

**PARENTAL ENGAGEMENT IN THE EDUCATION OF GRADE 1 LEARNERS DURING
THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC IN RAKWADU 2 CIRCUIT**

By

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DECLARATION

I, **MAFA MMAPOTLO CONSTANCE**, hereby declare that the dissertation for Master of Education in Early Childhood Development Studies degree hereby submitted by me, has not previously been submitted for a degree at this or any other institution, and that this is my own work in design and execution and that all reference materials contained therein have been duly acknowledged.



MAFA MMAPOTLO CONSTANCE
DEDICATION

DATE: 2024/02/10

This study is dedicated to my dear husband, Masilo Julius Mafa, my siblings and dear children, Dephney, Maphuti, Mojalefa, and Kgotso and my granddaughter, Bokamoso. They supported me unconditionally. To my father, it would be a great pleasure to celebrate my achievement with you. May your precious soul continue to rest in peace.

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ABSTRACT

The study sought to investigate parental engagement in the education of Grade 1 learners during the Covid-19 pandemic in Rakwadu 2 Circuit in Limpopo province. The Covid-19 pandemic led to an abrupt closure of all South African schools on the 18th of March 2020. Therefore, the closure of schools was the right decision to control the spreading of the virus among learners and teachers.

However, learners' performance was severely affected as they languished at home without any curricular assistance from parents. The study was guided by Joyce Epstein's theory, subsumed under the interpretive research paradigm. An explorative qualitative research design was employed, and data were collected through face-to-face interviews, observations and document analysis. Observations were conducted with the teachers only. Teachers were observed while collecting work from the learners and further analysed thematically. A purposeful sampling procedure was employed to select twelve (12) participants from two (2) primary schools; two (2) Grade 1 teachers per school (the total number of teachers was 4) and eight (8) parents whose learners were in Grade 1. There were four parents from each sampled school. The findings revealed distinctive challenges of insufficient parental engagement in the school setting. The study recommended parents to get involved in education to improve learners' performance amidst the impact of the Covid19 pandemic.

Keywords: Covid-19 pandemic, Early Childhood Education, Grade 1 learner, Parent, Parental engagement

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LIST OF ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

DoE	:	Department of Education
WHO	:	World Health Organisation
COVID-19	:	Coronavirus Disease 2019
CAPS	:	Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statement
FP	:	Foundation Phase
SASSA	:	South African Schools Act

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CHAPTER 1 INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND TO THE STUDY

1.1 INTRODUCTION

Education is widely recognised as a fundamental right of individuals (Kopp,Babolat,McCrary and Polanin,2020:89), although the advent of the Covid-19 pandemic in 2020 brought about significant transformations in both the lifestyle and educational practices. As a result of Covid, learners entering schools, especially Grade 1s were destined to encounter a distinct learning experience compared to those who were already in the education system. According to the State President (Salam,20:47), school closures were officially declared in South Africa on 18 March 2020, resulting in the disruption of educational activities for a population of approximately 17 million learners from pre-school to secondary levels (Baranowski, 2022:91).

According to World Health Organisation (WHO), China notified the WHO during December 2019, about a deadly coronavirus discovered in the city of Wuhan, Hubei province, central China (WHO, 2020:1). Following the outbreak of that deadly pandemic, the President of the Republic of South Africa, Cyril Ramaphosa, announced stringent measures aimed at curbing the spread of the virus (Chukwuneme, Olaniyi, and Innocent, 2023;81). According to the Covid-19 pandemic Disaster Management Task Force (2020) stringent measures included amongst others, exercising healthy living practices as well as practising social distancing (Thomson and Ip, 2020:109)

South African schools were closed from Wednesday, the 18th of March 2020, considering that schools are by nature a very high-risk environment, if one considers how learners interact with each other as well as the teachers (Noor, Ayuningtyas & Prihatiningsih, 2020:26). The closure of schools and total lockdown affected learners' performance, as the academic year was disrupted (Disaster Management Task Force, 2020:31). The main function of the Department of Basic Education (DBE) is the implementation and monitoring of the curriculum (DBE, 2021:126). Principals, together with their management teams are responsible for the day-

today running of schools in an attempt to cover the curriculum (Zenda, 2021:126). Therefore, there was a need to involve parents of learners in order to work collaboratively with teachers and learners to improve learner performance as a key priority.

According to Mutlokwa (2022:20), The South African Schools Act (No. 84 of 1996) advocates that all stakeholders must have active participation in the governance and management of schools. The pandemic outbreak led to a considerable loss of time in contact teaching, resulting in poor performance of learners (Salam, 2020:8) In 2020, the DBE implemented Revised National Curriculum Statement Grade R-9 recovery plans in order to make up for lost contact learning. Curriculum recovery plans were developed taking into consideration the number of days lost by learners, and how those days could be recovered (Department of Education, 2020:12). The curriculum was streamlined, reorganised and trimmed in all grades except for Grade 12. Annual teaching plans (ATPs) were amended for each grade starting from Grade R to 11. According to Fay et al (2020:16) learners from previously disadvantaged communities were severely affected by the pandemic, as its impact left an indelible mark of subjects' knowledge and content gaps among learners, particularly the Grade 1 learners. Learners from ordinary public schools were still incapable of reading and writing within their age groups and grade levels (Fay et al, 2020:16). However, their counterparts in former model C schools in more affluent communities can write, read and count at their appropriate age and grade levels with much ease because parental involvement seemed to have been highly prioritised even before the new normal (Mohale, Litshina, Mashau, Mudau, Moyo & Sebopetsa, 2020:132 I).

Schools in more affluent communities were able to engage and influence parents regarding the learning of their children, hence better results in writing, reading and/or counting in contrast to learners from ordinary public schools (Harris, 2020:715). According to Schwab and Davids (2018:27), the dawn of the Fourth Industrial Revolution (4IR) has come as a relief and a mechanism to stop the spread of Covid-19 (Khan, 2021:4630). The majority of former model

C schools are now technologically advanced in the use of technology for teaching and learning. According to Basilaia and Kvakadze, (2020:54) schools were equipped with virtual classrooms and laboratories, virtual libraries and the use of massive open online courses (MOOCs), paper-less classrooms, projectors, internet, WhatsApp, Twitter, Facebooks, Instagram and Skype, which enable teachers, parents and learners to interact amidst Covid19 pandemic and its devastating effects (Schwab et al, 2018:30). However, all these cannot replace the duties of parents in the education of their children, as “parents are the educators of their children” (Zeynep & Sahin, 2021:890). Therefore, Venketsamy and Miller, (2021:60) states that parental involvement in the education of learners can bring a huge difference to learners’ academic performance irrespective of their background and level of education.

The Covid-19 pandemic and school closure created a unique situation in previously disadvantaged public ordinary schools (Santos, 2020:43). However, parents want their children to excel academically regardless of their educational background and family earning levels (Thomson and Ip, 2020:109). The schools need to get in touch with learners’ parents and ensure that the necessary stationery and equipment are readily available for learning (Venketsamy & Miller, 2021:60). Never had there been an outcry about how and to what extent parents of learners from public ordinary schools could be included in support of the curriculum and their children’s academic achievement like it was in the new normal (Salam,20:47). Hence, the Covid-19 pandemic has made a powerful case for making meaningful parental involvement a critical piece of what education should look like pre- and post-pandemic (Khan, 2021:4631). One of the ways to prevent the Covid-19 pandemic from robbing an entire generation of children was to empower parents and guardians to support home learning (Meira, 2020:67). This was and is still true, especially in the preliminary grades in which learners require regulated facilitation by adults. Therefore, in this premise, the study sought to explore parental involvement in the education of Grade 1 learners during Covid-19 pandemic in Rakwadu 2 Circuit in Limpopo province.

1.2 STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

The Covid-19 pandemic which resulted in schools’ closure had a devastating effect on learners’ performance (Harris, 2020:31). Learners languished at home through the Covid-19

pandemic lockdown and schools' closure without any curriculum intervention to cover up the lost contact time (Louise, 2020:60).

There was a need for collaborative engagement between schools and parents in an attempt to overcome the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic (Harris, 2020:31). This obligates parents with the primary responsibility of taking their children to school from as early as four-and-a-half years old as indicated by South African Schools Act No 84 of 1996. At school, teachers play their assigned roles as “in-loco parentis”, and continue teaching learners in the absence of their parents (Duncan, 2015:23). However, according to Wilder, (2023: 44), there are public concerns that most parents of learners from public ordinary schools are inactively involved in their children's education.

As one of the teachers in Rakwadu 2 Circuit, I was prompted to conduct this investigation because of public concerns raised regarding inadequate parental engagement in the education of Grade 1 learners during the COVID-19 pandemic (Hedenbro & Rydelius, 2019:4). Some of the concerns raised include amongst others that parents do not create a child-friendly environment at home for learners to do their school work with ease. Parents are not complementing schools in providing much-needed support and educational resources to learners (Liman & Wahyadiah, 2023:213). Learners are not assisted in doing their school work, assignments, reading and writing (Liu & Sulumani, 2022:123). Some of the parents have completely withdrawn their roles in the learning of their children, and have given their parental responsibilities to teachers and schools (Hisham, Ovchiston & Ducan, 2019:473). The gradual withdrawal of parents came in the form of non-attendance to school meetings, not visiting schools to make follow-up on learners' performance and other related challenges (Hopkins, Higham & Duncan, 2019:473). Learners' whose parents are uninvolved underperform and drop out of school (Louise, 2020:61). Therefore, all these concerns raised regarding parental engagement in the education of learners cannot be discerned without being investigated. Hence, my intention in embarking on this investigation was to share new knowledge with other academics on parental engagement in the education of Grade 1 learners in Rakwadu 2 Circuit in Limpopo province.

1.3. AIMS OF THE STUDY

The study aimed to explore parental engagement in the education of Grade 1 learners during the Covid-19 pandemic in Rakwadu 2 Circuit in Limpopo province.

1.4. OBJECTIVES

The objectives of the study were as follows:

- To investigate the parents' perceptions regarding their involvement in their children's education;
- To explore how parental engagement can improve the academic performance of Grade 1 learners during the future pandemic; and
- To establish intervention that can be implemented by the teachers to improve parental engagement.

1.5. RESEARCH QUESTIONS

The main research question of this study was: What were the challenges that caused inadequate parental engagement in the education of Grade 1 learners during the Covid-19 pandemic?

In pursuing the aim of the researcher was guided by the following questions:

- 1.5.1 What were parents' perceptions of parents regarding their involvement in their children's education.
- 1.5.2. How can parental engagement improve the academic performance of Grade 1 learners during future pandemics?
- 1.5.3. Which intervention strategies can be implemented to improve parental engagement?

1.6. LITERATURE REVIEW

The literature review is, according to Matney (2018:101), a search regarding any available written information that directly and indirectly relates to the research topic or subject. Therefore, it was conducted to address the questions and benchmarks arising from this study. It also takes into consideration the findings from other authors and research journals and comparatively puts them into context with the study. This literature review amongst others discussed the concept of “parental engagement” – as a working definition, roles and responsibilities as well strategies that can be used for parental engagement in the education of learners.

1.6.1. Parental engagement

‘Parent engagement’ is a broad scope of responsibilities and/or obligations that parents shoulder with regards to the education of their children (Schoeman, 2018:12). These responsibilities and/or obligations include amongst others – attending school functions, parent-teacher conferences, and assisting their children with homework, the necessary study time and relevant resources (Rosario & Antonio, 2018:13).

Latunde, Clark and Louque (2016:74) define parental engagement as the voluntary and active participation of parents in the education of their children. Browner and Gordon (2017:161) include parental engagement in learners’ school-based and home-based activities with the sole purpose of improving their education. Therefore, parents’ school-based activities and participation by voluntarily serving in structures such as School Governing Bodies (SGB) and Quality Learning and Teaching Campaign (QLTC). These school-based structures work towards the effective running of the school.

It must be understood that parents’ engagement in home-based activities is about assisting learners with homework, reading, writing, counting and assignments. Therefore, the main focus of this study was on home-based activities during the Covid-19 pandemic lockdown. According to Epstein (2020:01), Covid-19 has deprived many children of learning opportunities; thus there are more efforts to overcome the disparities in the home-learning

environment of supporting learners with school work. Therefore, there are disparities in the home learning environment, such as supporting learners with schoolwork. However, despite all efforts to overcome the disparities, vulnerable learners facing a lack of parental engagement still do not achieve foundational literacy and numeracy skills (Baranowski, 2022:93).).

1.6.2. Strategies/Skills for parental engagement

The importance of the home environment for learning has been documented in numerous studies. The DBE n (2010:41) recognised the need to assist parents and guardians to get through the Covid-19 pandemic lockdown as effectively as possible. However, the DBE (2010:16) further maintains that parents were unexpected to become teachers per se, nor expect children to teach themselves the curriculum. Therefore, parents and guardians needed to ensure that meaningful learning took place at home during the Covid-19 pandemic lockdown. This study focused on the need for parents to support their children in an attempt to save the academic year.

Cotton and Wikelund (2018:56) outlined the following guidelines and strategies to assist parents in support of their children's education:

Teachers and administrators must be able to assess their own readiness to involve parents and determine how they wish to engage and utilise them. Furthermore, teachers need to communicate with parents regarding their engagement and support which makes a great difference in their children's school performance.

Parents need to be encouraged regarding their engagement as early as children start to enter school (preschool years).

Parents must be taught model reading behaviour and that reading to children increases children's interest in learning.

Parents need to develop programmes that conduct learning activities for children in their homes, assist with homework, monitoring and encourage learning activities for older students. Orientate and train parents, but always bear in mind that intensive, long-lasting training is neither necessary nor feasible.

Monitor and engage with parents regarding the involvement of disadvantaged students, who would benefit mostly from parents' participation in their learning, but whose parents are often initially reluctant to become involved.

Parents should build a sense of security and normalcy for their children, and work with children to structure routines that work for the family (Cotton & Wikelund, 2018:16). The next subsection discusses the roles and responsibilities of parents in their children's education.

1.6.3. The roles and responsibilities of parents

The first teachers of children are the parents, and they are the most important force behind child development without any doubt (Duncan: 2015:38). According to Cotton and Wikelund (2018:13), the engagement of parents has a significant effect on the quality of learners, experience of teaching and learning in the school and the results. Therefore, parents have extremely important roles to perform in the education of their children. Duncan (2015:39) further identifies the rights of parents in schools as follows:

- Being enlightened about their children's education,
- Treatment of fairness and respect must be adhered,
- Provide quality resources, opportunities and education for their children, and
- Receive information about the school periodically.

1.7 DEFINITION OF KEY CONCEPTS

1.7.1. Covid-19 Pandemic

Stefan (2021:2) defines COVID-19 as a disease caused by the SARS-CoV-2 virus continues to grow, the cytology laboratory must also brace itself to continue to offer the best service to patients, trainees, and pathologists. Furthermore, Muhamad, Suliman and Rabeea (2020:91) referred Covid-19 as an extremely contagious and pathogenic viral infection caused by severe acute respiratory syndrome coronavirus 2 (SARS-coV 2) that emerged in Wuhan, China and spread around the world. Genomic analysis revealed that (SARS-coV 2) is phylogenetically related to severe acute respiratory syndromes like (SARS-like) bat virus, therefore, bats could

be the possible primary reservoir. In this study, Covid-19 is a disease caused by coronavirus. Its symptoms are fever and cough. The disease is capable of causing death in older people and those with other underlying health conditions such as diabetes and high blood pressure. It was first discovered in China in 2019 and it escalated into a pandemic in 2020. Shereen (2020:91) defined coronavirus disease (COVID-19) as the highly transmittable and pathogenic viral infection caused by severe acute respiratory syndrome coronavirus (SARS COV 2), which caused a global pandemic that led to a dramatic loss of human life worldwide. Maluleke (2022:11) labelled COVID-19 as the main comorbidities that lead to Covid-19 infections and death. In this study, coronavirus refers to the pandemic that disturbed the teaching and the learning of the learners of which learners are to be assisted at home.

1.7.2. Engagement

Antipkina and Ludlow (2020:856) described engagement as a “continuum of parenting behaviours ranging from those representing lower levels of involvement to those representing higher levels of involvement”. Engagement in parents refers to the participation of parents in a wide range of school based and home based activities to improve their learner’s education. In this study, engagement is the parent and school staff working together to improve and support and track the work of learners. Silinskas and Kilas (2019:2) described engagement as contacting a teacher, asking about their children’s homework and also looking for every single movement a learner makes. Also, engagement involves parent-child contact, family rules and responsibility, parental academic reports, parent school communication rendered at the school premises rather than at the teacher level and parents reviewing homework (Durisic & Bunijevac, 2017:3) In this study, engagement is when the parents should assist their children with the school activities that are given by the teachers to work at home. Also, engagement refers the active participation and involvement of parents in their children’s learning and educational experiences.

1.7.3. Grade 1 learners

From the studies done by Jaekel, Schurig, Florian and Ritter, (2017:632), the usual learner

who is between 5 and 6 years of age is in the first year of primary school or Grade 1, as it is commonly referred. This young learner moves from the home setting, where most of their interaction is with the mother, to a peer group setting and the larger community (Venketsamy & Miller, 2021:30). The learner suddenly steps into a world where people embrace you depending on your ability in terms of physical prowess and neuromuscular coordination (Krathwol, 2020:9). Also learners start interacting with reasons, logics and doing mathematics at this age (Krathwol, 2020:9).. This learner is to comprehend ideas, symbols, abstract thought patterns and the patterns of adult communication, although these concepts are to be simplified and introduced at the level of this learner, as pointed out by Jaekel, Schurig, Florian and Ritter, (2017:632). The Grade 1 learner in general is seen as being capable of making own decisions and choose to leave the protection of the home and become involved with peers and adult activities (Denzin & Lincoln, 2019:123).

Foundation phase refers to the first four years of schooling (Grades R to 3) where the medium of instruction is the learners' home language (Dagada, 2022:2). Stadio (2020:21) described foundation phase teaching as the formal qualification aimed at people who want to work with young people from Grades R to 3. Foundation phase constitutes the latter four years of early childhood development from birth to 9 years, (Beni, 2021:17). Foundation phase is the first phase of the general education and training band (Grades 1, 2 and 3), it focuses on primary skills, knowledge and values and in so doing, lays the foundation for further learning (DBE, 2010:52. In this study, foundation phase refers to the early years of schooling from Grade R (the year before formal schooling). It is a critical period for developing reading proficiency and lays the foundation for future learning.

1.7.4 Parents

According to Corbin and Strause (2019:32), a parent is one who has produced or been responsible for the birth of a child. A parent is a man or woman legally and officially responsible for the upbringing of a child (Dusi, 2020:108). Montacute and Cullinane (2018:41) stated that when a child is brought in this world by a man and woman, who turn to be parents to such a child and take the education role of the child. The child being ignorant of societal norms and in a state of helplessness places them in a desperate need of the parents' help

while at the same time recognizing the authority of their parents as natural helpers and educators (Dusi, 2020:108). This leads to parent taking a certain role and that role encompass the responsibility of providing care, protection and safe haven for the child apart from being responsible for his/her development and growth to adulthood (Corbin and Strause 2019;32). According to Montacute and Cullinane (2018:41), parents are seen role models who are directly responsible for the child development process and learning throughout childhood and into adulthood. The same Dusi, (2020:108) also perceive parents as primary teachers who are most involved with the largest part of whose education and the kind of person is becoming. In this perspective, defines parents as those who have the right to command the child and, at the same time, should be the ones who create a comfortable starting point for the child's other relations(Venketsamy & Miller, 2021:30). These study believe that a child is entirely indebted to parents and has a high degree of loyalty and obedience to them.

1.8. RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

The study aimed to explore parental engagement in the education of Grade 1 learners during the Covid-19 pandemic in Rakwadu 2 Circuit in Limpopo province.

This section presented the study's research paradigm, design and methodology, population, sampling procedures, sample and data collection.

The researcher adopted the interpretivism paradigm for this study.

1.8.1. Research Paradigm

A research paradigm reflects the worldview of the individual researcher's construct (Denzin & Lincoln, 2019:123). As explained by Creswell (2016:89), a research paradigm is a perspective that provides a rationale for research and commits the researcher to particular methods of data collection, observation and interpretation. Creswell (2018:92) further maintains that

research paradigm is the basic set of beliefs that guide actions as the researcher's epistemological, ontological and methodological premises.

The researcher adopted the interpretivist paradigm. Interpretivist paradigm is well-suited to social science research because of its constructionist base that seeks to uncover how actors make sense of their reality (Bryman, 2018:28). Rubin and Babbie (2018:90) assert that the social world in which we live, and its participants demand that their stories be told authentically and accurately. Therefore, this interpretivist approach provides unique opportunities for researchers to write about the lives of individuals, groups, and collectives.

Creswell (2016:79) argues that a single situation possesses many interpretations. Therefore, reality from this assumption is complex, multi-layered and perceived from the worldview of the researched. The opinions and views of teachers are uncovered as they reside in their world. Creswell (2016:82) further maintains that reality is multiple and depends on issues that exist in participants' minds, hence, the construction of reality rests on the instances that play out during interviews.

Epistemology is about the search for knowledge as an endeavour to discover the truth regarding the phenomenon (Creswell, 2016:34). This perspective is about knowledge as well as reality. The knowledge that people hold is created by society and is tied to a particular context, and this knowledge is shaped through the political, social, cultural and historical factors in the context of the study and time (Maxwell, 2017:170). People build knowledge from the experiences that they have through interpretation, evaluation and making conclusions on their experiences. Therefore, epistemology refers to knowledge accessed through participants' interpretations of their practices. Hence, the choice of **interpretive** research paradigm was quite relevant to the study.

1.8.2 Research Design

Babbie (2018:123) asserts that research design is an overall plan of research. According to Monette and Sullivan (2020:120), qualitative research design investigates issues in their natural settings. Participants' perceptions, ideas and assertions were gained through direct interactions with the researcher. Therefore, the researcher was the instrument, and to this

extent, the researcher and the participants as the research subjects were inseparably interconnected. One other reason for employing the qualitative research approach in the study was the close relationship that was established between qualitative research and the adopted interpretive research paradigm which was underpinned by symbolic interactionism.

1.8.3. Research Methodology

According to Leedey and Ormond (2020:24), research methodology is the formation and betterment of approaches and strategies to gather information, the development of methods to find out and elevate the psychometric attributes such as reliability and validity of the information gathered using approaches and analysis of data. Qualitative methods need to understand circumstances in totality in order to start a complete understanding of a person, programme or situation. According to Creswell (2018:65), in qualitative research, the researcher tends to become involved with the phenomena. In this study, the researcher used qualitative method in order to facilitate face-to-face interviews and observation in the classroom situation. Data were collected from two (2) sampled primary schools in Rakwadu 2 Circuit in Limpopo province. This made the researcher follow up on the raised questions.

1.9. SAMPLING

This section presented sampling, with a focus on population, sample size, data collection and analysis procedures.

1.9.1. Population

Bundari (2022:1) defines population as the entire group that the researcher wants to draw conclusion about. Other researchers define population as the individuals from whom the investigator wishes to generate findings of the study (McMillan & Schumacher, 2014:236).

The study's population included all parents whose learners were in Grade 1 in Rakwadu 2 Circuit and all the Grade 1 teachers in Rakwadu 2 Circuit in Limpopo province.

1.9.2. Sampling procedure

The study applied a purposeful sampling procedure. Creswell (2016:396) asserts that purposeful sampling is a process in which the researcher deliberately chooses people and sites to conduct the study. Therefore, the suitability of this sampling procedure is based on the knowledge of the researcher with regards to the population, the elements and the nature of the research objectives. The sample included twelve participants thus eight parents of Grade 1 learners. From each school where the parents were **purposefully** selected, two parents were illiterate and two were literate. Furthermore, four Grade 1 teachers were selected because they were teaching Grade 1 learners only.

The researcher selected two schools which consisted of more than one Grade 1 class and all the resources that the researcher wanted to observe. The researcher needed to explore the involvement of parents in the education of Grade 1 learners during Covid-19. The sampled schools had Grade 1 classes in which the researcher administered classroom observations and focus group interviews with Grade 1 teachers.

1.9.3. Sample size

Sample size is the number of participants selected to participate in a study as representative samples of the population (Fouche & De Vos, 2017:56). Twelve participants were sampled from two primary schools in Rakwadu 2 Circuit in Limpopo province because each school had two classes of Grade 1. The participants included eight parents whose children were in Grade 1 and four teachers who taught Grade 1.

1.9.4. Data collection instruments

The researcher employed face-to-face interviews, observations and document analysis as data collection methods. The researcher was granted permission by Mopani West District (Department of Education) to administer the research. Parents of learners who were in Grade 1 and the Grade 1 teachers were subjected to focus group interviews and data collection. The researcher secured appointments with teachers and parents which were appropriate for them.

A qualitative research tool was employed to solicit data from a group of participants on a particular research topic (Corbin & Strauss, 2014:12). Participant observation as a data collection tool was employed to observe teachers' and learners' interaction in the teaching and learning situation. Therefore, observation was used to gather primary information such as compliance with Covid-19 protocols. The focus group interviews were used to enquire questions and the researcher gave clarity where there was a need.

The written evidence was kept by the researcher in the record book. The following steps were followed by the researcher when collecting data as well as classifying and choosing individuals, obtaining participants' approval to partake and gathering data by requesting individual relevant questions. Data were collected from two (2) sampled primary schools in Rakwadu 2 Circuit in Limpopo province.

1.10. TRUSTWORTHINESS OF THE STUDY

Trustworthiness is the genuine, reliable and quality of research, which gives credible and dependable findings of the study (Noble & Heale, 2019:67). In this study, the researcher strove to ensure credibility, dependability, transferability and confirmability. This study explored the procedures for how loyalty to each measure was adhered to.

1.10.1. Credibility

Credibility was enhanced by choosing participants with extensive experience and rich knowledge about the phenomenon/subject under research. McMillan and Schumacher (2019:309) prefer cross-validation of various data sources and different data-collecting tools. Human experiences are described and presented in such a manner that people who also share the same experiences can identify the descriptions. Since the aim of this study was to give outcomes that were determined to be reliable, two categories of data sources and two different data collection modes were employed, and this enabled the researcher to triangulate the data sources.

1.10.2. Dependability

Dependability refers to the stability of findings which include participants' evaluation, interpretation and recommendations of the study supported by data received from the participants (Irene & Albine, 2017:122). The researcher was at all times striving to convince the readers that the findings of the study emanated from the participants' own responses and not the researcher's. One of the strategies was to quote the participants verbatim with regards to their responses in interviews. Therefore, the value of dependability rests on the extent to which the outcomes of the study reflect the views of the participants and not those of the researcher.

1.10.3. Transferability

In this study, transferability meant the ability of the readers to apply the findings of the study to similar situations and get similar results. Cilliers (2018:234) describes transferability as the application of outcomes derived from a rich, thick data collection resulting in similar outputs as the researched phenomenon. The validity is external, therefore the outcomes of this study are related to the theory, procedure, and further research.

1.10.4. Confirmability

According to Mohajan (2018:16), confirmability refers to data conduct acquirement that is unprejudiced and free rein from the intolerance of the researcher. The researcher ensured that the findings that emerged from the study were clearly linked to the data collected. Fouche (2017:98) concurred that confirmability is addressed when the findings of the study are clearly linked to the researched phenomenon and not the bias of the researcher.

1.11. DATA ANALYSIS

The study employed thematic data analysis. Creswell (2020:26) defines thematic data analysis as a systematic method used to identify, organise and offer insight into patterns of themes across a dataset. In this method, commonalities were identified in regards to the way

a topic was talked or written about. Therefore, themes emerging from the captured data represented a pattern of responses or meanings in relation to the research question.

1.12. SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

Participants who benefitted from this study **will be** the parents, teachers, learners, Department of Education (DOE), and Curriculum advisors. The study will be important to the parents because they **will** have acquired a better understanding of the importance of the education of their children during Covid-19 pandemic. According to Hedenbro and Rydelius, (2019:2), the benefits of parental involvement promote the learner's socioemotional development.

Teachers will also benefit from this study because they will gain a better understanding of families' cultures and diversity, and formed a deeper respect for parent's time and abilities to support their children **The teachers will learn about the parents from the context** and utilised the knowledge to design activities that accommodated the parents.

Learners will gain better self-esteem, become more disciplined, and will show higher aspirations and motivation towards school. Learners from different cultural backgrounds will manage to do better when parents and professionals worked together to synchronise the culture at home and the culture in school.

The study provided guidelines for the next researcher to develop the Maluuse of learning methods if there were contextual factors in the teaching and learning process during Covid-19.

The study **will** also have helped the policy planners to utilise the findings when developing policy about the Grade 1 learners' curriculum.

1.13. DELIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

The study was conducted within primary schools in Rakwadu 2 Circuit of Mopani West District, Limpopo province.

1.13.1. Ethical Considerations

There were several ethical considerations that were recognised and addressed when conducting this kind of research. The researcher applied for the ethical clearance certificate from the University of Venda. The researcher further requested approval from the Limpopo Department of Education, Mopani East District, to conduct research in schools. In this study (qualitative study), the researcher interacted with the participants at personal level and as such, had to identify their values, weaknesses and individual personal issues. According to Creswell (2020:69), researchers are obliged to respect the rights, needs and values of the participants during the process of collecting data, leading to the dissemination of research outcomes. The researcher also addressed ethical issues such as privacy, voluntary participation, informed consent, confidentiality and anonymity.

1.13.2. Voluntary Participation

McMillan and Schumacher (2019:118) define voluntary participation as a process whereby the participants take part freely and willingly without being forced, coerced or prejudiced by the researcher. In this regard, participants were informed verbally of their rights to decline to participate in the study at any given time should they feel uneasy for any reason. Therefore, the participants participated voluntarily

1.13.3. Informed Consent

Anderson (2019:98) defines informed consent as a process whereby participants unreservedly agree to the terms and conditions of the research process after the researcher has explained the purpose and intentions of the study in a manner that is clear to them. The researcher duly informed the participants about the following the purpose of the study, the procedures and methodology to be followed, the roles of the participants and their rights with regards to asking questions, and the benefits of the study as well as the risks if there were any. In this process, participants also signed consent letters to authenticate their informed consent.

1.13.4. Confidentiality and Anonymity

Krathwol (2021:215) refers to confidentiality as a measure to control access to information and the guarantee that the data collected during a research process is not shared with unauthorised people. Krathwol (2021:215) added that anonymity is achieved when the researcher deliberately chooses to withhold the names of the participants. Creswell (2020:12) concurs that participants have the right to have their identities kept confidential for any reason they may advance. Therefore, the researcher has a duty to adhere to this principle by using imaginary names or pseudonyms in identifying participants and their sites.

1.14. CHAPTERS OUTLINE

This research was divided into five chapters below:

CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

This chapter focused on the introduction and background of the study, based on the problem statement, aims and objectives, research questions, research paradigm, design and methodology, data analysis, trustworthiness of the study, delimitation of the study ethical considerations, significance of the study and chapter outline.

CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW

This chapter provided a literature review on parental involvement in the education of learners and focused on what other authors say about the top.

CHAPTER 3: RESEARCH PARADIGM AND METHODOLOGY

Chapter 3 outlined research paradigm, and methodology of the study.

CHAPTER 4: DATA PRESENTATION, ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

The chapter presented data collection, data analysis and data interpretation.

CHAPTER 5: SUMMARY OF FINDINGS, RECOMMENDATIONS AND CONCLUSIONS

This was the final chapter of the study, which provided the findings, recommendations and conclusions.

1.15 SUMMARY

Chapter 1 entailed the study background ,problem setting, research questions and study objectives, research design and methodology, ethical considerations, significance of the study, theoretical framework, keywords delimitation, sampling procedure, trustworthiness, and the delimitation of the study.

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

INTRODUCTION

In this chapter, the literature review regarding parental engagement in the education of Grade 1 learners during the Covid-19 pandemic in the Limpopo province. This chapter outlines the theory on which the study was grounded.

2.1. LITERATURE REVIEW OF THE STUDY

Hart (2019:13) defined the literature review as the selection of available documents (both published and unpublished) on the topic which contains information, ideas, data and evidence written from a particular standpoint to fulfil certain aims or express certain views on the nature of the topic and how it is to be investigated, and the effective evaluation of these documents in relation to the research being proposed.

The literature review is therefore conducted to address the questions and benchmarks arising from this study. It also takes into consideration the findings from other authors and research journals and comparatively puts them into context with the study. This literature review will, amongst others, discuss the concept of "parental engagement" – as a working definition, roles, and responsibilities as well as strategies that can be used for parental engagement in the education of learners.

In 2019, there was a sudden outbreak of a coronavirus disease (COVID-19) which adversely affected various people in one way or the other. Various governments throughout the entire world were forced to implement measures to counter the rapid spreading of the coronavirus

(Wang and Mao 2021:957), . In the Republic of South Africa, lockdowns were introduced as

a measure of decimating the spread of this contagious virus (Wilder, 2023:72). Lockdown resulted in the closure of schools, as schools were given a break in March 2020, bringing the whole educational system to a complete turn-around (Backstrom, 2019:110). Contact learning was no longer possible and as such, new measures of distance learning were initiated.

Venketsamy & Miller, (2021:66) stated that social media such as WhatsApp, radio, television, cell phones, computers and other related mediums were introduced as the most effective measures to accelerate communication between various stakeholders, for example, parents, teachers, and learners. This inevitable turn-around of the schooling process resuscitates the schools to engage parents to become active partners in educating their children at home. Parents want the education of their children to be conducted in two routines.

This new environment of teaching and home learning came with reasonable challenges that resulted in research on parental engagement in the education of Grade 1 learners during Covid-19 in Rakwadu 2 Circuit in Limpopo province.

2.2. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

The research study was grounded on Joyce Epstein's (1995:65) theory. Although there are different inputs from the DBE with regards to parental engagement in schools, parents continue to experience difficulties in understanding active participation in their children's school work, social developments and achievements. This study revealed that parents must be involved in school thus support is needed from both parents and the school to become effective partners in supporting learners. Epstein (1995:65) presents six types of models on how parents can partner with the school. They further explained that the school, teachers and parents are required to establish this partnership between the school and home. These six types of models of parental engagement are outlined below.

2.2.1. SIX FACTORS OF PARENTAL ENGAGEMENT

Teachers and parents play major roles in the educational success of learners. Learners need a positive learning experience to succeed in school: one providing support, motivation, and quality instruction (Zeynep and Sahin, 2021:39). With the increasing demands on the parents, parental support in the education of children extends beyond the school building. Many parents are faced with overwhelming and unpredictable schedules and circumstances while juggling school, sports, family situations, family time, work schedules, and other responsibilities, allowing minimal time to provide support in any one given area (Swap, 2017:15). Although it seems that parental engagement is researched on the topic of many domestic and foreign studies, debatably, there is still concern regarding parental engagement and what constitutes effective parental engagement in the education of learners. Teachers, parents, and community members may have different opinions regarding effective engagement practices and the ways each can contribute to the educational process (Wigfield & Eccles, 2020:76).

Parental engagement in the education of learners begins at home with the parents providing a safe and healthy environment, appropriate learning experiences, support, and a positive attitude towards school. Several studies indicate increased academic achievement with learners that have involved parents (Epstein, 2018:122; Greenwood & Hickman, 2021:279; Henderson & Berla, 2018:86; Whitaker & Fiore, 2021:9). Studies also indicate that parental engagement is most effective when viewed as a partnership between educators and parents (Emeagwali, 2017:8). By examining parents' and teachers' perceptions, educators and parents should have a better understanding of effective parental engagement practices in promoting learners' achievement.

Researchers such as Davies (2019:13) and Epstein (2018:122) have studied parental engagement and its effects on the educational process over the years. A leading researcher of parental engagement is Joyce Epstein, the founder, and director of the National Network of Partnership Schools at Johns Hopkins University (Smith, Sheridan, Kim, Park and Beretvas, 2020:157). With numerous studies and work in over 100 publications, Epstein focuses on school, family, and community partnership programmes that will improve policy

and practice to increase learners' academic achievement and learners' success (Epstein and Sheldon, 2019:36). Epstein has identified a framework that contains six important factors concerning parental engagement (Epstein and Sheldon, 2019:36). This framework is based on findings from many studies of what factors are most effective with regards to learners' education (Epstein, 1995:701; 1996: 209; 2009:122). Those six factors are parenting, communicating, volunteering, learning at home, decision-making, and collaborating with the community.

2.2.1.1. Parenting

Parenting includes all of the activities that parents engage in to raise happy, healthy learners who become capable learners (Epstein and Sheldon, 2019:130).. Unlike teachers, whose influence on a child is relatively limited, parents maintain a life-long commitment to their children (Swap, 2017:23). Activities that support this type of engagement provide information to parents about their child's development, health, safety, or home conditions that can support learners learning (Zeynep and Sahin, 2021:40). This includes parents' education and other courses or training for parents, family support programmes to assist families with health, nutrition, and other services, and home visits at transition points to elementary, middle, and secondary schools (Smith, Sheridan, Kim, Park and Beretvas, 2020:231) .

2.2.1.2. Communicating

Families and schools communicate with each other in multiple ways. Schools send home notes and flyers about important events and activities (Wigfield & Eccles, 2020:76). Parents give teachers information about their child's health and educational history. A school website is an additional mode of communication with parents and families. It includes conferences with every parent at least once a year, language translators to assist families as needed, and a regular schedule of useful notices, memos, phone calls, newsletters, and other communications.

2.2.1.3. Learning at Home

This pertains to providing ideas and information to parents about how they can best assist their learners with homework and curricular-related decisions and activities. Parents helping their learners with homework or taking them to a museum are examples of this type of engagement. These activities produce a school-oriented family and encourage parents to interact with the school curriculum. Activities to encourage learning at home provide parents with information on what learners are doing in the classroom and how to help them with homework. This includes information for families on skills required for learners in all subjects at each grade, information on homework policies and how to monitor and discuss schoolwork at home, as well as family participation in setting learners' goals each year and in planning for college or work (Davies,2019:13) .

2.2.1.4. Volunteering

Volunteering applies to recruiting and organising help and support from parents for school programmes and learners' activities (Wigfield & Eccles, 2020:76). There are three basic ways that individuals volunteer in education. Firstly, they may volunteer in the school or classroom by helping teachers and administrators as tutors or assistants. Secondly, they may volunteer for the school, for instance, fundraising for an event or promoting a school in the community. Finally, they may volunteer as a member of an audience, attending school programmes or performances. This includes school/classroom volunteer programmes to help teachers, administrators, learners, and other parents, parent room or family centre for volunteer work, meetings, and resources for families, annual postcard surveys to identify all available talents, times, and locations of volunteers.

2.2.1.5. Decision Making

Decision making refers to including parents in school decisions and developing parent leaders and representatives. Parents participate in school decision-making when they become part of school governance committees or join organisations, such as the parent/teacher association.

Other decision-making activities include taking on leadership roles that involve disseminating information to other parents. This includes active advisory councils, or committees for parent leadership and participation, independent advocacy groups to lobby for school reform and improvements, and networks to link all families with parent representatives.

2.2.1.6. Collaborating with the Community

This component pertains to identifying and integrating communities' services and resources to support and strengthen schools, learners, and their families (Salam, 20:52). This includes information for learners and families on community health, cultural, recreational, and social support, and other programmes/services, and information on community activities that link to learning skills and talents, including summer programmes for learners. Each of these factors can lead to various results for learners, parents, teaching practices, and the school climate. In addition, each factor includes many different practices of partnership. Lastly, each factor poses challenges to involve all families and those challenges must be met. That is why Epstein (2018:122) considers it to be significant for each school to choose what factors are believed to be most likely to assist the school in reaching its goals for academic success and to develop a climate of alliance between homes and the school. Even though the primary focus of these six factors is to promote academic achievements, they also contribute to various results for both parents and teachers (Epstein, 2003:334; 2018:122).

Adapted from Epstein (2018:54), although all six factors are important, for this study, the focus was on 'parenting'. Therefore, this study focused particularly on the following three factors: parenting, communication, and learning at home, to determine how the study enables parents to become involved in the school. There is a continuous focus on the remaining three factors in South African schooling although it may not be perfect (Davids, 2020:45; Mohapi & Netshitangani, 2018:76). The DBE continuously controls the implementation of communication, decision-making and collaboration with the community (Pirzadeh, Lingard & Blismas, 2020:13). Epstein and Salinas (2004:102) argue for the active development of a school learning community. A school learning community includes teachers, learners and parents who work together for the success of learners' learning (Epstein & Salinas, 2004:102).

The school learning community is based on the improvement of learners' learning opportunities to achieve their academic and personal objectives. During the Covid-19 pandemic, most schools communicated with parents through newsletters and virtual meetings on social media, such as WhatsApp groups, Facebook and Google Meet.

This study argues that the schooling system in South Africa, especially in Rakwadu 2 Circuit, is not yet been acquainted with how to reinforce parents with parenting skills to support learning, communicate with parents regarding learners' activities and enable parents to implement learning at home. In preparation for this study, it became obvious for parents to be engaged with the recommendations as set out by Epstein

2.3. DETERMINANTS OF PARENTAL ENGAGEMENT

Parents' cognitions about their role have been identified as a major contributor to their willingness to engage in supportive parenting. We focused on three forms of parental cognition: parents' aspirations concerning their learners' future occupation, their self-efficacy in rearing and educating their learners, and their perceptions of the school (Eccles & Harold, 2014:3; Hoover-Dempsey & Sandler, 2022:3; Okagaki & Frensch, 2018:123).

2.3.1. Parental Aspirations

Parental aspirations refer to idealistic hopes or goals that parents may form regarding future attainment (Wigfield & Eccles, 2020:76). Parents who hold high aspirations for their learners' future are likely to be more willing to exert efforts to ensure that those aspirations are realised. Indeed, evidence from research suggests that educational and occupational aspirations are associated with how parents shape learners' activities, time, and learning environments (Murphey, 2021:199).

2.3.2. Parenting Self-Efficacy

The construct of self-efficacy refers to "beliefs in one's capabilities to organise and execute the courses of action required to produce given attainments" (Bandura, 2019:3). Research conducted in a variety of countries finds that individuals with high self-efficacy in a specific

area exert effort in that area persevere in the face of difficulty, and respond resiliently to adversity (Bandura, 2020:269). They are less prone to self-defeating thought patterns, and they experience less stress and depression than those with lower self-efficacy.

The construct of self-efficacy is intended to be domain-specific; particular experiences concerning a given domain affect the individual's sense of confidence about acting efficaciously in that domain. The domain of parenting self-efficacy has been examined at length, and parenting self-efficacy has shown to be an extraordinarily powerful determinant of effective parenting behaviour in Western societies.

Parents with high self-efficacy are generally more optimistic, authoritative, and consistent in their interactions with their learners than those with lower parenting self-efficacy (Ardelt & Eccles, 2022:944; Bandura, Barbaranelli, Caprara & Pastorelli, 1996:1206; Olioif & Aboud, 2016:3). Additionally, theoretical formulations have identified parenting self-efficacy as a key determinant of parental engagement in schooling (Eccles & Harold, 2014:3; Hoover-Dempsey & Sandler, 2022:3). Empirical work suggests that parents with high self-efficacy are more likely to monitor their learners' schoolwork and to participate actively at school (Ardelt & Eccles, 2022:944).

2.3.3. Perceptions of the School

Parents' degree of engagement is likely to be affected by the school itself. If teachers appear to care about the welfare of the child, communicate respect for parents, and develop effective means of communicating with families, parents are more willing and able to become involved in their learners' schooling (Hoover-Dempsey & Sandler, 2022:3).

2.3.4. Barriers to parental engagement

Although parental engagement is recognised as being of significance in the education of learners, there remains great diversity concerning parental engagement. Some factors exist over which schools have little control and these factors have become of great interest to educational decision-makers (Feurstein, 2019:29). Today's parents are often preoccupied with the distractions and demands of daily life. Burdened by low-income, inflexible work hours, and language barriers, some parents are unable to attend school activities or participate in

the schooling of their learners regularly (Ho, 2018:101). Beck (2020:549) and Lee and Bowen (2021:193) cite cultural norms, insufficient financial resources, and a lack of educational attainment as barriers to parental engagement in school.

Davies (2016:13) asserted that many parents suffer from low self-esteem and others did not experience success in school themselves and therefore lack the knowledge and confidence to help their learners. Parents who did not experience success in school may view it negatively (Greenwood & Hickman, 2021:296). Parents may be intimidated by the language, the curriculum, and the staff; consequently, they avoid communication with the school (Flynn, 2021). Rutherford and Edgar (2015:56) recognise that parents have increased difficulty in being involved in their learners' secondary education as determining which educator is responsible for which part of the children's academic programme can be overwhelming.

Hill and Taylor (2016:161) posited that parents from lower socioeconomic backgrounds are challenged in engagement, including nonflexible work schedules, a lack of resources, transportation problems, and stress due to residing in disadvantaged neighbourhoods. Turnbull (2019:57) reported that low-income urban parents can and want to participate in the education of their learners as much as middle-class parents. Turnbull further reported that single-parent participation is often hindered by inflexible leave policies and child-care responsibilities. Many school officials tend to decide in advance that single and low-income working parents cannot be approached or relied upon. They are expected to participate in their learners' classrooms, attend meetings, or provide assistance with home learning activities (Turnbull, 2019:60).

Williams and Sanchez (2020:54) identify four areas that are barriers to engagement: time poverty, a lack of access, a lack of financial resources, and a lack of awareness. Johnson (2015: 95) asserted that feelings of inadequacy, limited school background, or preoccupation with necessities may prevent parents from communicating with schools. Lee and Bowen (2016) and Dika and Singh (2019:31) cite social capital in families as being positively linked to their learners' achievement, graduation rates, higher educational attainment, as well as motivation and engagement in school. Similarly, Ho (2018:101) discusses the benefit of parents' engagement in schools, noting that it helps parents overcome a lack of social capital.

Likewise, Hill and Taylor (2016:161) assert that parental engagement in the school supports learners' achievement by increasing the parents' social capital.

Learners are a critical component for a successful school, family, and community engagement and can create a barrier to partnerships when they fail to fulfil their duty (Epstein, 1995:701). Learners are often responsible for delivering information and communicating with their parents regarding school programmes, activities, and events (Epstein, 1995). In programmes that require a high level of engagement, teachers help learners understand their roles and the importance of actively participating in family, school, and community partnerships (Epstein, 1995:701). Given decreased budgeted funds for education and increased expectations, school administrators and teachers must take the initiative to involve parents to assist in the educational achievement of learners (Ho, 2018:101).

Some school administrators and teachers may not know how to involve parents; therefore, educators lacking this knowledge could be taught techniques for involving parents and creating partnerships (Greenwood & Hickman, 2021:279). Administrators and teachers may not fully understand the importance of parental engagement and the effects of parental engagement on learners' achievement (Flynn, 2021:23). Often, teachers believe parents do not support the school and do not discipline learners when there has been a problem at school. When teachers do not feel parental support, they often believe it is a waste of their time to contact parents (Amatea & West, 2017:81).

To overcome the barriers preventing parental engagement, schools need to provide a welcoming climate where the school staff is respectful and responsive to parents (Emeagwali, 2017:8). Administrators and teachers must encourage respectful two-way communication between the school and home (Epstein, 2009:101). An educational consultant stated, "The answer is to stop treating parents like clients" and start treating them like "partners" in helping learners learn (Emeagwali, 2017:10). A survey of parents in four school systems concluded that parents want to be treated with respect and do not want a professional-client relationship (Davies, 2016:376). Failure to sufficiently train preservice teachers is a significant obstacle in promoting parental engagement in schools (Epstein, 1995:701).

Preservice teachers could work with parents as part of their teacher education program and internship (Greenwood & Hickman, 2021:279). Classes could be incorporated into teacher education programs and advanced degree programmes to assist in defining an educator's role in the school, family, and community partnerships (Epstein, 1995:701). Some school systems have employed parent engagement coordinators to lead and coordinate parental engagement activities and programmes within the system to overcome obstacles between the home and school (Epstein, 2001:67). Epstein (2009:100) described the role of parent engagement coordinators as a way of encouraging more parents to become involved in a variety of aspects of the school. Parent engagement coordinators often conduct workshops for parents to inform them of the school curriculum and remind them that they are their children's most important teachers (Epstein, 2009:31).

Bouffard and Weiss (2018:2) summarise some of the basic principles that the process of involving families can make meaningful and useful. Firstly, the engagement of parents must be part of a broader strategy of complementary support learning and development as a systematic effort supported by joint action of all stakeholders. Furthermore, the engagement of parents should be viewed as a continuous process that has its evolutionary stages through childhood and adolescence and is especially important in the periods of the transition of learners from one to another level of schooling. However, not all parents have equal capacities for fuller participation in all activities, and not all schools are interested and able to adequately support participation in them. Research shows that the traditional system of parental participation, despite good intentions, usually leaves out the participation of non-dominant parents. In the modern school system, there is no generally accepted model of parental participation.

2.3.5. Models of parental engagement

Analysing several existing approaches in establishing an adequate model of the relationship between parents and schools, Swap (2017:49) identifies three models of parental engagement.

2.3.5.1. Protective Model

The goal of this model is to avoid conflict between teachers and parents by keeping the teaching and parenting functions separate (Swap, 2017:57). It is referred to as the protective model because its objective is to protect the school from interference by parents. The teacher's responsibility is to educate learners, while the parents' responsibility is to make sure learners get to school on time with the correct supplies. In this model, parental engagement is seen as unnecessary and potentially interfering with the education of learners.

2.3.5.2. Transmission Model

This model is predicated on the view that teachers see themselves as the primary source of expertise for learners but recognise the benefits of using parents as a resource (Swap, 2017:100). In this model, the teacher remains in control and decides on the intervention, but does accept that parents can play an important role in facilitating learners' progress. Teachers using this approach must have additional skills, including techniques to effectively guide parents and interpersonal skills to establish productive working relationships. One drawback of this approach is the assumption that all parents can, and should, take on the role of acting as a resource (Zaman, 2019:110). This model has the potential to overburden parents by placing excessive demands on them to carry out activities in the home.

2.3.5.3. Curriculum-Enrichment Model

The goal of this model is to extend the school curriculum by incorporating parents' contributions (Oblinger, 2018:93). This model is based on the assumption that parents have valuable expertise to contribute and that the interaction between parents and teachers will enhance the curriculum and the educational objectives of the school. Parent engagement in this model focuses primarily on curriculum and instruction within schools. The major drawback to this model is that it involves teachers permitting parents to have tremendous input regarding what is taught and how it is taught. In some cases, this may seem threatening to the teacher.

Later, Hornby (2017:76) added descriptions of three more models:

2.3.5.4. Expert Model

In this model, teachers consider themselves to be the experts regarding all areas of the development and education of learners, whereas parents' views are given little credence (Cunningham & Davis, 1985:239). Teachers maintain control over all decisions, while the parent's role is to receive information and instruction about their learners. Parents' views and feelings, the need for a mutual relationship, and the sharing of information are given little if any, consideration.

2.3.5.5. Consumer Model

In this model, teachers function as more of a consultant while parents decide what action is to be taken (Cunningham & Davis, 1985:239). The responsibility of decision-making lies on the shoulders of the parents, but it is the teachers' responsibility to provide parents with relevant information and the options available. In this model, teachers defer to the parents, who are placed in the expert role. Because parents are in control of the decision-making process, they are most likely to be satisfied with the services they receive, to feel more confident in their parenting, and to be less dependent on professionals.

2.3.5.6. The Partnership Model

This is the most appropriate model in which teachers are considered to be experts on education and parents are viewed as experts on their learners (Hornby, 2017:80). The goal is to establish a partnership in which teachers and parents share expertise and control to provide the optimum education for learners, each contributing different strengths to the relationship. Mutual respect, long-term commitment to a wide range of activities, and sharing of planning and decision-making responsibilities are the essential components for true partnerships between parents and teachers to occur. The essence of effective partnerships between parents and school staff was summarised in seven principles by Turnbull (2019:56). A key principle of an effective partnership is trust. The teacher is required to have reliable, confidential, open, and honest relationships with parents. Furthermore, the relationship must

be based on mutual respect which means respect for the opinions of others and respect for the dignity of others. Parents should be convinced of the competence of persons who are professionally involved in the work with their learners. Effective partnerships require two-way communication that will enable the exchange of knowledge and ideas between all parties involved. No less important is the imperative of protecting learners, which is achieved through the early identification of problems, and their solutions, the identification of appropriate strategies, and the promotion of knowledge about the protection of learners.

2.4. PARENT-SCHOOL RELATIONSHIPS DURING THE PANDEMIC

Concerning the first objective, it was evident in a large number of investigations that one of the main concerns of parents was related to time compatibility (Garbe, 2020:40; Pozas, 2021:35) to meet the educational needs of learners and be able to go to work or work from home. Similar studies showed that parents sometimes have not had the sufficient capacity to be able to combine everything (Sosa, 2021:7956; Craig & Churchill, 2020: 66), coupled with the need to share resources and spaces. School administrations have acquired a special prominence within the development of home learning. It has been observed that the decisions made in some countries have not been those expected or desired (Sala, 2020:53; Lau & Lee, 2021:863). The studies analysed in this review and others developed during the pandemic highlight the lack of coordination among school administrations in carrying out their responsibilities (Franco, 2020:23). In addition, different approaches carried out by the administrations have made it difficult for schools to provide quality education, as shown by The Non-Governmental Organisation Save the Children (2021:121). One of the main lines of action of school administrations resides in reducing inequalities and allowing learners with disabilities to have equal access to education and diverse activities by providing them with the necessary support. The present situation has revealed many shortcomings, as shown in another study carried out during the pandemic (Dickinson & Yates, 2020:890). Many parents have had to buy the necessary resources to continue their children's therapies without government aid or benefits (Yates, 2021:921).

Both the good and the bad have been exposed in the relationships established between teachers and parents. Depending on the educational stage and the country, these

relationships have been either positive or negative (Gutierrez & González, 2020:635). Indeed, they have mostly leaned towards the negative and exposed the need for improvement. Similar studies revealed that a vast majority of parents were not entirely satisfied with the relationships established between school and parents with regards both to online learning and the difficulties in participating in it (Katz, 2016:155). This dissatisfaction may be affected by the parent's educational level, socioeconomic characteristics or degree of involvement (Borup, 2017:207). Regarding the offered resources, parents have demonstrated little or no knowledge about the use of different technological tools and virtual teaching (Bonal & González, 2019:637). Bonal and González (2019:637) add that despite the dizzying pace at which they have adapted to these technologies, they have been less focused on teaching or pedagogical purposes but more geared towards entertainment and leisure.

Furthermore, parents felt overwhelmed by the number of technological resources presented by the school (Garbe, 2020:51; Pozas, 2021:41; Jones, 2020:210). Studies carried out before the pandemic already highlighted some of the challenges in this regard such as the establishment of communication channels between parents and schools the importance of teachers (Oblinger, 2018:42), financial resources (Scherer, 2019:13), the lack of interest in the use of technology (Zaman, 2018:22), the high level of commitment of parents (Smith, 2020:101), and the establishment of a good two-way relationship between these two educational agents, all of which can positively influence both motivation and learner academic performance. Resources are an essential part of the parent–school–learner relationship, as demonstrated in research carried out during the pandemic. It is quite clear that establishing communication channels between parents and schools is essential if the aim is to successfully move towards learning, including online learning. Even before the pandemic, studies have shown the many positive aspects of virtual learning, such as direct interaction with teachers, which is more flexible than face-to-face learning (Robinson, 2020:37, 99-108).

Various studies have shown that online education should not be based solely on uploading and downloading documents or videos from different virtual platforms (Robinson, 2020:37, 99-108.), nor should it be based on training and innovations; instead, it is crucial to train parents in digital skills. This should be conducted in addition to training teachers in the use of these resources (Rojas, 2020:298; González, 2020: 635) so that they can create scenarios

appropriate to the needs and characteristics of their learners and promote the different didactic strategies so that learners achieve the desired meaningful learning—autonomous learning adapted to the rhythm of each one of them (Romeu-Fontanillas, 2020:28). Special mention must be made of learners with disabilities, since several of the analysed studies (Garbe, 2021:46; Yates, 2020:342) showed that, in a pandemic situation and compared to fellow pupils, these groups are at a disadvantage in terms of education and well-being. This is not a new finding since, in previous studies, this group’s educational, social, and employment differences have been highlighted (Cox & Marshall, 2020:222). Some parents (Majoko & Dudu, 2020:3; Neece, 2020:743; Cahapay, 2020:2) noticed substantial improvements in the development and learning of their children with disabilities. Many ultimately decided to implement home-schooling as a definite rather than a temporary measure.

Research carried out during the pandemic showed that many parents, despite its many challenges, have opted for home-schooling for their children (Feeney, 2021:33). As parents have become “teachers” in the home learning environment, the critical role that teachers play in their children’s education, as well as the lack of preparation of parents and families to assume this role, has become increasingly evident (Parczewska, 2020: 10). Many parents have felt overwhelmed because their attention was split between their other responsibilities and having to master new technologies. Moreover, they fought other issues exacerbated by the pandemic, such as anxiety, frustration, anger, irritation, fear, uncertainty, confusion, and loneliness (Yaakov, 2020:810). In studies carried out during lockdown, it was shown that the role of the teacher is essential for supporting learners, clarifying concepts, and deepening their understanding, thus releasing parents from this burden—an action which has been diminished during this period (Sosa, 2021: 7956; Craig & Churchill, 2020:70). It is also important to remember that although parents are one of the main axes in the educational processes of their children, they do not have the necessary skills to promote knowledge acquisition (Parczewska, 2020:1; Sosa, 2021:7956).

2.5. TEACHER-LEARNER RELATIONSHIPS IN TIMES OF PANDEMIC

Concerning the second objective, learner–teacher relationships have been overshadowed at all education levels and contexts by the exceptional situation that education has undergone.

learners, and failing that, parents, must fully understand the management of multiple platforms in which teachers host content. In many cases, these platforms offer a few cognitive challenges for learners (Garbe, 2020:60), who must then wait until the next virtual class to contact the teacher and communicate any doubts they may have had, turning the teaching-learning process into a tedious and unmotivated activity (Garbe, 2020:51). Studies before the pandemic showed that the variety of activities and the feedback that learners receive from teachers throughout the teaching-learning processes are vital for promoting meaningful learning (Pushor, 2017:470). It has been shown how the learner-teacher relationship in compulsory schooling stages, whether primary or secondary (Jones, 2020:9; Parczewska, 2020:8), has become more robust in that teachers provide necessary wake-up calls when there have been connectivity problems or decreases in task productivity (Garbe, 2020:63). However, in the non-compulsory stages such as infant school or university levels (Lau & Lee, 2021: 872), this communication has sometimes faltered.

In studies carried out before the pandemic, it was observed that families present a multitude of issues that entangle these communications (such as materials, resources, low culture, and different languages. One issue, present in most of the analysed studies and which parents have highlighted as being a major concern, is the constant use of computers (Majoko & Dudu, 2020:2), tablets, or mobile devices (Weaver & Swank, 2021:137), as well as the amount of time spent doing school tasks. Pre-pandemic research analysed how excessive screen time use can negatively influence learner development, increase health problems (Dong, 2020:105), and increase the risk of accessing inappropriate content. Some articles (Lau & Lee, 2021:863), have shown that the time spent by learners carrying out their tasks exceeds 2–3 hours a day, an aspect that goes against the recommendations of the World Health Organisation (WHO) that argues that screen-time for children under five years of age should not be greater than one hour per day (WHO, 2021). Although electronic or virtual learning has long been promoted (Hernández-Sánchez & Ortega, 2018:20), the pandemic has forced its implementation for an extended period and in such a generalised way for the first time.

2.6. FAMILY-LEARNER RELATIONSHIPS DURING THE PANDEMIC

Finally, regarding the third objective, the changing relationship between parents and children has meant that parents' levels of stress and frustration increased, as did feeling overwhelmed by the ever more difficult school tasks with which children needed help (Nafisah, 2018: 659). Thus, in research carried out before the pandemic, it was evident that the involvement of parents when tackling their children's learning difficulties was also conditioned by face-to-face education, a condition that became harder to tackle when the learning took place in an online environment (Feeney, 2021). Some studies have shown how family violence or verbal violence between the family and learners has increased during this lockdown (Dong, 2020:105, 440; Thorell, 2021:10; Bokayev, 2021:31), a regrettable fact but not an isolated issue since another study carried out during this period corroborated it (Usher, 2020:549).

2.7. STRATEGIES/SKILLS FOR PARENTAL ENGAGEMENT

The importance of the home environment for learning has been documented in numerous studies. The DBE, (2020:13)) recognised the need to assist parents and guardians to get through the Covid-19 pandemic lockdown as effectively as possible. However, the DBE (2020:16) further maintains that parents were unexpected to become teachers per se, nor expect children to teach themselves the curriculum. Therefore, parents and guardians needed to ensure that meaningful learning took place at home during the Covid-19 pandemic lockdown. This study focused on the need for parents to support their children in an attempt to save the academic year. Cotton and Wikelund (2018:56) outlined the following guidelines and strategies to assist parents in support of their children's education:

- Teachers and administrators must be able to assess their readiness to involve parents and determine how they wish to engage and utilise them. Furthermore, teachers need to communicate with parents regarding their engagement and support which makes a great difference in their children's school performance.
- Parents need to be encouraged regarding their engagement as early as children start to enter school (preschool years).

- Parents must be taught model reading behaviour and that reading to children increases children's interest in learning.
- Parents need to develop programmes that conduct learning activities for children in their homes, assist with homework, monitoring and encourage learning activities for older students.
- Orientate and train parents, but always bear in mind that intensive, long-lasting training is neither necessary nor feasible.
- Monitor and engage with parents regarding their engagement of disadvantaged students, who would benefit most from parents' participation in their learning, but whose parents are often initially reluctant to become involved.
- Parents should build a sense of security and normalcy for their children, and work with children to structure routines that work for the family (Cotton & Wikelund, 2018).
The next sub-section discusses the roles and responsibilities of parents in their children's education.

2.8. THE ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF PARENTS

Firstly, educators of children are the parents, and they are the most important force behind child development without any doubt, (Duncan, 2015). According to Cotton and Wikelund (2021:18), the engagement of parents has a significant effect on the quality of learners, the experience of teaching and learning in the school, and the results. Therefore, parents have extremely important roles to perform in the education of their children. Duncan (2015:10) further identifies the rights of parents in schools as follows:

- Being enlightened about their children's education.
- Treatment of fairness and respect must adhere.
- Providing quality resources, opportunities, and education for their children.
- Receive information about the school periodically.
- Participate in the school's administrative activities.
- Being informed about the progress of the child at certain times (Duncan, 2015).

2.9. THE ROLE OF PARENTAL ENGAGEMENT IN THEIR CHILDREN'S EDUCATION

Parents and families have a major impact on the success of the process of education and the upbringing of learners. The engagement of parents is related to their position at home (monitoring the learning of learners), as well as participation in activities organised at school (parent-teacher conferences, volunteer activities, various forms of parental activism, workshops, and seminars for parents). It is well established that parental engagement is correlated with the school achievement of both learners and adolescents (Davies, 2016:19). Primary school learners gain greater academic, language, and social skills (Johnson, 2015:61), middle and high school learners' have greater achievement and future aspirations (Eccles & Harold, 2014:56) and spend more time doing and completing homework (Epstein, 2009:289). Research shows that parental engagement is more important to learners' academic success than their family's socioeconomic status, race, ethnicity, or educational background (Amatea & West, 2017:23). Parental engagement can encourage learners' and adolescents' achievement in many ways. One way that parents can contribute positively to their learners' education is to assist them with their academic work at home. Parents who read to their learners, assist them with their homework, and provide tutoring using resources provided by teachers, their children tend to do better in school than learners whose parents do not assist them (Ball & Blachman, 2021:44).

Furthermore, Schmid, and Garrels, (2021:457) research show that the level of parental engagement is associated with academic success. Learners whose parents are actively involved in their schooling benefit better than learners whose parents are passively involved. Specifically, if parents attend teacher conferences, accept phone calls from the school, and read and sign messages from the school, their learners will benefit academically more than learners whose parents do none of the above. Furthermore, learners excel even more when their parents assist them at home with their homework, attend school-sponsored events, and volunteer at their learners' schools (Vollono, Falconi, Gaziano, Iacovelli Dika, Terracciano, Bianchi & Campione, 2019:56)

2.10. VARIOUS PERSPECTIVES REGARDING PARENTAL ENGAGEMENT IN THE INTERNATIONAL, AFRICAN AND NATIONAL CONTEXT DURING COVID-19

The emergence of the Covid-19 pandemic made the entire world acknowledge the existence of many inequalities that were prevalent even before the eruption of the global crisis (Loannidis, 2021:45). There was suddenly a huge interest in the concept of home learning. Seale (2020:7) highlights the huge challenges that teachers had to navigate through as a measure of engaging parents to be active participants in the education of their children. Naidoo (2021:78) further suggested that there was a dire need to empower families to support their children with home learning as a means of alleviating the deepening inequality that was uncovered by the eruption of the Covid-19 pandemic.

Parents are primary caregivers to their children and as such, a great deal of collaboration between teachers and parents was very essential in preparing effective lessons for home learning. Cox (2020:43) correctly identifies the collaboration between teachers and parents as a comprehensive tool to guide the learners to be successful academically. Andersan (2020:9) indicated that mutual reports and feedback between teachers and parents proved to be a critical component in the education of all the children during Covid-19 and proved to be a more reasonable method even after Covid-19.

2.10.1. DENMARK

During Covid-19, there was a survey conducted on 900 families in Denmark (Madsen 2020:52). The survey, which was conducted by the work-life Hub showed that 71% of families in Denmark were working from home during the period of the Covid-19 pandemic. Work-life Hub indicates that the majority of parents were experiencing some level of stress in balancing the act of executing their full-time jobs and assisting their children with home learning. Many families had to return to their old ways, where men were the breadwinners and women were the caregivers to the children. That is men had to focus on their full-time responsibilities whereas women had to take care of the children and assist with their home learning.

Lee (2021:72) embarked on a key study campaign on the levels of parental engagement in various countries in relation to home learning activities during Covid-19. The results of the

study were that Danish parents showed significantly higher levels of involvement than home learning activities. Anderson and Nielsen's (2020) report showed that empowering parents with the necessary skills has a positive spin-off on the progress of their children concerning reading and writing. The report added that in Denmark, families with highly educated parents have more interest in assisting their children as compared to less educated parents. The results are that children from this educated family performed much better than their counterparts from less privileged families. Lee (2021:47) suggested that parents in Denmark spent far less time with their children as compared to parents in other countries.

2.10.2. SINGAPORE

Chung (2020:23) reports that the Covid-19 pandemic caused a reasonable amount of stress on parents and children. This stress impacted the relationship between parents and children negatively. It resulted in harsh parenting and increased family violence and child abuse as families remained isolated in their homes. (Chung, 2020:45).

The regulations, such as social distancing, caused a lot of stress to parents as they could no longer rely on other social partners to take care of their children. In Singapore, parents relied on other family members, churches, and schools for caregiving support of their children and financial support as well. Madsen, (2020:112) reports that due to lockdown interventions, parents had to stay home and juggle their normal workload and the extra job of making sure their children pay attention to their home learning. Parents no longer had the privilege of child care by family members, tutors, or caregivers to take care of their children. (Randstad, 2020:59). The Covid-19 pandemic resulted in parents taking care of their children's home learning 24/7 and their full-time jobs simultaneously. This resulted in a considerable amount of stress for parents.

The study conducted by the Centre for Family and Population Research at the National University of Singapore) showed that 35 % of parent's reach to their children daily (Chung and Drobic, 2021;123). Only 14% of parents from a lower socioeconomic status read to their children daily. Then, 31% of parents from lower socioeconomic status have never read to their children. The study shows that parents from a high socioeconomic status provide their children with a more suitable learning environment and as such, children from such families perform

much better compared to children from lower-class families. Madse, (2020:76) emphasises that highly educated parents have a better learning environment at their homes. Parents must be well-equipped to assist their children with home-learning skills.

2.10.3. SOUTH AFRICA

The educational process requires a great deal of parental supervision in the foundation phase of learning (Mestry & Grobler, 2019:90). It is the responsibility of the parents to monitor their children's activities such as homework and projects during the foundation phase of learning. The South African Schools Act (1996) supports that parents should monitor their children's activities in the foundation phase as children spend most of their childhood at home, and therefore they must receive love and support from them (Kraft & Rogers, 2019:66). Parents are the primary teachers and have to enforce the learning process of their children at home since they are the most influential teachers (Price, 2019:41). Naidu, Muthukrishnu and Holden (2019:22) argue that South African parents struggle to cope with their role as active stakeholders in education. According to Naidu et al. (2019:22), parental interest and support are very important factors for children's success in school.

The South African Schools Act (SASA, 1996:28) emphasises that parents play a pivotal role in supporting a child's education. However, in South Africa, there are many problems in providing effective education during the Covid-19 pandemic. South Africa faces challenges that make it very difficult to provide learners with effective education, which should be considered when strategies are put in place to support parents who have to assist with the learning process (Naidu, Muthukrishnu & Holden, 2019:22). Therefore, improving parental engagement is the most challenging task, especially in rural areas. Patton (2019:35) indicated that the lack of parental engagement causes parents and teachers to misunderstand each other.

According to Segoe and Bisschof (2019:23), in South African schools, the bond between parents and teachers is not always evident, and very often, parents and teachers do not share the same idea of what is best for the child's needs. Parents find it difficult to be engaged in their children's education since they are uncertain of their responsibility in their child's academic programme. Durisic and Bunijevac (2019:33) explain that parent's uncertainty

creates conflict between the parent and the teacher as the parents have little or no knowledge and skills to facilitate subject content.

The findings of a study conducted by Segoe and Bisschof (2019:23) indicated that most parents are uninvolved in their children's schoolwork and this affects the school functionality. Teachers feel that this is because parents have no understanding of their roles as stakeholders (Newman, 2018:27). Many parents in South African rural areas have little education or no education at all (Huffman, 2020:29). Therefore, they are unable to provide the necessary support to their children with the learning process (Segoe & Bisschof, 2019:23). This became a huge problem during the Covid-19 pandemic as thousands of learners rely on parents as their teachers. Most of these parents could not read or understand the teacher's instructions, as parents are illiterate. A study done by Statistics South Africa in 2018 has found that just over three million South Africans remain illiterate (Newman, 2018:27). Bangani (2020:19) argues that children of parents with low literacy levels and limited education resources are at risk of falling behind curriculum coverage as they cannot support their children's learning at home. It is therefore critical that a parent takes the time to invest in their child.

If parental engagement is not managed and implemented at the foundation phase, the children will be negatively affected at higher grades and later in their careers, as the fundamental building blocks are missing. Huffman (2020:34) further points out that online teaching is ineffective, as the foundation phase children lose interest and need stimulation with direct contact time and to perform activities to develop learners' sensory and gross motor skills. Hobbs and Hawkins (2020:31) point out that this much-needed stimulation needs to come from parents; unfortunately, parents do not know how. A lack of this will only create a bigger gap in the child's academic achievement as a learner (Reddy, Soudien & Winnaar, 2020:35). Jansen (2021:78), indicated that if one does not have access to the internet, Google Classroom, and other digital learning platforms, one will only get further left behind as in circumstances where face to face teaching occurs.

South African parents who are illiterate feel dissatisfied with teachers and their online education efforts during the pandemic, especially in government schools. Human Rights

Watch (2020:55) interviewed parents who indicated that they were unhappy with the virtual schooling system during the Covid-19 pandemic. Their children did not receive adequate schooling as needed, and those children were falling behind. Furthermore, parents find themselves dissatisfied with their children's online education during the closure of the school due to the pandemic. Human Rights Watch (2020:41) that parents of government schools felt that their children were no longer learning at home and that they only sat at home waiting for the schools to reopen to continue with their studies because most of their parents are uneducated. Teachers found it difficult to complete the activities given to learners to complete at home with the help of their parents due to lack of education of their parents (Mandel,2020:78). Some parents did not know the subject content (Human Rights Watch, 2020:66). Others felt that the work was too much and they drowned in trying to support their children and keeping their jobs, as they were classified as essential workers (Bangani, 2020:18).

Mandel (2020:78) describes how parents had emotional breakdowns as they felt that they could not help with reinforcing their children's learning and still focusing on their work (Leenders, 2019:50). However, teachers provided work as they would have within the allocated face-to-face time within a normal school day. Parents were also experiencing a lack of relevant technological gadgets and internet connections to support online learning (Ramrathan, 2020:45).

Meier and Lemmer (2018:32) suggest that parents want two-way communication. Leenders (2019:50) describes two-way communication as a message sent to another person and the person receiving the message responds to the message by sending back a response. During the pandemic, parents felt that they were unprepared for online learning (Ramrathan, 2020:45). They received no training, and they also felt that they were not ready to take on the role of the facilitator of the learning process now taking place at home (Jansen, 2021:78). Parents felt that communication was unclear and that teachers were not easily accessible to parents (Meier & Lemmer, 2018:32). Teachers did not communicate directly to parents (Leenders, 2019:50). They used online platforms to reach some groups of learners as other learners did not have access to technological gadgets. Human Rights Watch (2020:38) points out that no direct communication was made use during the pandemic.

Therefore, parents felt that it was a one-way communication line and that they had many questions unanswered (Newman, 2018:27). Parents felt that schools could have been more open with communication as parents often felt uninformed (Newman, 2018:27). Therefore, the covid-19 pandemic has affected the academic performance of the learners.

2.11 Summary

In this chapter, I give an overview of the national and international context of the parental engagement in the education of Grade 1 learners during covid-19 pandemic. The intergration of parent's engagement during covid -19 is worldwide concern as the pandemic affects globally. The chapter also discussed about the parent-school and teacher-learner during the pandemic. The role of parental engagement in their children's education were also heighlited. Chapter 3 explains in detailed how the entire research is going to be conducted.

CHAPTER 3 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY AND DESIGN

INTRODUCTION

Chapter 2 provided an in-depth literature study of parental engagement in the education of Grade 1 learners during the Covid-19 pandemic in Rakwadu 2 Circuit in Limpopo province. This study also dealt with the theoretical framework in which this study was foregrounded. Chapter 3 explores research methodology, which entails research paradigm, research design, research setting, sampling procedure, population, sample, data collection, classroom observation, interview, document analysis and instrumentation.

3.1. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Leavy (2020:39) views research methodology as a plan to follow to build a house, therefore, a good research methodology explains the procedure that a researcher must follow to conduct the study in detail and with clarity. In this next section, the components related to the research methodology will be discussed. This chapter explores research methodology, which entails research paradigm, research design, data collection methods, sampling procedures, instrumentation, piloting of data collection instruments, documents collection procedures and data analysis which this study utilised.

3.2. RESEARCH APPROACH

Leavy (2020:39) defines research approach as the steps the researcher use for collection, analysing and interpretation of data. Mandel (2020:19) views research approach as procedure that include three approaches to research which are quantitative, qualitative, and mixed methods. There this study utilised qualitative research approach. According to Newman, (2018:27) qualitative approach is a procedure used to understand social phenomenon from the people involved in the situation rather than collecting information from the outside view of the context. Furthermore, Leavy (2020:39) affirms that qualitative research allows the researchers to collect and analyse of single data on a more intensive and to accumulate new ideas into the thought of the participants. A qualitative design was appropriate for this study because this study understand the participants experience, behaviour, emotions and feelings of the parents of the Grade 1 parents.

3.3. RESEARCH PARADIGM

A research paradigm reflects the worldview of the individual researcher's construct (Denzin & Lincoln, 2017:123). As explained by Creswell (2016:89), a research paradigm is a perspective that provides a rationale for research and commits the researcher to particular methods of data collection, observation, and interpretation. Creswell (2016:92) further maintains that the research paradigm is the basic set of beliefs that guide actions as the researcher's epistemological, ontological, and methodological premises. The researcher adopted the interpretive paradigm. Interpretive paradigm is well-suited to social science research because of its constructionist base that seeks to uncover how actors make sense of their reality (Bryman, 2018:28). Rubin and Babbie (2018:90) assert that the social world in which we live, and its participants demand that their stories be told authentically and accurately.

Therefore, the interpretive paradigm provides unique opportunities for researchers to write about the lives of individuals, groups, and collectives. Creswell (2016:79) argues that a single situation possesses many interpretations. Therefore, reality from this assumption is complex, multi-layered, and perceived from the worldview of the researched. This implies that the opinions and views of practitioners are uncovered as they reside in their world. Creswell (2016:82) further maintains that reality is multiple and depends on issues that exist in participants' minds, hence, the construction of reality rests on the instances that play out during interviews.

Epistemology is about the search for knowledge as an endeavour to discover the truth regarding the phenomenon (Yaakov, 2020:90). This perspective is about knowledge as well as reality. The knowledge that people hold is created by society and is tied to a particular context, and this knowledge is shaped through the political, social, cultural, and historical factors in the context of the study and time (Maxwell, 2017:170). People build knowledge from the experiences that they have through interpretation, evaluation, and making conclusions on their experiences. Therefore, epistemology refers to knowledge accessed through participants' interpretations of their practices. Hence, the choice of interpretive research paradigm was relevant to the study.

3.3. RESEARCH DESIGN

Binu (2018: 3) views research design as a formalised method towards creative thinking, gaining knowledge and problem solving. Levy (20217:3) describes the research design as a structure of research that holds all the steps in a research study. The study used a qualitative research design which is relevant to the interpretive paradigm. Mahajau (2019:21) views qualitative research as an approach that can be utilised to understand any social phenomenon from the various perspectives of people involved (Macmillan and Schumacher 2019:7).

A qualitative research approach allows researchers to examine a phenomenon in its natural setting to make sense of this experience (Denzin & Lincoln, 2017:26). The design can be described as phenomenological as it was tailored towards describing a phenomenon in its natural setting, namely the authentic experiences of Foundation Phase teachers during the Covid-19 pandemic, and interpreting the implications of these perceptions (Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2018:46). The phenomenological research design allowed me to pose questions that would yield rich data from which themes emerged (Beck, 2018:19). Based on an interpretive paradigm, a process of inductive reasoning was followed, commencing with the specific phenomenon of teacher experiences on parental involvement and cooperation in order to move towards the general in formulating conclusions.

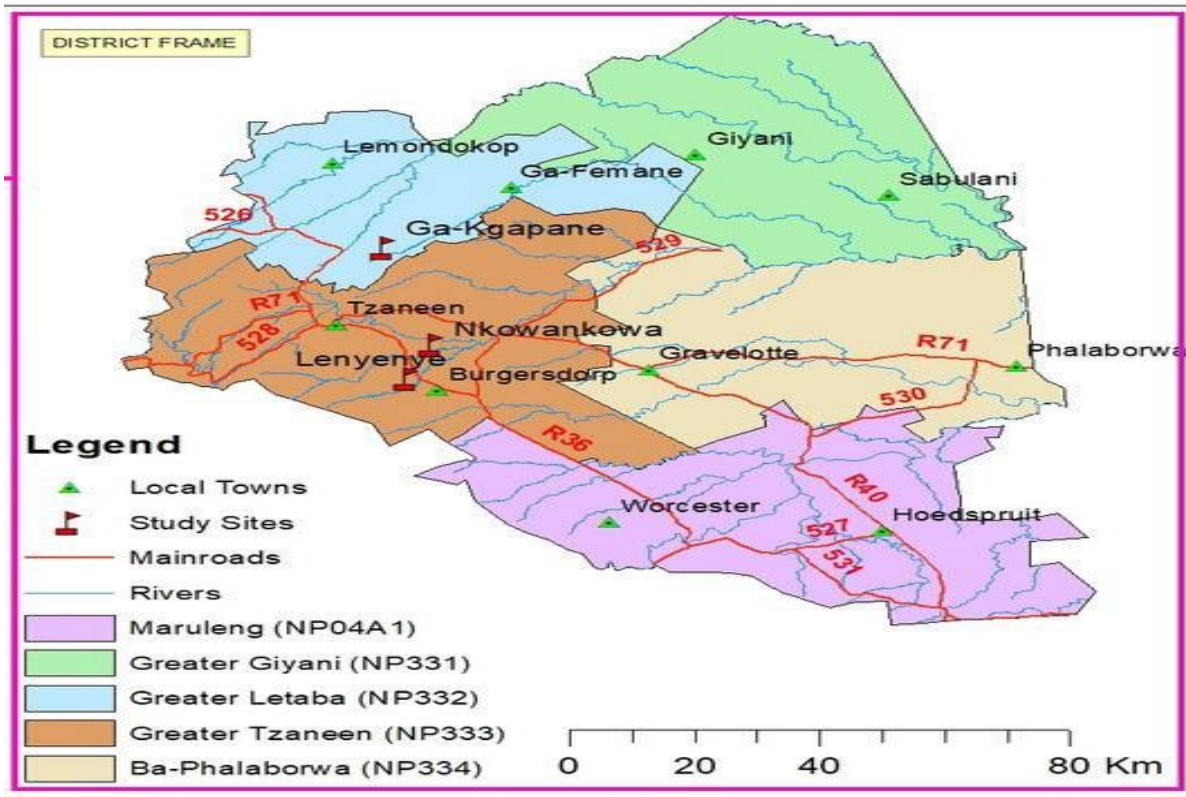
Therefore, the researcher employed a qualitative research design using phenomenology in conducting the empirical study. Babbie (2018:123) asserts that research design is an overall plan of research. According to Monette and Sullivan (2017:120), qualitative research design investigates issues in their natural settings. Participants' perceptions, ideas, and assertions were gained through direct interactions with the researcher. One other reason for employing a qualitative research approach in this study was the close relationship formed between qualitative research and the interpretive research paradigm which was underpinned by Epstein's theory.

3.5. RESEARCH SETTING

According to **Creswell** (2019:211), research setting is the area where research data are collected. The study was collected at Rakwadu 2 Circuit in Mopani West District, Limpopo

Province, South Africa. Rakwadu 2 has 14 primary schools. The random selection was utilised to select the two participating schools. The two selected schools are located in the western part of Limpopo Province.

3.5.1. Figure: 1 Greater Tzaneen Municipality



3.6. SAMPLING PROCEDURE

The study applied a purposeful sampling procedure. Mahajau (2019:96) asserts that purposeful sampling is a process in which the researcher deliberately chooses people and sites to conduct the study. Therefore, the suitability of this sampling procedure is based on the knowledge of the researcher concerning the population and sample and the nature of the research objectives.

3.6.1. Population

Bundari (2022:1) defined population as the entire group that the researcher wants to conclude about. Other researchers defined population as the individuals from whom the investigator wishes to generate findings of the study (McMillan & Schumacher (2014:236). The study's population included all parents whose children were in Grade 1 and all the Grade 1 teachers in Rakwadu 2 Circuit.

3.5.2. Sample

The sample size is the number of participants selected to participate in a study as representative samples of the population (Fouche & De Vos, 2017:56). This study utilised purposive sampling to permit the study to select the participants based on the judgement made by the researcher. Chikwiri and Musiyiwa (2017:80) described purposive sampling as a design established based on the researchers' decision to provide the data for the objectives and success of the study. Twelve participants were sampled from two primary schools in Rakwadu 2 Circuit in Limpopo province because each school had two classes of Grade 1. The participants included eight parents whose children were in Grade 1 and four teachers who taught Grade 1.

3.7. DATA COLLECTION

Fouche and De Vos (2017:121) viewed data collection as a strategy of measuring and collecting data on given research questions. The researcher employed observations, and face-to-face interviews data collection methods. Qualitative research tools were employed to solicit data from an individual participant on a particular research topic (Corbin & Strauss, 2014:12). Ethical clearance was granted from the University of Venda Higher Degrees' committee and the Department of Education in Limpopo Province.

3.7.1. Classroom Observation

Classroom observations refer to data collection tools employed to observe teachers' and learners' interaction in the teaching and learning situation (Turnbull, 2019:61). Observation

entails being directly available in a situation and making a record of the participants' impression of what is transpired (Turnbull, 2019:61). Therefore, classroom observation was used to check the quality and effectiveness of teachers teaching Grade 1. During classroom observation, the researcher verified the following documents: Annual Teaching Plans (ATPs), Tracers and planners, learners' workbooks, record sheets, informal and formal tasks, and attendance register. The researcher used an e observation checklist to observe teachers teaching Grade 1 learners. Recording and note-taking were recorded in the notebook. The researcher observed the relationship between the teacher and the learners as well as the teaching support materials and the layout of the classroom. Notes were taken during qualitative observation and activities of individuals in this research study.

3.7.2. Interviews

An interview is a process of asking and getting answers from participants on particular questions in the study (Fabian & Dunlop, 2016:67). Research interview involves an interviewer, who coordinates the process of the conversation and asks questions and an interviewee, who responds to those questions (Franco, 2020:5). The aim of the interview is to give a guide on which the participants illustrate their own thinking (Gilliers, 2018:34). Interviews also allow the researcher to gather qualitative data as well as gain insight into the thoughts and behaviours of individuals (Hart, 2017:47). Interview styles that were used in this research were as follows: individual face to face and group interview. The semi-structured interview questions were used in this study to allow the participants to feel at ease. Semi structured interview questions contain questions that are formally prepared and follow-up questions to get data from the participants (Hedenbro & Rydelius, 2019:39). For both teachers and parents, five questions were asked to each participant to obtain the data. The interviews were conducted at school. A voice recorder was used during the interview session

3.7.2.1. Interview with Teachers

In this study, data was collected through face-to-face interviews to check parental engagement in the education of the Grade 1 learners. Interviews were conducted during

school hours in the Grade 1 classes. The interview session with teachers lasted for 1 hour 30 minutes during the Home Language period as scheduled on the daily routine timetable.

3.7.2.2. Interview with Parents

Interviews with parents were done through face-to-face interviews to check parental engagement in the education of the Grade 1 children at home. Interviews were conducted at school in free classes arranged by the school principal. Each parent was scheduled for a specific time to arrive for the interview session. The interview took 1 hour per participant.

3.7.3. Document analysis

Denzin and Lincoln (2017:98) indicated that documentation includes the documents and texts. In this study, the lesson plans, ATP and Caps documents were analysed, workbooks to check the teachers adhere to derived to the policies.

3.7.4. Instrumentation

This study used the following instruments:

- Interview schedule for Grade 1 teachers on parental engagement in the education of Grade 1 learners during the C-19 pandemic (see appendix A).
- Interview schedule for parents whose children were in Grade 1 on parental engagement in the education during Covid-19 pandemic (see Appendix B).
- Observation schedule for Grade 1 teachers. A rubric was used for observation when teachers presented lessons.
- Document analysis for formal and informal tasks completed with the help of parents at home.

3.8. TRUSTWORTHINESS OF THE STUDY

Creswell (2016: 196) refers to trustworthiness as the quality of research, truth and authenticity of findings which gives the degree of trust and confidence in the results of the study. The measures to ensure trustworthiness in qualitative research study include credibility, transferability, dependability and conformability. A detailed outline of how the study ensured adherence to each measure is as follows:

3.8.1. Credibility

McMillan and Schumacher (2014:309) prefer cross-validation of various data sources and different data collecting tools. Hence, different data collection modes were employed, and this enabled the researcher to triangulate the data sources. In this study, credibility was enhanced by choosing participants with extensive experience and rich knowledge about the phenomenon under research.

3.8.2. Dependability

According to Denzin and Lincoln (2017:98), dependability is the solidity of findings that include findings, interpretation and recommendations of the study such data are supported and gathered from the participants of the study. One of the strategies quoted the participants verbatim concerning their responses in interviews. Therefore, the value of dependability rests on the extent to which the outcomes of the study reflect the views of the participants and not those of the researcher. In this study, the researcher attempted to convince the readers that the findings of the study emanated from the participants' responses and not the researcher.

3.8.3. Transferability

Cilliers (2018:234) described transferability as the application of outcomes derived from a rich, thick data collection resulting in similar outputs as the researched phenomenon. In this study, transferability shall mean the ability of the readers to apply the findings of the study to similar situations and get similar results.

3.8.4. Confirmability

Fouche and De Vos (2017:98) concur that conformability is addressed when the findings of the study are linked to the researched phenomenon and not the bias of the researcher. In this study, the researcher ensured that the findings that emerged from the study were linked to the collected data.

3.9. ANALYSIS OF DATA

According to Borup (2017:16), analysis of data is a process of inspecting, examining, filtering and modelling data to help solve problems. An analysis of data starts when all data have been put together and prepared from interviews and observations (Hart 2017:29). During this stage, the researcher reflects on all information, organises it into topics from all information origins aimed at writing objective reports of the lived experiences (Creswell, 2016:186). Ibrahim (2015:57) shares that the analysis of data is the process of performing certain calculations and evaluations in order to extract relevant information from data while the aims are to summarise the collected data and organise it in such a manner to yield an answer to the question. Once the aims behind the analysis are clear, the next step is to collect data which is analysed. Data collected using interviews were organised into a sizeable amount of data, transcribed and interpreted to get a clear understanding. Coding was applied to all appropriate topics and divided into parts to make sense of data. In this study, data was examined thoroughly to identify the main categorised topics and patterns analysed through thematic analysis. Conclusions were outlined from analysed data to get acknowledgements of the research question. Data analysis questions from all two instruments raised in this study were answered and objectives were achieved.

Jones (2020:31) believes that qualitative data was found in media and memorandums at work. Qualitative data analysis is the transcript of individual interviews, and focus groups, field notes from observation of certain activities, copies of documents, audits and recordings (Creswell, 2016:187). Kart (2016:31) adds that data analysis is a process and procedure which researchers use to examine the qualitative data analysis that has been collected into some form of explanation and interpretation of the people and situations the researchers are finding out. Qualitative data analysis is the non-numerical examination and interpretation of

observations, content analysis, in-depth interviews and other qualitative research techniques, to discover underlying meanings and patterns of relationships (Babbie, 2018:15). This study was envisioned to shed more light on the social reality of parental engagement in the education of Grade 1 learners during Covid-19 pandemic.

3.10. ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

Ethical considerations in research are principles that must be adhered to when conducting research. These principles are voluntary participation, informed consent, anonymity, confidentiality, the potential for harm, and results communication (Steyn, 2017:80). Before data collection, the researcher has the responsibility to respect the integrity of the participants and the researcher informs the participants about the aims of the study. Therefore, the researcher adhered to the following ethical considerations:

3.10.1. Informed Consent

According to Cohen (2018:471), informed consent explains the purpose of the study, the procedures and methodology to be followed, the roles of the participants and their rights concerning asking questions, and the benefits of the study as well as the risks, if there are any.

The researcher applied for an ethical clearance certificate from the University of Venda. Ethical clearance number **REC 111513-038** includes an ethical clearance committee viewing the research aims and methodologies of researchers to make sure that the research is done in ways that protect the dignity, rights and no harm of the research participants and that the research design is ethically sound and is suitable to provide the expected outcome (Cohen 2018:471). The researcher further sought for approval from the Limpopo Department of Education, Mopani East District, to conduct research in schools and the principal of the sampled school. Sampled participants were asked to read and sign the consent form and were informed that participation was voluntary. They were also told that they could terminate their participation at any given time, even without any explanation given to the researcher.

Thereafter, the researcher ensured that the procedures were explained to all the participants in accordance with ethical rules.

3.10.2. Right to Privacy: Anonymity and Confidentiality

According to Hornby (2017:22), anonymity refers to the non-disclosure of participants' identities. Cilliers (2018:18) emphasises that the researcher should inform the participants that there would be no revelation of confidential data unless the participants granted permission to the researcher at the beginning of the research. The researcher ensured that the names of the participants were not used or reflected anywhere on the research documents during and after the research process, instead, codes would be created for them. Data was collected through a voice recorder, participants' voices were disguised, and all information was kept in a gadget requiring an encrypted password. The researcher assured the participants that any published data collected from the study would not in any way be possibly linked to any individual.

3.10.3. Avoidance of harm

The research's ethical standard prohibits the researchers from exposing participants in any way that they might be at risk of harm as a result of their participation. Harm can be referred to as both physical and emotional (Creswell, 2014:188). The two major standards of confidentiality and anonymity were strictly maintained throughout the study. The study, in its nature, did not have any potential to expose the participants to any form of physical harm. In terms of emotional stress, the researcher treated all the participants with the utmost respect. The researcher emphasised the issue of the rights of all the participants and explained that they could withdraw from the study at any given time as and when they felt uncomfortable.

3.1. SUMMARY

This chapter detailed the research methodology and motivation thereof, which this study aimed to acquire in pushing towards the objectives indicated in Chapter 1. This chapter also indicated how research methodology correlated concepts would be obtained for the most valid

and reliable finding. The use of a qualitative approach was justified for the provision of comprehensive answers, research questions and presented data analysis.

CHAPTER 4 DATA ANALYSIS, INTERPRETATION AND DISCUSSION

4.1. INTRODUCTION

This chapter focuses on collection, analysis and interpretation of data, triangulation of the findings, discussion, theoretical framework on findings, conclusions drawn and recommendations for future studies in order to give a sound and well-grounded outlook of parental engagement in the education of their Grade 1 learners in the eventuality of a crisis such as occurred during the outbreak of Covid-19 pandemic. The researcher uses face-to-face interviews and observation to collect data. The following research questions guided the researcher to collect data:

- 4.1.1. What are the perceptions of parents regarding parental engagement in their children's education?
- 4.1.2. Which challenges are faced in parental engagement in child learning or something to this effect?
- 4.1.3. Which intervention measures can be taken to improve parental engagement?

4.2. ANALYSIS OF DATA COLLECTED THROUGH INTERVIEWS

Summary of themes and subthemes

THEMES	SUB-THEMES
THEME 1: Parents' perceptions towards parental engagement.	1.1. Effect on daily routine. 1.2. Problems with materials to support online learning.
THEME 2: Challenges experienced by parents in their children's learning.	2.1. Language barrier. 2.2. Lack of knowledge. 2.3. Barriers to the implementation of remote learning.

THEMES	SUB-THEMES
THEME 3: Intervention strategies to improve parental engagement.	3.1. Maintaining a strict routine. 3.2. Engaging in creative and learning activities.

3.3 The ability of parents to keep

4.2.1. Theme 1: parents' perceptions towards parental engagement.

This theme entails three sub-themes: (a) Effect on daily routine; (b) difficulty in shifting to the online mode of education: and (c) impact on social development.

4.2.1.1. Effect on the daily routine.

It was revealed that parents found the sudden closure of the schools extremely disturbing and were concerned about their children's routines. According to Mishra, Gupta, and Shree (2020:73). Parents believe that through schools, a formally structured routine is followed on most days of the week and this helps children understand the importance of time, scheduling and doing assignments on a given timeline. Wilder, (2023:95) states that all these elements of systematic routine help them shape their future work habits. According to Jones, (2020:46) they found that parents and school plays a significant role in disciplining children.

One of the parents mentioned:

I was trying to make sure all my learners get lessons from the television programme regarding their grades and questions were asked and they should do all activities given to them so that they can be on par with the syllabus (PA3).

Promote learning style at home by influencing a positive attitude towards learning. Help learners with the segmentation of words and spelling. (PA6)

Establish a routine like play and read time. Discuss the internet with children so that they know how it works. (PA7)

On the other hand, parents also expressed that they feel children are now more responsive to their health and hygiene practices and religiously follow hygiene routines without reinforcement. This view concurs with Ren and Fan, (2019:179) who also believe that children need a routine structure. This study found out that a scheduled learning routine is still a major gap in times of Covid-19 according to a few parents. Parents felt that their children were

deprived of access to schools, friends, examinations and sports due to countrywide closure and lockdown. PA7 also stated, as parents, we need to

Encourage children to ask questions and express their feelings. Also, discuss good hygiene practices. Parents can use it every day to reinforce the importance of things such as regular and thorough hand washing. (PA8)

4.2.1.2. Problems with materials to support online learning

Parents were concerned that a major change their kids have had to see is an abrupt transition from physical classes to online classes. (Rousoulioti, Tzagari & Giannikas, 2022:45) state that the discipline that learners learn while getting ready for school, engaging in various activities, and using different methods to learn their subjects in classes is difficult to maintain when education has become virtual. Ren and Fan, (2019:178) believe that the seriousness that the physical presence of a teacher can instil in their learners is seemingly impossible with online learning. Another factor that hampered their learning was highlighted by the parents in the following words:

Lack of knowledge, some parents cannot use social media, because they do not have smartphones. They can overcome the situation by providing more digital or smartphones to parents and providing them with free data. (PA6)

It was evident that not only did the children find this new way of learning unusual, but the teachers as well were faced with an unprecedented need to switch to their computers from textbooks and blackboards. This view concurs with García and Weiss, (2020:142) states that for decades, the education system has been based on a very particular pattern and a drastic change like the shut-down has revealed how unprepared the system is in other modalities of learning. For this reason, the researcher believes that this ultimately means that children's learning is being compromised and their parents are rightfully concerned.

Karademir,(2021:29) agree that the loss of physical classes also means that there is no longer any peer-learning opportunity.

4.2.2. Theme 2: Challenges faced by parents in the children's learning

This theme entails three subthemes: (a) challenges faced in the implementation of remote learning.

4.2.2.1. Challenges to the implementation of remote learning

Covid-19 has caused undue difficulties in ensuring quality education globally and more especially in third world countries like South Africa (Venketsamy and Hu 2023:12). According to Venketsamy, Hu, Helmbold and Auckloo, (2022:349) these novel innovations in learning is not always convenient, especially the transitioning has been abrupt rather than gradual. Therefore, the researcher agrees that parents are concerned about the challenges that remote learning has brought for them and their children. Mukuna and Aloka (2020:148) believe that online schooling requires the availability of computers and the internet at exact hours as needed. Any technical issues related to the requirements could result in the child missing out on learning. This is especially challenging when there are more than one school going child in a family due to the possibility of classes clashing, as one of the parents remarked:

Lack of knowledge, some parents cannot use social media because they do not have smartphones. They can overcome the situation by providing more digital or smartphones to parents and providing them with free data. (PA6)

Parents also mentioned how they had to take care of homework more than ever, including explaining worksheets and other tasks. According to they Wilder, (2023:98) found their children often sometimes shy away from asking questions or experience internet lag. These children therefore do not want to ask question. Karademir, (2021:29) said that he/she had to explain work to their children which they themselves did not understand

4.2.2.2. Language barrier

Another barrier to parental involvement and engagement in their children's learning is due to

'language barriers.' To complicate the problem, it was impossible to gauge whether parents had conveyed the learning task accurately and as the teacher had intended. One participant remarked in this regard:

Eish, it is difficult for me to help my children because I cannot read. I do not know what to tell my child to do. (PA2)

Another teacher added:

Other challenge child-headed families. Illiterate parents. (T4)

The researcher found that most parents do not speak the language of teaching and learning of the child and therefore they struggle to give meaning to words. This barrier has created tension in families whereby young learners feel that their parents are not well educated.

According to **Hornby and Blackwell, (2018:231)** parents are reluctant to engage with children's schoolwork due to their poor literacy and numeracy level. Some parents are illiterate when it comes to new methods of teaching young learners.

4.2.2.3. Lack of knowledge

Teachers observed that many parents struggled to follow instructions that they had provided to assist the learners in completing learning activities at home. One teacher expressed their sentiment as follows:

A social problem where there are differences of parents that they expose to children. Lack of relevant equipment that can help in studying. Lack of motivation by studying with unenlightened people. Lack of exposure and information. Poverty status of their families. In villages, there are noises generated by liquor outlets that hinder children from studying. Even when there are laws to prevent that, law enforcers and community leaders just turn a blind eye to that. (T 1)

Another teacher added:

Learners are left with grandparents while their parents are at work far away from home. Some parents knock off late and arrive home late. Other challenges are child-headed families and illiterate parents. (T4)

This may suggest that parents were non-compliant, a situation that reverberated negatively on the success level of their children's learning. As an open-ended item, teachers were invited to divulge any further insights or comments that they might wish to express. Parent involvement was repeatedly cited as the most problematic issue. It was clear that well weathered teachers found themselves exasperated by the level of disregard exhibited by parents. One teacher voiced it as follows:

Poverty, uneducated parents, uncontrollable family, drunkard family, bullying parents. I think the above-mentioned situations can hinder the academic success of a learner. The learner even in class cannot perform or concentrate because this can disturb the child's mind. Parents who don't care about their children. (T2)

This situation is worrisome, especially considering that teachers are not directly charged with the responsibility for parents, but for the learners in their care. It therefore seems that parental non-compliance has surfaced as a variant of concern, to borrow and re-apply some of the Covid-19 terminology.

4.2.3. Theme 3: Intervention measures can be taken to improve parental engagement

This theme entails the following sub-themes: (a) maintenance of a strict schedule; (b) engaging in creative and learning activities.

4.2.3.1. Maintenance of Strict Schedule

Parents around the world are rightfully concerned about how their children's routines are disrupted extensively (Muller and Kerbow, 2018:41)). To combat this issue, Mukuna and Aloka (2020:150) found that parents have designed homemade timetables according to which children should have something to do at most times and should have a normal sleep-wake cycle. Karademir, (2021:197) believes that implementing a schedule helps children feel less restless and more productive. It can also prevent unnecessary internet and computer time.

One of the parents wants to begin and end her child's day just like normal school days and commented:

I give their children access to learning channels on TV, computers internet. Meaning they must install a home internet connection. They must also allow their children to help them with work at home. They must learn to cook, clean and fix some faults that they can with their own hands. (T1).

Parents together with their children should have rules and timetables to follow at home and the parents should always start with the subject the learners need most so that the child's mind should be ready to adapt to other subjects according to his or her space. (T2).

4.2.3.2. Engaging in creative and learning activities

Parents indicated that they have limited time and this make it difficult to be involved in their children's school learning activities. Some parents believe in getting creativity with the children. From arts and crafts to cooking, from dancing to singing, parents and their children are open to all ideas. Some of them have also enrolled the kids in online courses so that by the end of this period, the children will have acquired some soft skills and structured knowledge too. A participant explained:

As a teacher, you must communicate to parents that wherever they encounter problems regarding helping their learners, they must feel free to ask for assistance from the teacher as he or she will be able to clarify what is needed to be done for that task and he or she must apply his or her professional methodologies to explain the task to the parents so that they can help their learners with what will be needed. (T2)

A collaborative, cooperative partnership involves planning and problem-solving to develop specific positive strategies to help children achieve their highest potential. The teacher gives learners homework to do at home. Ask the learner's parents to monitor the learners in completing the work. Even the teacher will monitor the work by signing the book and also ask the learners to do some work at school. (T3)

4.2.3.3. The ability of parents to keep children busy.

Although parents are trying to the best of their abilities to keep their children engaged in meaningful activities, there are some challenges that they recognise as well. According to Schimpf, (2023:43) they found that many children are considering the 'shut-down' time as a vacation from school; hence they want nothing to do with a normal school-like routine. Venketsamy and Hu 2023:12 state that these learners use the shut-down as an opportunity to sleep and wake up according to their own wish and spend the rest of the time playing video games and watching cartoons/movies. García and Weiss, (2020:142) state that this is a potential threat to their social, educational and physical development. The researcher believes that these children's lifestyle is becoming sedentary with limited outdoor access and they are not used to physical activities inside their house, probably because of the lack of space. As one parent remarked:

Learners are left with grandparents while their parents are at work far away from home. Some parents knock off late and arrive home late. Other challenges are child-headed families and Illiterate parents. (T4)

Another parent also commented:

Poverty, uneducated parents, uncontrollable family, drunkard family, bullying parents. I think the above-mentioned situations can hinder the academic success of a learner. The learner even in class cannot perform or concentrate because this can disturb the child's mind. Parents don't care about their children. (T2)

It is especially challenging if the parents are working from home or offices, and have their own schedules to follow. Keeping their children in check all the time has become cumbersome and parents end up allowing the children to do things their way.

4.3. DISCUSSION ON FINDINGS

With the above exposition of parents' less than satisfactory contribution to their children's successful learning, it has been discussed that parents need training in order to have a significant impact on the needs of their children for learning support during a pandemic. This is affirmed by Formosinho's plea for "schoolification" of parents (2021: 141). A caveat is expressed by Jones (2020:43) who warns that parents should not try to recreate the traditional school environment at home; rather, learners should be allowed greater freedom in dealing with curriculum content. As remarked by one of the participants:

The curriculum should be adapted so that the idea of catching up and being behind can be erased from teachers' and learners' perspectives and attitudes towards everyday life.

It is imperative to note that in times of a pandemic and global trauma, specifically of a novel kind, it is hard to explore relevant literature to suit specific enquiry. In addition, the participants of this study were parents from urban areas in Pakistan who were already vulnerable to the consequences of global lockdown and school closures and were learning to adapt to the new routine of working from home and learning from home (Khalid, & Singal, 2023:19).

The participants sampled from these study were convinced that teachers had not only provided what they would have done in normal times but had sacrificed on a personal and emotional level in order to assist their learners to function as normally as possible.

T3 also indicated that "There is a need for social agents other than teachers to complement the classroom learning processes since these agents embody the overall knowledge experiences of learners".

These measures included buying airtime for parents, photocopying and dispatching learning material to offsite destinations and recording time-consuming video clips at their own expense frequently. Teachers were perhaps most painfully aware of the absence of collaborative learning as envisaged by the National Curriculum Statement (NCS, 2012) for their learners during the pandemic. Learners were deprived not only of the physical support of their peers (Landsberg , 2012) but also of the first-hand expertise of the subject experts, the teachers,

who were now dependent on the collaboration of parents in order to reach their Grade 1 learners. This calls to mind the words of Fru and Seotsanyana (2017:9).

Thus far, the months spent in lockdown due to the pandemic have confirmed the veracity of this theoretical statement. In addition, teachers had to improvise and compensate for parents' performance ((Jansen & Farmer-Phillips, 2021; Matlabe, 2017). Ironically, the pandemic resulted in the teacher-parent responsibility roles frequently being swapped with the parent now acting in a double capacity – and often failing desperately. As mentioned above, Mochida et al. (2021) concluded that higher levels of stress experienced by learners during the pandemic point to the lack of school and peer support and the necessity to rely on parental input. In line with the socio-constructivist theory of learning, likely, the inability of parents to provide the required level of support to their children contributed significantly to this stress.

The findings highlighted above are true reflections of their lived experiences. The findings revealed that the major concern of the parents was related to children facing problems due to sudden school closure and a complete lockdown on social gatherings. Many newspaper opinions and notifications also talked about the loss of learning and its impact on students (CDC, 2020; Jinshan, 2020; UNESCO, 2020). There are various reasons and factors for this.

Children have been cocooned in homes due to the possible threat of contracting the virus, while research and evidence so far suggest that children are seemingly not at a high risk of severe infections and they could be asymptomatic and could be carriers of the disease to adults and the elderly. Although schools had to go under government-mandated lockdowns to ensure social distancing and the collective good of the nation, school closures present a possible threat of stress and anxiety among children. Schools are thriving places for children

to interact with their peers and adults in various indoor and outdoor learning environments. More importantly, school days ensure a healthy routine for children, which plays a critical role in their robust growth and development. The timing of the extended lockdown also is critical.

The academic term comes to an end towards April and May, thus according to the academic calendar of most public and private schools, whether they offer matriculation or O & A Level programmes of education, the months of February and March are focused towards syllabus completion and assessments. Moreover, the cancellation of board examinations worldwide and in Pakistan has also impacted students' preparation, about every academic activity came to a sudden standstill, resulting in a negative impact on children's routines, mindset and future (Mitsuru & Okutsu, 2020; Razzaque, 2020; UNESCO, 2020).

A report for the National Foundation of Educational Research (NFER) in England by Nelson and Sharp (2020) similarly observed that the challenge of parents without the technological support of data or connectivity was a major issue for teachers in their attempt to provide teaching and learning material to the learners. Notwithstanding the low level of satisfaction expressed by teachers in the present study in this regard, WhatsApp group messages were regarded as the best way to communicate with parents.

To address these challenges, schools have played a phenomenal role in flipping the conventional model of teaching and learning. While they have provided induction and paraphernalia for teachers to conduct online learning, they have also persevered in inducting parents and students to use the online apps (Razzaque, 2020; RNZ, 2020; UNESCO, 2020). However, things have not been as easy as they may seem. Many teachers had to speedily overcome camera consciousness and be able to deliver 'live' classes. Special content had to be created in the form of audio notes, PowerPoint presentations, use of digital whiteboards and online learning tools. Moreover, conventional methods of communicating with parents include circulars and notes in diaries. A few schools have short messaging services and

WhatsApp or email communication channels with parents. While those few schools seem to have utilised technology as best as possible with seamless communication to parents via videos, graphics, online guides and support, it was a first time and a unique challenge for many schools. They may have to evaluate how effective their outbound communication has been and whether parents and students can get the help they intend to give in the first place.

A variation of this challenge was encountered with parents who were not digitally literate and who could not assist their children due to insufficient technological savoir-faire. Timmons et al. (2020) documented the anguish of parents during the pandemic who realised that their inability to provide technological support would negatively affect their children's learning. Atilas et al. (2021) flagged this concern as the most likely decisive factor in future scenarios that will separate the empowered from the deprived.

Parents, on the other hand, have had to overcome the challenges of being locked down as well. Following the closure of schools, offices and public places were also locked down (Dai & Lin, 2020; Jinshan, 2020; UNESCO 2020; Xia, 2020; Xie & Young, 2020). While most parents have been helpless in how to keep their children engaged, many have tried to befriend technology and grapple with online learning.

Those already familiar with technology and online tools were far more effective in creating a routine of learning at home with their children, including activities and home assignments given by the schools, and using more online resources for reading and home-based activities. Many mothers have been using Facebook groups to interact with the community on how to keep their children engaged with pot painting, indoor gardening, simple games, worksheets and activities. Quite a few parents have been able to use free services that have become available for pleasure reading, including audiobooks, e-books and flipbooks.

All things considered, the entire nation and academics around the world have come forward to support learning at home, offering a wide range of free online avenues to support parents

and children. Moreover, parents too have adapted quickly to address the learning gap that has emerged in their children’s academic lives in these challenging times.

Finally, the quintessence of effective communication with parents was reiterated by various researchers around the globe (Jansen & Farmer-Phillips, 2021; Formosinho, 2021, Kirby, 2021; Atilas et al., 2021) and was reiterated by the teacher responses in the current investigation. With the fourth industrial revolution steadily gaining ground in all aspects of life, it is inevitable to adapt to the demands of digitalisation. As previously discussed, Van der Walt (2020) stresses the importance of setting an example for our learners to embrace innovation.

Socio-constructivism emphasises the influence of an enabling environment for enhancing the learning transfer by our learners (Landsberg et al., 2012) in which parents can intimately influence the situation of their children. It is ironic that some parents, who are expected to guide and protect their children, are rendering themselves increasingly impotent in decision-making processes due to their inadequate mastery and control of technology. Parents must keep abreast of innovation to retain their social relevance.

4.4. BIOGRAPHICAL INFORMATION OF THE PARTICIPANTS

This section presents the biographical information of all the participants, meaning age and teaching experience.

Coding of participants

Codes	Explanation	Numbers
T	Teachers	1,2,3,4,
PA	Parents	1,2,3,4,5,6,7,8
SCH	School	X,Y

Location	SCH	T	Grade	Gender	Experience	Language
Rakwadu Circuit 2	X	1	1	F	15 years	Sepedi
		2	1	F	20 years	Sepedi
	Y	1	1	F	12 years	Sepedi

		2	1	F	11 years	Sepedi
Total		04				

School and Teacher Profiles

The first section of the questions profiled the type of school and the teachers' experiences. Although the researcher attempted to target schools from across the socio-economic spectrum, the diversification of schools was maintained in coding the data. Teachers had an average of 10 years of experience teaching Grade 1 which was a good contribution during face-to-face interviews. Most foundation phase teachers are females, and this was confirmed in the present study where all participants were females.

The empirical investigation zoomed in on the aspect of the teacher experience of the engagement of parents. Teachers were sensitive to the obligation that they had to respond to their learners with new and novel solutions for the adapted reality that did not include the collaborative environment of the classroom anymore. The teachers mentioned their deliberate efforts to compensate for the disrupted classroom situation. From the responses to this section, the issue of the extent of parental engagement regarding the success of learner adjustment and curriculum delivery emerged with surprising consistency. A major category that emerged from the coding process was concerned with communication. It became clear that the process of communicating with learners through their parents caused additional problems.

4.5. CONTEXTUAL ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION OF QUALITATIVE DATA

This section outlines and interpretation of the qualitative data obtained through the interviews, observations and document analysis.

4.5.1. Interview with Grade 1 Teachers

4.5.1.1. How can the relationship between the teachers and parents improve academic success for the learners at home?

By creating grade WhatsApp groups in order to communicate with parents. Grade WhatsApp group is used to send parents homework, assignments and projects. We can also ask them to help learners with incomplete classwork. It will make learners not forget the school work when they are at home as teachers will have continuous communication with parents that will make parents monitor if the learner is doing the school work. (T1)

Proper communication skills can build a strong relationship between the teacher and parents. Most parents need a teacher who has a vision and good communication to make sure parents take part in helping their learners at home with whatever will be communicated to them and when they don't understand they will ask for clarification from the teacher to help their learners. (T2)

A positive relationship between the teachers and parents is essential towards the performance of the learners. Parents can provide the teacher with the behaviour of their children which can cause barriers to learning. The teacher can keep in contact with the parents to report changes in the learner. (T3)

The relationship is good and we understand each other. Parents adhere to the calling when the educators call them for the academic performance of their learners. They understand and have a love of education for their children. They participate actively. Also, consistency, creating routines and providing consistent opportunities to encourage your child to learn at home reinforces the notion that you and the educator are working together to support him/her (T4)

Most of the responses insisted on proper communication between the teachers and parents that can bring better results in the curriculum performance of learners despite the distance.

4.5.1.2. How can the teacher support the learning process taking place at home?

Creating a group chat with the parents so that effective communication can be maintained with all parents. The group chat can be used to send the work that parents are expected to help learners with. (T1)

As a teacher, you must communicate to parents that wherever they encounter problems regarding helping their learners, they must feel free to ask for assistance from the teacher as he or she will be able to clarify what is needed to be done for that task and he or she must apply his or her professional methodologies to explain the task to the parents so that they can help their learners with what will be needed. (T2)

A collaborative, cooperative partnership involves planning and problem-solving to develop specific positive strategies to help children achieve their highest potential. The teacher gives learners homework to do at home. Ask the learner's parents to monitor the learners in completing the work. Even the teacher will monitor the work by signing the book and also ask the learners to do some work at school. (T3)

Teachers should be able to use social media as a way to offer lessons. Also encourage parents and learners to access a technological gadget in the form of a computer, smartphone or tablet and also to have the internet at their homes. (T4)

The above response indicated that there is a need for gadgets and internet connections to support communication between parents and teachers. Furthermore, there is a need to train the parents to operate technological gadgets.

4.5.1.3. Which strategies can parents use for their children's learning at home?

They can give their children access to learning channels on TV, computers internet. Meaning they must install a home internet connection. They must also allow their children to help them with work at home. They must learn to cook, clean and fix some faults that they can with their own hands. (T1).

Parents together with their children should have rules and timetables to follow at home and the parents should always start with the subject the learners need most so that the child's mind should be ready to adapt to other subjects according to his or her space.

(T2).

Parents make timetables for reading, writing homework and reporting or presenting what they have learnt. They should not do all of the above while watching TV, listening to the radio or playing games. (T3).

Parents should ensure that they control the time of watching TV, and playing and also avoid giving learners a lot of home chores. Parents should provide their children with the learning materials. (T4).

The responses emphasised discipline in activities such as watching TV and playing as they might interfere with the schedule for learners' and parents' work.

4.5.1.4. What are the challenges faced by the teachers in establishing contact with parents?

A great challenge is that most teachers are technologically illiterate. They don't know how to use technological equipment effectively. On the other hand, some parents have dropped out of school early. They are unemployed, they cannot afford to install and subscribe to educational websites and internet connections. They can't also help their children in interpreting questions for activities given at school. (T1).

Most parents are not interested in their children's education. They don't want to take part because they are illiterate they cannot read and write. Parents are not taking part because they don't have the heart to make sure they can help their children. (T 4).

Some parents do not have cell phones; communication becomes a problem. Some do not come when requested to come to school. It is difficult to contact parents as some are unable to use technological devices, e.g., cell phones. (T2).

Scale of communication, technological constraints cultural distinction, parental involvement and a lack of documentation, a lack of time, both parents and teachers busy with schedules. Some parents are unable to access WhatsApp and lack internet access. Some parents are unable to read. Some do not have access to cell phones. (T3).

The above responses showed that most parents were illiterate to operate technological gadgets and also unable to read or understand the content of the subject.

4.5.1.5. Which problems at home hinder the academic success of learners?

A social problem where there are differences of parents that they expose to children. Lack of relevant equipment that can help in studying. Lack of motivation by studying with unenlightened people. Lack of exposure and information. Poverty status of their families. In villages, there is a noise generated from liquor outlets that hinder children from studying. Even when there are laws to prevent that, law enforcers and community leaders just turn a blind eye to that. (T1)

Poverty, uneducated parents, uncontrollable family, drunkard family, bullying parents. I think the above-mentioned situations can hinder the academic success of a learner. The learner even in class cannot perform or concentrate because this can disturb the child's mind. Parents who don't care about their children. (T2)

Due to little or no education of parents, learners do not get the necessary assistance. Some learners are from child-headed families; they have to do all the home chores. Community and societal factors, including housing instability, food insecurity, community violence and household and neighbourhood poverty. (T3)

Learners are left with grandparents while their parents are at work far away from home. Some parents knock off late and arrive home late. Other challenges are child-headed families and illiterate parents. (T4)

The responses above address the issue of poverty and learners who are left with grandparents who do not know the school. It is difficult for learners to get the necessary assistance from their parents.

4.5.2.1 What do you do at home to help children succeed in their schooling during the Covid-19 pandemic?

Help the child with the given schoolwork and ensure that he is able to read his school books. (PA1)

Eish, it is difficult for me to help my learners because I cannot read. I tell that child to do the work. (PA2)

I was trying to make sure all my learners get lessons from the television programme regarding their grades and questions were asked and they should do all activities given to them so that they can be on par with the syllabus. (PA3)

Teach and observe learners to follow the rules of the Covid-19 pandemic. (PA4)

Know what Covid-19 is. Precautions on preventing Covid-19. How to keep safe from contaminating Covid-19. (PA5)

Promote learning style at home by influencing a positive attitude towards learning. Help learners with the segmentation of words and spelling. (PA6)

Establish a routine like play and read time. Discuss the internet with children so that they know how it works. (PA7)

Encourage children to ask questions and express their feelings. Also, discuss good hygiene practices. Parents can use it every day to reinforce the importance of things such as regular and thorough hand washing. (PA8)

The responses above emphasise that parents also should know Covid-19 regulations which they should teach their children.

4.5.2.2. Does the school communicate its expectations in relation to parental engagement?

Yes, the class teacher has created a WhatsApp group for the parents of the learners in her class. She is able to send us messages if she wants us to assist in anything to the child. (PA1)

During parents and phase or grade meetings, we always encourage parents to participate in their children's education so that together we can assist each other, and together we can build a better future for the child. (PA2)

Ja! The things they told me I could not do. I am unable to buy the cell phone they want. I cannot afford it; I rely on my children's social grants. (PA 3)

Yes, SGB's and parent's meetings are held. Feedback is also given to parents. (PA 4)

Yes, the school communicates with parents through quarterly meetings. (PA5)

Yes, the school uses social media as part of a platform to communicate with parents. (PA6)

The school use phones and email communication to discuss their children's performance. As parents, we should provide the school with the correct contact information for each teacher. (PA7)

Teachers at all times display good professional manners when talking to parents. Teachers always provide appropriate, regular and predictable high-value messages to the teachers. (PA8)

The responses acknowledged that teachers try all means to engage and communicate effectively with parents in relation to learners' activities.

4.5.2.3. Do you feel duty-bound to be jointly involved with teachers in your children's education?

Yes, I can't fold my arms and do nothing to ensure that there is any progress and development in the learning of my child. (PA1)

I wish I could be able to read so that I can help my child-like other parents. Truly speaking, I do not go near the teachers, I feel embarrassed because I do not assist my children as required. (PA2)

As a parent, I will make sure I work together with the teacher to help my child and working together will help the child to succeed. (PA3)

Yes! Parents are called if learners misbehave or do not follow school rules and policies, e.g., children who dodge lessons and who are bullies. (PA4)

Yes, I am duty-bound and jointly involved with teachers in children's education through circulars concerning educational matters and control of learners' work using checklists and tools. (PA5)

Yes, the school principal created a WhatsApp group for both teachers and parents to communicate regarding the children's education. (PA6)

No, no, no! The teacher of my child does not give my child activities to do at home. I don't know how to help or guide my child. (PA7)

I am involved even though I do not have knowledge of school. I attend parents' meetings to check learners' work. (PA8)

Most of the responses indicated that only a few teachers were able to send work to parents to assist their children.

4.5.2.4. What are the barriers to parental engagement? How can they be overcome?

The barriers are experienced by both parents and teachers. In some other classes, class teachers are old people who find it difficult to align themselves with technological

advancement. They rely on writing letters to communicate with their parents. Sometimes parents don't receive them. I think this will be solved as new teachers get into the field, even when capable teachers are employed. The other challenge is the lack of resources at school. Our schools are not well prepared for the third industrial revolution. Corruption that prevails within the South African government disturbs development and unemployment on the side of parents is a great challenge. Some parents cannot afford technological equipment that is user-friendly and subscribe to internet services due to their lack of income. To solve this, the government should be working on identifying people with skills and try to help them create jobs which can also help in employing others. (PA1)

Unable to provide my children with materials, especially materials that require money. I also came late from work; I even forgot to find out what they learnt. I think I should find a person who can help my children with extra classes or aftercare. (PA 2)

Parents are illiterate. This can be overcome by grouping learners to be assisted by a parent who can read and write so that all learners can be assisted. (PA3)

Most parents are working far from home and the ones who are not working do not avail themselves when called for parents' meetings, so they fail to form a quorum. (PA4)

Some parents are not educated, and some are employed and are not engaged in their children's education. Remedial work and assistance from other parents can help overcome the barriers. (PA5)

Lack of knowledge, some parents cannot use social media because they do not have smartphones. They can overcome the situation by providing more digitalisation or smartphones to parents and providing them with free data. (PA6)

Most of us (Parents) lack the knowledge and skills to help our children with their schoolwork. Schools can help parents by providing information about the school programme and by engaging them directly in their children's home activities. (PA7)
Schools do not have resources to facilitate parent-school partnerships. The principal

needs to set aside resources and raise funds to host events and pay for necessary support to make them truly accessible. (PA8)

The responses show different factors that hampered the progress of learners' academics during Covid-19 such as illiterate parents, a lack of knowledge, a lack of skills and a lack of interest.

4.5.2.5. How would you describe the state of the relationship between parents, teachers, and the school head?

The relationship between parents and teachers can be very good if, in the positions of leading the schools, people with knowledge and skills are put in place. With the current trend where the skills and knowledge are not looked upon, teachers cannot develop to the best where they understand their role of interacting with parents actively. As a result, the education system collapses the country as a whole. (PA1)

The school is trying its best to contact us as parents but sometimes we ignore their calls and advice. (PA 2)

The state of the relationship I can say is not 100% good but it is better because people are hard to resist change. They must know that nowadays things are shared, especially regarding the educational matters of our children, we must all take part so that we can all build a better future for our children. The school head also encourages parents to be involved in their children's education and most parents are taking part in that. (PA3)

The relationship is good. We are communicating with parents through WhatsApp groups. Those who can use technology devices are able to spread the messages to the ones who are unable to use them. (PA4)

The relationship between parents and teachers was good because teachers provided resources and activities to parents to assist learners at home. (PA5)

Parents feel valued and respected. Become more aware and responsive to their children's needs. Teachers benefit from parents' skills and expertise. (PA6)

The relationship between the school, parents and teachers can be good, when parents and teachers have a strong relationship, children get many academic and social benefits. (PA7)

When everybody is working together in the best interests of your child, you are likely to reap academic and social behaviour such as regular school attendance, positive results and a positive attitude towards school. (PA8)

4.5.6 SUMMARY

Research has indicated that great schools have effective partnerships with parents (Davies, 1996); therefore, school, family, and community partnerships are critical components in educating learners. Parental involvement provides an important opportunity for schools to enrich current school programmes by bringing parents into the educational process. Increased parental involvement has been shown to result in increased learner success, enhanced parent and teacher satisfaction, and improved school climate. To ensure effective parental involvement, schools may have partnership programmes in place that continually develop, implement, evaluate, and improve plans and practices encouraging family and community involvement. Schools can encourage involvement in several areas, including parenting, learning at home, communication, volunteering, decision-making, and community collaboration. Effective parental involvement programmes are built upon a careful consideration of the unique needs of the community. To build trust, effective approaches to parent involvement rely upon a strength-based approach, emphasising positive interactions. Though specifics may vary, all parent involvement programmes share the goal of increasing parent-school collaboration in order to promote healthy child development and safe school communities.

There must be mutual trust and respect between the home, school, and community. Partnership programmes within the school can train volunteers on specific ways and strategies to assist in the classroom or school. With this type of training, all volunteers will know the expectations and have a better understanding of the operations of the school.

Schools need to attempt to involve numerous parents and community members in the education of learners through effective partnership programmes to express the importance of education.

Finally, schools may implement involvement activities that concentrate on involving all parents. Administrators and educators must provide a welcoming and inviting atmosphere to make the school less intimidating and more comfortable for those parents who have negative experiences in the school. Interactions between the school and home need to be more positive, requiring teachers to contact families throughout the year and not just when problems arise. It may be beneficial for administrators and educators to attempt to involve all parents in the education of their children and make the educational experience more positive for everyone involved COVID-19 pandemic.

CHAPTER 5

SUMMARY, FINDINGS, CONCLUSIONS, RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1. INTRODUCTION

This chapter outlines a summary, limitations, conclusions, recommendations and suggestions for further study

The summary of this study was informed by the research questions, the literature review and empirical findings.

5.2. SUMMARY OF FINDINGS OF THE STUDY

The key finding from the experiences of the teacher sample indicated that communication between teachers and parents, or a lack thereof, presented an important stumbling block for the successful delivery of quality teaching and learning during the Covid-19 pandemic.

The findings of the study were subsequently discussed according to the sub-research questions (cf. par. 1.3). This discussion enabled me to compare findings from the literature review, the theoretical framework and the findings of the research data analysis in order to identify the relationship between the literature review and the data collected from the participants. This allowed the researcher to provide recommendations on how teachers could apply measures to ensure that parents are supported by the school thus ascertaining that learners' academic success takes place during and after Covid-19

5.2.1. Findings concerning research question one

What are the perceptions of parents regarding parental engagement in their children's education? The first sub-research question (cf. par. 1.5) was aimed at investigating the parents' perceptions regarding their involvement in their children's education. The theoretical framework outlined that there is a correlation between parents' engagement with academics of their children's success. The theoretical framework makes it clear that the school, parents and the community should work together towards a common goal. It is therefore critical that parents know exactly what is expected of them in order to assist their children. When looking

at the findings in Chapter 4, it becomes clear that schools should provide greater clarity about parental engagement, especially to older participants. The findings in Chapter 4 suggest that illiterate parents expect more service provided by the school during a pandemic. Illiterate parents also have more challenges regarding online teaching and learning.

Literate parents who know what is expected of them are more likely to have a child who succeeds academically, as they would be able to provide support to them. It is therefore critical that teachers ensure that all parents are aware of online activities and know how to support their children in mastering the online activities.

The findings from the literature review regarding parental support and academic success during Covid-19 allowed the researcher to formulate questions asked to participants in the form of interview questions. The questions were aimed at determining if parents can support their children to ensure academic success during Covid-19. This was done to determine if the findings in Chapter 2 related to the findings in Chapter 4. Chapter 2 revealed that academic success is more likely to be achieved by learners with parents who are involved and know what is expected of them to assist their children academically. Studies have also shown that if parents are negative towards the learning process, it is reflected in their child's academic achievements (Schmid & Garrels, 2021:91). Thus, a school needs to maintain a positive relationship with the parent in order to enhance academic achievement. Therefore, from the findings, it is evident that an effective partnership between the school, parents and teachers will lead to improved academic success. The school must provide a healthy school environment where parents feel welcome and free to express their need for academic assistance. It is thus critical that there is a strong school-teacher-parent relationship, as all the spheres have to interact with one another in order to ensure that academic success takes place. The parents who are involved in the academic process of their children, and those children stand a better chance to succeed and the learning process becomes easier. Also, effective communication is required to create a strong learner-teacher-parent relationship.

5.2.2. Findings pertaining to research question two

What were parents' perceptions of parents regarding their involvement in their children's education?

The second research question (cf. par. 1.5) was formulated to find out how the engagement of parents can improve the academic performance of Grade 1 learners during Covid-19 at primary schools in Rakwadu 2 Circuit in Limpopo province. The literature review in Chapter 2 was used to correlate with the findings of Chapter 4, which that there were a few factors that hindered academic success during Covid-19. Through research done in Chapter 2, it was found that many parents did not have access to technological gadgets to ensure that their children could study online. Furthermore, the costs of internet connection were unaffordable for parents to assist their children to be up to date with their school activities. However, in the study conducted in Rakwadu 2 Circuit, it was found that most parents have challenges accessing technological gadgets. The literature review also revealed that most parents found it very difficult to maintain a job and assist their children academically. The findings also revealed that illiterate parents find it difficult to understand the instructions of the content. If parents do not understand the content and instructions, they cannot assist their children as they do not know how to explain and teach the content.

5.2.3. Findings pertaining to research question three

Which intervention measures can be taken to improve parental engagement? The third research question aims to establish intervention measures that can be taken by teachers to improve parental engagement (cf. par. 1.5). It enabled me to understand how the relationship between the school, teacher and parent could be improved to ensure academic success for learning during Covid-19. This was a very important aspect of the study, as it was necessary to know the relationship in order to develop guidelines for the school. This ensures that parents are supported to ascertain academic success during Covid-19. In any relationship, clear communication must take place, mutual respect should be visible, there should be support for one another, and in order to achieve this, each party should know its role in the relationship. From the findings in Chapter 4, it has become clear that there is not a good relationship between the school, teachers and parents. Many parents felt that the teachers did not give learners work and there was a lot of miscommunication on what had to be done

and whose responsibility. In Chapter 4 it became clear that parents with children in the foundation phase found online learning inefficient.

The findings from this study suggest that there is a continuous need for support and the parents feel that the schools are unable to support this and therefore there is a need for support. The participants showed that online learning was not facilitated and it was inconsistent throughout the school. This study also found that there is a need for the school to improve its communication channels with parents more regularly. The school should look at providing workshops for parents on how to assist and support their child with the online learning process now taking place. This would increase parental engagement and would lead to academic success. If the school provides workshops, parents will have a platform to meet one another and build relationships with one another as well as with the teachers.

5.3. RECOMMENDATIONS

These are uncertain times for humanity in general and for the young developing minds in particular. To mitigate the physical and mental health consequences, the government, Nongovernment Organisations (NGOs), academia and parents must provide a structure by utilising regular routines, communication and developing new partnerships. The literature is still evolving, but some lessons can be learnt from the previous outbreaks (Decosimo, 2019) and countries that were initially affected (Wang, 2020).

Home schooling and learning has emerged as a substitute for conventional schooling methods, which should be made effective to provide essential learning skills to children at home using the limited available resources. Online resources which are adapted to our curriculum's expectations can be implemented at home. The curricula should incorporate cautiously curated online courses which include physical and psychosocial components other than the academic goals (Mason, 2018). The limitations remain like how parents with different educational backgrounds will follow through with the instructions; therefore, online schooling to support home learning can be a go-to strategy where teachers deliver education online. Centralised data dashboards, an adaptive interactive educational technology can be used to

measure, monitor, organise and analyse data to keep the students, teachers and schools on target (Papamitsiou, 2014). Opportunities for enhancing teachers' quality and lifelong professional development should be encouraged to be at the forefront of this transformative process.

Encourage parents to provide additional resources. For example, Laptops, Smartphones etc. Teachers should provide a guide on the utilisation of the resources as listed above. The school should provide a platform for virtual meeting with parents so as to give tangible feedback.

5.4. SUGGESTIONS FOR FUTURE STUDIES

This research study has presented a systematic review of the most recent research on the relationships between learners, parents, and teachers during the Covid-19 pandemic lockdown. The three groups were discussed in a comprehensive set of research articles. In this context, we asked ourselves the following questions:

- 1) How supportive were the relationships between the parents, teachers and the learners during the Covid-19 pandemic?
- 2) How were parents involved in supporting their children's education during school closure? The parents involved in educating their children during the Covid-19 pandemic?
- 3) Did the three groups (parents, teachers and learners) supported each other appropriately so that parents know how to support their children at home during the Covid lockdown??

These questions are linked to the more general objective of presenting critical information about the relationship established between the family and the school in the face of an imposed distance education scenario due to Covid-19.

The following specific objectives were addressed:

- 1) To analyse the relationships that were established between the parents and the teachers during the Covid-19 pandemic.

- 2) To determine how the teachers supported their learners, and to examine the relationships that were established between parents and their children in a home learning situation during the Covid-19 pandemic.

5.5. THE STUDY'S CONTRIBUTION TO THE BODY OF KNOWLEDGE

Covid-19 impact on learners: challenges and responses

A recent editorial pointed out that education is one of the best predictors of life chances and challenges among children:

- Many educational institutions were temporarily closed to contain the spread of Covid-19. Such measures have been detrimental to the education and wellbeing of many young people. As of 25 March 2021, UNESCO reported that around 164 million learners still lack access to education.
- While many schools have shifted to online learning, such a modality poses a challenge for learners who have limited access to the internet. Since schools are shuttered, many teachers and learners find it difficult to obtain learning resources. Moreover, some learners are embroiled in domestic violence, which makes learning at home strenuous. As the battle against Covid-19 continues, many learners struggle with mental health issues. Young people are forced to stay at home and have limited physical and social interaction with peers. As a result, many feel that their freedom is curtailed and they feel alone. The Centre for Disease Control and Prevention reports that there are young people who suffer from anxiety and depression due to the pandemic.
- To cope with stress, some resort to substance abuse, gambling, and spending more time in online games. According to studies, it was also alarming that the Covid-19 pandemic exacerbated suicidality among young adults

- Many countries took steps in the right direction towards the prevention of Covid-19. However, along with efforts to safeguard physical health, adequate attention must also be given to the other dimensions that contribute to a person's well-being
- Spiritual care can be considered part of a holistic approach to help young people navigate the uncharted waters of the Covid-19 pandemic. Holistic care includes purposeful communication and interaction anchored in understanding and empathy. The limited number of research on holistic care is an opportunity and invitation to explore novel solutions to the adverse impact of C-19 in our lives.

The coronavirus pandemic abruptly and suddenly changed the routines and prospects for many households around the world. The educational field was one of the most affected in this sense since after the successive closure of schools worldwide in mid-March 2020, an alternative plan to the acclaimed and entrenched face-to-face education needed to be improvised.

This systematic review revealed an objective reality: in the 21st century, learners' lack of autonomy and motivation is attached to an educational system that continually revolves around face-to-face education. New technologies have been the immediate and most effective solution to the closure of schools, thus becoming both a problem and solution regarding a complex social and educational situation.

They have evidenced various inconsistencies and setbacks that had remained hidden under the normality of pre-academic education, such as the enormous challenge posed by its immediate use within a purely face-to-face educational system, the scant training of families in its use, the limited access to it by many learners, and the diversity of platforms and media. Schools and families have had to strengthen their relationships, fight for their causes, and satisfy their learners' educational needs. Parents and their children have discovered various positive and negative effects of home-schooling, though the adverse effects have been much

more palpable and evident. A beneficial line of future research may be related to those positive aspects of home-schooling that need further study.

While families and learners have had time to experience the effects of home-schooling, educational institutions have had the opportunity to rethink how education is delivered. They must seriously consider both the challenges and the opportunities that online education brings without leaving behind the different groups that, due to their characteristics (such as low socioeconomic level, disability, or ethnic minorities), are more vulnerable and, unfortunately, have been forgotten in pandemic education.

5.6. CONCLUSION

In conclusion, this study revealed that parents had little or no knowledge of how to support their children at home during the lockdown. Therefore, teachers in primary schools should support parents to ensure academic success during future pandemics. The study identified a series of factors that were used to develop a support programme that teachers can implement to support parents with the online learning process taking place at home during Covid-19. Teachers must take the findings and recommendations into consideration when implementing a model like the open supportive parental model. The teachers need to address the challenges raised by parents to improve the online learning experiences of parents, teachers and learners. The online learning process experience will in turn ensure academic success for the learners. It is hoped that this study has highlighted some of the challenges that parents experienced at home and solutions that the teachers could use when implementing a support programme during future pandemics.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX FIGURES



Appendix Figure 1: SCH Y



Appendix Figure 2: SCH X



Appendix Figure 3

GRADE 1B TIME TABLE 2022

	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY
07H20 ASSEMBLY					
07H30	HL	Dipalo	EFAL	Dipalo	HL
07H35					
08H00	HL	Dipalo	EFAL	Dipalo	EFAL
08H05					
08H30	HL	Dipalo	Dipalo	Dipalo	HL
08H35					
09H00	HL	Dipalo	Dipalo	LS	LS
09H05					
09H30	Dipalo	LS	Dipalo	LS	LS
LONG BREAK 1 st BREAK 40 MIN					
10H10	Dipalo	LS	Dipalo	LS	LS
10H40					
10H40	LS	HL	HL	LS	Dipalo
11H30					
11H30	LS	HL	HL	HL	Dipalo
11H40					
11H40	LS	HL	HL	HL	
12H10					
SHORT BREAK 10 MIN 2 nd BREAK					
12H20	EFAL	EFAL	LS	HL	LS
12H50					
12H50	EFAL	EFAL	LS	EFAL	LS
13H10					

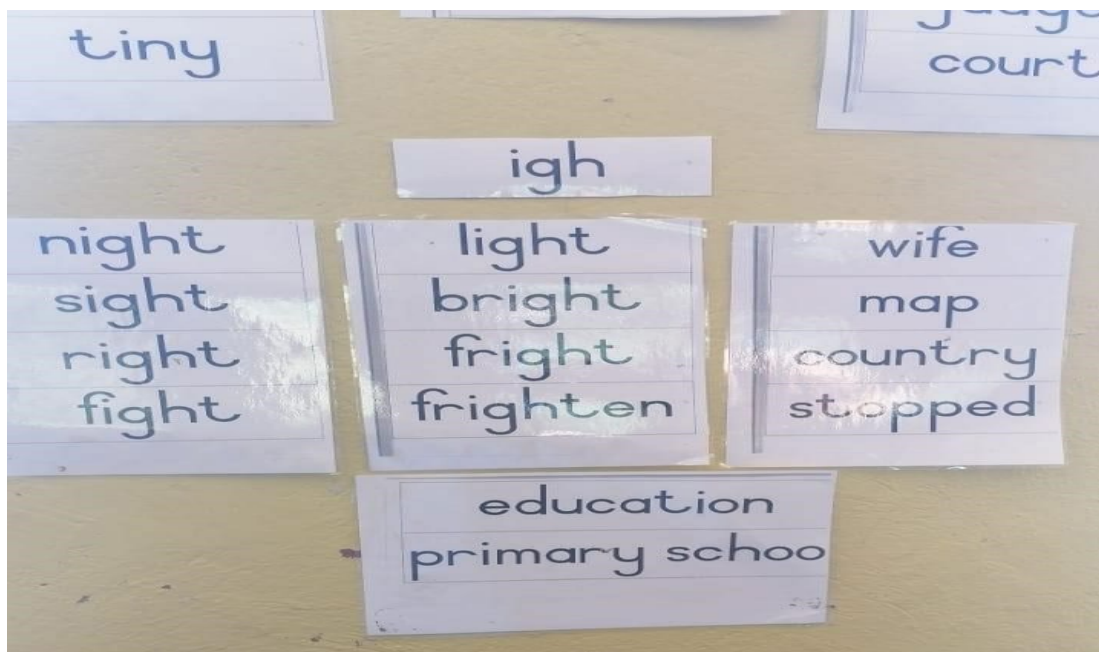
KGASHANE SD

Appendix Figure 4

ROTATIONAL COVID-19 TIME TABLE

TIME		07h20-8H00	8H30-9H00	9H30-10H00	10H30-11H00	11H00-11H30	11H30-12H00	12H00-12H30
DAY	GRADE	SUBJECT		BREAK	SUBJECT			
MON	1	DIPALO	SEPEDI		EFAL	LIFE SKILLS	LIFE SKILLS	
TUES	R	MORNING CIRCLE	HEALTH CHECK AND TOILET		WORK TIME	SMALL GROUPS	TIDY UP TIME	
WEDN	1	LIFE SKILLS	DIPALO		SEPEDI	EFAL	EFAL	
THURS	R	HEALTH CHECK	WORK TIME		SMALL GROUPS	OUTDOOR PLAY	STORY TIME	
FRI	1	DIPALO	DIPALO		SEPEDI	SEPEDI	LIFE SKILLS	

Appendix figure 5: ROTATIONAL TIME TABLE-INDICATING TIME ALLOCATED SUBJECT AND GRADE DURING COVID-19



Appendix Figure 6



Appendix Figure 7



Appendix Figure 8

APPENDIX A: INTERVIEW SCHEDULE FOR GRADE 1 TEACHERS ON PARENTAL ENGAGEMENT IN THE EDUCATION OF GRADE LEARNERS DURING COVID-19 PANDEMIC IN RAKWADU 2 CIRCUIT.

1. BIOGRAPHICAL INFORMATION

1.1 Gender : Male: Female:

1.2 Age: _____

1.3 Highest academic qualification: _____

1.4 Professional qualification: _____

1.5 Teaching experience _____

2. QUESTIONS BASED ON CONTENT

2.1. How can the relationship between the teachers and parents improve academic success for the learners at home?

- 2.2. How can the teacher support the learning process taking place at home?
- 2.3. What strategies can parents use for their children's learning at home?
- 2.4. What are the challenges faced by teachers in establishing contact with parents?
- 2.5. Which problems at homes hinder the academic success of learners?

APPENDIX B: INTERVIEW SCHEDULE FOR PARENTS OF GRADE 1 LEARNERS ON PARENTAL ENGAGEMENT IN THE EDUCATION OF GRADE LEARNERS DURING COVID-19 PANDEMIC IN RAKWADU 2 CIRCUIT.

1 BIOGRAPHICAL INFORMATION

1.1 Gender : Male Female

1.2 Age: _____

1.3 Highest academic Qualification: _____

1.4 Professional Qualification: _____

1.5 Experience as Departmental Head: _____

2 QUESTIONS BASED ON CONTENT

2.1. What do you do at home to help children succeed in their schooling during covid19 pandemic?

2.2. Does the school communicate its expectations in relation to parental engagement?

2.3. Do you feel duty-bound to be jointly involved with teachers in your children's education?

2.4. What are the barriers to parental engagement? How can they be overcome?

2.5. How would you describe the state of the relationship between parents, teachers, and the school head?

APPENDIX C: OBSERVATION SCHEDULE FOR GRADE 1 TEACHERS

Indicator	Codes √ Yes X No ? Yes but unclear	Comments
Detailed lesson plan available according to ATP		
Lesson based on plan		
Punctual start of lesson		
Aims and objectives clearly started		

<p>Learners understand and follow instructions</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Is there any sanitizer • Social distance • Wearing of mask • Washing of hands 		
---	--	--

Learners are kept involved throughout the lesson		
Teacher displays knowledge of content		
Teacher asks questions of different cognitive levels		
Teacher answers learner questions clearly		
Classroom control		
Praise, recognition, and encouragement given		
Appropriate learning resources used		
Learners use textbooks, workbooks etc. appropriately and separately		
Seating arrangement appropriate for the lesson observing social distance		

APPENDIX D: DOCUMENT ANALYSIS: LANGUAGE USAGE ON THE LESSON PLAN



Morning Oral Work

- Boledišang ka letšatši, sehla, maemo a boso goba tiragalo yennngwe yeo e kgethegilego. Ketekang matšatši a matswalo.



Phonics

DBE workbook

DBE Workbook 2
Page: 49, 53, 107, 119

Sound **ts**
15 min



Group Guided Reading Paired / Independent Reading



Group **3**
15 min



Writing GR.1

15 min

Maikemišetso

Barutwana ba tla kgona go:

- Tlhatholla le go ngwala mafoko a mabedi ka setšhwantšho

Ditlabakelo tšeo di hlokegago:

1. Setšhwantšho: Go ya kua le kua
2. Seripa se tee sa pampiri go morutwana yo mongwe le yo mongwe le dikherayone

Go ikemišetša go thoma:

1. Bea setšhwantšho mo letlapeng moo morutwana yo mongwe le yo mongwe a tlogo go se bona.
2. Thekgiša barutwana ditho gore o hwetša šedi ya bona.
3. Ge barutwanaba le dipančeng tša bona, netefatša gore dipanka ga dina selo.

Tšhupetšo:

1. Tlhalosa gore lehono, barutwana ba tla kgetha sebakadišwa sefe kappa sefe seo ba tla ngwalago ka sona.
2. Tlhalosa gore barutwana ba tla ngwala mafoko a mabedi go tšaleletša puku ya phaphoši: Go ya kua le kua
3. Šomiša TŠHUPETŠO go TLHALOSA seo o se bonago setšhwantšhong, bjalo ka:
 - Ke bona motho yo a apere bjalo ka sesegiša. Go bonagala e kare o rekiša dibapadišwa.
 - Ke bona monna yo a aperego hempe ye serolwane. Go

APPENDIX E

Teacher's language competence	Comments
How proficiency are the teachesr in drafting lesson plans	

APPENDIX F: TEACHERS' CONSENT FORM FOR THE INTERVIEW ON PARENTAL ENGAGEMENT IN THE EDUCATION OF GRADE LEARNERS DURING COVID-19

PANDEMIC IN RAKWADU 2 CIRCUIT

Statement of agreement to participate in the Research Study:

- I hereby confirm that I have been informed by the researcher, **CONSTANCE MMAPOTLO MAFA**, about the nature, conduct, benefits and risks of this study
Research Ethics Clearance Number: **FHSSE/22/ECE/02/2111**
- I have also received, read and understood the above written information (participant letter of information) regarding the study.
- I am aware that the results of the study, including personal details regarding my sex, age, date of birth, initials and diagnosis will be anonymously processed into a study report.
- In view of the requirements of research, I agree that the data collected during this study can be processed in a computerized system by the researcher.
- I may, at any stage, without prejudice, withdraw my consent and participation in the study.
- I have had enough time to ask questions for clarity and declare myself prepared to participate in the study.
- I understand that significant new findings developed during the course of this research which may relate to my participation will be made available to me.

Full name of Participant.....

Signature.....

Date

Time

I **CONSTANCE MMAPOTLO MAFA** herewith confirm that the above participant has been fully informed about the nature, conduct and risks of the above study.

Signature..... Date.....

Full name of Witness.....

Signature..... Date.....

APPENDIX

G: PARENTS' CONSENT FORM FOR THE INTERVIEW ON PARENTAL ENGAGEMENT IN THE EDUCATION OF GRADE LEARNERS DURING COVID-19 PANDEMIC IN RAKWADU 2 CIRCUIT

Statement of agreement to participate in the Research Study:

- I hereby confirm that I have been informed by the researcher **CONSTANCE MMAPOTLO MAFA** about the nature, conduct, benefits and risks of this study
Research Ethics Clearance Number: FHSSE/22/ECE/02/2111
- I have also received, read and understood the above written information (participant letter of information) regarding the study.
- I am aware that the results of the study, including personal details regarding my sex, age, date of birth, initials and diagnosis will be anonymously processed into a study report.
- In view of the requirements of research, I agree that the data collected during this study can be processed in a computerized system by the researcher.
- I may, at any stage, without prejudice, withdraw my consent and participation in the study.
- I have had enough time to ask questions for clarity and declare myself prepared to participate in the study.
- I understand that significant new findings developed during the course of this research which may relate to my participation will be made available to me.

Full name of Participant.....

Signature.....

Date

Time

I **CONSTANCE MMAPOTLO MAFA** herewith confirm that the above participant has been fully informed about the nature, conduct and risks of the above study.

Signature..... Date.....

Full name of Witness.....

Signature..... Date.....

APPENDIX

H

ATT: MAFA MC

072 2265 997

Mafaconny42@gmail.com

The Circuit Manager

Motupa circuit

Tzaneen

0850

Dear Sir

P.O BOX 4134

Ga- kgapane

0838

09 JUNE 2023

REQUEST FOR PERMISSION TO CONDUCT A RESEARCH PROJECT AT YOUR CIRCUIT

1. I am a master's degree student in the Department of Early Childhood Education, faculty of human, Social Science and Education, at the University of Venda, and as part of my studies. I am doing a research project on two primary schools is one of the selected school.
2. Be ensured that contact time will not be disrupted.
3. I would also like to state it that as the researcher, I would be confirmed by all , teacher's personal information and their results will not be shared with anyone. After my write-up all the information I collected will be saved participants at their own request.
4. I have attached copies of the Research Ethical Clearance Certificate from the University and Limpopo Provincial Research Ethics.
5. I should be grateful for your positive response.
6. Thank you in anticipation.

Yours faithfully

MAFA MC

Student no: 21016285

SIGN 

DATE 09/06/2023

APPENDIX

I

ATT: MAFA M.C
0722265997
Mafaconny42@gmail.com

The Principal
Mapaana School
Rakwadu 2 circuit
0838

P.O.BOX 4134
Ga- kgapane
0838
09 JUNE 2023

Dear Sir

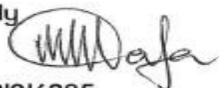
REQUEST FOR PERMISSION TO CONDUCT A RESEARCH PROJECT AT YOUR SCHOOL

1. I am a master's degree student in the Department of Early childhood education, faculty of human, social sciences and education, at the University of Venda, and as part of my studies. I am doing a research project on two primary school. Your school is one of the selected school
2. Be ensured that contact time will not be disrupted
3. I would also like to state it that as the researcher, I would be confirmed by all the principles that govern a research project. Amongst other, the teacher's personal information and their results will not be shared with anyone. After my write-up all the information I collected will be saved participants at their own request.
4. I have attached copies of the Research Ethical Clearance Certificate from the University and Limpopo Provincial Research Ethics
5. I should be grateful for your positive cooperation
6. Thank you in anticipation

Yours faithfully

Mafa M.C

Student no: 21016285



J

APPENDIX

ATT: MAFA M.C
0722265997
mafaconny42@gmail.com

The Principal
Mamatlepa primary school
Ga Kgapane
0838

P.O.BOX 4134
Ga Kgapane
0838
19 June 2023

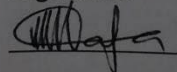
Dear Sir

REQUEST FOR PERMISSION TO CONDUCT A RESEARCH PROJECT AT YOUR SCHOOL FROM 22-23 JUNE 2023

1. I am a master's degree student in the Department of Early childhood Education, Faculty of human, Social Sciences and Education, at the University of Venda, and as part of my studies. I am going to collect data from two primary schools, your school is one of the selected school
2. Be ensured that contact time will not be disrupted .
3. I would also like to state it that as the researcher, I would be confirmed by all the principles that govern a research project. Amongst other, the teacher's personal information and their results will not be shared with anyone. After my write-up all the information I collected will be saved participants at their own request.
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6. Thank you in anticipation

Yours faithfully
Mafa M.C
Student no: 21016285

Signature



Date

19/06/2023

K

APPENDIX

ETHICS APPROVAL CERTIFICATE

RESEARCH AND INNOVATION
OFFICE OF THE DIRECTOR

NAME OF RESEARCHER/INVESTIGATOR:
Mr MP Mafa

STUDENT NO:
21016285

PROJECT TITLE: **Parental Engagement in the Education of Grade 1 learners during COVID -19 pandemic in Rakwadu 2 Circuit.**

ETHICAL CLEARANCE NO: **FHSSE/22/ECE/02/2111**

SUPERVISORS/ CO-RESEARCHERS/ CO-INVESTIGATORS

NAME	INSTITUTION & DEPARTMENT	ROLE
Prof NP Mudzielwana	UNIVEN, Early Childhood Education	Supervisor
Dr. SA Mulovhedzi	UNIVEN, Early Childhood Education	Co-Supervisor
Mr MP Mafa	UNIVEN, Early Childhood Education	Investigator – Student

Type: **Masters Research**

Risk: **Minimal risk to humans, animals, or environment (Category 2)**

Approval Period: **November 2022 – November 2024**

The Research Ethics Social Sciences Committee (RESSC) hereby approves your project as indicated above.

General Conditions

While this ethics approval is subject to all declarations, undertakings and agreements incorporated and signed in the application form, please note the following:

- The project leader (principal investigator) must report in the prescribed format to the REC:
 - Annually (or as otherwise requested) on the progress of the project, and upon completion of the project
 - Within 48hrs in case of any adverse event (or any matter that interrupts sound ethical principles) during the course of the project.
 - Annually a number of projects may be randomly selected for an external audit.
- The approval applies strictly to the protocol as stipulated in the application form. Would any changes to the protocol be deemed necessary during the course of the project, the project leader must apply for approval of these changes at the REC. Would there be deviation from the project protocol without the necessary approval of such changes, the ethics approval is immediately and automatically forfeited.
- The date of approval indicates the first date that the project may be started. Would the project have to continue after the expiry date; a new application must be made to the REC and new approval received before or on the expiry date.
- In the interest of ethical responsibility, the REC retains the right to:
 - Request access to any information or data at any time during the course or after completion of the project.
 - To ask further questions; Seek additional information; Require further modification or monitor the conduct of your research or the informed consent process.
 - withdraw or postpone approval if:
 - Any unethical principles or practices of the project are revealed or suspected.
 - It becomes apparent that any relevant information was withheld from the REC or that information has been false or misrepresented.
 - The required annual report and reporting of adverse events was not done timely and accurately.
 - New institutional rules, national legislation or international conventions A it necessary

ISSUED BY:
UNIVERSITY OF VENDA, RESEARCH ETHICS COMMITTEE
Date Considered: November 2022

Name of the RESSC Chairperson of the Committee: Prof TS Mashau

Signature




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CONFIDENTIAL



LIMPOPO
PROVINCIAL GOVERNMENT
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

OFFICE OF THE PREMIER

Office of the Premier

Research and Development Directorate

Private Bag X9483, Polokwane, 0700, South Africa

Tel: (015) 230 9910, Email: mokobij@premier.limpopo.gov.za

LIMPOPO PROVINCIAL RESEARCH ETHICS COMMITTEE CLEARANCE CERTIFICATE

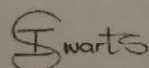
Review Date: 05 July 2023

Project Number: LPREC/102/2022: PG

Subject: Parental Engagement in the Education of Grade 1 Learners during Covid-19
Pandemic in Rakwadu 2 Circuit

Researcher: Mafa MP

Chairperson: Prof I Swarts



Chairperson: Limpopo Provincial Research Ethics Committee

The Limpopo Provincial Research Ethics Committee (LPREC) is registered with National Health Research Council (NHREC) Registration Number REC-111513-038.

Note:

- i. **This study is categorized as a Low Risk Level in accordance with risk level descriptors as enshrined in LPREC Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs)**
- ii. **Should there be any amendment to the approved research proposal; the researcher(s) must re-submit the proposal to the ethics committee for review prior data collection.**
- iii. **The researcher(s) must provide annual reporting to the committee as well as the relevant department and also provide the department with the final report/thesis.**
- iv. **The ethical clearance certificate is valid for 12 months. Should the need to extend the period for data collection arise then the researcher should renew the certificate through LPREC secretariat. PLEASE QUOTE THE PROJECT NUMBER IN ALL ENQUIRIES.**

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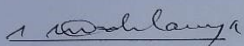
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APPENDIX

4 Furthermore, you are expected to produce this letter at Schools/ Offices where you intend conducting your research as an evidence that you are permitted to conduct the research.

5 The department appreciates the contribution that you wish to make and wishes you success in your investigation.

Best wishes.



Mashaba KM
DDG: CORPORATE SERVICES

8/5/2023

Date

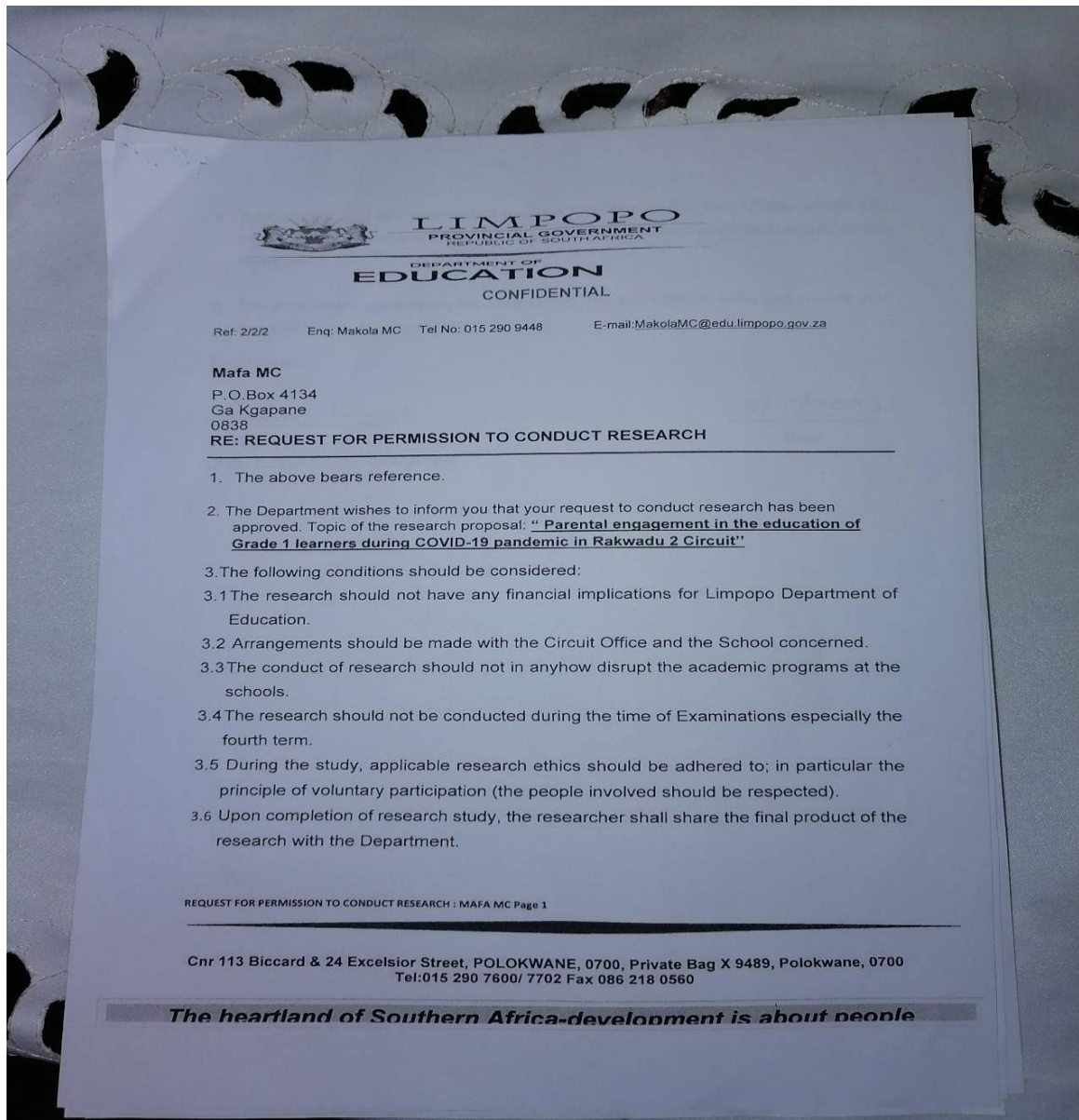
REQUEST FOR PERMISSION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH : MAFA MC Page 2

Cnr 113 Biccard & 24 Excelsior Street, POLOKWANE, 0700, Private Bag X 9489, Polokwane, 0700
Tel:015 290 7600/ 7702 Fax 086 218 0560

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APPENDIX



P

APPENDIX

ATT: MAFA M.C
0722265997
mafaconny42@gmail.com

The Circuit Manager
Rakwadu 2 circuit
Ga Kgapane
0838

P.O.BOX 4134
Ga Kgapane
0838
19 June 2023

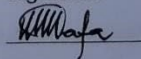
Dear Sir

**REQUEST FOR PERMISSION TO CONDUCT A RESEARCH PROJECT AT
RAKWADU 2 CIRCUIT (MAMATLEPA AND MAPAANA PRIMARY SCHOOLS)**

1. I am a master's degree student in the Department of Early childhood Education, Faculty of human, Social Sciences and Education, at the University of Venda, and as part of my studies. I am going to collect data from two primary schools, Mamatlepa and Mapaana primary schools.
2. Be ensured that contact time will not be disrupted .
3. I would also like to state it that as the researcher, I would be confirmed by all the principles that govern a research project. Amongst other, the teacher's personal information and their results will not be shared with anyone. After my write-up all the information I collected will be saved participants at their own request.
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Yours faithfully
Mafa M.C
Student no: 21016285

Signature




Date

19/06/2023

Q

APPENDIX



LIMPOPO
PROVINCIAL GOVERNMENT
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

DEPARTMENT OF
EDUCATION

Ref: 2/2/2 Enq: Motloutsi DI Tel: 0820639264 Email: ditshego.motloutsi@gmail.com

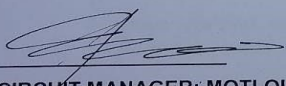
RAKWADU 2 CIRCUIT

To: Mafa MC

Yourself

PERMISSION FOR REQUEST TO CONDUCT A RESEARCH

1. The above matter refers:
2. We are hereby granting you a permission to conduct research in our Circuit as requested on the attached letter.
3. You are therefore requested to consider the terms and condition stated in Paragraph 3 of the Limpopo provincial department letter attached.
4. Your cooperation in this regard will be highly appreciated.


CIRCUIT MANAGER: MOTLOUTSI DI

20 /06/2023
DATE

Page 1

Rakwadu 2 Circuit, Private Bag X 903, Molototsi, 0827
Tel:015 310 6014

The heartland of Southern Africa-development is about people

R

APPENDIX

ATT: MAFA M.C
0722265997
mafaconny42@gmail.com

The Circuit Manager
Mamatlepa primary school
Ga Kgapane
0838

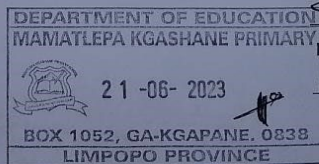
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19 June 2023

Dear Sir

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Yours faithfully
Mafa M.C
Student no: 21016285



Signature

Date

19/06/2023

APPENDIX

S LANGUAGE CERTIFICATE

Registered with the South African Translators' Institute (SATI)

Reference number 1000686

24 January 2024

*PARENTAL ENGAGEMENT IN THE EDUCATION OF GRADE 1 LEARNERS DURING THE COVID-19
PANDEMIC IN RAKWADU 2 CIRCUIT*

This confirms that I edited substantively the above document, including a Reference list. The document was returned to the author with various tracked changes to correct errors and clarify meaning. It was the author's responsibility to attend to these changes.

Yours faithfully



Dr. K. Zano

Ph.D. in English

kufazano@gmail.com/kufazano@yahoo.com

+27631434276

PARENTAL ENGAGEMENT IN THE EDUCATION OF GRADE 1 LEARNERS DURING THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC IN RAKWADU 2 CIRCUIT

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