ensuring that children's educational progress is moving in the right direction. Parents and educators should regularly and individually discuss their child's progress, regardless of the learner's ability. This can help identify any issues early on and ensure that the child is getting the support needed.
- Schools should try to reach out to parents who may not be attending meetings due to a lack of interest, involvement or time. This can be done through newsletters, WhatsApp groups and A3 books, which are among the communication channels that can be used to boost learners' performance and parental involvement.

- Educators should assign homework to learners as it is a means of communication between parents and educators, as well as between parents and children, to enhance their academic progress and engagement.
- Educators should be trained on how to engage parents effectively. This can include training on communication skills, conflict resolution and other relevant topics.

Parents

- Parents should maintain regular communication with educators pertaining to any activities that concern their children.

- Parents should attend parents' meetings when requested to and if unable to attend must follow up with educators to be updated of matters discussed.

School Based Support Team

- The school-based support team should support educators by providing continuous professional development to equip them with the necessary skills to enhance parental involvement and engagement. This can be done in the following manner:
  - Strengthen the educators' ability to address diverse learners' needs effectively.
  - Foster positive relationships between parents and educators.
  - Encourage open communication by regular updates and mutual understanding.
  - Involve parents in decision-making processes related to their children's education.
- The school-based support team should identity individual learner needs.

Department of Basic Education

- Promote regular interaction by encouraging regular communication between parents and educators.
- Create a sense of community and caring relationships within the school.
- Encourage both parents and educators in planning and decision making.
- Use disagreements as chances for collaborative problem-solving, where diverse perspectives are valued and can lead to beneficial solutions and innovative growth for all parties involved.
- Establish a relationship of mutual respect between parents and educators.
- Encourage both parents and educators to appreciate each other's roles in supporting learning.

5.8.2.2 Recommendations for the Promotion of Parental Involvement

Educators

- Schools should improve communication and collaboration with parents to ensure that they are aware of school governance and policies. This can be done through regular meetings, newsletters and other forms of communication.

- The schools should provide regular and accessible training sessions for parents on how to support their children's learning at home and at school, as well as how to communicate effectively with educators.
- The schools should develop and implement a parental involvement policy that outlines the goals, expectations and benefits of parental involvement for both parents and educators.
- The schools should create opportunities for parents and educators to collaborate and share their experiences, challenges and best practices on parental involvement through workshops, forums or support groups.

Parents

- Model positive attitudes and behaviour towards schooling and show enthusiasm for learning.
- Encourage children's reading as a daily habit at home.
- Regularly communicate with their children about their experiences and feelings.
- Familiarise themselves with their child's rights and responsibilities in relation to education.
- Understand the different learning areas and subjects the child is studying.
- Be aware of how assessments work and interpret school reports.
- Encourage children's regular school attendance.
- Participate in school meetings, attend parent-teacher conferences and actively contribute to decision-making processes.
- Create a consistent study routine with children and provide a dedicated space and time for homework.
- Support and supervise children's homework.
- Consider volunteering at the school to contribute directly to the educational environment.

School Based Support Team

- Ensure that parents feel comfortable and welcome in the school. Organise open houses, parent–educator workshops and other events where parents can interact with teachers and staff.

- Establish clear communication channels between the school and parents. Regularly share information about school activities, learners' progress and upcoming events. Use newsletters, emails and social media platforms.
- Conduct workshops on topics relevant to parenting and education. Cover areas such as supporting homework, understanding curriculum and fostering positive behaviour at home.
- Encourage collaboration between parents and educators. Involve parents in decision-making processes, school committees and volunteer opportunities.
- Organise family-oriented events such as literacy nights or cultural celebrations. These activities strengthen the bond between families and the school.
- Invite parents to volunteer in classrooms, libraries or school events. Their involvement enriches the learning experience for learners.
- Share resources on child development, parenting strategies and academic support. Provide access to books, online courses and workshops.
- Acknowledge and appreciate parents' efforts. Highlight their involvement through newsletters, awards or recognition ceremonies.
- Partner with local organisations to offer additional resources and services to parents. These could include health clinics, counselling services or after-school programmes.

Department of Basic Education

- Instil strong family values that emphasise the importance of education.
- Familiarise yourself with your child's rights and responsibilities in relation to education.
- Participate in school meetings and decision-making processes.
- Consider volunteering at the school to contribute to the school–community partnership.

5.8.2.3 Recommendations for the Challenges of Parental Involvement

Educators

- Enhance parental involvement in their children's education by considering the challenges that parents face and address them accordingly. For example, educators

can offer flexible meeting times, online communication platforms and home visits to accommodate the parents' schedules and circumstances. Educators can also provide parents with training and materials to help them support their children's learning at home. By doing so, educators can foster positive relationships with parents and improve the children's academic outcomes and motivation.

- Schools should consider investing in a technology app like D6 that can facilitate communication with parents and provide them with timely and relevant information about their children's school activities, progress and achievements.
- Educators should receive adequate training and support on how to use technology effectively in their pedagogy, curriculum and assessment, and how to address the challenges and opportunities that technology brings to education.

Parents

- Parents should be encouraged to use the technology app and other channels to stay connected with their children's school and support their learning at home by accessing resources, monitoring their performance and providing feedback and encouragement.

School Based Support Team

- Regularly assess the support needs of learners, educators and parents within the school.
- Work closely with educators, parents and other stakeholders to address challenges.
- Advocate necessary resources to enhance support services.
- Facilitate open communication channels between parents and educators.
- Consider flexible meeting times or virtual options to accommodate parents' schedules.
- Provide workshops or information sessions on the importance of parental involvement and how they can contribute to their child's education.

Department of Basic Education

- Offer workshops or information sessions to educate parents about school policies, curriculum and assessment methods.
- Encourage schools to create a warm and inclusive environment where parents feel comfortable participating.
- Encourage open communication and active listening between teachers and parents.
- Encourage schools and parents to collaborate as equal partners in a child's education.

5.8.2.4 Recommendations for Mutual Partnership between Parents and Educators

Educators

- Both parents and educators need to work together to create a positive learning environment for children and to address the challenges and barriers that prevent parental involvement. This can be done through open communication, mutual respect and collaboration.
- Educators can foster parental involvement by sharing feedback and strategies with parents on how to help their children improve. This can be done through regular meetings, newsletters or phone calls.
- Schools should provide more opportunities for parents to be engaged in their children's education. This can be done through parent–educator workshops, volunteering opportunities or school events.
- Educators should provide feedback and guidance to both parents and children. This can help parents understand their children's strengths and weaknesses and how they can help them improve.

Parents

- Parents should be involved in their children's education without becoming overbearing. Parents can provide their children with support and encouragement at home, which can improve their academic performance and attendance in

school. Parental participation can also aid in identifying and resolving any potential learning issues or obstacles that their children may experience. Involved parents can collaborate with educators to determine and meet the requirements of their children.

- Parents should be encouraged to be more involved in their children's education as it is a key factor in their academic success. They can motivate and support their children to achieve better results.

School Based Support Team

- Regularly meet with parents and listen attentively. Treat each other as integral parts of the planning and decision-making team. Provide training and support for teachers to effectively collaborate with parents.
- Tap into community-based organisations, non-government organisations and professionals to access additional support.
- Leverage parents' insights as they have valuable knowledge about their children.
- Approach disagreements constructively. Encourage problem-solving rather than blame. When challenges arise, focus on finding solutions that benefit the child. Acknowledge that parents play a vital role in their child's education. Involve them in decision-making processes, seek their input and value their perspectives.

Department of Basic Education

- It is recommended that the Department of Basic Education and other stakeholders invest in improving the learning environment for learners in the Foundation Phase. This can lead to policy adjustments, reducing class sizes, providing adequate resources and ensuring that educators are well-trained to meet the diverse needs of learners in their classes. By doing so, educators will be able to teach more effectively, and learners will be able to achieve better academically in the Foundation Phase and enhance further curriculum and access.

5.9 SUMMARY OF THE CHAPTER

Chapter 5 offered a construal of the outcomes of this study that was supported by existing literature and the theoretical framework of the six parental participation strategies outlined

by Epstein (2018). The emerging themes and sub-themes provided a pre-arranged demonstration of the interpretations and were deliberate. The researcher assumed that she would answer the fundamental research questions of this study. The data analysis, supported by the experiences and responses from participants in Chapter 4, was replicated into coherent and important recommendations for the establishment of strategies to support parent–educator relations on learners' academic performance in the Foundation Phase. This chapter was completed by presenting limitations and recommendations to all interested parties.

5.10 CONCLUDING COMMENTS

To conclude, it is remarkable that educators find it challenging to involve some parents in their children's education. Due to the problems and socio-economic status of some parents who are unable to be involved in their children's education, the academic performance of learners in the Foundation Phase may not improve. Even though educators are encouraging parents to be involved in their children's education, some parents still fail to be part of their children's academic performance. The study contributes to other tactics that the Department of Basic Education could adopt to implement parent–educator workshops, train educators on how to engage parents effectively, reduce class sizes by providing adequate resources and ensure that educators' training institutions prepare educators to deal with issues related to parent–educator partnerships or family, school and community partnerships. To create mutual partnership between parents and educators at schools should provide opportunities for parents to be engaged in their children's education. Although the research findings of this study are not comprehensive, the study supports the value of strengthening the support available to parents by providing regular and accessible training sessions for all parents on how to support their children's learning at home and school to improve communication and collaborate with parents to ensure that they are aware of educational policies that govern parental involvement.

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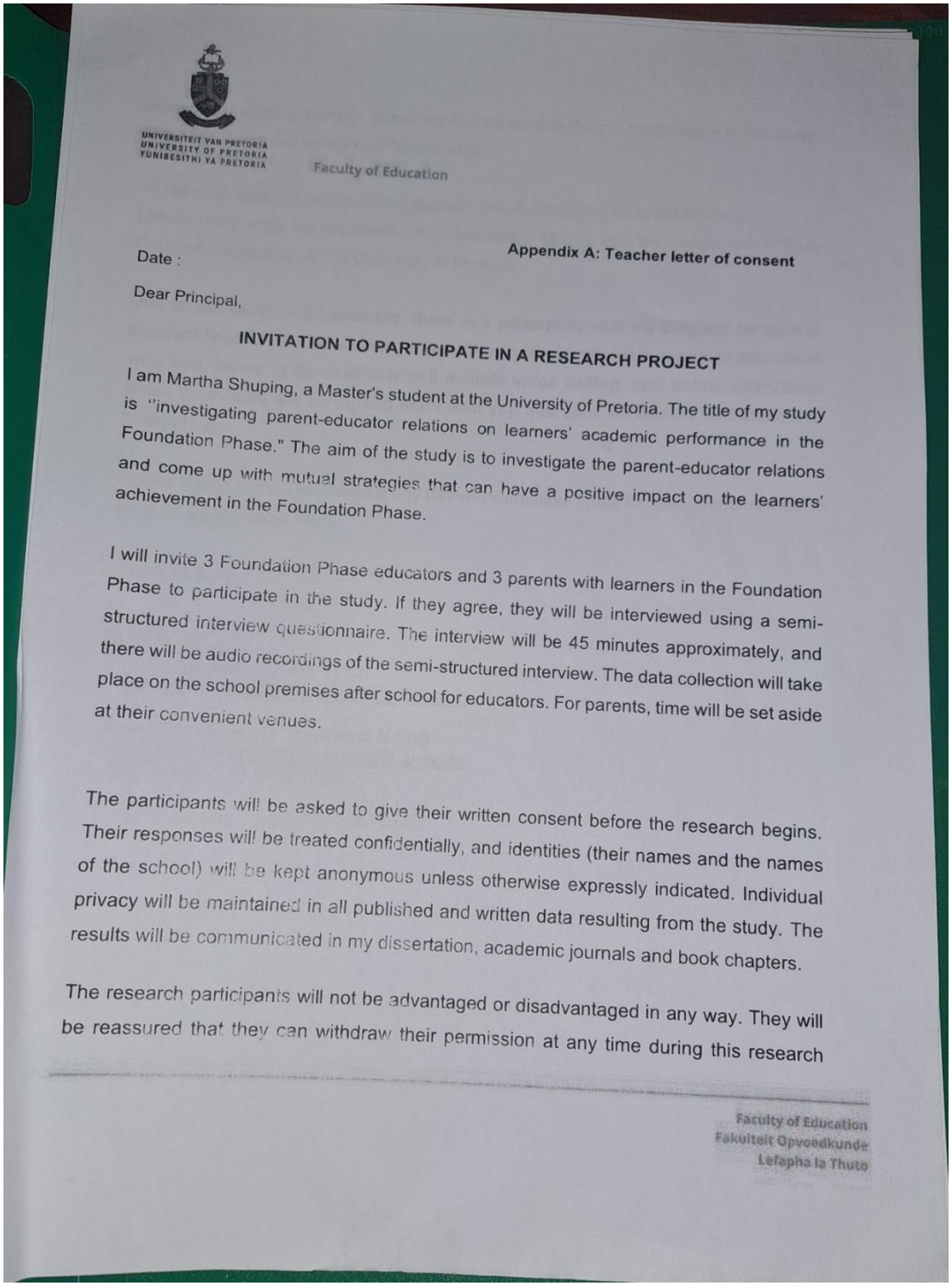
ANNEXURES

ANNEXURE A: Letter Requesting Permission from the Principal



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Date :

Appendix A: Teacher letter of consent

Dear Principal,

INVITATION TO PARTICIPATE IN A RESEARCH PROJECT

I am Martha Shuping, a Master's student at the University of Pretoria. The title of my study is "investigating parent-educator relations on learners' academic performance in the Foundation Phase." The aim of the study is to investigate the parent-educator relations and come up with mutual strategies that can have a positive impact on the learners' achievement in the Foundation Phase.

I will invite 3 Foundation Phase educators and 3 parents with learners in the Foundation Phase to participate in the study. If they agree, they will be interviewed using a semi-structured interview questionnaire. The interview will be 45 minutes approximately, and there will be audio recordings of the semi-structured interview. The data collection will take place on the school premises after school for educators. For parents, time will be set aside at their convenient venues.

The participants will be asked to give their written consent before the research begins. Their responses will be treated confidentially, and identities (their names and the names of the school) will be kept anonymous unless otherwise expressly indicated. Individual privacy will be maintained in all published and written data resulting from the study. The results will be communicated in my dissertation, academic journals and book chapters.

The research participants will not be advantaged or disadvantaged in any way. They will be reassured that they can withdraw their permission at any time during this research

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Lefapha la Thuto

process without any penalty. There are no foreseeable risks to participating in this study. The participants will not be paid for this study.

All research data will be preserved anonymously for reuse by other researchers. I am working under the supervision of Dr Makwalete Malatji, from the Department of Early Childhood Education at the University of Pretoria.

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, there is a probability that we may not be able to conduct face-to-face interviews. I therefore, propose alternate forms of interviews with you. Some of the methods will include video calling, and online interviews; these interviews will be agreed upon with you and your availability and access to technology.

Please let me know if you require any further information. I look forward to your response as soon as it is convenient.

Your Sincerely

M.M. Shuping
Contact number: 072 311 1172
Email address: marthashuping4@gmail.com

Supervisor name : Dr Makwalete Malatji
Email address: makwalete.malatji@up.ac.za
Office contact : 012 420 5524

If you agree kindly sign below consent :

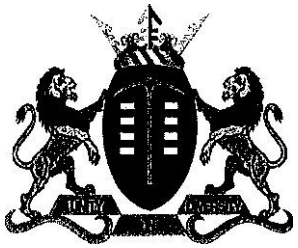
ANNEXURE B: Permission from the Principal

I _____ the school principal hereby give permission to M.M. Shuping to undertake a research project in _____ Primary school.

Signature: _____

Date: _____

ANNEXURE C: Letter of Approval from Gauteng Department of Education



Tec (011) 355 0488

Email: Faith.Tshabalala@gauteng.gov.za

.Website: www.education.gpg.gov.za

Department: Education

REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

814141112

GDE RESEARCH APPROVAL LETTER

Date:	21 October 2022
Validity of Research Approval:	08 February 2023-30 September 2023 20221479
Name of Researcher:	Shuping M
Address of Researcher:	14 Kliprivier Road
	Riversdale
	Mayerton
Telephone Number:	072 311 1172
Email address:	Marthashuping4@gmail.com
Research Topic:	The impact of parent–educator realtions on learners academic performance in the Foundation Phase
Type of qualification	Masters
Number and type of schools:	2 Primary Schools
District/s/HO	Ekurhuleni South

Re: Approval in Respect of Request to Conduct Research

This letter serves to indicate that approval is hereby granted to the above-mentioned researcher to proceed with research in respect of the study indicated above. The onus

rests with the researcher to negotiate appropriate and relevant time schedules with the school/s and/or offices involved to conduct the research. A separate copy of this letter must be presented to both the School (both Prin al and SGB) and the District/Head Office Senior Manager confirming that permission h s ranted for the research to be conducted. al to z.02-z-

The following conditions apply to GDE rch. The re ear her may proceed with the above study subject to the conditions listed below are met. Approval may be withdrawn should any of the conditions listed below be flouted

Office of the Director: Education Research and Knowledge Management
7th Floor, 17 Simmonds Street, Johannesburg, 2001

-rel: (011) 355 0488

Email: Faith.Tshabalala@gauteng.gov.za

Website: www.education.gpg.gov.za

1. The letter would indicate that the said researcher/s has/have been granted permission from the Gauteng Department of Education to conduct the research study.

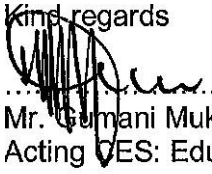
2. The District/Head Office Senior Manager/s must be approached separately, and in writing, for permission to involve District/Head Office Officials in the project.
3. Because of the relaxation of COVID 19 regulations researchers can collect data online, telephonically, physically access schools, or may make arrangements for Zoom with the school Principal. Requests for such arrangements should be submitted to the GDE Education Research and Knowledge Management directorate.
4. The Researchers are advised to wear a mask at all times, Social distance at all times, Provide a vaccination certificate or negative COVID„19 test, not older than 72 hours, and Sanjtise frequently.
5. A copy of this letter must be forwarded to the school principal and the chairperson of the School Governing Body (SGB) that would indicate that the researcher/s has been granted permission from the Gauteng Department of Education to conduct the research study.
6. A letter/document that outlines the purpose of the research and the anticipated outcomes of such research must be made available to the principals, SGBs, and District/Head Office Senior Managers of the schools and districts/offices concerned, respectively.
7. The Researcher will make every effort to obtain the goodwill and cooperation of all the GDE officials, principals, and chairpersons of the SGBs, teachers, and learners involved. Persons who offer their cooperation will not receive additional

remuneration from the Department while those that opt not to participate will not be penalised in any way.

8. Research may only be conducted after school hours so that the normal school program is not interrupted. The Principal (if at a school) and/or Director (if at a district/head office) must be consulted about an appropriate time when the researcher/s may carry out their research at the sites that they manage.
9. Research may only commence from the second week of February and must be concluded before the beginning of the last quarter of the academic year. If incomplete, an amended Research . Approval letter may be requested to conduct research in the following year.
10. Items 6 and 7 will not apply to any research effort being undertaken on behalf of the GDE. Such research will have been commissioned and be paid for by the Gauteng Department of Education.
11. It is the researcher's responsibility to obtain written parental consent of all learners that are expected to participate jn the study.
12. The researcher is responsible for supplying and utilising his/her research resources, such as stationery, photocopies, transport, faxes, and telephones, and should not depend on the goodwill of the Institutions and/or the offices visited for supplying such resources.
13. The names of the GDE officials, schools, principals, parents, teachers, and learners that participate jn the study may not appear in the research report without the written consent of each of these individuals and/or organisations.
14. On completion of the study, the researcher/s must supply the Director: Knowledge Management & Research with one Hard Cover bound and an electronic copy of the research.
15. The researcher may be expected to provide short presentations on the purpose, findings, and recommendations of his/her research to both GDE officials and the schools concerned.
16. Should the researcher have been involved with research at a school and/or a district/head office level, the Director concerned must also be supplied with a summary of the purpose, findings, and recommendations of the research study.

The Gauteng Department of Education wishes you well in this important undertaking and looks forward to examining the findings of your research study.

Kind regards



.....

Mr. Gumani Mukatuni
Acting CES: Education Research and Knowledge Management

DATE: 21/10/2022

ANNEXURE D: Interview Questerview for Participants (Parents)

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Key informant interview guide

Thank you for consenting through means of the consent form to partake in this discussion that aims to identify positive aspects, limitations and possible amendments to the questionnaire that I have created to investigate the impact of parent–educator relations on learners' academic performance in the Foundation Phase.

I would like to assure you that your views are extremely valuable and that your identity will remain anonymous throughout the duration of my study. I am interested in your experience as a Foundation Phase parent and hope that you will help me improve my questionnaire so that I can better understand parents beliefs about parent- educator relationship I within their children's academic in the school from an academic point of view.

I am going to ask you specific questions about your own experience as Foundation Phase parent having relationship with educators and more specifically about your views on the questionnaire, there are no wrong / right answers. These questions are intended to help stimulate conversation between us. I will be recording the session so please speak clearly and remember the recorder will not be able to pick up gestures such as nodding etc.

Interview questions for parents

1. What are your experiences of parental involvement within a school context?
2. In your opinion, what do you think are some aspects that promote parental involvement in school?
3. How do you promote parental involvement as a Foundation Phase parent?
4. What does the educational policy state about parental involvement within a school context?
5. In your own view, what are the benefits of parental involvement in the Foundation Phase?
6. What do you suggest must be done to make parents aware?
7. What challenges do you come across regarding parental involvement?
8. Is there a mutual partnership between parents and educators?
9. In your view, how can the school improve parental involvement?

ANNEXURE E: Interview Questerview for Participants (Educators)

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Key informant interview guide

Thank you for consenting through means of the consent form to partake in this discussion that aims to identify positive aspects, limitations and possible amendments to the questionnaire that I have created to investigate the impact of parent-educator relations on learners' academic performance in the Foundation Phase.

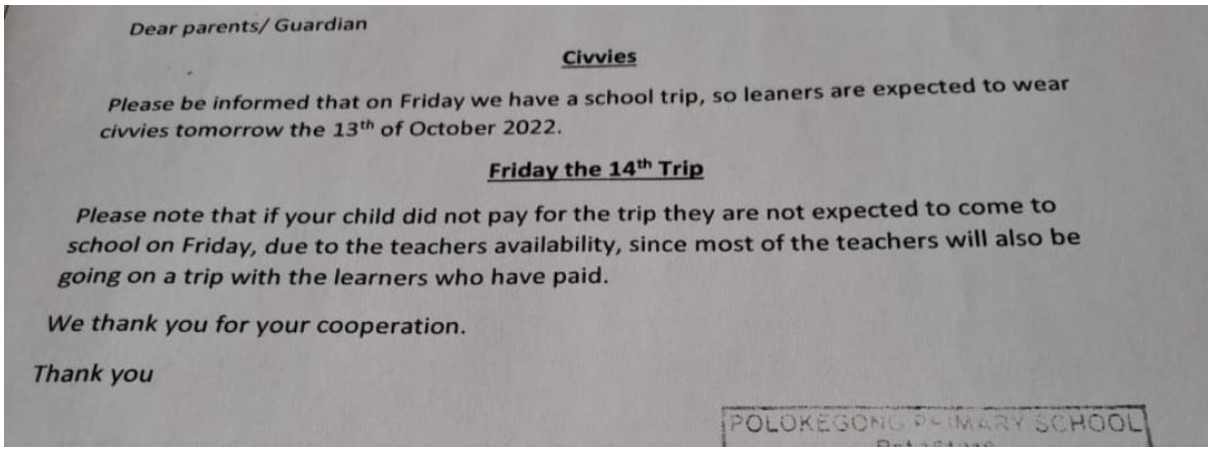
I would like to assure you that your views are extremely valuable and that your identity will remain anonymous throughout the duration of my study. I am interested in your experience as a Foundation Phase educator and hope that you will help me improve my questionnaire so that I can better understand educators beliefs about parental involvement within their children's academic in the school from an academic point of view.

I am going to ask you specific questions about your own experience of teaching Foundation Phase having relationship with parents and more specifically about your views on the questionnaire, there are no wrong / right answers. These questions are intended to help stimulate conversation between us. I will be recording the session so please speak clearly and remember the recorder will not be able to pick up gestures such as nodding ect.

Interview questions for the educators

1. What are your experiences of parental involvement in your school?
2. As a Foundation Phase educator what informs you to promote parental involvement?
3. How do you promote parental involvement as a Foundation Phase educator?
4. What does the educational policy say about parental involvement?
5. In your own view what are the benefits of parental involvement in the Foundation Phase?
6. What challenges do you encounter about parental involvement?
7. What are some of the success you have experienced as a Foundation Phase educator on parental involvement?
8. In your view how can the school enhance parental involvement?

ANNEXURE F: An Example of Documents Supporting Parental Involvement



Dear parents/ Guardian

Civvies

Please be informed that on Friday we have a school trip, so leaners are expected to wear civvies tomorrow the 13th of October 2022.

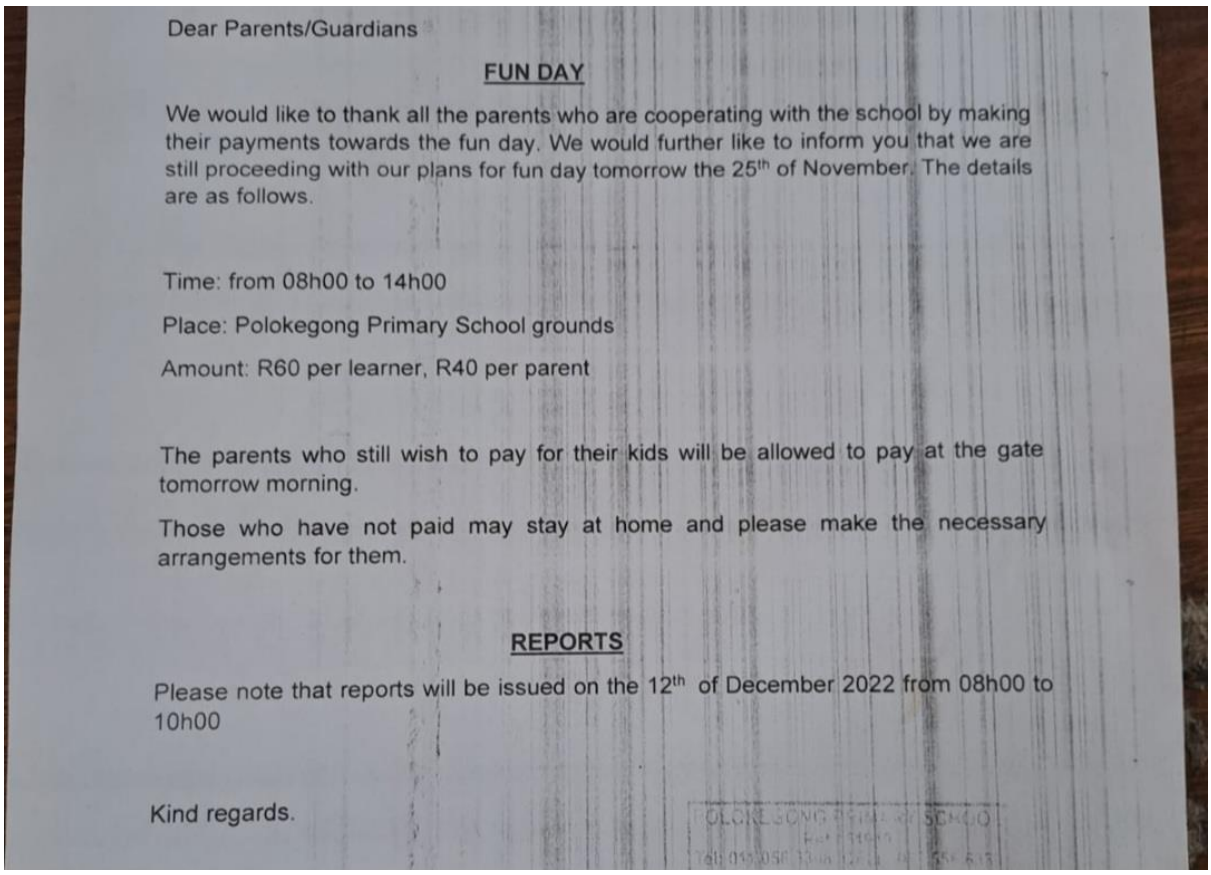
Friday the 14th Trip

Please note that if your child did not pay for the trip they are not expected to come to school on Friday, due to the teachers availability, since most of the teachers will also be going on a trip with the learners who have paid.

We thank you for your cooperation.

Thank you

POLOKEGONG PRIMARY SCHOOL



Dear Parents/Guardians

FUN DAY

We would like to thank all the parents who are cooperating with the school by making their payments towards the fun day. We would further like to inform you that we are still proceeding with our plans for fun day tomorrow the 25th of November. The details are as follows.

Time: from 08h00 to 14h00

Place: Polokegong Primary School grounds

Amount: R60 per learner, R40 per parent

The parents who still wish to pay for their kids will be allowed to pay at the gate tomorrow morning.

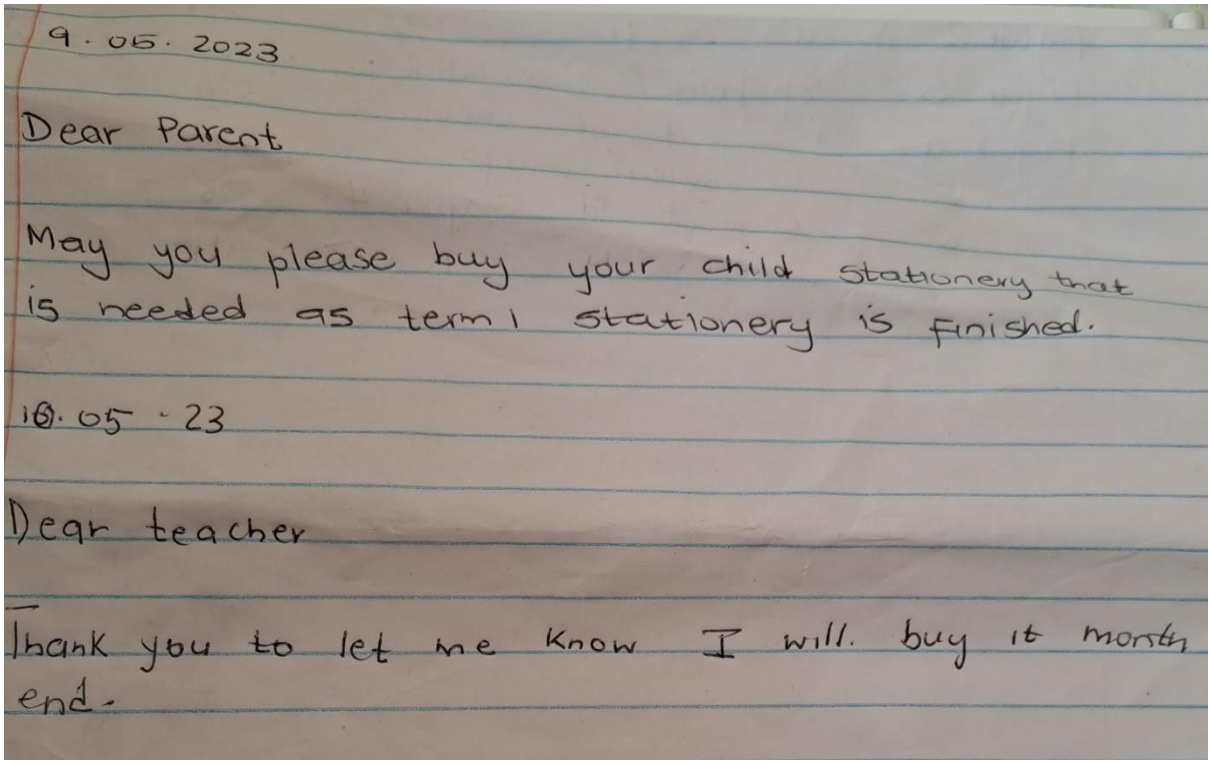
Those who have not paid may stay at home and please make the necessary arrangements for them.

REPORTS

Please note that reports will be issued on the 12th of December 2022 from 08h00 to 10h00

Kind regards.

Letters above are proof that the school sends letters to parents


9.05.2023

Dear Parent

May you please buy your child stationery that is needed as term 1 stationery is finished.

10.05.23

Dear teacher

Thank you to let me know I will buy it month end.

The document above seemed to prove that the A3 communication book between educators and parents was active.

Letters above proof that the school send letters to parents

ANNEXURE G: Turnitin Report

Document Viewer

Turnitin Originality Report

Processed on: 02-Apr-2024 10:49 SAST

ID: 2337728462

Word Count: 50165

Submitted: 2

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Mbuisa, Mahlatini. "Assisting principals to perform their instructional leadership task more effectively : a case study of Gauteng township schools", 2023

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Dekeza-Tsomo, Ntombikazi Gloria. "Factors contributing to the dropout rate of learners at selected high schools in Kings William's Town", 'Thamar University - Faculty of Arts', 2012

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Marais, Hester Petronella. "Parental involvement in the education of children with autism spectrum disorder : a phenomenogical study", 2020

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"Lived experience of teachers educating young learners with foetal alcohol spectrum disorder", 'University of Pretoria - Department of Philosophy', 2021