AN INVESTIGATIVE STUDY OF PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT IN THE GOVERNANCE OF PUBLIC AND PRIVATE SCHOOLS IN THE MATATIELE DISTRICT OF THE EASTERN CAPE PROVINCE OF SOUTH AFRICA

By

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ABSTRACT

This is a comparative study of parental involvement in the governance of public and private schools in the Matatiele District of the Eastern Cape Province of South Africa. Parental involvement can range from occasional attendance of the school functions to partnership through parent teacher organizations and parent management bodies. Education is a national enterprise that requires the co-operation and participation of all the role players who are parents, community, teachers, learners and the Department of Education. The problem to be investigated in this study is: Why is it that parental involvement is more positive in the governance of private schools than that of public schools? Two schools were selected for the study and the researcher administered questionnaires personally by hand and conducted face to face interviews to collect the primary data. The responses of the administered questionnaire were tabulated and recorded in table form so as to give an accurate interpretation of what was revealed in the data. Patterns in the data were considered in order to provide an accurate interpretation of the information. The findings were divided into two, that is: findings from the public school and those from private schools. From the public school it was found that: parents are not involved in the governance of the school; the school does not involve parents on financial matters; parents do not attend meetings when invited; they do not know their roles and responsibilities, for example, according to the South African Schools Act (SASA), parents must be actively involved in the governance of the school in their community and that there is an element of ignorance and negligence on the part of parents towards their children's education. From the private schools it was found that: parents are more involved in the governance of the school; they attend and participate actively in school meetings; the school involves parents in financial matters and as such the financial support from the parents is very good; parents are much involved in the monitoring of the progress of their learner's

education and are passionate about the school and seem to own the policies and the governance of the whole school system.

The conclusion drawn from the study is that private schools allow for parental involvement in the governance of their schools whereas in public schools parental involvement is low.

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DEDICATION

This work is dedicated to my loving wife Mrs. Lungelwa Slulu Mnukwa and to my miracle children Toneka and Njingalwazi Mnukwa for bearing with me during the long hours of study which deprived them of my attention.

DECLARATION

I, Zolile Maxwell Mnukwa, sincerely declare that this dissertation on "AN INVESTIGATIVE STUDY OF PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT IN THE GOVERNANCE OF PUBLIC AND PRIVATE SCHOOLS IN THE MATATIELE DISTRICT OF THE EASTERN CAPE PROVINCE OF SOUTH AFRICA" is my own work, supervised by the supervisor whose name appears on the title page. All the relevant sources used have been quoted, acknowledged or listed in the bibliography. This dissertation has not been previously submitted for a degree at another university.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

1.1. INTRODUCTION

The proposed study was a comparative study of parental involvement in the governance of public and private schools in the Matatiele District of the Eastern Cape Province. Parental involvement implies mutual co-operation, sharing and supporting the school. Researchers and educators have long agreed that when parents get involved in the education of their children, the children work harder and achieve more at school (Van der Westhuizen, 2003; Boaduo, Milondzo & Adjei, 2009). Epstein (1995) suggests that there are six traditional types of parental involvement in schools, namely, parenting, communicating, volunteering, learning at home, decision making and collaborating with the community. Each type of involvement is valuable and has an impact on learners, teachers and the parents themselves. In the South African situation, parental involvement in the governance of private school is positive while that of public schools is positive as revealed in the literature consulted (Boaduo et all 2009; Bush et al 2001; Bush et al 2003)

The aim of the study was to provide insight into the following: To identify the roles that parents can play in the governance of both public and private schools

and the effects these roles can have on the governance of both public and private schools.

1.2. BACKGROUND TO THE STUDY

This chapter provides the background, statement of the problem, main and subsidiary research questions, objectives, rationale for the study, significance, delimitation and limitations and definitions of major terms used in the context of the report. The focus area of the study is in the Matatiele District in the Eastern Cape Province. Matatiele District has primary, junior secondary and senior secondary schools. The study will be conducted in one public school, namely school A and one private school and school B. Parental involvement can range from occasional attendance at school functions to partnership through parent-teacher organizations and parent-management bodies. Van der Westhuizen (2003) states that education is a national enterprise that requires the co-operation and collaboration of all the role-players who are parents, teachers, learners and the Department of Education: (DoE)

The literature reviewed indicates that most parents are concerned with the education of their children and want to help them succeed at school (Van der Westhuizen, 2003). All teachers and school administrators express interest in the increased parental involvement in schools (Boaduo, Milondzo & Adjei, 2009).

Despite their common interest in helping their children to succeed however, teachers and school administrators on the one hand and parents on the other, may not communicate well with each other, in part because of past fears and frustrations experienced by both stakeholders. Good parent and school partnership programmes work to overcome these challenges so that all parents can be involved successfully in their children's education across the grades. In effect, planned partnership programmes are needed to ensure active and equal participation by the school and parents (Van der Westhuizen, 2003).

Bauch (1994) states that parents volunteerism is vital to school fundraising and other school related projects. Further confirmation is that academic achievement is directly proportional to parent involvement (Boaduo, Milondzo & Adjei, 2009). For instance, Puebelo Pintando Community School in Cuba reflects this idea. Realistically, education is a national enterprise that requires the cooperation and collaboration of all stakeholders – parents, teachers, learners, school administrators and the DoE.

The Education System is inevitably linked to parents and communities. Boaduo, Milondzo and Adjei's (2009) study in Botswana revealed that parents value education for themselves and for the future of their children. It is therefore important that parents should be involved and regularly kept informed of their children's performance. Parents should be orientated about the roles that they

are expected to play and the need to understand what the school is trying to do and to support the goals set by the schools. This idea is support by Van der Westhuizen (2003) who contends that any education system which succeeds in the achievement of set aims and objectives generally has strong parental involvement.

Flora, Spears and Swanson (1992) suggest that teachers should realize the importance of parental involvement in the provision of education both in public and private schools. They further indicate that such support has a profound influence on the culture of teaching and learning. Parental involvement has a positive significant effect on the behaviour and the quality of learner performance in the end of year examinations result (Boaduo, Milondzo & Adjei, 2009).

1.3. STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

The problem investigated in this study was: "comparison of parental involvement in the governance of private and public schools." This problem revolves around positive parental involvement in the governance of private schools as compared to public schools. In South Africa, like other southern African countries learners go to school without parent follow-up to find out how their children are doing, especially in public schools (Boaduo, Milondzo & Adjei, 2009). On the other

hand, parents are very active in the governance of the private schools that their children attend (Fullan, 2001).

From my personal observation as a practising teacher for over seventeen years in public schools, lack of support and encouragement from home is anathema to the progressive performance and development of both teachers and learners. Further observation reveals that in public schools, when school management teams call for meetings where parents are invited, few parents show up while in private schools parents show up in numbers. Parents are reluctant to visit schools to fetch their children's progress reports and to familiarize themselves with the teaching staff.

1.4. MAIN RESEARCH QUESTION

The study sought to find answers to the main research question: Comparison of parental involvement in the governance of private and public schools."

1.4.1. SUBSIDIARY RESEARCH QUESTIONS

The following subsidiary questions were considered in an attempt to find answer to the main research question:

- Do parents get more involved in the governance of private schools than in public schools in the Matatiele District?

- What is the extent of their involvement?

- What specific roles do they play?

- What effects have the roles they play had on the governance of both schools?

- How can a parental partnership be encouraged and improved in public schools?

1.5. AIMS

This comparative study are attempted to provide insight into the following major aims:

- To identify the roles parents can play in the governance of both private and public schools.

- To identify the effects these roles can have on the governance of both private and public schools.

1.5.1. OBJECTIVES

The study had the following subsidiary objectives.

- To briefly outline the extent and trends of involvement of parents in the governance of private and public schools.

- To use the findings to make recommendations to show how parental involvement in the governance of private schools can positively enhance their involvement in public schools.

1.6. RATIONALE FOR THE STUDY

The researcher developed an interest in this study because of the numerous complaints and worries by school principals and teachers concerning the lack of parental involvement in the governance of public schools compared to private schools. It, therefore, becomes relevant and necessary that this study is undertaken to identify major factors that hinder positive parental involvement in the governance of public schools compared to that of private schools.

1.7. SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

After the successful completion and the report have been compiled, the major findings and recommendations can be combined and a proposition made to the Department of Education in the Matatiele District to take note and share the experiences that the report has unveiled. As a professional it is therefore important that parents should be involved and regularly kept informed of their

children's performance. Parents should be orientated about the roles that they are expected to play and the need to understand what the school is trying to do and to support the goals set by the schools. This could help to provide motivational strategies to entice parents to get involved in the running of public schools in their communities. Furthermore, school managers could learn from the findings and recommendations and adjust their management styles to improve parental involvement in school governance of public schools to improve the education of their children.

1.8. DELIMITATIONS

1.8.1. GEOGRAPHICAL DELIMITATION OF THE STUDY

The study location is Matatiele District and the specific schools chosen for the study were given pseudonyms A (private) and B (public). Parents and teachers in the two schools were used for a administration of questionnaire. Five parents and two teachers from each of the school will be randomly sampled for questionnaire administration and interviews so as to collect the relevant primary data for the study.

1.8.2. THE SAMPLE GROUP DELIMITATION

Two schools were selected for this investigation. Two target population groups were envisaged for the investigation namely, parents and teachers (Smit, 1995:

15-16). The questionnaires and interviews were administered to them for the collection of the primary data as well as to eight of the top officials, namely the two principals and their deputies, chair persons of the school governing bodies of the two schools and two teachers from each school.

1.8.3. RESEARCH CONTENT DELIMITATION

This was an investigative study and concentrate specifically on the two selected schools, one public and the other private. Schools need reform and innovation to be able to address and resolve the lack of parental involvement on the governance of schools.

1.8.4. LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

The major limitations that can negatively impact on the study were the following. First the researcher is a full time employee of the Department of Education of the Eastern Cape Province and as such does not have sufficient time to conduct the study. However, leave days will be sought to administer questionnaires, conduct interviews and gather the required primary data for the study. Furthermore, school holidays were an added advantage to enable the researcher to attend to contact sections and compile the research report. However, the researcher is of the view that the findings can be generalized since the sampling method used to select the population is random and every member of the teaching staff has an equal chance of being selected. The third issue was

finance. Even though Walter Sisulu University provides some financial assistance for postgraduate studies, the amount is not enough for researchers to take larger samples of respondents for the administration of the questionnaire and interview; and it is difficult to access and claim finance. In the light of this problem, the researcher will make use of family transport in order to cut cost so as to complete the study.

1.9. DEFINITION OF TERMS

The definition of the terms provided below will be contextually applied in the compilation of the study report and mean as indicated:

- **Parent:** Any father or mother or legal guardian responsible for a child who has registered at the school e.g. paying school fees, buying uniform etc. (Joubert & Prinsloo 2001, p.43).

- **Parental Involvement**: It is the participation of the parents in ensuring quality education for their children. (Lemmer and Van Wyk, 2004).

- **Governance**: Involvement of parents in the administration, organization and management of schools. South African Schools Act 1996 (SASA, 1996 No. 84).

1.10. CONCLUSION

This part of the study identified the research topic, briefly provided an introduction stated the research problem, main research question and subsidiary questions. Objectives have been stated including the rationale for the study, significance of the study provided including the delimitation and limitations. Terms that would be contextually significant have been provided in the list under the definition of terms.

1.11. OUTLINE OF CHAPTERS

This chapter has provided the background, statement of the problem, main and subsidiary research questions, objectives, rational for the study, significance, delimitation and limitations and definitions of major terms used in the context of the report with a short conclusion. Chapter two provides a detailed literature review about the topic for the study. This is done to enable the researcher to identify any major gap lapse which this study will carefully survey and fill at the end of the study. Literature related to the study, which is relevant and applicable, has been consulted and the information obtained has been summarized to situate the study in its practical perspective. This has been done to show the significance of the study and how similar studies have touched partially on the research topic but left gaps that require new studies to be conducted. In chapter three provides a detailed research methodology and

design. These have been discussed to show their relevance and application to the study. The most relevant of these methodologies has been identified and chosen for this study. Chapter four has treated and analysed all the collected data into manageable sizes. This has been done to make relevant the information obtained from literature sources as well as primary sources for integration into a coherent structure. In chapter five the analyzed data has been discussed leading to the summary of findings upon which recommendations have been made and finally a conclusion drawn about the study as a whole.

1.12. ABBREVIATIONS USED IN THE REPORT

DoE = Department of Education

SASA = South African Schools Act

SGB = School Governing Body

SMT = School Management Team

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1. INTRODUCTION

The chapter has reviewed available research literature conducted by researchers related to this study to situate the research problem in its context and identify the gap lapse, which this study should fill.

2.2. COMMENTARY ON THE REVIEWED LITERATURE

Formal schooling was introduced into South Africa by the colonialists. Two groups of schools emerged. These were public and private schools. Parents generally regarded schools as an exceptional environment for teachers, school administrators and learners (Boaduo, Milondzo & Adjei, 2009). To a large extent, parents and communities where schools were built, regarded themselves as outside of the governance of schools (Fullan, 2001). Teachers too did not see parents as instruments which could be used to advance their activities as revealed by Fullan (2001: 250): "…Traditionally, schools have tended to keep parents out, using the argument that a professional skill such as teaching must be carried out without interference. Today, this attitude is changing and schools are trying to encourage parents to take a greater interest in the governance of schools."

2.2.1. VIEWS OF PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT IN SCHOOL GOVERNANCE

Van der Westhuizen (2003) is of the view that it is important that parents should be kept informed of their children's education and that parents need to understand what the school is trying to achieve and to support them to achieve these goals. This is supported by Deventer and Kruger (2003) who are of the view that parental involvement serves important aspects of education which need to be embarked upon regularly and that principals and educators should see to its effective implementation. The unique circumstances of each school may determine how parental involvement should be planned and managed. Van der Westhuizen (2008) concludes that parental involvement in the education of their children provides effective and efficient control of learners' activities and behaviour in and out of the school.

Modern technological and scientific advancement have been relentlessly agitating for accountability and performance from public institutions by interested parties, such as parents. In the National Education Systems throughout the world especially in the USA and Great Britain, this agitation is highly visible and as such, parental involvement in the governance of schools has been advocated.

The question of parental involvement in the governance of schools has been the subject of many books as well as research studies (Anderson, 1990; Fullan, 2001; Henry, 1996). However, specific studies of this nature concentrating solely

on selected private and public schools have been very few (Boaduo, Milondzo & Adjei, 2009). Review of some of the literature consulted revealed a mass of contradiction, confusion and even hopelessness in understanding, let alone, coping with the relationship between parents and schools. One source concurred that: "The closer the parent is to the education of the child, the greater the impact on the child's development and educational achievement" (Fullan, 2001: 198).

2.2.2. THE NEED FOR SCHOOL GOVERNING BODIES

Taylor (2004) suggests that the introduction of school governing bodies has been envisaged as part of democratic transformation to involve parents in the governance of schools (Bush and Gamage, 2001; Bush and Heystek, 2003). This is highly desirable because in our post-modern society; we can no longer get every work in the school system effectively and efficiently done by teachers, learners and the school administrators alone (Boaduo, Milondzo & Adjei, 2009). Furthermore, school governance has become very complex for any one particular group to successfully do it alone. Fullan (2001: 198) further writes that "…The closer the parent is to the education of the child, the greater the impact on child development and educational achievement. It has, therefore, become necessary to move towards a new paradigm in the governance – administration, organization and management – of both private and public schools. Boaduo, Milondzo and Adjei (2009: 97) are of the view that "…Parents on one hand and

the teachers, learners and school administrators on the other hand, should move closely towards each other to be able to address and resolve concurrent pertinent educational problems mutually." Other researchers like Anderson (1990), and Henry (1996) support the suggestion by Boaduo, Milondzo and Adjei (2009).

Some of the literature sources advised that the decision about the precise nature of parental involvement in the governance of schools must take into account cultural, ethnic and class differences as well as variations related to the age and gender of learners (Fullan, 2001). Furthermore, Shaeffer (1994) is of the view that in determining what conditions parental involvement in the governance of schools are beneficial; we have to understand the different forms of parental participation and their consequences for the school, the learners and other personnel in the whole school system. The reason provided by Shaeffer and others is that certain forms of involvement produce positive results while others may be wasteful or completely counter-productive (Anderson, 1990; Shaeffer, 1994).

2.2.3. PARENTAL-SCHOOL COLLABORATION

Henry (1996: 132) studied parent-school collaboration in a poor neighbourhood in the USA and concluded that: "Educators have to go out into their communities with empathy and interact meaningfully with their constituents."

Henry's conclusion will definitely involve shifts in power and influence, but it is what new power arrangements can accomplish that really matter to the parents-school administrator relationship so as to be able to govern schools amicably. Others are sceptical about this new power game advocated by Henry and indicate that: "To seek power is to raise and begin to answer the question: To seek power to change what? Changing the forces of powering no way guarantee that everything will change" (Fullan, 2001: 53).

One of the major revelations from the reviewed literature was that teachers can facilitate and encourage parental collaboration. Teachers can facilitate and encourage parental collaboration through some simple practices all well known but not implemented consistently in many schools. Most parents are conscious that much more could be done by them to help their children to learn in the classroom and in the home as well.

For consistency and preciseness about the role of parental involvement in schools, Fullan (2001: 152) undertook a study of school effectiveness and discovered that parental involvement practices represented one of the twelve key factors differentiating effective from less effective schools and wrote: "My findings show parental involvement in the life of the school to be a positive influence upon learners' progress and development. This included help in the

classroom and on educational visits and attendance at meetings to discuss learners' progress....Parents' involvement in learners' educational development within the home was also clearly beneficial. Parents who read to their children, heard them read and provide them with access to books at home had a positive effect upon their children's learning."

Bryk et al (1998: 127-128) reported that those schools that were more successful were committed to developing "the engagement of parents and community resources."

2.2.4. RESEARCHER'S COMMENTARY ABOUT CONSULTED LITERATURE

The researcher is of the view that, it is not a matter of seeking power to change tradition, but to seek power for input from stakeholders to be able to make the change meaningful, empowering and contributing towards good governance of the schools in communities where all the stakeholders will feel that they are included in the whole system of schooling and not just the business of school teachers, learners and school administrators.

To the question of "What will it take to mobilise more people and resources in the provision of quality services in the education of all learners?" Several literature sources were reviewed and the revelation was that teachers and school administrators cannot do it alone (Bryk, Sebring, Kerbow, Rollow & Easton, 1998; Coleman, 1965; Henry, 1996; Rosenholtz, 1989; Steinberg, 1996).

According to these studies the expertise and specific experiences of parents and other community members are crucial and are largely untapped resources, they have assets and expertise that are essential to the partnership. These studies further emphasise that parents have knowledge of their children that is not available to anyone else. Such knowledge would be of immense help to the teachers. Further to this, parents have a vested and committed interest in their children's success. They also have valuable knowledge and skills to contribute that usually spring from their own interests, hobbies and occupations and standing in the community including their professions (Boaduo & Babitseng, 2007).

The study by Coleman (1965: 11) was very clear about the benefits and the necessity of parental engagement. Based on his interviews and surveys of parent members, learners and teachers collaboration, Coleman argues that: "Learners commitment to schooling (or engagement in learning) is primarily shaped by parents through the curriculum at the home and parents' involvement is an unalterable variable which can be influenced by the school and teacher practices."

Coleman (1965: 14) strongly believed that "…the power of three, namely, parent, learner and the teacher" is crucial because when the development of learner responsibility occurs; it is a function of the attitudes and practices of all

the triad members. This idea is unflinchingly supported by Fullan (2001: 200) who listed the vital elements of the triad as follows: "For teachers, beliefs about parental involvement, learner capabilities and the importance of deliberate teaching of responsibility in the classroom is crucial. For learners, communication with parents about school, confidence in the ability to do the work, valuing school for its importance to the future collaboration with teachers is significant. For parents, valuing school as an invitational teacher attitude and communication with learners about the school cannot be overemphasised."

The conclusion by Coleman (1965) was that student commitment can be sustained and strengthened by collaborative teacher attitudes expressed in and through their practices and for that reason, strong connections with the home are essential to the success of the task.

According to Boaduo, Milondzo and Adjei (2009) without parental support, it becomes difficult for teachers to effectively discipline children. All these key elements are important for any school to perform well academically.

2.3 CONCLUSION

The literature reviewed has clearly indicated the need for parental involvement in the governance of both private and public schools. Many researchers and authors

have indicated this necessity and for this reason this study can make a contribution by delving into how parental involvement in the governance of private and public schools can contribute towards a positive work environment for teachers, learners and other stakeholders in the governance of schools, especially in the Matatiele District in the Eastern Cape Province of South Africa.

CHAPTER 3

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY AND DESIGN

3.1. INTRODUCTION

In this chapter a brief discussion Carr's (1990) argument and others about methodological choice and design have been provided in order to conceptualise, clarify and justify the research methodology used for this study.

It was identified that social science inquiry takes a less empirical view of researching society than the traditional positivistic scientific approach (Cohen & Manion, 1989; Boaduo, 1988; Smit, 1995). The reason is that social science research claims that society and life cannot be replicated in the laboratory. Cohen and Manion (1989) support this position by stating that: "…one comes to know social reality through prolonged and intimate participation in it rather than adhering to scientific protocols." The emphasis here was on participation, and the questions are:

• Who participates in this process?

• How should they participate?

• Why should they participate?

• When should this participation take place?

• Where should the participation emanate?

The participants were the teachers and parents of the selected schools providing the required information needed for the study. The enumerated participants were not be used as pressure a group to bring about the desired changes. Rather they were required to give input, provide suggestions and participate in the development of functional, practical curricula for use in the secondary education system. Where some of the participants have the necessary professional capacity and expertise, they were required to help in the implementation of the recommendations that emanated from the study. The how, the why, the when and the where were elaborated.

Scientific approach applied in social science research must be done with in-depth management of data. Carr (1990) takes this point further by claiming that social science inquiry fulfils the basic requirements of science in the following ways:

3.1.1 It confronts the social world being studied directly: In this study, it is the involvement of parents in the governance of schools that has to be confronted to indicate the need for change and total transformation to meet the challenges of the modern and advanced technological world in terms of school governance. However, this does not mean that traditional knowledge that has much to offer the modern technological world, should be ignored when dealing with problems of this nature.

3.1.2 It establishes relations between categories of data: In this study, it has been indicated that casual observation reveals the gap between parents and school governance which makes it impossible to fulfil the aspirations of learners. Data collected to enhance the project inquiry will clarify the situation vividly. Also listening to people, developing questionnaires and structured interviews heightens the participatory scenario.

3.1.3 Propositions are formulated around the relations in the study and investigated further through the use of the selected instruments: In this study, the major concern is the relationship between parents and school governance. In other words, the relevance of their contribution is required to improve school governance. Views from both parents and school administrators will be sought in the course of the study through questionnaires and interviews to augment the argument.

3.1.4 These propositions are then organized into analytical schemes: in this study, the major propositions are collaborative participation and direct involvement of parents in the governance of schools.

3.1.5 Finally, the testing of questionnaires and interviewers discussion take place through the examination of the problem under study: In this study, the participants have already observed and identified the proposed

problem for the study. Therefore, the participants will engage in suggesting, identifying and devising appropriate involvement strategies to make parental involvement in school governance a reality that must be continuously revived.

This study was therefore, guided by the above approach as well as others that are examined below.

3.2. RESEARCH APPROACH

Lewin (1986: 34 & 46) has observed that "… research that produces nothing but books will not suffice" in the new millennium. To this, one may add the suggestion of McNiff, Lomax and Whitehead (1996) that "…research, must of itself be educational. It must help practitioners to try to make sense of their normal everyday practice." Carr and Kemmis (in Walker 1990: 158) provide criteria for a methodology that seeks to be at the cutting edge. They argue that all educational science and consequently contemporary educational research must attain these requirements in order that it can be regarded as adequate and coherent. These requirements are:

• An acceptance of both qualitative and quantitative methods of interpretation by practitioners and participants;

• The ability to differentiate between ideas and interpretations that are distorted by ideology from those that are not.

Mouton (1996) believes that methodological paradigms – for instance qualitative, quantitative and participatory action – are not merely collections of research methods and techniques. Rather, methodological paradigms include assumptions and values regarding their use under specific circumstances. At this level, one encounters both the actual methods and techniques and the underlying philosophy regarding their use. The philosophy would include a theory of when and why to apply, for example, qualitative rather than a quantitative method and an awareness of the limitations of various methods (see figure 1 below).

Mouton (1996: 38-39) further discusses and emphasizes that "…research methods and techniques are task specific and the task is defined by the research goal, that different studies use different methods and techniques because they have different objectives; that the technique and method must be appropriate for the task at hand; and that the technique and method should apply to data collection and data analysis techniques, to sampling and to questionnaire design."

The above observations imply that the use of methods and techniques in a study would depend on the nature of the study. For example, this study is essentially going to use a qualitative approach but this does not necessarily follow that quantitative approach would be ignored if it is appropriate to use to process,

analyse and interpret the collected data from the questionnaire and other sources.

Epistemological assumptions   **Ontological assumptions**

Methodological
Paradigm

    Qualitative   **Quantitative**   **Participative**

Research Methods   **Sampling**   **Data Collection**   **Data analysis & interpretation**

Research techniques   **Research goal**
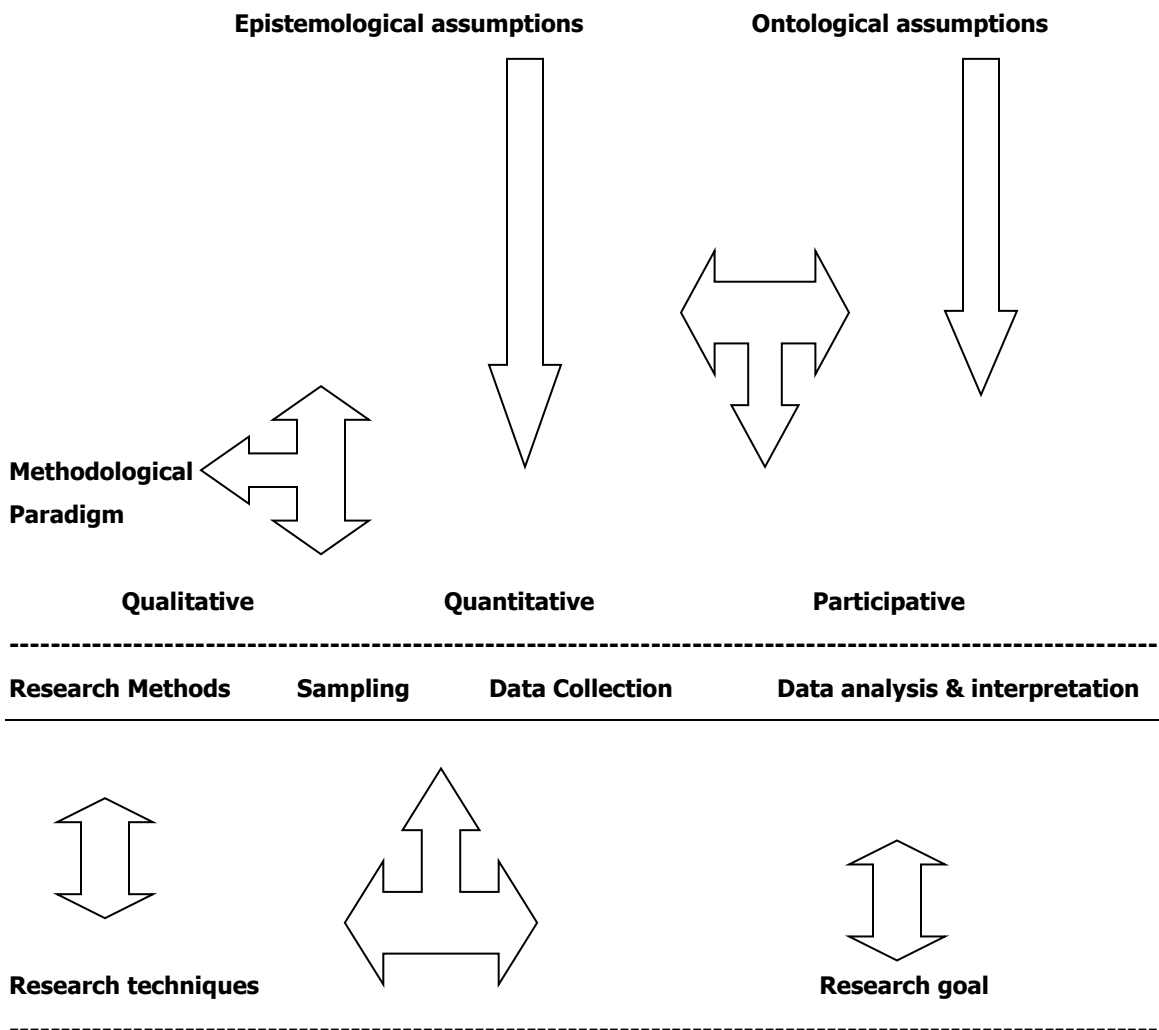
Figure 1: Levels in the Methodological Dimension

Source: Mouton, 1996: 39 with modifications by the researcher

Participatory action research is also regarded as appropriate for this study, including the two main approaches to qualitative data analysis proposed by Bryman and Burgess (1994: 3), which are the discussion of the main general framework and the provision of the main emphasis of the data. The comments by Carr, Kemmis and Mouton are paramount in selecting participatory action research as one of the research methods to use to study a field situation, like this study, in order to improve practice of education.

3.3. CONTEXT

The need to take account of context is a recurrent theme in qualitative analysis. Contexts are important as a means of situating an action, and of grasping its wider social, political, economic and historical import. This can require detailed descriptions of the social setting within which action occurs; the relevant social contexts are parents and teachers. The time frame within which an action takes place, the spatial context and the network of social relationships are requirements in this comparative study (Dey, 1993).

Qualitative analysis aims at the description of the world as it is perceived by different observers and or participants. The analysis is usually concerned with how actors define situations and explain the motives that govern their actions. It must be ensured that this relates to the intentions of the actors involved – in this

study, the Government of South Africa and the general public (Dey, 1993; Stake, 1994; Caspecken, 1996).

Qualitative research often seeks to illuminate the ways individuals interact to sustain or change social situations, as this study has as one of its aims. Qualitative data, therefore, is description of social relationships and interchanges, which unfold in the succession of action and events in which the actors are engaged. This is the need for participation in the process (Dey, 1993).

Contextually, data collection can itself be conceived as an interactive process through which the researcher struggles to elicit a meaningful interpretation of social action. Analysis follows data collection. The result of analysis depends on, and is modified by, the collection and the investigation of further data. In this respect, the researcher becomes a participant in his own research project. His own interpretation and action become a legitimate object of subsequent analysis. Information on the researcher's own behaviour and thinking in the form of field notes, memos or a diary, is a vital source of data for the analysis.

The process, therefore, shifts from context and intention to action and consequences; hence the additional choice of participatory and participatory action research apart from qualitative and quantitative making the methodological paradigm a triangulation (Sayer 1992).

3.4. THE PARTICIPATORY PERSPECTIVE

Participatory research, as this study purports to do, support and contributes to the effort of individuals, groups and movements which challenge social inequality and work to eliminate exploitation (Participatory Research, 1982). It strives to play a liberating role in the learning process by promoting the development of a critical understanding of social problems, their structural causes and possibilities for overcoming them. It calls for democratic interaction between the researchers and those among whom the research is conducted. This democratic interaction depends upon the political participation of those involved in conducting research on the causes of their exploitation with the objective of overcoming it. In this study parents have been idling about involvement in the governance of schools in their communities. Participatory research is composed of three inter-related processes (Participatory Research 1982: 2). These are:

• Collective investigation of problems and issues with the active participation of the constituency in the entire process.

• Collective analysis, in which the constituency develops a better understanding not only of the problems at hand but also of the underlying structural causes[socio-economic, political, cultural, historical] of the problems.

• Collective action by the constituency aimed at long-term as well as short-term solution of these problems.

The three processes cannot be separated. Their integration gives participatory research its fundamental strength and power. Processes most closely related to investigation, analysis or action can be identified separately in any participatory research study or activity, but each process incorporates aspects of the others. Above all, participatory research is a learning process for those involved. The process begins with people's concrete experience and situation and moves to include both theoretical analysis and action aimed at change. Critical evaluation of the success or failure of action also deepens an awareness of the concrete reality that people face. Participatory research is an educational approach to social change (Participatory Research, 1982). Participatory research is not a recipe for social change. It is a democratic approach to investigation and learning to be taken by individuals, groups and movements as a tool aimed at social change. According to Boaduo (2010) the following questions need to be answered in this study perspective.

WHO ARE THE PARTICIPANTS?

As indicated above, the participants include parents and teachers. They are required to provide input into the study so that the outcome becomes the collective responsibility of all the stakeholders, and as a result recommendations are accepted and considered for implementation. Their participation in this study

is crucial because the problem being investigated affects all of them and as such their concerns will need to be expressed. The collective efforts by the participants will contribute significantly in the governance of public and private schools in communities.

WHY SHOULD THEY PARTICIPATE?

In a metaphor "nobody takes in medicine on behalf of a sick person". In other words, it is the sick person who needs the medicine to get better. In this investigative study, it is the people who need solutions to their problems and therefore it should be their collective responsibility to find solutions. By participating, they will provide input and share the derived benefits from the contributions that they make.

HOW WOULD THEY PARTICIPATE?

There are various ways people can collectively participate in the study. These include answering questionnaires and taking part in scheduled interviews.

WHO HAS TO LEARN WHAT?

Right from the start, all the participants will collectively learn from the various means through which data will be collected. The learning will be the practical involvement of all the participants and whatever is discovered through this

process will be a collaborative expression of interest and solutions to the problem being investigated.

WHAT HAS TO BE LEARNT?

Participants will first learn how to identify problems that confront them, how to investigate the causes of the problems and how to identify possible solutions to the problems identified. Since the learning will be practical, participative and a learning experience, the participants will be empowered educationally.

WHY SHOULD THEY LEARN WHAT THEY HAVE TO LEARN?

The need to learn, as a member of society, is obvious. The participants need to find and work out solutions to their own problems. An outsider who does not reside in the community and does not share the needs and aspirations of the people cannot provide solutions to the problems of the people. It is only the people who know their problems, who can determine the causes and find solutions to them. There is therefore a need for the participants to learn what they have to learn to be able to find solutions to their problems.

HOW WOULD THEY PARTICIPATE IN THE LEARNING PROCESS?

The participants will be fully orientated, engaged and will be required to make specific inputs of the identified problem. For example, some of the participants

will devise possible questions for inclusion in the questionnaire. Through this process the participants will learn through participation.

3.5. CHARACTERISTICS AND STRENGTHS OF PARTICIPATORY ACTION RESEARCH AND ITS RELEVANCE TO PRESENT STUDY

According to Cohen and Manion (1984: 117), Kemmis (in Keeves 1988: 11), Tripp (1990: 158-166) and McKernan (1991: 17), the key characteristics governing the family of participatory action research are many, but they can be reduced to six key elements relevant to this study namely:

- A critical analysis is encouraged through the research process and not just at the beginning or termination; the approach encourages active involvement on the part of all participants;

- The participatory action research is positive in initiating and helping to bring about change and improvement;

- By using either the classroom or the field or both as the study area, the natural behaviour of participants is accommodated;

- As a research framework, it is adaptive and flexible.

- Participatory action research describes relationships as they develop over time and accommodates changes in thinking which reflect mutations occurring in the context of the study.

THE THREE PARTICIPATORY ACTION RESEARCH PARADIGMS

Participatory action research aims at understanding and solving problems. It does not, however, fit into one recognizable form. Rather it gives expression to a variety of perspectives on how parental involvement in the governance of schools relates to educational research. In other words, approaches to educational research involve different theories of educational change that underpin them (Kemmis in Keeves, 1988). These assumptions are examined in order to assess the most appropriate form of participatory action research strategy applicable to this study.

Habermas's *"Comprehensive theory of knowledge"* in McKernan, (1991: 17-19) provides such a framework for discussion. Habermas identifies three basic cognitive interests namely technical, practical and emancipation; which constitute three types of scientific approaches in which knowledge is organized. These are discussed in the following session.

TECHNICAL KNOWLEDGE

Technical knowledge is positivistic in nature, emphasizes rule following and attempts to maintain the *status quo* (McKernan, 1991). Lewin in Keeves, 1988) refers to this as scientific participatory action research. Educational events, practices and relationships are seen to be phenomenal and consequently capable

of objective assessment. Such action research asks: *How best can I do it?* This approach has given rise to empirical-analytical research.

PRACTICAL KNOWLEDGE

Practical knowledge has given rise to interpretive research that emphasizes the need to describe and understand interactions (McKernan, 1991). It most commonly asks the following questions: *What should I do?* And *why ought I to do it?* Proposals for such participatory action research stress the need to be intelligent, rather than correct, and to provide guidance rather than direction. The research has the responsibility to determine which knowledge is legitimate. This approach gives rise to hermeneutics and is based on the humanistic model. Lewin in Keeves (1988: 24) refers to this kind of research as "practical-deliberate participatory action research."

EMANCIPATION KNOWLEDGE

Action research is a radical alternative mode grounded on "emancipation knowledge proposed by Lewin in Keeves (1988). This type of participatory action research goes beyond asking questions pertaining to the social assumptions on which technical and practical actions are based. Additionally, it attempts to promote critical consciousness in solving problems (McKernan, 1991). It attempts

to make explicit the assumptions that there is a conscious commitment to social critique that is realized through changes to practice (Tripp, 1990). The guiding ethical code of this paradigm is that of freedom, independence, equality, justice and respect for each other's views. It redresses all concerns – social and ethical – approaches to issues.

Participatory action research addresses practical problems with theoretical relevance while transferring the knowledge from the research findings to the participants (McNiff, Lomax and Whitehead, 1996). Participatory action research must possess an aspect of direct involvement in organizational change, and simultaneously, it must provide an increase in knowledge. In contrast, several qualitative research methods seem to fall under the categories of basic research, applied and evaluation research. A critical observation suggests the development and application of planning methods and related interventionist research technologies may be a neglected area of qualitative methodologies (Corey in Nel, Singh, and Venter, 1985: 63).

3.6. QUALITATIVE RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The participatory action research methodology that has been selected for this study is complemented by the qualitative approach (Tuckman, 1988). Qualitative research is generally classified as primarily interactive field research or non-

interactive document research (Cohen and Manion, 1989). It is a naturalistic inquiry (Schofield, 1990; McNiff. Lomax and Whitehead, 1996). It describes and analyses people's individual and collective social actions, beliefs, thoughts and perceptions (McMillan and Schumacher, 1993; Scott and Usher 1996; Casanova, 1981; Gudykunst and Kim, 1984; Mills, Mathew and Huberman, 1984; Van Maanen, 1982). The qualitative methodology is appropriate for this study because it studies the problem in its context, where the people are (Mouton, 1996; McMillan and Schumacher, 1993; Labovitz and Hagedorn, 1971; Tuckman, 1988). Lee (1973) in planning research have long observed that effective and operational decisions are more likely to result if the recommendations from planning analysis are couched in terms that are understandable, especially to decision makers and clients.

3.7. DATA COLLECTION, ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

Primary as well as secondary data are needed to complete this study. The primary data comprise the responses from the questionnaires, interviews and the observation. The secondary data are to be obtained from published and unpublished sources. Since this is an investigative study, the qualitative data are mapped, inferences made, comments, analysis and interpretations provided (Tuckman, 1988). Mills, Mathew and Huberman (1984:21) view qualitative analysis as data that "appear in words rather than in numbers." Corey in Nel,

Singh and Venter, 1985: 62) maintain that "…qualitative data can be collected by review of literature, content analysis, observation, interviews, extracts from documents, tape recordings, questionnaires and the like." They further go on to show that "qualitative data is analysed by means of data reduction, data display, conclusion-drawing and verification" (1984:10-11). An addition to this Mouton's view (1996: 66-67) is that "data collection produces new information or data about the world that requires further processing." The explanation given in this respect is that data processing involves, at least, two kinds of operations, namely data reduction, during which quantitative and qualitative data are summarized; and data analysis (Smit, 1995). Data analysis will include both qualitative analysis that includes processes such as thematic and content analysis and quantitative or statistical analysis (Mouton, 1996; Scott, 1996). Tuckman (1988) emphasises that data analysis is followed by synthesis that involves interpretation or explanation of the data (Tuckman 1988; Scott 1996). In this way categories with similar labels will be compared and contrasted putting together categories that seem to go together and making further notes to augment the findings. These notes, together with the data they refer to will form the basis of the final report of this study.

The responses of the conducted interviews were interpreted while the administered questionnaire was tabulated, recorded and later converted into tables (quantitative) so as to give an accurate interpretation of what was

revealed in the data. Patterns in the data (qualitative) were considered in order to give accurate interpretation of the information revealed by the collected data. According to White (2005), qualitative data analysis involves becoming familiar with the data in depth to provide detailed descriptions of setting participants and activities, categorizing and coding pieces of data and physically grouping them into themes and interpreting and synthesizing the organized data into a general conclusion.

3.8. SAMPLE AND THE SAMPLING TECHNIQUE

The concept of sampling involves taking a portion of a population, making observations, administering questionnaires, conducting interviews on a smaller group and then generalizing the findings to the larger population (Nachmias and Nachmias, 1981). In a qualitative survey research of this nature sampling is indispensable to the researcher (Cohen and Manion, 1989). As stated in the limitations, time, money and effort involved did not allow for a larger sample population (Anderson, 1990: 195-224; Vockell, 1983; Scott and Usher, 1996; Tuckman, 1988). Furthermore, it was not necessary to study all possible cases to understand the case under consideration. This sample technique comes to the researcher's aid as it enables him to study a portion of, rather than the entire population. Since the purpose of drawing a sample from a population is to obtain information concerning the population, it is extremely important that the

individuals in the sample constitute a representative cross section of individuals in the population (Smit, 1995). In short, sampling must be representative if one is to generalize with confidence from the sample (Babbie, 1998). The target population must be accessible. This is diagrammatically illustrated in figure 2 below.

_____

TARGET POPULATION ⟹ **ACCESSIBLE POPULATION** ⟹ **SAMPLE**

FINDINGS
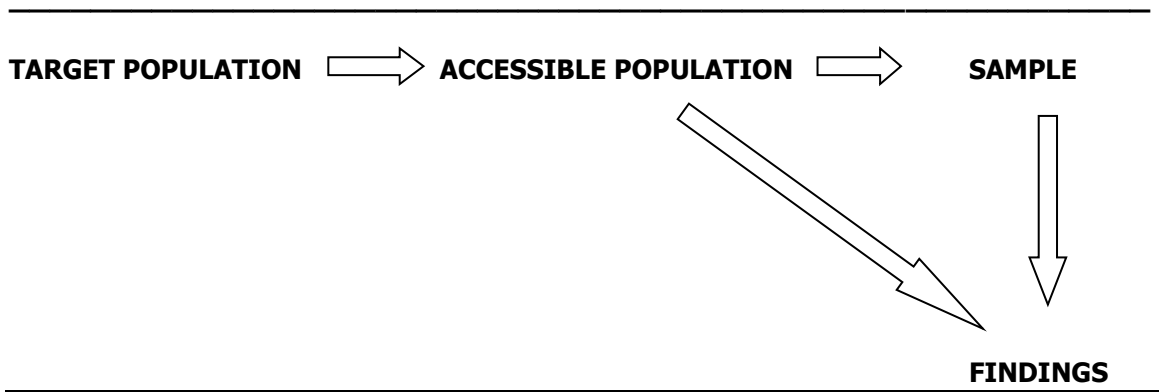
Figure 2: Accessibility of Sample Target Population

Source: Ary, Jacobs and Razavieh, 1972: 161.

The systematic sampling technique was used for the selection of the sample population. Babbie (1986 & 1998) as well as Forcese and Richer (1979), McMillan and Schumacher (1993) all concur that this method is economically feasible, gives reasonably precise results and shows within itself an honest measure of accurate results. The most important aspect of this technique is that the design can be based on statistical theory (Mouton and Marais, 1990), and that from a properly designed sample survey it is possible to draw valid generalizations. Tuckman (1988) argues that random sampling is one way to ensure that the

sample population is representative of the larger population, this helps to limit the probability of a biased sample. The targeted population comprised parents, school governing bodies, teachers, principals and their deputies of the selected schools. Their selection was not random because of their involvement in the management of the schools.

The sampling was done randomly for the selection of the respondents which made every one had the opportunity to be selected. The justification is that not all the population of the selected schools and parents could be included in the sample.

According to Boaduo (2010), to enable the researcher to make the choice of methodologies, further identified that:

- Research methods and techniques are task specific;

- The task is defined by the research goals and objectives;

- Different studies use different methods relevant and applicable to the study being undertaken;

- Both methods and techniques for data collection must be specific and should apply to data collection, treatment, analysis and interpretation.

The implication in this study is that qualitative, quantitative action and participatory methods have been chosen because of the nature of the problem to be investigated and the involvement of communities where action and

participation are required from the respondents. Furthermore, the chosen methodologies are complementary in the sense that where statistical issues arise, for instance, the treatment of questionnaires; the quantitative method was applied while the qualitative method was used for the compilation of the report (Gajendra and Kanka, 1999; White, 2005). The action and participatory methodologies were used to involve all respondents to action and participation (Boaduo, 2006 & 2010).

3.9. RESEARCH INSTRUMENTS

In this study, the researcher administered a questionnaire personally by hand and conducted face-to-face interviews to collect the required primary data. Gajendra and Kanka (1999) define an interview as a conversation between two or more people. It represents an interaction between three elements, the interview, the interviewee and the context of the interview including issues or questions raised in the interview. On the other hand, a questionnaire was considered versatile because it enabled respondents to respond to the questions in their own time without any form of pressure.

3.10. DATA COLLECTION PROCEDURE

The researcher will use notes as a data collection tool, administer a questionnaire and conduct interviews. According to White (2005), field notes are the researcher's record of what have been observed in the field, descriptions of individual responses, the setting and what happened during the recording of a conversation.

3.11. ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

Permission: White (2005) suggests that ethics are generally considered to deal with beliefs about what is right or wrong, proper or improper, good or bad. The researcher requested a recognition letter from Walter Sisulu University in the Faculty of Education. This was taken to the district office in Matatiele where the schools chosen for the study are situated for a written permission to conduct the study. Permission was granted from the selected schools for the study to administer questionnaires and conduct interviews. Interviews were conducted with the permission of the interviewees.

Informed Consent: Obtaining informed consent implies that adequate information on the goal of the investigation and procedures were followed during the investigation. The possible advantages, disadvantages and dangers, to which respondents may be exposed, as well as the credibility of the researcher, are rendered to potential subjects or their legal representatives (Babbie, 1998). The

researcher asked the participants to give consent. Participants were at liberty to withdraw from the investigation at any time of the study.

Rights of participants: Participants were protected from unwarranted physical or mental discomfort, distress, harm, danger or deprivation (Babbie, 1986). White (2005) suggests that respondents in a research project should be allowed to exercise their right to be part of the research or not. The researcher allowed the respondents to participate voluntarily, which they did.

Confidentiality: Confidentiality indicates the handling of information in a confidential manner. Cohen and Manion (1989: 24) view confidentiality as a continuation of privacy "which refers to agreements between persons that limit other's access to private information." All the information obtained in this study was treated confidentially and was not divulged to anyone. The participants were assured that the collection of data from the interviews was for academic purposes only.

Anonymity: Information given anonymously ensured the privacy of the subjects. It is often necessary that respondents be identified, for instance when reminders have to be sent to persons who have not responded, or followed up interviews have to be conducted with certain respondents (Scott, 1996). The questionnaires did not request respondents for their names.

3.12. VALIDITY AND RELIABILITY

The validity and reliability of a research study hang on issues of accuracy and relevance of procedures used for the information collected for the study. According to Gajendra and Kanka (1999), validity in the field of educational measurement refers to the degree to which a test, tool or technique measures what it is supposed to measure in a study. Reliability on the other hand refers to the extent to which a test or technique provides consistency and accuracy by yielding the same results should the same study be conducted elsewhere using the same methodology. White (2005) is of the view that qualitative researchers regard reliability as the elimination of casual errors that can influence the results. Validity in qualitative study refers to techniques that check the credibility of data and minimizes the distorting effect of personal bias upon the logic of the evidence revealed by the collected data (Boaduo, 2006 & 2010).

In this study, the data collected reflected the sample population which was a representative sample of the respondents and as a result it was a reliable evidence of proper collection of data for the final analysis and interpretation to be able to arrive at the findings and the conclusion.

3.13. CONCLUSION

This chapter provided the research methodology and design so as to situate the comparative research study in its proper and relevant perspective. By so doing, the researcher identified the need to discern an elaborate methodological choice and application because this is the most important part of a research study guiding the whole process to a successful conclusion. Through the methodological application, the study produces data from which findings can be deduced and recommendations made. In this way a solution to the problem can be identified and the recommendations can be used to resolve it.

CHAPTER 4

DATA ANALYSIS

4.1. INTRODUCTION

This chapter places the study as well as the discussion of the primary data, questionnaire, and interview responses into the comparative perspective with reference to collection, treatment and analysis. For the interview the two principals and their deputies were selected. For the questionnaire, the principal, the deputy and the SGB members were requested to respond. In the case of teachers, the principal and deputy, English was used and for the parents vernacular and English were used to cater for those who could not read English. This was done at different pre-scheduled times. A detailed discussion of the comparative perspective is presented in this chapter.

4.2. SIGNIFICANCE OF COMPARATIVE STUDY OF EDUCATIONAL ISSUES

According to Venter and Van Heerden (1989), comparison of educational issues is a valuable aid to researchers in education. Duminy (1990), Vos and Barnard (1984) concur with Venter and Van Heerden. In other words, they indicate that a comparative study and analysis of educational issues enables educational practitioners to:

- Analyse, describe, characterise and compare various education issues for redress.

- Develop solutions to educational issues to acceptable levels dynamic to the times.

- Identify various determining factors and underlying forces to which the issues are subject to discussion by interested stakeholders.

- Enable the merits and demerits of the issues to be considered with the aim of finding acceptable common solutions; and

- Deduce universally applicable principles concerning the issues for future redress should such problems recur.

The justification of comparison in this study, was that it enabled the researcher to identify what had been going on in other parts of the world. This was in relation to parental involvement in the governance of schools so that the

successes achieved could be emulated and applied in the area where the study was conducted in particular and the whole country in general.

Furthermore, Altbach (1982), Atchoarana (1995) and Hans (1982) aver that a comparative study of educational issues examines how countries plan for the upgrading, expansion and democratization of their educational issues inherent in the education system. They also indicate that a comparative study leads to greater insight into the following:

- Nature of the problems educational policy makers and practitioners confront in their working environment.

- Origins of these problems both within and outside the school systems and other institutions.

- The range of solutions attempted in the various countries who are confronted with the same or similar problems.

- The outcomes of planned interventions in the schools and other related institutions; and

- Factors that may be associated with the success or failure in an attempt to find solutions to the problems raised by the educational issues.

From the perspectives outlined above, it is very important to state that a comparative study of educational issues according to Van Schalkwyk (1988) contributes to, among other things the following processes:

- The professional training and development of educators to be able to resolve impending educational problematic issues should they surface.

- Be able to engage in informed policy and practice to engage in constructive discussions that will lead to the solution of impending problems.

- The creation of a knowledge-base for reference by providing an expanded set of analytical categories and models of issues for examining the realities of education and society universally.

A comparative study helps researchers (as in the present study), educators and education policy and decision makers to examine educational issues in more complex, comprehensive and far-ranging ways so that positive results and findings are maintained for further improvement and implementation.

In studying educational issues throughout the world one discovers the limitations and possibilities of schooling in fostering the required fundamental reforms and innovations in society. Ideally, the humanizing effect of comparison is to realize the common problems that, virtually, all societies and school systems confront in order not to repeat them elsewhere (Altbach, 1991).

In an endeavour of countries to find new solutions to old problems, to break with the past, and to effect meaningful and lasting changes, there is always the need for a comparative study and analysis of some sort.

As societies develop, evolve and change, particularly through education and technological advancement, they also change that which constitutes their life-world. This, in turn, influences the way in which societies apply the changeable principles governing life to suit the circumstances. In essence, relevant education adapts to changing times, thus equipping its learners to adapt effectively to it and fulfil their calling responsibly. That is education for living.

Comparison can deepen the understanding of educational issues confronting society by providing an international perspective on national education debates and issues. It also provides the basis for more informed decision making regarding educational matters as cognizance is taken of educational dilemmas and reform or innovation (Dekker and Lemmer, 1996; Van Niekerk, 1996; Hope, 1992).

A discussion follows the primary data collected for the study, its treatment and analysis so as to place the study in the required perspective for easy articulation

of the information obtained from the questionnaire administered and interviews conducted with respondents.

4.3. TREATMENT AND ANALYSIS OF COLLECTED DATA

The responses of the administered questionnaire were tabulated and recorded in order to give an accurate interpretation of what is revealed in the data. Patterns in the data (qualitative) were considered in order to give accurate interpretation of the information revealed by the collected data. According to White (2005), qualitative data analysis involves becoming familiar with the data in depth to provide detailed descriptions of the setting, participants and activities, categorizing and coding pieces of data and physically grouping them into themes and interpreting and synthesizing the organized data into general conclusions or understanding.

The respondents comprised randomly selected numbers of parents who are members of the School Governing Bodies (SGB) and teachers who are members of the School Management Team (SMT). According to Gajendra and Kanka (1999), population refers to the larger group from which a sample is selected for a study. White (2005), states that the population is a collection of objects, events or individuals having some common characteristics that the researcher is interested in studying. The random sample comprised 10 parents who were

members of the School Governing Body (SGB) and 4 teachers who are members of School Management Team (SMT).

4.3.1. QUESTIONNAIRE ADMINISTRATION

The questionnaires were administered by hand to the respondents by the researcher to clarify any misunderstandings and to make sure that all the respondents returned the questionnaire. This was done to the parents and teachers. The scores from the questionnaires were added and presented in tables for easy comparison and interpretation (See tables 1 and 2). The results of the items were tallied to determine how many respondents responded to each question in the items. The scores were summed up and converted into percentages to yield group score. The formula used is provided below:

$$\underline{X \quad x \ 100}$$

$$10$$

Where X represented the total number of respondents per item, and 10 the number of respondents and 100 the convertible percentage value (Gay, 1976). The responses helped to create a picture of the evidence collected from the questionnaire for the study. The representation of the figures in tables helped in the following ways:

- The tables lend themselves to quick observation and easy comparison of figures displayed.

- The tables are easily interpretable and can be understood by even the casual observer and compared easily.

- The tables also make it easy to see the values of the variables

4.3.2. RESPONSES FROM THE QUESTIONNAIRE ITEMS

The analysis that follows is based on Table one which is a summary of respondents' responses from the administered questionnaire.

Table 1: The summary of responses to the questionnaire items for the public school

Item	SA	AG	UC	DA	SD
1. Parents are more involved in the governance of the school	20%	10%	0%	70%	0%
2. The extent of parental involvement has a positive influence on the governance of the school.	80%	20%	0%	0%	0%
3. Parents know their roles and responsibilities.	0%	0%	20%	20%	60%
4. The school involves parents on financial matters.	0%	0%	20%	20%	60%
5. Parental involvement has an influence on the performance of both teachers and learners.	60%	40%	0%	0%	0%
6. Parental involvement improves learners' discipline.	80%	20%	0%	0%	0%
7. The school has the responsibility to improve parental involvement.	100%	0%	0%	0%	0%
8. Parents attend and participate actively in school meetings.	0%	0%	0%	20%	80%

9. Availability of resources is influenced by parental involvement.	0%	0%	0%	20%	80%
10. Parents play a vital role in maintenance and protection of school property.	0%	0%	0%	0%	100%
11. Parents attend school activities outside the school premises.	0%	0%	0%	20%	80%

In item one from the table, the indication is that 70% disagree with the statement; meaning that parents are not involved in the governance of the schools in their community.

In item two from the table, 80% of the respondents agree with the statement, which means parents recognise the need for involvement in the governance of schools in their community.

Item three indicates that parents do not know the roles that they have to play in their involvement. In these responses, 60% strongly disagree with the statement.

In item four the indication from the respondents is that 60 % disagree with the statement that parents are not involved in the financial matters of the school. In item five, 60% of the respondents agreed to the statement, which implies that

there is a need for involvement to influence performance. In item six, 80% of the respondents indicated their agreement meaning that if both the school and the parents are involved, learners will be disciplined. In item seven, 100% of the respondents strongly agreed with the statement. This is an indication that the schools should do something to try and bring the parents in the governance of the schools. In item nine, 80% of the respondents strongly disagreed with the statement. This is an indication that parents do not attend meetings when

Table 2: The summary of the responses of the questionnaire items for the private school

Item	SA	AG	UC	DA	SD
1. Parents are more involved in the governance of the school	60%	30%	0%	10%	0%
2. The extent of parental involvement has a positive influence on the governance of the school.	40%	60%	0%	0%	0%
3. Parents know their roles and responsibilities.	0%	80%	0%	20%	0%
4. The school involves parents on financial matters.	20%	0%	0%	80%	0%
5. Parental involvement has an influence on the performance of both teachers and learners.	20%	60%	0%	10%	10%
6. Parental involvement improves learners' discipline.	80%	20%	0%	0%	0%
7. The school has the responsibility to improve parental involvement.	80%	20%	0%	0%	0%
8. Parents attend and participate actively in school meetings.	100%	0%	0%	0%	0%
9. Availability of resources is influenced by parental	80%	20%	0%	0%	0%

involvement.					
10. Parents play a vital role in maintenance and protection of school property.	40%	40%	20%	0%	0%
11. Parents attend school activities outside the school premises.	40%	40%	20%	0%	0%

invited. In item nine, the majority of the respondents strongly disagreed with the statement. This indicated their non-involvement in the activities of the schools in their community. In item ten, the revelation is that 100% of the respondents strongly disagreed with the statement. This indicates that parents are not involved at all in the governance of the schools in their community. In item eleven, the response is similar to item ten. In this case, 80% of the respondents indicated their strong disagreement with the statement.

The researcher will provide an interpretation to the analysed responses in table one.

4.3.3 RESPONSES FROM THE ADMINISTERED QUESTIONNAIRE

The analysis that follows is based on Table two above which is a summary of respondents' responses from the administered questionnaire in private schools.

In item one, 60% of the respondents agreed to the statement; meaning that parents are more involved in the governance of the private school. In item two,

60% of the respondents agreed to the statement which implies that parental involvement has a positive influence on the governance of the school. In item three, the indication is that parents indeed do know their roles and responsibilities; 80% agree with the statement. In item four, 80% of the respondents strongly disagreed with the statement, which implies that the school does not involve parents in financial matters. In item five, 60% of the respondents indicated their agreement with the statement, that parental involvement has an influence on the performance of both teachers and learners. In item six, 80% of the respondents indicated their strong agreement that if both the school and the parents were involved, learners will be disciplined. In item seven, the response is similar to item six which is a clear indication of parental involvement help to improve learner discipline positively. In item eight, all respondents (100%) strongly agreed with the statement, which implies that parents attend and participate actively in school meetings. In item nine, 80% of the participants agreed with the statement, and this is an indication that parental involvement may influence the availability of resources. In item ten, 40% of the participants agreed with the statement, this indicates that parents are involved in the maintenance and protection of school property. In item eleven, the response is similar to item ten above where the respondents indicated their strong agreement with the statement.

4.4. ANALYSIS OF INTERVIEW RESPONSES IN PUBLIC SCHOOLS

The analysis that follows is based on the interview, which is a summary of respondents' responses from the scheduled questionnaire administered to the interviewees in public school.

Interview question: How do parents relate with the school?

Response: Their relationship with the school is fair as a result of poor attendance during organised meetings by the school.

Interview question: What strategies do you use to get their support?

Response: Sometimes the teachers socialize with them, join their clubs and get involved in community activities.

Interview question: How do they get involved?

Response: Most of the parents are reluctant to participate in school activities. Their reason is always that they have no time to spare.

Interview question: What specifically would you like parents to do to help improve school governance?

Response: To help to maintain discipline and help learners to do their home work as well as taking some developmental initiatives such as sports and programmes of action.

Interview question: How are they involved in general school governance?

Response: Under rare circumstances, parents help in the general cleaning of the school compound and the buildings.

4.5. ANALYSIS OF INTERVIEW RESPONSES IN PRIVATE SCHOOL

The analysis that follows is the summary of respondents' responses from the scheduled administered interviews to the interviewees in the private school.

Interview question: How do parents relate with your school?

Response: There is very positive relationship in many respects. Many parents have expressed their happiness at the level of the service offered by the school and the standard of education as a whole. Teachers sacrifice to provide extra mile to accommodate learners. We have had numerous requests from parents to extend our curriculum to include Further Education Training phase.

Interview question: What strategies do you use to get their support?

Response: We invite parents as often as possible through letters sent out regularly and keep them fully informed on time about all events that are to take place in the school.

Interview question: How do they get involved?

Response: Parents are involved through their representatives on the board of governance and also use their children's diaries to record their notes to teachers or send letters to the office. Unfortunately, due to the financial constraints on parents they do not support fund raising activities. However attendance at parent's evenings and annual general meetings is positive.

Interview question: What specifically would you like parents to do to help improve school governance?

Response: It will be more wonderful if parents will be more involved in their children's education, and day-to-day monitoring of their performance. This will impact positively on how teachers could focus on skills development of the children instead of spending more time on disciplinary issues.

Interview question: How are they involved in general school governance?

Response: They are represented on the board of governance by three parents representatives and free to utilize this involvement to make inputs during board meetings.

4.6. CONCLUSION

This chapter attended to the comparative significance of the study, how the questionnaire was administered and collected as well as the conduct of the interview and how the collected primary data was treated and analysed. The responses from the research instruments have been discussed and respondents' response summarised to place the discussion in its proper context. What follows in chapter five is the interpretation of the analysed data, list of findings both anticipated and unanticipated and the recommendations that the research provided based on the findings and a conclusion drawn.

CHAPTER 5

INTERPRETATION OF ANALYSED DATA, LIST OF FINDINGS, RECOMMENDATIONS AND CONCLUSION

5.1. INTRODUCTION

In this chapter, the researcher has provided an interpretation of the analysed data collected from both private and public schools that enabled the study to be successfully conducted. The findings revealed by the data have been listed and recommendations based on the findings have been provided. Cross-referencing has been done to connect the various parts of the study into a coherent whole.

5.2. INTERPRETATION OF ANALYSED DATA

Under this subheading the interpretation of public school analysed data is given. It emerged from the administered questionnaire and interviews conducted that

parents are not involved in the governance of the schools in their community. It was evident that parents do not attend school meetings when invited. Secondly, there was no effective communication between the school and parents in the public school. Heubsch (1989) argues that communication implies the transmission, from one person to another, of necessary information, feelings or ideas with a view to eliciting a sensible reaction from the receiver. It involves the transmission and reception of thoughts, feelings and ideas between two or more points. Parents do not attend meetings when invited by letters. This seemed not to bother the school management team (SMT) to find alternative communication ways with parents besides letters. Though lack of parental involvement does not augur well, the SMT and teachers of public schools appeared to be satisfied and conditioned to that behaviour.

It became clear that parents do not know the roles they have to play in the involvement (See 1.4.1). According to Aspen, Chapman and Wilkinson (1994), people working in school decision-making groups do not know how to get things done. Such groups and their activities can be aimless and lead to very frustrating experiences for participants unless they are well guided. There is indication that parents are not guided as indicated by these authors. This means, therefore, that it is imperative for the SMT to turn the situation around and try to lure and involve parents in the governance of public schools (See 1.7). Jansen (2004:90) advises that "It is time for us as South Africans to grow up, change happens

slowly. Change costs money. Change seldom responds to profound and moving policy dictates. And change might not happen at all. In this regard it must be useful to take a sombre look at the variable of time as it is often used to defend the slowness of change."

It is against this background that the researcher found that the lack of parental involvement was not only a parent-based problem, but rather, the educational institutions, the Department of Education (DoE) at large and the teachers too must take the blame (See 1.4.1). Davis and Yang (2005: 34) concur with the above view and indicated "Looking back, I realized that I didn't have a single course in college that offered practical strategies for engaging with my students' families." This shows that there is no single stakeholder responsible for parental involvement.

Under this subheading the interpretation of private school analysed data is given. Contrary to what is stated above in public schools, communication in the private schools with parents is very effective (See 2.2.1 to 2.2.4). This may be attributed to the various strategies used by the SMT and teachers in the private schools, for example, letters and reminders sent out regularly, telephone calls and the numerous parents' evenings held very often throughout the year. The level of parental involvement is very high in the governance of private schools; for example, parents know their roles and responsibilities and are involved in

financial matters. This high level of parental involvement has influence on the performance of both teachers and learners. This influence also has a positive effect on learner discipline. It is, therefore, evident that there is a rapport between the school and parents.

5.3. LIST OF FINDINGS REVEALED BY THE DATA

What is provided in the lists (5.3.1 & 5.3.2) below are the findings revealed through the data collection for the study; they need to be articulated and made available to the readers of this report.

List of findings from the public school
- Parents are not involved in the governance of the school.
- The school does not involve parents on financial matters.
- Parents do not attend meetings when invited.
- They do not know their roles and responsibilities, for example, according to the South African Schools Act (SASA), parents must be actively involved in the governance of the school in their community.
- There is an element of ignorance and negligence on the part of parents towards their children's education.

List of findings from the private school
- Parents are more involved in the governance of the school.
- They attend and participate actively in school meetings.

- The school involves parents in financial matters and as such the financial support from the parents is very good.
- Parents are also very much involved in the monitoring of the progress of their learner's education.
- Parents are passionate about the school and seem to own the policies and the governance of the whole school system.

5.4. RECOMMENDATIONS BASED ON THE FINDINGS

What are provided in this paragraph are the general recommendations that the researcher considers appropriate to contribute towards effective and efficient school governance by both parents and the institutions.

It is therefore, clear from these findings that there is a problem of non-involvement of parents in the governance of public schools compared to private schools. The DoE has a responsibility to workshop parents, teachers and the community on the importance of involvement of all the stakeholders in school governance. There should be clear channels of communication. The DoE, in conjunction with teachers, should organise seminars where the importance of parental involvement in education is emphasized; for example, educate parents on what involvement is, how it is done, who is supposed to be involved and involvement as an interchangeable responsibility in children's educational life.

The researcher also recommends that future research could look at factors that influence parental involvement in the governance of public schools as the researcher is of the view that when parents are involved in their children's education, the performance of both teachers and learners improves considerably.

5.5. CONCLUSION

The South African Government and the DoE have an obligation to address the lack of parental involvement in the governance of public schools. This lack of parental involvement in their children's education seems to be too extreme and dangerous culminating in problems, which are rife in South Africa public schools. School principals have a role to play in this regard, as this is their responsibility to create a school climate conducive to parental involvement, as the quality of frequency of interactions between all the stakeholders involved in the governance of the school must be encouraged. When the climate is conducive, the direct result is interaction and willingness to participate. The transformation in the entire universe requires a collaborative effort on stakeholders, with the school at large. The rationale behind this is always to enhance quality education.

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APPENDIX 1

PERMISSION LETTER TO THE DISTRICT OFFICE

P. O. Box 679
Matatiele
4730
28 April 2010

The District Director
• Maluti Department of Education
Eastern Cape

Sir/Madam

REQUEST TO CONDUCT A RESEARCH PROJECT

I hereby request permission to conduct a research project about an INVESTIGATION OF PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT IN THE GOVERNANCE OF PRIVATE AND PUBLIC SCHOOLS IN MATATIELE DISTRICT IN THE EASTERN CAPE PROVINCE. This is a requirement towards the completion of my MEd degree at Walter Sisulu University.

I promise that the information that will be obtained from the respondents will be confidential and anonymity and privacy will be maintained.

APPENDIX 2

DISTRICT DIRECTOR'S RESPONSE

Province of the
EASTERN CAPE
DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

MALUTI DISTRICT OFFICE
206 Magistrate Street • Maluti • 4740 • Postal Address .Private Bag X 9003• Matatiele • 4730 •
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA • Tel: +27 (39   0516 Fax: +27 (39) 256 0516• Cell 0827706145 Website:
ecprov.gov.za • Email: kholeka.mahlasela@ed   rov.gov.za

TO   : **MR ZOLILE M MNUKWA**
FROM   : **DISTRICT OFFICE - MALUTI**
SUBJECT   : **REQUEST TO CONDUCT A RESEARCH PROJECT - YOURSELF**
DATE   : **11/05/2010**

This serves to inform you that the Department of Education does not object that you should conduct research in its schools.

However, it is expected that as a researcher some of the information might need confirmation from the Department as it might cause irreparable damage to the image of the Department. Furthermore you are required to assist and provide the department with your Theses after completion as it might be useful to improve performance in its schools.

Thanking you in advance.

LETTER TO THE PRINCIPAL OF SELECTED SCHOOLS

P.O. Box 343
Matatiele
4730
03 May 2010

The Principal
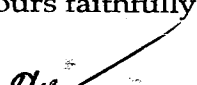St Monica's Diocesan School
Matatiele

Sir/Madam

LICATION TO CONDUCT A RESEARCH

I Mr. Mnukwa Z.M. a second year MED student at WSU main campus hereby apply for a permission to conduct a research at St Monica's Diocesan school. The research is an essential prerequisite for the completion of my degree.

The information obtained will be not divulged to any body and will be used for educational purposes.

Yours faithfully

APPENDIX 5D

LETTER TO THE PRINCIPAL OF SELECTED SCHOOLS

P.O. Box 343
Matatiele
4730
03 May 2010

The Principal
Hlomendlini j.s.s
Matatiele
4730

sir/Madam

RE: APPLICATION TO CONDUCT A RESEARCH

I Mr. Mnukwa Z.M. a second year MED student at WSU student main campus hereby apply for a permission to conduct a research at Hlomendlini j.s.s. The research is an essential prerequisite for the completion of my degree.

The information obtained will not be divulged to any body and will be used for educational purposes only.The principle of anonymity and confidentiality will also be observed.

Yours faithfully

St. Monic... ... .ocesan Schc

P.O.Box 498
Matatiele
4730

Phone: 039 – 737 4053
Fax: 039 – 737 4791

Email: secretary@stmonicas.za.net
Web: www.stmonicas.za.net

25 May 2010

Dear Mr Mnukwa

Permission to do Research at St. Monica's Diocesan School

I hereby grant you permission to do research at St. Monica's Diocesan School regarding parent involvement in their children's schooling.

The following conditions will apply:
- Sufficient notice must be given of the need to meet with any SMT member, teacher or learner. (at least one full week)
- Duration of interviews should not be more than 30 minutes.
- All information pertaining to the school should be treated as confidential.
- The school should receive a copy of your research findings.

Thank you.

Yours faithfully

Mrs M King
Principal

APPENDIX 4B

RESPONSE FROM PRINCIPALS OF SELECTED SCHOOLS

HLOMENDLINI J.S.S.
P.O. BOX 161
MATATIELE
4730
25 May 2010

Dear Mr Mnukwa

RE- PERMISSION TO DO RESEARCH AT HLOMENDLINI J.S.S.

I hereby grant you permission to do research at **Hlomendlini J.S.S.** regarding your research topic. Please be advised that the duration of the interviews should not be more than one hour and all information performing the school should be treated as confidential..

Thank you
Yours faithfully
Mrs T.B. Sithole (school mananger)

076 955 6501

HLOMENDLINI J. S. S.
P. O. BOX 161 MATATIELE 4730
DATE: ....25 - 05 - 2010.
PRINCIPAL SIGN: ....