# LEADERSHIP AND ADMINISTRATION OF PARENT PARTNERSHIPS IN RURAL SCHOOL ENVIRONMENTS: A CASE STUDY

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**Abstract**

The purpose of this study was to investigate the leadership and administration skills that are needed for managing community and parent partnerships in the Ilembe Schools District of the KwaZulu-Natal province. The study aimed to investigate how ineffective management and leadership of parent partnerships in rural schools can be detrimental to schools, learners, parents, and the broader community. The study used a qualitative methodology approach with a case study research design. Data was collected through semi-structured face-to-face interviews with fifteen participants. The data was analysed through content analysis, a qualitative research method used to systematically interpret and categorize textual information to identify patterns, themes, and meanings. The findings revealed that in schools, ineffective management and leadership of parental participation exist through relationship limitations between the schools, the parents, and the community. The study recommended that comprehensive knowledge concerning the phenomenon of parent, family, and community partnership should be compiled into a national policy on parent, family, and community partnership, which is considered vital for rural communication and a lack of cordial relationship between parents and the schools in South Africa.

## 1. Introduction

The topic of parental involvement has sparked the most debate among school administrators and leaders in the context of school development and the attainment of educational objectives (Antipkina & Ludlow, 2020). It is now widely acknowledged that the active involvement of parents in their children's education is essential and advantageous for the success of each child. As a result, the educational process can be enhanced by the effective management of parental involvement in their children's education. Parental involvement in education encompasses a wide range of activities and responsibilities. According to Heryanti and Nurhayati (2023), key aspects of parental responsibility include fostering children's development within the home environment and establishing clear, effective communication with educators and school personnel. Parents are responsible for helping their children grow at home and for communicating well with teachers and school staff. Yulianti et al. (2020) highlight that parents play a vital role by taking part in school activities and volunteer programs, supporting their children's learning at home, and engaging in school governance and decision-making processes. Schools benefit when parents are actively engaged in various aspects of the educational environment. Eden et al. (2024) emphasize that building strong, collaborative relationships between families and the wider community plays a crucial role in enhancing student achievement.

The primary goal of this research was to determine the degree to which the community at large, learners, parents, and schools in the Ilembe District of KwaZulu-Natal Province can be negatively impacted by the ineffective administration and leadership of parental involvement in rural schools. Parents can contribute insights and knowledge that complement the professional skills of school personnel, thereby improving academic and social programs. In the same vein, the ineffective management of parental involvement at the school level may present significant challenges, potentially even impeding learner performance and successful school functioning. Parental involvement is essential for a quality education, as is the effective administration of this involvement to maximise its associated advantages. Carvalho et al (2020) offer the following reasons for parental involvement in school administration to substantiate this assertion. They argue that educators and institutions must comprehend the

home conditions of learners and the attitudes of their parents. Furthermore, schools are required to furnish parents with information regarding the educational requirements of their children. This is especially important, as parents possess the right to obtain information on their children's performance and behaviour. It is now well acknowledged that parents may be a crucial resource in helping learners achieve their objectives. Research has consistently demonstrated that effective parental involvement enhances schools, supports teachers, and fortifies families, as agreed upon by teachers, parents, administrators, and learners (Nzuruba, 2024).

Regrettably, parental involvement is still restricted in the majority of schools, particularly in rural areas, where parents are not adequately informed about the pivotal role they assume in their children's education. The optimal approach for school management to extract maximum community and family participation is a topic of some confusion and several challenges (Cheng & Cheng, 2018). Many parents are unaware of how to engage in their children's education, according to Liu et al (2023). Therefore, parents frequently are impeded from participating in their children's education, not because they don't care about advocating for their children, but because they don't know how or do not have the skills.

Karisa et al (2021) contend that certain educators anticipate that parents will independently engage in their children's education without assistance. They are considered to be "good" parents if they do so. If not, they are characterised as "bad" parents, unconcerned, or irresponsible. In the interim, other educators and parents anticipate that the school will merely provide parents with instructions and assume that they will adhere to them. Neither of these leadership strategies sufficiently engages parents and families.

Extensive research indicates that forming strategic partnerships is the most effective approach for achieving optimal outcomes. Tofail and Khan (2024) assert that constructive engagement between teachers and parents fosters strong relationships, which subsequently contribute to improved learner performance. These good relationships then lead to better academic performance and overall development for the learners. Zack (2024) elucidates that in partnerships, families and community members collaborate to exchange information, assist learners, resolve issues, and commemorate accomplishments. Lansing et al. (2023) point out that these partnerships recognise the collective responsibility shared among families, schools, and the broader community.

A broad range of disciplines, including education, have been the subject of concerted governmental efforts to involve stakeholders in decisions that affect them since the democratisation of South Africa in 1994 (Kgobe, 2024). According to the Republic of South Africa (1996), "the number of parent members must comprise one more than the combined total of other members of a governing body who have voting rights" (s23 (9)). Consequently, parents are permitted and encouraged to adopt a co-ownership way of teaching their kids at school. In countries such as the United Kingdom (UK) and the United States of America (USA), the high value placed on parental involvement appears to be essential, as evidenced by the direct correlation between an intensified government spotlight on the matter and an increase in parental partnership (Lee & Bansal, 2024).

Another obstacle is that educators typically acquire the ability to instruct in their official education in their own subject areas. In contrast, managers are only taught how to oversee numerous responsibilities, establish schedules, and administer the school as an organisation. At present, the majority of educators and administrators are not adequately prepared to engage in productive interactions with the families and communities associated with their schools as a result of their academic backgrounds (Zack, 2024). This lack of preparation is primarily due to the way they were trained academically, which did not focus enough on building these kinds of relationships. In other words, as elucidated by Gulya and Fehervari (2024), a significant number of educators enter schools without a sufficient understanding of the antecedents, languages, religions, cultures, histories, structures, ethnicities, social classes, and other characteristics of the families and communities of the learners. Educators are unable to talk to the people who are most important to the kids they educate without this knowledge.

The process of learning is disintegrating in numerous South African institutions primarily as a consequence of this. The weakening of authority and the subsequent breakdown in discipline, adverse sentiments among teachers and learners, a community's reluctance to perceive schools as integral to the community, in addition to budgetary and provisioning challenges, are all consequences of insufficient and inefficient parental involvement in schools. South African schools are frequently not succeeding in fulfilling their intended goal of teaching the nation's youth, particularly in rural regions, and instead serving as detrimental influences. Du Plessis and Mestry (2024) have found that these schools have become disagreeable environments in which learners are occasionally treated disrespectfully and do not feel at home. Consequently, they attempt to avoid these schools. The outcomes indicated that most schools have poor management and leadership of parental involvement due to restrictions on the schools' interactions with parents and the community. The research determined that the inadequate leadership and administration of parental, familial, and communal involvement are primarily caused by issues such as indifferent attitudes of parents and inadequate institutions (Fisher & Refael-Fanyo, 2022).

The objectives of this research were as follows:

- To determine the primary causes of insufficient management and leadership in rural educational institutions, including familial participation, partnerships, and collaboration.
- To recognise the obstacles that are linked to the endeavour to provide efficient administration and leadership of parental associations in remote educational schools, as well as the potential benefits that may result.
- To determine the potential advantages of efficient administration and guidance of parental, familial, and community engagement and collaboration in remote institutions.

## 2. Method

Qualitative research and case study designs were implemented in this investigation. Au (2022) argues that a qualitative research design begins with the prospective application of a theoretical lens, assumptions, and a worldview. Fossey et al (2002) contend that it entails an analysis of the interpretations that individuals or groups attribute to a social or human issue. A qualitative approach also entails the accumulation of information in an organic environment and the inductive analysis of data in a method that is considerate of the individuals and locales being examined. This method establishes themes and patterns. The final written report or presentation of a qualitative study includes the complex description and interpretation of the problem, the researcher's reflectivity, and the voices of the participants (Lim, 2024). The purposive and convenient sampling technique was employed to select the research site and participants from the Ndwedwe Circuit management centre. Three educators from each of the five rural secondary or high schools were selected to participate. The participants consisted of one educator with more than five years of experience in the classroom, one educator possessing fewer than five years of teaching, and a member of the school management staff. The research instrument for data acquisition was semi-structured interviews. The Department of Basic Education permitted us to conduct interviews with educators, in addition to the ethical authorisation from the University of South Africa, 2019/07/24/50801163/24/MC. Furthermore, the District's officials and school principals were contacted in advance, and their consent was obtained similarly. Furthermore, the selected participants were contacted and obligated to execute consent and assent documents before the interviews commenced. The research objectives and queries were directly aligned with the development of the questionnaires.

## 3. Findings and discussions

In the rural school environments of the Ilembe district, 15 participants engaged in a discussion regarding their experiences with the management and leadership of parent partnerships.

Table 1. Participants' Biodata

| Participant | Gender | Age | Qualifications | Teaching Experiences |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| P1 SA | Female | 41 - 60 years | Masters Degree | Less than five years |
| P2 SA | Female | 41 - 60 years | Bachelor Degree | Less than five years |
| P3 SA | Male | 20 - 40 years | Bachelor Degree | Above five years |
| P4 SB | Female | 20 - 40 years | PGCE | Above five years |
| P5 SB | Female | 20 - 40 years | BED(HONS) | Above five years |
| P6 SB | Female | 20 - 40 years | PGCE | Above five years |
| P7 SC | Female | 41 - 60 years | Bachelor Degree | Above five years |
| P8 SC | Female | 20 - 40 years | Bachelor Degree | Less than five years |
| P9 SC | Female | 41 - 60 years | Bachelor Degree | Above five years |
| P10 SD | Female | 61 years + | Diploma | Above five years |
| P11 SD | Female | 20 - 40 years | Bachelor Degree | Less than five years |
| P12 SD | Female | 20 - 40 years | Bachelor Degree | Above five years |
| P13 SE | Female | 20 - 40 years | Bachelor Degree | Above five years |
| P14 SE | Female | 41 - 60 years | Diploma | Above five years |
| P15 SE | Male | 20 - 40 years | Bachelor Degree | Less than five years |

Data taken from Owusu's MED dissertation.

It was imperative to acquire information regarding the opinions on what comprises or establishes poor management and leadership of parental involvement in schools. As a result, the researcher sought to elicit the participants' opinions on the factors that contribute to poor management and leadership of parental involvement. This would enable the researcher to propose pertinent recommendations that would help resolve the issue. The

data yielded the following four themes: the connection between the parents and the school, the disposition of parents, the inconsistent attendance at parental meetings, and the lack of contact between the school and the parents.

*The connection between the parents and the school*

A key component of inadequate parental engagement management and leadership, according to participants, is the absence of a properly established and nurtured connection between the school and the parents. The participants' shared belief that building rapport is the first step in any connection means that evaluating the success or failure of parental, community, or family participation is impossible in the absence of such a foundation:

*"I believe that the school will encounter significant challenges in managing effective leadership of parental, family, and community involvement if it fails to establish a relationship with the community. In order to effectively administer, it is necessary to establish a relationship between the school and the parents".* (P1, SA)

In the same vein, Participant 15 of School E expressed a similar sentiment, stating that the personal relationship between the school and the entire community incorporates all that takes place in their institutions.

*"Everything at school revolves around personal relationships. The biggest problem is personal relationships. Everything will go wrong if personal interactions fail. If the community and management get along, they can perfect the school and claim it".* (P15, SE)

The viewpoints show that if the school's management and leadership do not get along with the community, parental, family, and community participation and collaboration may suffer. Both participants emphasize that personal relationships between the school and the community are foundational to the success of educational institutions.

The above is confirmed by Asal *et al* (2024), who explain that building a genuine relationship between the school and the parents requires both teachers and parents to create a shared meaning about education. This means aligning their values, expectations, and communication so that they support each other in helping learners succeed. Without this mutual understanding, collaboration may be superficial or ineffective. Goodall and Montgomery (2023) suggest that the challenges in forming strong relationships between teachers and families often stem from differences in socio-economic status, educational levels, cultural backgrounds, group identities, and other factors. Teachers and families sometimes struggle to connect and work together effectively because they come from different social and cultural environments. Syakhrani and Aslan (2024) highlight that when teachers and schools take the time to understand the social, cultural, and economic environments in which their learners live, they gain deeper insight into the families they serve. This contextual awareness enables educators to build more meaningful and empathetic relationships with parents, ultimately enhancing collaboration and support for learners. In order to establish a functional relationship between the school and the parents, certain teachers employ their cultural lenses to engage with culturally and linguistically diverse parents.

*The inconsistent attendance at parental meetings*

The data analysis indicated that inefficient management and leadership are contributing factors to the irregular attendance of parents at meetings. Participants also disclosed that parents do not respond to requests for meetings at the schools during the interviews. The parents of the institutions expressed similar sentiments regarding their attendance at meetings, which was either irregular or nonexistent. The involvement of parents and the community in the school is rendered more ineffective by the fact that parents fail to respond when summoned, as if they lack concern for the school.

Participant 6 said, *"The parent does not attend, even if the learner has committed an infraction and the parent has been requested to attend the school. Regardless of whether a parent meeting is scheduled, the majority of them fail to attend".* (P6, SB)

Inefficient management and leadership of parental, family, and community partnerships are perceived to be influenced by parents' tendency to respond infrequently to invitations to attend meetings or not attend meetings.

In the same vein, Participant 7 maintained that: *"When parents are summoned to attend any school-related meetings, it is imperative to be informed of their availability. They are bead producers, and they commit to Tuesdays. You must be aware of the times when they are engaged in the production of beads. Additionally, you must be aware of the days on which they are available for purchase. For instance, when I scheduled a meeting on a day when there was a funeral in the community, no one attended. Only two individuals were present. Attendance is typically exceedingly low".* (P7, SC)

The attendance of meetings is often subpar because parents prioritise their other obligations over their children's school meetings, which is a result of factors such as time constraints and a lack of education. Participant 8 reiterates this concept, stating that "*Some parents in my school do not cooperate with us, even when you call*

*them for school meetings; they do not attend.*" (P8, SC)

Participant 10 reinforces the perception that the ineffectiveness of administration and leadership of parental involvement is a consequence of parents not attending meetings:

*"I believe that we are confronted with a significant issue in terms of parental involvement in the school. I believe that the primary issue is that the majority of our parents are illiterate and do not prioritise education. If we schedule a meeting with parents, it is discovered that only a small number of them will be present. Consequently, we do not receive the full support of the parents".* (P10, SD)

The issue of illiteracy among parents is perceived as a contributing factor to their lack of serious engagement in their children's education and their failure to attend significant school meetings. The aforementioned notion was also substantiated by Participant 12, who stated, "*I can confidently assert that there is no collaboration between the parents and the school. As an illustration, yesterday, we requested prayers from more than 50 parents; however, only four responded. This implies that they are disinterested in the school's operations; consequently, there is no engagement.* (P12, SE)

This implies that the effective administration of parental involvement and leadership is impeded by the absence of parents from meetings. In other words, the school is unable to receive the necessary support because parents do not attend meetings to collaborate with the school regularly.

This affirms the standpoint of Zhang et al (2024) that parents should consider attending school meetings and functions more seriously in order to improve the levels of cooperation that exist between the schools and the parents. The increased involvement leads to better communication, mutual understanding, and shared responsibility for learners' success. Similarly, Owino *et al* (2023) expound that the meetings teachers or schools arrange with parents to discuss issues such as the academic performance of their children are part of the core academic and management function of the school. These interactions are essential for ensuring that parents are involved and informed, which helps support learners' success. The important finding is the strong positive correlations that emerge between the variables that evaluate the school's contribution to an environment that exudes transformation and the variables regarding parental involvement (Koutsouveli & Geraki, 2022). When schools actively work to create an environment that encourages growth, innovation, and positive change, parents are more likely to get involved in school activities and support their children's education. The study shows that these two aspects, school transformation and parental involvement, are closely linked and tend to improve together.

### The disposition of parents

After conducting a thorough examination of the interviews, it was discovered that parents maintain an indifferent stance towards school management and leadership. This attitude is a significant component of the ineffective management and leadership of parental, family, and community involvement.

Participant 14 believed that the parents' demeanour indicates that they are not interested in participating in the school. The following statement corroborates this claim: "*The residents of this region have expressed their unwillingness to participate in the school since my arrival. They are unwilling to assist us if we can schedule meetings; they do not attend, and only a small number of individuals attend. I am unaware of the cause*". (P14, SE)

According to Participant 3, parents have frequently demonstrated their lack of interest in their children's education by placing them in school and with instructors, without providing any assistance to the students.

"*I believe that the indifferent administration and leadership of parental involvement is because parents may believe that they have given everything to the instructors when they bring their children to school. Therefore, we are unable to form a strong partnership as a result of the breakup*". (P3, SA)

Participant 3's statement implies that a lack of shared responsibility and mutual understanding between parents and schools weakens the potential for strong partnerships. The participant suggests that some parents may feel that their role ends once they drop their children off at school, believing that educators should take full responsibility from that point onward.

In contrast, Participant 5 of School B suggested that parents' dearth of knowledge is a result of their rural location, particularly if they are elderly, illiterate, and do not comprehend the significance of a partnership with the school:

"*Occasionally, they believe that institutions could accomplish significantly more on their own. Additionally, some individuals choose not to participate in the school's activities and instead look down on themselves. Therefore, the parents must be involved in the management of the school, which is a challenge because even the SGB, which is responsible for the school's administration, is comprised of illiterate individuals, rendering them unmanageable. Some individuals are not even interested in the school's growth. Consequently, parents are inclined to abandon their children and leave them at the school once they have lost hope. Subsequently, the school is*

*responsible for managing this situation*". (P5, SB)

Participant 5 expresses concern about the lack of meaningful parental involvement in schools. They observe that some parents believe schools can function independently and choose not to participate, often due to feelings of inadequacy or hopelessness. This disengagement is further complicated by the fact that members of the School Governing Body (SGB), who are meant to support school management, may lack the literacy and skills needed to contribute effectively. As a result, some parents lose interest in the school's progress and abandon their responsibilities, leaving the school to manage the challenges alone.

According to Participant 11, "*the majority of school activities are not collaboratively conducted by parents and instructors*". (P11, SD)

The absence of cooperation is perceived as a component of an apathetic attitude that leads to ineffective administration and leadership of parental involvement.

In the same vein, Participant 12 confirmed: "*There is no collaboration between the school and the parents. For instance, yesterday, we summoned parents for prayer; only four parents responded out of more than fifty, indicating that they are disinterested in the school's operations. Consequently, there is no engagement*" (P12, SD). Participants interpret parental apathy as a lack of cooperation with the school, as evidenced by their failure to attend meetings.

In certain instances, Participant 13 elucidates that grandparents are required to assume the role of parenting when parents are absent, and the grandparents, in turn, encounter challenges in engaging in school-related activities.

"*The majority of our students are not the children of parents. They reside with their grandmothers or, on occasion, with their siblings. Therefore, even if a meeting is scheduled, the elders may encounter difficulty in locating the school. So, it is possible that the learner is not represented, and they are unable to express their opinions on the learner's education and impart some of their knowledge, including indigenous knowledge, that could potentially benefit their grandchildren's learning. So that is the issue. They typically refrain from attending meetings due to their advanced age*". (P13, SE)

Participant 13's statement implies that family structure and generational gaps can significantly hinder parental involvement in education. Many learners are not living with their parents but with elderly relatives, such as grandmothers or siblings. These caregivers often face practical challenges, like difficulty locating the school or physical limitations due to age, that prevent them from attending meetings or engaging actively with the school. Most parents believe that the school and the instructors in question should be responsible for their children's education. It is unreasonable for parents to demonstrate a lack of interest in their children's education.

Smith (2024) and Haisraeli and Fogiel-Bijaoui (2021) reinforce the findings discussed earlier by highlighting that schools today face growing pressure to develop effective strategies aimed at increasing parental involvement. This urgency stems from the recognition that active engagement from parents plays a vital role in enhancing student outcomes and strengthening school-community relationships. As a result, educational institutions are being called upon to move beyond traditional approaches and adopt more inclusive, collaborative practices that encourage meaningful participation from families. The participants further contend that parents have allegedly grown increasingly apathetic and disengaged from participating in their children's education due to factors such as time constraints, a perceived inability to contribute, uncertainty about how to engage, insufficient childcare, feelings of intimidation, unavailability during school-organized events and meetings, and a lack of welcome at the school. Similarly, Nanfuka et al (2024) reveal that fear of divulging conflicts at home, panic over the child's possible failure, and guilt about lack of parenting skills. Parents may sometimes hesitate to get involved in their children's schooling due to several reasons: they may feel it is inappropriate to interfere with the teacher's responsibilities, believe they lack the knowledge or skills to contribute meaningfully, or perceive that educators are trying to shift their responsibilities onto them. (Hornby & Blackwell, 2018; Hill, 2022).

*The lack of contact between the school and the parents.*

Participants unanimously believed that inadequate communication signifies insufficient administration and leadership of parental, family, and community relationships within their schools. The examination of the interview data revealed that the parents' and community's lack of engagement stems from a deficiency in information distribution from the school to the parents. The investigation indicated that parents might facilitate the advancement and growth of learners if they were apprised of their children's progress. Participant 2 corroborated this allegation as follows:

"*The absence of engagement from key stakeholders, such as parents and the community, in their children's education renders the school's operations and management inefficient. Parental involvement is essential. They may not participate in the formal academic documentation of the students, such as in their direct instruction.*

*Parents must be consistently informed about their children's growth and the advancements of the school. They might also contribute to the school's development in many ways. Without the involvement of parents and the community, the school is unlikely to operate at its full potential*". (P2, SA)

The participant is emphasizing that when parents and the community are not actively involved in their children's education, the school struggles to function effectively. While parents may not be directly involved in teaching or academic tasks, they still play a crucial role by staying informed and contributing to the school's development. Without their support and engagement, the school cannot reach its full potential.

Participant 4 also saw inadequate communication as a contributing cause to ineffective management and leadership regarding parental involvement. "*Based on my observations, I believe there is a deficiency in communication or interaction between the school and parents, rather than specifically with the instructors*".

Participant 9 corroborated the aforementioned perspective: "*I believe our school must enhance its efforts. At times, I believe we neglect to engage parents. Parents frequently perceive themselves as excluded, indicating that our communication is ineffective. We exclude them. Typically, we engage with parents only when their children exhibit misconduct, seeking their involvement at that juncture. Aside from that, we do not embrace parental involvement in the school environment, which is why parents perceive they have a role in their children's education*". P9, SC

Participant 9 acknowledges that the school does not consistently engage parents, often only reaching out when there are disciplinary issues. This lack of regular, inclusive communication makes parents feel excluded and undervalued, which weakens their involvement in their children's education. The statement highlights the need for schools to improve their efforts in building strong, ongoing relationships with parents to foster a more collaborative and supportive school environment.

Participants have identified poor communication as a significant factor contributing to inadequate management and leadership on parental engagement. It may be interpreted that schools fail to convey appropriate messages to parents, resulting in the perception that parents abandon their responsibilities due to ineffective communication from instructors. In contrast, school administration perceives that parents are reluctant to engage or be contacted regarding their children's education.

Parents compel their children to attend school and thereafter relinquish responsibility, entrusting all matters to the educators. Participant 4 said: "I *have received several unpleasant remarks from students regarding their parents' comments about their academic achievement. However, they are not exerting any effort to assist the teachers. It appears that the responsibility rests solely on the teachers*". P4, SB

The participants collectively highlight a critical issue in school leadership: the lack of consistent and meaningful parental engagement. Together, these participants suggest that improving communication, building trust, and creating proactive strategies for parental involvement are essential for effective school management and learner success. Lu et al. (2024) emphasise that one of the primary barriers to parental involvement in education is ineffective communication from schools. Specifically, when schools fail to provide clear, accessible, and practical information, parents often feel disconnected and uncertain about how to engage. This lack of straightforward communication discourages participation and weakens the partnership between families and educational institutions, ultimately impacting learners' success. Harush (2024) concurs by stating that if a school principal is not aware of the procedures to be put in place for communication to flow from school to family and from family to school, an inviting school climate may not prevail. If a principal does not understand or implement proper procedures that allow information to flow smoothly between the school and families, and vice versa, it can prevent the development of a welcoming and inclusive school environment. In other words, a favourable school climate depends heavily on transparent, two-way communication, and without it, parents may feel disconnected, reducing their involvement and weakening the school-community relationship. Communication and shared norms are indispensable in the establishment of common ownership of the school in communities, as they enable parents to contribute to their children's formal education and supplement the teacher's efforts (Uti, 2024; Myende & Nhlumayo, 2020). When these elements are present, parents are more likely to actively participate in their children's education, not just by supporting formal learning, but also by reinforcing and complementing the teacher's efforts. This shared responsibility enhances educational outcomes and strengthens the school-community relationship. A genuine partnership between parents and teachers is contingent upon the existence of an efficient connection between the school and home. Effective communication is a critical component of any parent involvement strategy (Wildmon et al, 2024).

### Conclusions

In our research, we concentrated on one of the most critical components of parental involvement management and leadership: the true definition of inadequate management and leadership on parental engagement. The initial

research query was designed to identify and establish the ineffectual management and leadership of parents' involvement that participants perceived. The study subsequently determined that parents do not have a positive relationship with school leadership and management. Therefore, the participants believed the relationships between the institutions and their parents were not optimal. This also led to parents exhibiting certain misdemeanours, such as irregular attendance at meetings. The primary concern was the communication challenge, which was identified as a critical component of the inadequate management and guidance of parental engagement in secondary institutions in the KwaZulu-Natal Province. Acutely connected to the issue of information dissemination from school to parents and vice versa, the poor meeting attendance was a result of inadequate communication. The research determined that schools believed that parents did not wish to be contacted, while parents also believed that the messages were never intended for them.

Kovács et al (2024) contend that parental involvement is of the utmost importance in the modern era of education. Additionally, school management and leadership cannot disregard the critical role that parents play in assisting the school in the achievement of specific educational objectives, such as the enhancement of learners' academic achievements, the reduction of learner behavioural issues, the improvement of attitudes towards schooling, and the increased commitment of learners to their schoolwork. In light of the aforementioned, it is hereby recommended that school management and leadership strive to establish a more constructive and positive relationship with parents, as well as utilise a contemporary communication medium to facilitate communication with parents. In addition, we recommend that school management and leadership adopt a more proactive approach to courting the patronage of parents by employing dynamic strategies and approaches. This will improve the attendance of parent meetings and eliminate the disinterest that parents exhibit towards schools.

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