Examining teachers' views on parental involvement in schools: A study of the Hlanganani district in Limpopo

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Abstract

The benefits of parental participation have been widely recognised even though teachers play a significant role in learners' academic and psychosocial development in school. Parental involvement is beneficial to the learner in improving academic achievement, and teachers help learners develop academically and psychologically. Parents' involvement in their children's education may benefit teachers by reinforcing learning. From the literature, it is unclear whether teachers have profited from parents' involvement in their children's education. This study aimed to investigate how teachers, who spend much of their time with learners at school, view parents' engagement in their children's academic and psychological development. The study was a qualitative case study of four Hlanganani District, Limpopo, schools, using focus group discussions with teachers. Park and Holloway's (2018) conceptual model and Jeyes's (2018) Dual Navigation Approach (DNA) were used to guide the study. According to the findings, parental involvement in children's education is still a challenge as most parents do not participate as expected, even though it appears that there are signs of positivity among teachers regarding parental involvement. Therefore, additional support is needed to ensure effective parental involvement to help children succeed academically. Overall, parental involvement seems to support teachers, improve student outcomes, and create a harmonious educational ecosystem that benefits everyone. As a result, the study recommended improved measures to enhance parental involvement in the education of their children.

Keywords: Teachers, children, perceptions, parental involvement, Dual Navigation Approach

1. Introduction

Parents' involvement in schools has long been recognised as a key factor in assisting learners' in succeeding and performing well in the classroom. According to research, children whose parents are involved in their education perform better academically, are more motivated, behave better, and have a higher feeling of self-worth. Roy and Giraldo-Garca (2018:32) define parental involvement as those behaviours displayed by parents in both home and school settings that are intended to support the development of their

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children's social/emotional skills and promote their academic success. Meanwhile, the South African Schools Act (Act 84 of 1996) defines "parent" as the parent or guardian of a learner; the person legally granted custody of a learner, or the person who agrees to carry out a parent's responsibilities for the learner's education at school.

Parents who take an active interest in their children's education typically value it highly and encourage attendance. Second, children who frequently receive parental help have higher self-esteem and are less inclined to miss class as a result. The attitudes of learners toward learning are also improved by parental involvement. Reading becomes pleasant when done with children when they are young and enjoy the graphics. This helps children develop a positive outlook on learning in general. The value of their parents' company and the enjoyment of doing things with them, is another lesson they pick up (Jeynes, 2016; Jeynes, 2017). Teachers, though, must also participate in this activity by giving parents the support they need by offering the tools and direction the parents need. Global trends support parental involvement in their children's education because they recognise the importance of shared responsibility between the school and learners' parents. Berger (1983), cited by Maluleke (2014:9), notes that from the history of education, we have learned that parents have been formally involved in their children's education all over the world, for instance, by teaching them the rules and regulations of being members of the family and members of society. Parental engagement is encouraged by the South African Schools Act 84 of 1996, which stipulates that "parents are required to accompany their children to school from the first school day of the year in which such learner attains the age of four and a half". According to Urii and Bunijevac (2017:137), for schools to adhere to the system of integrated support for their learners', they must form relationships with parents and establish shared accountability for children's academic performance. Urrii & Bunijevac (2017:139) also highlighted the important role that strong, supportive relationships between families and schools play in children's growth and education. According to Sudderth (2022), there is a favourable effect on student success when families are stakeholders in the learners" education. To set up learners for successful learning, the relationship between the school and the parents needs to be mutually beneficial. Learners' are more likely to graduate, obtain better grades, increase their attendance, and attend college when families are actively involved in their children's education. There is a distinction between family engagement and family involvement, according to Sudderth (2022). Involvement frequently suggests a one-way, directive approach to the connection between the family and the school. Engagement, on the other hand, denotes a mutually beneficial relationship between families and schools.

Family engagement also creates an overall environment of support that enables learners to feel cared for and valued at school. Although this study focuses on parental

involvement, parental engagement is also regarded as important. It would be interesting to see how teachers and parents exchange experiences of the child in learning as they engage with him both at home and school. By interacting with families, teachers can better understand the resources these **learners'** require to succeed in school and foster a community where everyone is respected and heard. Roy and Giraldo-García (2018:30) emphasized the responsibility of parents to support their children, both in terms of academic achievement and social/emotional skills, to have a real impact on their development as individuals who have been prepared to interact with society on a global scale. According to the research, a child's surroundings and family background have a big impact on how well they do in school. Citing Elias (2006), Roy and Giraldo-García (2018) posit that the promotion of social/emotional skills to enhance learners" academic performance finds an ally in the level and style of parental involvement if we consider that "effective, lasting academic learning and socio-emotional learning are built on caring relationships".

Even though the study was conducted in a particular setting and the results cannot be applied outside of this study's more rural study area, the results do give us a unique understanding of the factors and difficulties that influence parental involvement in learners" education. The study's conclusions showed that although parents are highly valued, there are still obstacles preventing them from fully contributing to their children's academic achievement. Based on the foregoing discussion, the study's objectives were to ascertain how teachers in the Hlanganani District of the Limpopo Province perceive parents' involvement in schools, to identify barriers and develop strategies for overcoming them, and to enforce parental involvement that is effective for learners" education. However, research on parental involvement in children's learning is primarily conducted in Western contexts, hence parental involvement is not well-documented in South Africa.

2. Literature Review

2.1. Parental involvement perspectives

In this study, parental engagement refers to parental involvement in children's learning and development and the learning process (Novianti & Garzia, 2020; (Jeynes, 2005). The findings of the Jeyes (2005) study revealed that parental engagement does have a favourable impact on the educational outcomes of children (Novianti & Garzia, 2020). However, the level of readiness for this type of learning among teachers, learners', and parents varies. According to Spera (2005), children whose parents actively participate in school activities are more likely to succeed than those whose parents do not.

Parental participation can be examined through different methods, according to Jabar et al. (2023). Finley, Mira, and Schwartz (2008), for example, divided participation into three categories: expressive (play, sharing of activities), instrumental (imposing discipline, and involvement in mentoring/advising (developing intellectual competence). At the same time, Epstein's model of parental participation emphasized six different types of involvement behaviours (Epstein & Dauber, 1991). Positive home environments, communication, participation at school, home learning activities, group decision-making within the school, and community relationships are included. When asked about their impressions of parental participation in their student's academic pursuits, teachers in this survey also mentioned these favourable home conditions.

On the other hand, some academics perceive parental participation as a type of capital (Jabar et al., 2023). For instance, McNeal (1999), mentioned in Jabar et al. (2023), contends that parents can invest in their children's education with a variety of capitals, including physical capital, human capital, social capital, and cultural capital. In terms of social capital, McNeal (1999) operationalised it as consisting of parent-child conversations, PTO (parent-teacher organisation) involvement, parental oversight, and educational support measures. Therefore, this study focused on the PTO, one of the various capitals that affect parental engagement. Similar to Novianti and Garzia (2020), Bradley & Corwyn (2002) noted that children's participation in academic activities, the caliber of parent-child relationships, and the availability of learning resources are three essential components of the home learning environment that encourages children's educational development.

Importantly, Green et al. (2007) summarised parental engagement, which is divided into school-based and home-based involvement. According to Hoover-Dempsey et al. (2005), school-based involvement is defined as parental involvement in school-related activities such as attending parent-teacher conferences, which often address school-related concerns or school needs, and observing children's performance in physical activities. Home-based involvement, on the other hand, refers to parent-child interactions that happen outside of the classroom, such as helping with homework, parent-child communication, and keeping an eye on children's behaviour and academic progress. These interactions typically speak to parents' views on child development and appropriate home support (Hoover-Dempsey et al. (2005). Furthermore, Hsieh (2023) thought that since doing homework is highly appreciated in schools, such parental participation behaviours may lay a solid foundation for their children's success in school in the future.

2.2. Teachers' perceptions and relationship with parents

According to Goldman and Burke (2019), parental participation is linked to favourable outcomes like student happiness and decreased parental stress. However, simply involving parents does not automatically result in a strong, effective family-teacher partnership (Schuck, Lambert & Wang, 2023). Kim and Sheridan (2015) presented a partnership paradigm that highlighted two foci: relationships between families and schools and parent involvement through structural involvement. The focus of structural participation is on activities, both at home and at school (Kim & Sheridan, 2015). According to Schuck, Lambert, and Wang (2023), structural engagement can resemble more of a checklist for parents even though it is linked to several advantages and is not always focused on coordinating home and school activities. However, family-school partnerships emphasise cooperation and collaboration with awareness of "shared tasks and responsibilities across families and schools" and employ a family- and child-focused approach (Kim & Sheridan, 2015). Despite the requirement for parent involvement and family-school collaborations together with the evidence that doing so is advantageous for teacher education programmes (Murray, Mereoiu, & Handyside, 2013), preservice teachers frequently receive little training in parent-teacher communication (Kyzar et al., 2019). The relationship between parents and teachers may become disconnected as a result, with some parents feeling that they are not fully involved (Azad, Wolk, & Mandell, 2018). In contrast to parents who gave teachers substantially better ratings on communication indices, all teachers believed they were doing a good job educating parents, according to a study by LaBarbera (2017). Previous studies have also emphasised parents' desire for teachers to speak particularly about methods that can be used at home (Azad, Wolk, & Mandell, 2018). In LaBarbera's (2017) study, all teachers believed they were engaging with parents about home-based techniques, but few parents thought this communication was sufficient.

2.3. Perception of parents' academic support

According to Jabar et al. (2023), the concept of parental participation is complex. Parental participation is firstly measured using a variety of indicators or measures due to its differing definitions. Second, it is unclear whose viewpoint should be emphasised in parental engagement studies because it is a social field with a variety of role participants (Shearer, 2006). Because of this, opinions about parental involvement vary among the various stakeholders, including parents, teachers, and learners' (Connell, 2018). Connell (2018) says in her study that parents, learners', and teachers should all have a comprehensive awareness of how and what role they play in parental participation to address this issue.

In their study, Schuck, Lambert, and Wang (2023) discovered that teachers reported varying degrees of parental and family engagement. Some needed to be more involved, notably parents of smaller children and those who needed more significant support, while other parents just assisted in turning on technology and were around in case assistance was needed. Schuck, Lambert, and Wang (2023) also noted in their study that parents of older children tended to be there for behaviour control and to increase motivation to engage. Parents mentioned that a barrier to assisting children at home was access to technology and Wi-Fi connection. Schuck, Lambert, and Wang (2023) emphasised that teachers are trying to teach parents how to put classroom strategies, such as visual timetables, and token economy systems, as well as the more general concept of increasing learners' independence, into practice. Although teaching parents these strategies was not always simple, it is crucial that teachers now understand that these are areas that might require additional at-home attention (Schuck, Lambert, and Wang, 2023).

2.4. Parents' inclusive support for learners with diverse needs

It can be particularly difficult to teach learners with impairments online, as noted by Stenhoff, Pennington, and Tapp (2020), as these learners may need aids that are often not attainable through a screen. In addition, many special education teachers use a range of non-online behavioural techniques to boost motivation and participation (Stahl et al., 2017). As a result, special educators had to rely primarily on family involvement during the closing of educational facilities. According to Thurlow, Liu, and Mentan (2022), it is critical to develop and maintain trustworthy connections with parents and guardians of children with disabilities if you want to involve them in decisions about their children's schooling. Reaching out to parents is necessary to get to know them, their children, and their family's culture. In addition, it gives parents a chance to interact with teachers and contribute to their children's progress (Thurlow, Liu & Mentan, 2022). Fostering these relationships between educators and parents will also aid in eradicating any biases present in the dominant society. Thurlow, Liu, and Mentan (2022) claim that this approach makes parents feel valued as contributors to their children's success both inside and outside of the classroom. The decisions made as a result of involving parents in the planning and decision-making process for their child's education are better for the child's teaching and assessment outcomes when the child feels appreciated and engaged (Koran & Kopriva, 2017). When consideration is given to the resources that parents or guardians provide in terms of their cultural, social, and human capital, learners with disabilities have a better chance of succeeding (Bourdieu, 1992).

2.5. Learners' discipline and behavioral challenges

According to McIntosh (2023), interventions based on behavioural theory principles are incredibly effective at altering human behaviour. This makes teachers and learners a

potential target for improving educational systems. McIntosh (2023) also hinted that the principles are so potent that it is helpful to think about this fundamental tenet: even when the goal is good, the more effective the practice, the more it is necessary to ensure that it is applied ethically. Teachers struggled to improve outcomes for learners' with disabilities, especially those classified as having emotional or behavioural disorders. This led to the development of the application of positive behaviour support to school systems, also known as schoolwide positive behavioural interventions and support. Given the multitude of learners' who needed support plans together with the resources needed to implement them, the student-by-student strategy of employing individual support plans was proving to be too challenging to implement in classes and schools (Colvin et al., 1993). An alternative would be to alter the host environment to better promote the social, emotional, and behavioural development of all learners' (Kame'enui and Simmons, 1998).

Importantly, Balayar and Langlais (2022) believe that parental engagement and support are the most important variables in fostering children's happy emotions and academic achievement. It was shown that during the COVID-19 epidemic, academic performance, motivation to engage in learning, socialising, prosocial conduct, discipline, and externalising and internalising behaviours all declined. The results of this study demonstrated a strong relationship between student behaviour and the intensity of parental involvement in academic and extracurricular activities.

3. Theoretical Framework

The research employed Jeynes's (2018) Dual Navigation Approach (DNA). Jeynes (2018) proposed the Dual Navigation Approach (DNA) model that separated out and developed school-based and home-based parental participation components, and discovered that collaboration with teachers had the maximum effect. The home-based and school-based parts of parental involvement are the two main branches that the DNA model separates and develops. According to the theory, educational leaders should work to increase parental involvement and engagement both at home and at school (Jeynes, 2018:149). It is thought that student performance can be significantly improved when the two elements combine. This is backed up by Goodall and Montgomery's (2014) assertion that for learners' to succeed, school officials must recognise the value of parental participation both at home and at school. They also emphasise how important it is for schools to teach and mentor parents about the aspects of parental involvement that should be modelled at home (ibid). Grandparents or other guardians who are significantly involved in the child's life may also be subject to these requirements.

4. Method

4.1. Paradigm

The interpretivism paradigm was used to analyse the study since the researchers think that participants will actively participate in all stages of the processes (De Vos, Strydom, Fouché & Delport, 2011: 7). Guba and Lincoln (1989) hold that knowledge and meaning are products of interpretation and seek to consider the various interpretations that people, as intricate and complex beings, have regarding the phenomenon under study (parental involvement in schools), which teachers perceived as they interacted with parents within the context of the school. To better comprehend parental involvement in education, the researchers analysed the data gathered from schoolteachers.

4.2. Approach and Design

A qualitative approach (De Vos, et al., 2011) was used to allow for an in-depth understanding of social phenomena within their natural setting, i.e. four schools of Hlanganani District in Limpopo Province. Rahman (2016: 103) posits that the qualitative approach can refer to research about persons' lives, lived experiences, behaviours, emotions, and feelings as well as about organisational functioning, social movements, cultural phenomena, and interactions between nations. Information on all these can be obtained through dialogue rather than statistics. A case study research design was employed in this study. De Vos, Strydom, *Fouché,* and Delport (2014: 321) define a case study as an exploration of a bounded system (bounded by time, context, and or place), or a single or multiple case, over some time. In the study, four schools in the Hlanganani District of Limpopo Province were selected as the case for research.

4.3. Interviews and Participants

Four focus group discussions were conducted with teachers in the four schools selected for the study to gather relevant data. Purposive sampling was used to enlist parents from the four schools in this study (Patton, 2002). In the Hlanganani school district in Tzaneen, Limpopo Province, parents from two primary schools and two secondary schools were included. This district's schools are characterised by overcrowding in the classrooms, a lack of skilled teachers, a lack of instructional materials, and a poor and/or malfunctioning infrastructure. The demographics of participants in the focus groups were as follows: the majority of participants were women, the average participant age was 45, 72% of parents had at least a high school diploma (the highest level of education in the group), and 66% of participants were unemployed. A total of 41 parents were questioned in four distinct focus groups.

Data were analysed thematically to identify, organise, describe, and report themes within a data set (Nowell, Norris, White, and Moules, 2017: 2).

4.4. Data analysis

To develop an understanding of extensive information, qualitative research is a broad field that uses a range of analytical tools. Thematic analysis is one of the more widespread methods employed by qualitative researchers, and it entails the discovery of recurrent patterns that are then presented by researchers as overarching claims or themes (Lochmiller, 2021; Braun, & Clarke, 2006). By employing the participant's own written or spoken testimony, scholars can define and characterise what that participant's reality is (Lochmiller, 2021). The following themes emerged from this study: the relationship between teachers and parents; homework policies and support; inclusive help for learners' with a variety of needs; behavioural and discipline issues; and additional difficulties around parental engagement.

5. Findings

SCHOOL 1: Teachers at School 1 have a positive view of parental involvement, appreciating the support and interest parents show in their children's education. In support of valuing the support given by parents, one teacher mentioned that most parents in the school want to be kept abreast with the academic progress of their children. Furthermore, teachers indicated that effective communication and a partnership between home and school are prioritised, and teachers value the collaborative efforts of parents, social workers, and therapists to provide inclusive support for learners' with diverse needs. For example, one teacher indicated, *"We call the parents and explain the problems, advise them to go to social workers or therapists for help."* Teachers at the school also emphasised the importance of having a homework policy and alternative disciplinary measures to create a positive learning environment.

SCHOOL 2: Teachers at School 2 have a positive relationship with parents who actively support their children's education. The school maintains open communication through platforms like WhatsApp and follows a homework policy. Teachers employ various strategies such as advising parents to enroll their children in special schools to address learners' challenges and provide support for learners' with special needs, ensuring a comprehensive and inclusive learning environment. Parents are seen as valuing education and making informed choices by selecting the school for their children's education.

SCHOOL 3: Teachers have different perceptions of parental involvement, with some seeing themselves as mentors and educators guiding learners' academically and in

developing good behavior and values. The relationship with parents is considered complex, with some parents actively supporting their child's education while others may not fully comprehend the teacher's responsibilities. To demonstrate this one teacher stated, *"Those who understand make my role as a teacher be seen. For those who do not understand, it's a bit complex because of the education level."* The school stands out and is renowned in terms of good teaching, academic performance, and overall good learner behaviour. Teachers address the challenges of learners not doing homework through subject-specific guidelines and offer additional support for struggling learners' with the help of parents. Besides challenges of homework completion by learners, teachers indicated that they involve parents and social workers when dealing with learners with special needs or behavioural challenges. In particular, one teacher mentioned, *"We provide extended learning opportunities and extra classes for learners who struggle to cope in class"* when asked about support mechanisms used to support parents whose learners require special attention academically.

SCHOOL 4: Teachers at School 4 emphasised the importance of communication and engagement with parents when addressing academic or behavioural issues. They believe that collaboration between parents and teachers can have a significant impact on a learner's learning journey. To illustrate the involvement of parents one teacher stated, *"For learners with behavioural challenges, we sit down with them, guide them, and involve their parents. If the behaviour doesn't change, we may take the matter to the disciplinary committee or involve specialists."* Thus, the school provides additional support for learners with special needs, and a disciplinary committee involving parents handles disciplinary matters. They have systems in place to track attendance, address absenteeism, and promote transparency. While communication primarily relies on written letters and announcements, the school recognises the potential of technology for enhanced communication in the future while considering the unique dynamics of its school community.

6. Discussion and Conclusions

Although home-based parental involvement is important for young children's learning (Suizzo et al., 2014), less is known about how this involvement affects adolescents' academic performance. This study examined teachers' relationship with parents, the support provided by parents, and the assistance provided by parents regarding behaviour and challenges shown by children with diverse needs at school.

6.1. **Teachers' relationship with parents.** Some teachers have a positive view of parental involvement. The teachers express satisfaction with the level of parental involvement at the school. Without a doubt, Wong et al. (2018) stressed that parental

educational involvement was favourably associated with children's linguistic proficiency and psychological well-being, and the associations were linked through engaging children with school. Teachers further appreciated that parents show interest in their children's education and actively follow their progress. They mention that parents frequently visit the school and check their children's work. In this regard, in their study, Smith et al. (2022) discovered that welcoming school policies and staff attitudes are seen to be crucial for building parent-teacher connections. Conversely, when it comes to the relationship with parents, teachers perceive it as complex. Smith et al. (2022) and Clarke et al. (2017) added to the complexity by stating that interventions like family-school engagements and parent-teacher relationships were found to significantly influence these characteristics (child-community; parent-teacher: family-school), indicating that these characteristics can enhance the quality of joining activities and communication between parents and teachers. Research has therefore shown that initiatives aimed at boosting parental involvement in education have favourable effects on children, families, and school communities (Jeynes, 2012; Catalano and Catalano, 2014 cited in Lara & Saracostti, 2019). Some parents understand the teacher's role and actively support their child's education. However, some parents do not fully comprehend the teacher's responsibilities, making it challenging for teachers to fulfill their roles effectively. For instance, Holmes et al. (2021) discovered that the quality of the relationships between teachers and parents as described by teachers varied depending on manifestations of particular interactional features that encouraged cooperation between parents and teachers. This lack of understanding is often attributed to differences in education levels. Additionally, teacher reports of parental involvement are linked to improved teacher evaluations of student-teacher relationships and lower reports of oppositional, hyperactive/impulsive, and inattentive behaviour in learners' (Dawson & Wymbs, 2016).

6.2. **Homework policy and support**. According to the teachers in this study, parents are actively involved in their children's education and provide support at home. They mention that parents help their children with homework, offer words of encouragement, and assist each other. Grolnick and Pomerantz (2022) in particular hold the opinion that teachers involve parents in a range of activities (such as volunteering in the classroom and helping with homework), and many parents join in when they get the chance to help. Teachers feel comfortable working with parents and appreciate the partnership between home and school. According to Grolnick and Pomerantz (2022), parent involvement is also favourably associated with children's motivation, engagement, and achievement, outside of parental help with homework. The teachers discuss the school's homework policy and their approach to monitoring completion. While teachers mention that they are not entirely familiar with the policy, they emphasise the importance of checking whether learners have done their homework. Teachers also mention that alternative disciplinary measures, rather than corporal punishment, are used for non-compliance.

Teachers provide homework guidelines specific to each subject taught. For learners who struggle with completing homework, teachers offer additional support and may schedule extra sessions after school to help them catch up. Similarly, learners' with poor performance receive extra work and attention to improve their understanding and academic performance. In this study, teachers are also playing an important role in the academic success of children. This was done to counteract the Wu et al. (2022) finding that parental involvement is more ineffectively negative (e.g., characterised by irritation) than positive (e.g., characterised by happiness) and more controlling (e.g., intrusive and directive) than autonomy-supportive during elementary and middle school when children are frustrated with homework or performing poorly in school (e.g., permitting initiative and choice). The teachers believe that effective communication between teachers and parents is crucial for the education of their children. They mention that parents approach them with questions and concerns about their children's academic performance. In response, the teachers explain the problems and challenges faced by the children and work together with the parents to find solutions. This demonstrates the significance of parental efficacy and shows how parents may continue to be involved in their children's education even in the face of difficulties. There is strong empirical support for the idea that parents are more interested in their children's learning overall when they feel more capable of assisting them in achieving academic success (Green et al., 2007; Hoover-Dempsey et al., 1992). For instance, parents should encourage children's autonomy by letting them try to solve problems on their own and offering guidance when necessary. Problem-solving can be difficult, therefore parents must have confidence in their ability to do so (Wu et al., 2022).

6.3. **Inclusive support for learners with diverse needs**. The teachers discuss how they support learners' with physical, learning, and behavioural challenges. They mention that they collaborate with parents, social workers, and therapists to address the specific needs of these learners'. The outcomes of this study are supported by the conclusions of Raley et al. (2023) that parents and teachers should provide experiences that may help a student's decision-making abilities as well as processes in which the learners' may need guidance. Regarding learners with special needs, teachers mention in this study that they consider learners' inclusion in sporting activities, ensuring they have opportunities to participate. However, they admit that they are still thinking about additional activities or support tailored-made activities specifically aimed at these learners.

6.4. **Discipline and behavioural challenges.** In the case of behavioural challenges, teachers address the issue by having discussions with the learners and involving their parents. If the behaviours do not improve, they may escalate the matter to the disciplinary committee and involve specialists such as social workers or even the police, if required. For instance, Kwok and Fang (2022) claimed that nonviolent discipline has

favourable effects on the well-being of primary school pupils, but parental psychological aggression has detrimental effects. learners' with a growth attitude and more school attachment exhibit higher levels of well-being (Kwok & Fang, 2022). When it comes to absenteeism, teachers take proactive measures to find out the reasons for a student's absence, such as contacting parents or visiting their homes. They rarely encounter problems with truancy or other attendance-related issues. To address bullying, teachers indicated that they invite the parent and the bully into discussions to understand the reasons behind their behaviour. Teachers work towards finding alternative solutions and involve parents and disciplinary committees when needed. Zhu (2023) asserts that parents can promote social development by talking to their children about their connections with their classmates, teaching them how to handle conflict, and cultivating a feeling of responsibility and respect for others. Teachers acknowledge that learners' who are bullied may not always report incidents, making it crucial to create a safe environment for them to speak up.

6.5. **Other challenges facing parental involvement.** First, The Hlanganani District experiences serious socioeconomic problems, such as poverty, unemployment, and restricted access to resources. These elements may have an impact on parents' capacity to participate actively in their children's education. Due to their limited financial resources or lack of free time, parents may come across as being disengaged from teachers. Keizer et al. (2022) and Poon (2020) provided evidence that low-income parents typically have less predictable schedules, where they work long hours or hold numerous jobs to provide for their families. Ours is consistent with the findings of this study. It can be challenging for low-income parents to be involved in their children's education both at home and at school because educational systems frequently do not take these concerns into account (Withuhn, 2023). Second, Sepedi, Xitsonga, and Tshivenda are among the many languages spoken in the linguistically diverse province of Limpopo. Language barriers can make it difficult for parents and teachers to work together effectively. Parents who find it difficult to communicate clearly in the language used in schools may be perceived by teachers as being uninvolved, which can result in misunderstandings and low engagement. As a result, these parents may be less literate and linguistically skilled than higher-income parents, have less awareness of the educational system, and be less capable of supporting their child's academic progress in school (Forster & van de Werfhorst, 2020) as opposed to higher income family earners (Withuhn, 2023).

Third, teachers' perceptions of parental involvement may differ from parents' perceptions due to cultural differences. Depending on cultural norms or practices, teachers may occasionally have different expectations regarding parental involvement. These distinctions may result in biases or misunderstandings that affect how teachers view parents' level of involvement. Fourth, parents who are not well-educated may be seen as not being involved by teachers. Parents with limited educational backgrounds might feel

less comfortable participating in school activities or helping their children with their schoolwork. Instead of a knowledge or skills gap, teachers might interpret this as a lack of interest. Finally, stereotypes and prejudice: Teachers' perceptions of parental involvement may be impacted by unconscious prejudices or stereotypes they hold. Teachers may have preconceived notions about particular families or communities, which can result in biased assessments of parental involvement. Fair evaluations of parental involvement depend on overcoming these prejudices and promoting an inclusive environment.

In conclusion, teachers' relationships with parents play a crucial role in learners" overall success and well-being. While some teachers have a positive view of parental involvement and appreciate the active support from parents in their children's education, others find the relationship complex due to differences in understanding and cultural norms. Parental support in homework and communication is highly valued, and teachers actively work to support learners with diverse needs. However, challenges such as socioeconomic issues, language barriers, cultural differences, and unconscious biases can hinder effective parental involvement. A comprehensive and collaborative approach involving various stakeholders, including promoting cultural understanding, implementing parent education programmes, and creating parental involvement-friendly school policies, is recommended to address these challenges. By fostering stronger relationships and recognising the value of parental involvement, schools in the Hlanganani District can create a more inclusive and supportive environment for all learners.

7. Recommendations

To address the challenges associated with teachers' perceptions of parental involvement in schools in the Hlanganani District, a comprehensive and collaborative approach involving various stakeholders is required. These can include:

Promoting cultural understanding: Encourage teachers to interact with parents and learn about their cultural backgrounds to foster stronger relationships and more accurate perceptions of parental involvement.

Parent education programmes: Parent education programs can provide parents with the knowledge and skills they need to actively participate in their children's education.

Creating parental involvement-friendly school policies: Education policymakers should create policies that recognise and value parental involvement. Examples are guidelines for teachers on engaging with parents, allocating resources for parent involvement initiatives, and incorporating parent feedback into decision-making processes.

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