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Exploring collaborative strategies used by School Management Teams to sustain parental involvement in Xhariep District schools

Abstract

The annual analysis of schools' results confirms that Xhariep District still has many underperforming schools at the primary level, requiring constant intervention of the Free State Department of Basic Education. Unfortunately, various societal issues contribute greatly to on-going adverse educational outcomes in the district, resulting in a steadily increasing number of learners becoming disinterested in attending schools and dropping out at the primary school level. The collaboration of schools with parents is necessary as their contribution to education is fundamental to ensuring a child's academic success, well-regulated school attendance, and acceptable levels of behaviour in and out of school. This article explores collaborative strategies used by school management teams (SMTs) to sustain parental involvement in the Xhariep District primary schools from the two viewpoints, a collaborative leadership theory and a theory of planned behaviour. Collaborative leadership perspective is necessary to aid SMTs and teachers to formulate effective networks and relationships between parents within the school environment to encourage broad participation and collaboration in decision-making processes and shared accountability for learners' expected learning outcomes. The theory of planned behaviour, on the other hand, assists SMTs and teachers to identify influences impacting on choices made by parents regarding their involvement in education. A sample of 15 participants comprising SMTs, teachers and parents, were interviewed to determine their perception of parental involvement in schools. Therefore, the article recommends that parents be empowered and developed to have the necessary attributes essential to their participation and educational partnerships with schools.

Keywords: *Collaborative strategies, parental involvement, SMT, Xhariep district*

1. Introduction

The South African Schools Act (SASA) 84 of 1996, section 3(1) (RSA, 1996), provides for parental involvement. It states that "parents are obliged to bring their children to school from the first school day of the year in which such learner reaches the age of seven years until the last school

day of the year in which such learner reaches the age of fifteen years or ninth grade". As a result, SASA supports the view that parents are required to be involved in education with the intention that they assist schools and learners to achieve their set goals and objectives. Researchers on parental involvement focus on how parents are involved in school events and classroom activities (Reinke, Smith & Herman, 2019). These researchers propose that it is necessary to find strategies to support parental involvement, because this influences children's achievement and performance (Grace & Gerdes, 2019). In furtherance of this proposal, South African studies on parental involvement point out that collaborative school programmes with parents are still effective. Many of these programmes focus on various aspects of learners' lives, which include the involvement of parents on sexuality education and other learning areas in schools (Gcelu, 2019). Parental involvement is an important factor for children's educational achievement, both at home and in the school (Boonk *et al*., 2018).

Though researchers acknowledge the significance of parental involvement, recent literature states there is a very consistent decline in parental involvement in schools. Effective edification of learners requires participation and active engagement by the parents (Park & Holloway, 2017), yet parental involvement rates have decreased at a rate of 7% in the previous five years. Parents are barely involved in the education of their children and they leave the responsibility of their children's development to the teachers and schools (Sebidie, 2015). The way that parental involvement takes place in South Africa cannot produce improved classroom practice (Van Wyk, 2010). It is not effective and is characterised by an absence of interaction between the school management teams (SMTs), teachers and parents, a lack of attendance of school meetings, no supervision of the children's homework, and a lack of participation in school activities (Msila, 2012). It is important for SMTs to ensure effective parental involvement through applying appropriate strategies (LaRocque, Kleiman & Darling, 2011). However, there is insufficient literature in South Africa on strategies to sustain parental involvement in education. Hence the research question: What are collaborative strategies used by school management teams to sustain parental involvement in Xhariep District primary schools?

2. The role of school management teams in sustaining parental involvement

In terms of the South African Schools Act (RSA, 1996), the word 'parent' can be defined as the parent or guardian of a learner, the person legally entitled to custody of a learner, or the person who undertakes to fulfil the obligations of a parent with regard to the learner's education at school. According to Dekker (1993: 153), "parental involvement is an all-embracing term that is used to describe a wide variety of activities that range from occasional attendance at school functions to intensive efforts to help parents become better teachers of their children". Globally, researchers on parental involvement emphasize the importance of involving parents in their children's educational development (McDowall & Schaughency, 2017). Such studies have sought to devise methods of involving parents in the education process. According to Smith (2006), parental involvement is seen as an integration of home and school. However, to have parents participate continuously and actively in a child's education has definitely become an issue in recent years (Hornby & Blackwell, 2018). Hence the SMTs at schools are mandated to guarantee that parental involvement occurs effectively, and is well sustained (Van Deventer, 2016).

Collaboration of the SMTs, parents, teachers and the entire community requires adequate planning to ensure the sustenance thereof. Modisaotsile (2012) reiterates that "[i]nvolved communities are able to articulate local school needs, hold officials accountable, and mobilize local resources to fill gaps when government response is not adequate". It is therefore the duty of the SMTs to create and provide programmes that will sustain and intensify the relationships that schools build with parents and the community at large. The concerns of parents who have an understanding of school procedures and rules, as well as school resources, are often taken into consideration when it comes to their children, which can have a significant impact on resolving school problems. (Modisaotsile, 2012).

To ensure continuous parental involvement, it is indispensable for the SMT to constantly familiarise parents about the changes in education policies, education system, new technologies, and the curriculum changes that may pose a threat to the collaborations between the parents and the schools. In well-resourced schools and economically privileged districts with middle-class parents, parental involvement in education is quite strong, and parents can contribute to the academic success of their children (Lareau, 2000). Parents from the lower class and disadvantaged communities find it extremely hard to participate in education. Evidence suggests that "many teachers and administrators perceive low-income parents to be uninterested in their children's education and thus, do not create a welcoming or informative environment" (Baquedano-López, Alexander & Hernandez, 2013). Consequently, parental involvement in such schools has continued to decrease over the last few years. The decrease threatens the educational system in South Africa and other parts of the world.

There are a number of strategies that schools can employ to involve parents in education. Since schools function in varied contexts, parental involvement may be influenced by different circumstances for each school. Consequently, it is important for SMTs to understand the factors contributing to parental involvement declines in their local communities and come up with effective solutions to address the declines. (Deslandes & Bertrand, 2005).

SMTs must see parents as valued partners who can contribute significantly to the school's attainment of its objectives. Because there is no clear definition of parental involvement, it is the role of the SMT to ensure that parents understand the concept of parental involvement, why they are expected to engage, what is required, and how they may participate at whatever level that is appropriate for them. It is particularly essential for SMTs and teachers to express gratitude to parents who are already participating in their children's education. Green *et al*. (2007) believe parents are apt to be more involved if they recognize that school staff and learners equally want and expect their involvement. Any impediments must be removed as soon as possible in order to establish indestructible links.

According to Hove (2015), "Arrangements that are made in the school are the responsibility of the SMTs; they should give support to educators, create a positive learning and teaching environment and ensure that parents are involved". Llamas and Tuazon (2016) claim that "parents become comfortable when the education system requires their involvement in school activities". This assertion confirms that schools are not doing enough to encourage parents to stay active, particularly in remote regions like the Xhariep district and others. Kwatubana and Makhalemele (2015) observe that "some schools did not use sound recruitment strategies that motivated parental involvement in school activities".

A key component of sustaining parental involvement in education and schools is constant and orthodox communication, cooperation and parental development, motivation, encouragement, and adequate feedback. Park and Holloway (2017) argue that "schools can

overcome parental disengagement by following robust, inclusive approaches with the capacity to unlock parent's existing potentials and enhance their meaningful participation". Johnsen and Bele (2013) confirm that, "through dialogue with parents and effective co-operation between home and school, teachers will gain knowledge about their learners, because a positive correlation exists between parental involvement and learner achievement".

Sheldon (2009) postulates that "the main focus of home visits is to enhance academic performance of learners in school and to improve the parent-teacher partnership". Parents who are not actively involved in their children's education must receive regular visits from SMTs in order to gain an understanding of their living conditions, determine what may be deterring them from participating in education, and provide alternative solutions and alternatives that are appropriate for each family. Sanders and Sheldon (2009) note that "the establishment of a coordinated team and its purpose permeates levels of planning, implementation and evaluation of efforts geared towards the encouragement of parent school activities". SMTs can form parental involvement committees comprising members of the SMT, teachers and parents. Parents' involvement is important to these committees, as they organize frequent events for disseminating vital information, maintain accurate and up-to-date records of participating parents, develop effective communication strategies, and conduct school-sponsored parental involvement meetings.

In relation to the volume and severity of the issue, the SMTs are required to establish acceptable communication techniques for a variety of reasons. Some difficulties will be resolved simply by sending an SMS, while others may need parents' attendance at the school. It is critical for schools to maintain profiles of all parents, as well as their current contact information. To achieve maximum engagement by all parents, schools should consider employing the most appropriate communication techniques.

Moles and Fege (2011) posit that, "for teachers and parents to work cohesively, there should be a capacity building workshop to train them, so that they can work as a team". Teachers must be properly trained in the concept of parental involvement, as they often interact with parents on a regular basis. SMTs must ensure that teachers receive the necessary training in this area.

3. Research methodology

A qualitative research approach was employed for this study. Qualitative research is used when there is a need to allow individuals to provide their narratives, to listen to their voices and to comprehend the settings and conditions in which problems and issues are addressed by participants (Creswell & Poth, 2018: 77). The selection of this approach was appropriate for understanding the sense created by identified SMTs and teachers regarding parental involvement in schools, as well as interpreting their experiences and the extent to which they are exposed to the involvement of parents in education. Participating primary schools situated in the Xhariep District where the problem of the decline in parental involvement was identified by the researcher were selected. This research especially focused on the Kopanong Municipality. The population was selected because "it consisted of all units, or the universe, people, or things possessing the attributes or characteristics in which the researcher was interested in" (Keyton, 2010). The sample consisted of five primary schools from the district, one member of the SMT from each school, one teacher from each school, either in the Intermediate Phase or Senior Phase, and at least one parent for each school. These participants were selected because they were able to inform the research question and enhance the understanding of the investigated phenomenon.

The benchmark used for choosing participants was:

- Permanent residents in the community who had the best interests of the schools at heart.

- Teachers and members of the SMT who have worked at the selected schools for at least three years and have prior experience engaging with parents.

- Parents who had children attending identified schools in the Xhariep District where the study was conducted, even if they were not involved in education.

For this study, a convenient sampling approach was used, with the targeted sample chosen based on their accessibility and closeness. The sample size and amount of data obtained were heavily influenced by the restricted resources (time and money). The purpose of this study was to uncover problems and propose solutions related to parental involvement in the region; hence the sample size had to be kept small.

Unstructured interviews per school were conducted. There was no predetermined set of questions, because the researcher wanted the interviews to be essentially exploratory. The data collection techniques were applied in consideration of the COVID-19 pandemic and the social distancing regulations. The researcher had planned to do online interviews, but the country was placed on alert Level 1 during the interview process, and the laws governing public encounters were relaxed, allowing the researcher to conduct interviews face to face with participants. Face-to-face interviews were scheduled with each participant, who wore masks, sanitized their hands, and maintained a distance of 1,5 metres during the interviews. Field notes were gathered throughout these interviews. From the interactions with all of the interviewees, the researcher was able to obtain enough data.

The inductive technique was used to summarise raw data, build a clear relationship between the study goals and the conclusions obtained from the raw data, and formulate a framework of common experiences that may be found in the raw data. This method offered a straightforward strategy to evaluate qualitative data to generate reliable study results and outcomes. Participants' perspectives were written down throughout the interviews, including unabridged quotations from them, and the transcripts were reviewed repeatedly while fascinating patterns or themes were identified. All of these procedures were carried out to ensure the study's credibility.

Because the research project required interviewing human participants, it was submitted to the University of the Free State's General/Human Research Ethics Committee (GHREC) regulations (UFS). The committee granted ethical clearance, because the researcher presented sound ethical steps to be followed to ensure that participants were safeguarded by all means required. Approval was granted by the Department of Education to conduct the research at the schools after gaining ethical clearance from the university. The researcher also sought authorization from the school principals, who gave it without difficulty. Participants were handed consent papers that detailed all the critical parts of the research that they needed to be aware of before giving their permission to participate in the study. The researcher ensured that participants knew why the study was conducted, why their involvement was required, and how the interviews would be conducted. Participants were informed that code names would be used in place of their real identities, shielding them from public recognition.

4. Findings

The ethical considerations required that the researcher protects the identity of the participants and keeps the information provided very confidential. The researcher achieved the ethical considerations by providing each of the five schools codes from A to E, SMT members' codes S1 to S5, teachers' codes T1 to T5, and parents' codesP1 to P5. The table below shows a summary of schools, participants and codes allocated to each.

4.1 Conceptualization parental involvement

The SMT members at the Xhariep District schools seemed to have a clear understanding of what parental involvement is. They were well-informed about the majority of the actions required for parental involvement in schools to take place. According to the research, all SMT members recognized the importance of parental involvement during both school and at home. All of the teachers in the group had a good understanding of what parental involvement entailed. The majority of their comments were fairly similar, and they emphasized the beneficial role that parents, in their opinion, played in influencing learners' academic progress as well as aiding in the maintenance of excellent learner behaviour and conduct. They also underlined the need of ongoing communication with parents in helping to meet the requirements of the many learners they teach. Despite the fact that the teacher's replies were nearly identical to the SMTs', they seemed to have a more in-depth and meaningful knowledge of the notion of parental involvement than the SMT had. The reason for this was simply because teachers worked more directly with parents; therefore they were usually at the forefront of the parent-school interaction and the first to feel the effects of these ties. However, parent participants had contrasting ideas to what parental involvement refers to in literature.

Responding on parental involvement, P3 had this to say,

> *Parents not only helping their children with homework, but also attending school meetings, fund-raising activities, sports activities, excursions and any activity that the school may require the contribution of parents in.*

P4 from School D had this to say,

> *I have been a parent in this community for many years, and all my kids are learners in this school. I was once a member of the SGB a few years ago. My contribution as a parent has been immense. I was part of the people who develop the school's slogan and new emblem. I was involved in developing some of the policies and my involvement was mostly concentrated on ensuring that learners attend school regularly and they are well disciplined and they dressed accordingly. That is what I understand parental involvement to be … helping the school in every way possible.*

4.2 Taking responsibility

All the SMT participants were unaware of the critical role they had to play in maintaining parental involvement at their schools,

> *It is often the job of the SGB to make sure parents are involved in school, the role of the SMT is to ensure that the SGB meet with parents and communicates the importance of parental involvement with them* [S4].

School management teams are responsible for developing and implementing programs that will enhance and support the relationships that schools develop with parents and the community at large.

Accordingly, it is clear that the SMT members abdicated their responsibility for ensuring effective parental involvement; consequently, parents were left uncertain as to who was responsible for their involvement in their children's education. The SMT is critical in influencing and promoting parental involvement in schools. SMTs are mandated to guarantee that parental involvement occurs effectively, and is well sustained (Van Deventer, 2016). They must be at the forefront of guaranteeing long-term parental participation. The SMT must actively establish family participation programmes and participate in a variety of community institutions aimed at increasing parental involvement in schools.

Teachers, on the other hand, thought they were doing their part to include parents in their children's education. They also claimed that many parents in the district were still unwilling to participate, leaving them (the teachers) with the onerous burden of dealing with the children on their own.

> *When it comes to our learners, we don't make decisions on our own. We must maintain frequent contact with parents to acquire critical information about their children. My responsibility is to ensure that I remain in touch with parents on their child's progress at school. When parents don't hear from us, they become complacent and believe everything is well.* [T2]

> *We usually schedule sessions with parents to discuss specific difficulties regarding their children, and we try to do so as frequently as feasible. Only a few parents, particularly parents of students who are performing well in school, would attend these sessions. Some parents may not attend meetings, but when things with their children are not going well, they are ready to come to the school and complain.* [T3]

4.3 School parental involvement committees

One SMT member (S1) stated that their school used to have a committee that dealt with parental involvement issues, but that it had been disbanded. Another SMT member (S2) stated that they did not have such a committee, because dealing with parent problems was frequently delegated to the SGB. He even went so far as to argue that the parental involvement committee would be ineffective, since the school lacked a parental involvement policy. As a result, deciding what to do would be tough for the committee. Three other members of the SMT (S3, S4 and S5) said they did not have any parental involvement committees.

4.4 Frequency of interactions

All teachers reported they had to be in touch with some parents on a weekly basis to update them on their child's progress.

> *We mainly communicate with parents during official quarterly meetings that the school conducts with parents to discuss certain objectives, such as when we release our quarterly results. When a learner has a disciplinary hearing, some meetings will be held. If we become aware of any family issues that may have an impact on a student's academic performance, we contact the parent to discuss the situation. We save the engagement for the most important issues.* [T1]

We frequently set aside sessions for important subjects, and we have a schedule for the majority of the meetings we intend to have with parents. However, certain difficulties arise unexpectedly, and we are forced to notify parents immediately. [T4]

4.5 Communication channels

According to all the SMT participants, schools employed different communication methods, suitable for each individual school and its community,

Telephonic communication, communication given to parents by learners, public announcements in churches, loud tailors on roadways, and notice announcements at local shops in the neighbourhood are the most prevalent methods of communication we utilize at our school. [S1].

Communication with the school was not an issue for any of the parents who took part in this study. They stated that they often spoke with the school and individual teachers per telephone, SMS, and WhatsApp, and that schools would occasionally compose letters and send them to parents through the learners. The parents' comments suggested that the communication strategies used by School A through E were quite effective, and that they were all comfortable with them.

4.6 Collaboration with parents formulation of school policies

All the SMT participants in this study mentioned that parents were never involved in the implementation of any school policies,

The SGB is, once again, a representation of all parents, and so, widespread parental involvement would only delay the policy making process and, in the end, render policy implementation useless. [S2]

We used to do it in the past. We will have parents partake in the creation of school admission policies, learner's code of conduct, schools dress code policies and other policies which the school felt affected parents. We were doing this to make parents part of the school and try to enhance their ownership of their children's education. However, this was just a futile process that proved fruitless. Conflicts and misunderstandings amongst parents themselves erupted. They did not agree with many decisions, and this delayed the implementation of most of the school policies. [S5]

All the parents in this study reiterated that they were not involved in formulating any school policy, and did not know some of the policies that their schools had. However, they acknowledged that it was important that they familiarized themselves with certain policies, understand their contents, and know how they bound them.

I had no idea that parents were allowed to take part in formulating school policies. Some of the policies are only read to us in the school meetings, and we agree with the contents verbally so. I have never seen or even signed any school policy. [P2]

The only school policy that I have seen is the learner's code of conduct that was sent at home with my child so that I can read and sign it. A copy is always in my child disciplinary file that he carries in his school bag. That's the only policy I know of. I have never helped to develop any school policy. ([P5]

4.5 Relevant capacitation

SMT participants stated that they did not provide any parent workshops, but that they usually notified parents about what the school required of them at the start of each year, either in writing or at the first parent meeting of the term.

> *We have* never provided any workshops. We have always assumed that parents are aware of what their expected contribution to the education of their child is, and we also believed that any parent who has an *enquiry will contact the school to receive assistance. We often contact parents if there's anything we need from them, or when we have any information requiring their attention*. [S3]

> *There's no need for ay workshops or training. We communicate our needs to parents when necessary, and they know where to find us if they need clarity or assistance on any issue relating to the education of their child.* [S5]

Only one teacher from the participants agreed to have received training on parental involvement,

> *Yes, I have received training. When we go to workshops, they often emphasize the importance of parental involvement at schools and advise us to have relations with parents about their children.* [T2]

Parents shared the same sentiments as teachers when they agreed that being trained and work shopped was necessary to understand parental involvement. However, they also indicated that they had never received any form of training. This shared concern indicates that initiatives to capacitate both parents and teachers on parental involvement are a necessity and the Department of Education needs to facilitate the processes to ensure that they are carried out effectively.

5. Discussion

The findings of this research reveal the impact of these factors on parental involvement in the district, and the emphasis is on parent participants. Inasmuch as the perspectives vary, the overall view is that parental involvement is a necessity. With several participants indicating their intentions to make parental involvement a success, this reveals that there is still a positive attitude towards the idea of parents being involved in education. The attitude and behaviour of parents, signify a hint of their willingness to be involved in schools (Bracke & Corts, 2012). Despite the identified decrease in the levels of parental involvement in this district, data suggest that there are pockets of parents being involved here and there. Teachers are also willing to work with parents. All participants revealed an awareness of this decline, and pointed out the number of factors which they believed had an adverse influence on parental involvement.

The findings of this study refute the claims of Stouffer (1992) that "parental involvement declines as students grow older, so that it is less in secondary schools than in elementary". The suggestion is that parental involvement in education is now, more than ever, increasingly declining in primary schools. In the Xhariep District, parental involvement is seldom practised in primary schools, as many parents feel that they can be involved, but lack the knowledge of how to do it. In the context of subjective norms, parents not being motivated to be involved could be a relevant example in this district. Due to the poor involvement of parents in the district, many parents are reluctant to be involved, for they do not know what is expected of them, or how they can be of value to the school. Kwatubana and Makhalemele (2015) observe that

"some schools did not use sound recruitment strategies that motivated parental involvement in school activities". Such parents did not experience the support from their own parents in education when they were still at school. In such cases, an encouraging environment must be created to motivate parents to be involved.

Xhariep is a poverty-stricken district with many families regarded as low-income households. The results of the study indicate that the involvement of parents in education is increasingly declining in primary schools. This is due to the fact that many parents who have children attending schools are in fact uneducated and young adults who are unemployed. This is one of many other reasons that limit the control that parents may have on parental involvement. The study identified that most of the parents did odd jobs and worked strenuous hours, which rendered them unable to be involved in their children's education. Some parents were employed on farms and could only be available on weekends or during the month-ends. Unfortunately, parents residing in disadvantaged communities such as the Xhariep District do not have enough financial resources and lack the necessary education to be involved. This study showed that such parents often feared being involved, and believed that they were, in most cases, underrepresented and mistreated because of their circumstances. The findings indicate that, as much as all parents are required to be involved in education, some of the factors prohibiting them from being involved cannot be done away with.

The perceptions parents have and the acknowledgement of their involvement in education in the district were largely positive. Many of the parents were still optimistic about the future of their children, and believed that education still played an important role in children's success. They held high expectations regarding their children's academic attainment, which fuelled their intention to be involved. Unfortunately, the degree of their involvement was influenced by many factors that they lacked control over, which were barriers to parental involvement in this district.

For teaching and learning processes to be carried out successfully, schools, SMTs and teachers cannot function in isolation. Collaboration with parents and other interested parties in the community, with the common goal of improving the learner performance, is necessary. One question that we need to ask is, will the collaboration in leadership have a positive impact on parental involvement and curb its decline in schools? Deducing from the findings in this study, parents, as stakeholders in education, form a vital part of every school's decision-making body and the formulation of significant school policies.

Many schools in the Xhariep District have School Governing Bodies (SGB) functioning as the representatives of parents in the school communities. Research suggests that "collaboration between parents participating in governing structures and teachers (in particular those in leadership positions) and their interaction, is considered essential for improvement of results in schools" (Bechuke & Nwosu, 2017). However, the findings suggest that SMTs in schools often delegate their entire duties relating to the management of parental involvement to the SGBs. It is imperative that SMTs understand the roles of SGBs and avoid allocating them duties that are outside their boundaries. To make parents feel part of the team and sustain their involvement in education, leadership responsibilities must be shared with them. Jeynes (2018) states that "wise school leaders understand that both parents and schools need to work together to improve student success". Parents are also members of the team, and their efforts must not be underestimated. Heinrichs (2018) indicates that

> school leaders can invite parents to attend school events such as Coffee with the Principal, where they can communicate a clear and consistent message to teachers, parents and families regarding their beliefs that the school is stronger when parents and teachers work together.

This research showed that parents often decide not to be involved because they do not know their expected responsibilities. Some parents were particularly vocal about this point. Given some leadership roles and responsibilities, and with the right training, parents can ultimately function as educational tools for their children. They can provide the necessary support to the teachers, children and other parents in the school community. Parents must also be given an opportunity to lead certain school activities, such as monitoring learner attendance, addressing issues of learner behaviour, disciplining learners, providing security for schools, volunteering in classrooms, etc. SMTs must acknowledge that parents are a valuable resource to the schools.

Teachers also voiced their concerns about not receiving enough support from the SMT when it comes to parental involvement. Jeynes (2018) posits that

> to support teachers in inviting parents to be involved, school leaders can begin by facilitating teachers and staff professional development programmes which aim to examine their beliefs and assumptions about students and families and to overcome cultural differences and other barriers to parental involvement.

Szczesiul and Huizenga (2014) emphasize that "principals must support both individual teachers as well as the collective team on which that teacher serves". Supporting teachers and training them to become leaders are imperative to the success of any school. In most cases, parents work more closely with teachers. That, therefore, means teachers must be afforded the opportunities to handle and lead some of the programmes dealing with parental involvement. This can help to foster their relationship with parents and help sustain this collaboration. SMTs must also view teachers as valuable resources and collaborative leaders. Effective collaborative leadership is imperative and has a positive impression on the schools and learners' success.

6. Conclusion

An in-depth exploration of how parental involvement in the Xhariep District in the Free State Province takes place was recognized in this study. The significance of parental involvement in education is well emphasized by parents, teachers and SMT members; however, there are quite a number of challenges that must still be addressed that highly influence the lack of parental involvement in the Xhariep District. The Department of Basic Education and schools' SMTs need to intensify their efforts in capacitating both teachers and parents about parental involvement in education and ways to get parents effectively involved. The conclusion can therefore be drawn that research and discussion on this topic in future has to be expanded on to cater for other schools in this country facing similar challenges.

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