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Parental influence of children's performance within a schooling environment in South Africa, Johannesburg.

By

Justine Anne Baron

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This research report is presented for the degree of

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Psychology



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Faculty of Humanities

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Table of Contents

Title Page……1

Plagiarism Declaration……....2

Acknowledgement……..…7

Abstract……...…8

Chapter 1: Introduction

1. Introduction and Problem Statement……..…9

1.1 Research Aims…….10

1.2 Research Questions…….10

1.3 Rationale……..…...11

Chapter 2: Theoretical Framework

2.1 Erik Erikson's Psychosocial Stages of Development

and Diana Baumrind's Parenting Styles……12-17

Chapter 3: Literature Review

3.1 Single-Parenthood……..…18-19

3.2 Parenting Self-Efficacy……...19

3.3 The Importance of Parental Care…….19-21

3.4 Parental Involvement……..…21

3.5 Negative and Positive Parenting……...21-22

3.6 The Influence of Background, Culture and Ethnicities…….22-23

3.7 Motherhood and Parenting……23

3.8 Good versus Bad Parenting…….…..24

3.9 Positive Reinforcement and Parenting Styles……..…25-26

3.10 Maternal Sensitivity……....26-28

Chapter 4: Methodology

4.1 *Research Design*……29

4.2 *Sample and Sampling Procedure*…….29-30

4.3 *Data Collection Procedure*……..……...…30-31

4.4 *Data Analysis*……...31-32

4.5 *Credibility, Trustworthiness and Reflexivity*……32-33

4.6 *Ethical Considerations*…….33-34

Chapter 5: Results

Table 1: Summary of demographics

Of participants…….…..35

Table 2: Summary of themes

And sub-themes…….……36

5.1 Theme 1: Competitive Parenting……..….36-41

5.1.1 Parent Pressure…….....37-39

5.1.2 Financial Pressure……...39

5.1.3 High Expectations…….....39-41

5.2 Theme 2: Maternal Overprotection……41-44

5.2.1 Learned Helplessness……....42

5.2.2 Gentle Parenting Approach…….42-44

5.3 Theme 3: Inclusive Parenting…….....45-47

5.3.1 Family Communication……...45-46

5.3.2 Promoting Independence…….46-47

5.4 Theme 4: Proactivity versus Reactivity……...…...47-51

5.4.1 Realistic Routine and Consistency……48

5.4.2 Modelling Positive Behaviour ……..49-50

5.4.3 Parent-teacher Interaction…….....50-51

5.5 Theme 5: Child-centred Approach

Versus Adult-centred Approach……51-53

5.5.1 Accountability…….....51-52

5.5.2 Child Anxiety

And Behavioural Problems……..52-53

Chapter 6: Discussion, Limitations,

Recommendations, Implications and Conclusion

6.1 Theme 1: Competitive Parenting……54-56

6.1.1 Parent Pressure…….54-55

6.1.2 Financial Pressure…….….55

6.1.3 High Expectations……...56

6.2 Theme 2: Maternal Overprotection……..…56-58

6.2.1 Learned Helplessness…….56-57

6.2.2 Gentle Parenting Approach……57-58

6.3 Theme 3: Inclusive Parenting……58-60

6.3.1 Family Communication……58-59

6.3.2 Promoting Independence……..60

6.4 Theme 4: Proactivity versus Reactivity…….60-62

6.4.1 Realistic Routines and Consistency……..60-61

6.4.2 Modelling Positive Behaviour……..…61-62

6.4.3 Parent-teacher Interaction……62

6.5 Theme 5: Child-centred Approach versus Adult-centred Approach……..…63-64

6.5.1 Accountability…….63

6.5.2 Chid Anxiety and Behavioural Problems……64

6.6 Limitations of the Study…….....64

6.7 Recommendations……...65-67

6.7.1 Implications for Future Research……...66-67

6.8 Conclusion……..…67-68

Reference List……69-71

Appendices…….72-82

Participant Information Sheet……..……73

Participant Consent Form……74

Consent Form for Recorded Interviews……...….75

Permission Letters……...76-81

Interview Schedule……..……..82

Ethics Certificate…….……..83

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Abstract

The purpose of the current study was to explore the influence of parenting on children's schooling and academic performance in South Africa, Johannesburg. The main focus of this study involved i) the relationship between parental involvement and school performance, ii) the importance of parental support and encouragement, and iii) the positive or negative influence of the involvement of parents towards their children at school. Eight (8) parents between the ages of 35 – 55 years old participated in the study, each having children between the ages of 6 -11 years old at the time of the study. The study involved in-depth interviews with parents whose children attended a private or a public school within Johannesburg. The research design chosen for this study was a qualitative research approach whereby thematic analysis was used to analyse the data. Multiple themes arose from the analysis which focused on parental involvement in their children's activities, specifically within a schooling environment. The participants expressed their views, perspectives and opinions on parenting and the study indicated the importance of support and encouragement, the opinions and beliefs of the parents relied on maintaining a consistent and dependable parent-child relationship. The parental involvement was explored in terms of Erik Erikson's Psychosocial Stages of Development, specifically the fourth stage, namely Industry versus Inferiority. The study concurred with the above that a primary caregiver plays a fundamental role in teaching basic learning and life skills to their children leading towards the ability to become independent individuals. Diana Baumrind's Parenting Styles were used to explore various approaches parents follow when parenting their children. The current study placed a major emphasis on the authoritative parenting style which displays the positive influence of maintaining a consistent, open-communicative and nurturing approach towards the child. This in turn results in a positive influence on the child's school performance. The research demonstrates that the presence and availability of parents within a child's school and home life is crucial to the performance of a child within a schooling environment.

Chapter 1:

1. Introduction

Parental influence of children's performance within a schooling environment is crucial to the upbringing of a child and the way in which they carry themselves within the world. It is evident that a child needs the guidance and support from a primary caregiver to be able to take part in daily activities and perform in all areas of their life. This research report will closely explore the parental involvement and the relationship between parenting and the school performance of a child. Many themes will be explored throughout this research report that illustrate parental involvement within a schooling environment. The scope of the study is limited to parents between the ages of 35 – 55 years old each having children between 6-11 years old that attended either a public or private school within South Africa, Johannesburg. The study was limited to this specific age group as it reflects the stage known as Industry versus Inferiority within Erik Erikson's psychosocial stages of development. Diana Baumrind's parenting styles are also included within the discussion to explore the implications of each style and the influence these may have on children. The primary focus of this study is to explore the parents' perspectives, views and opinions on parenting in relation to their child's performance at school.

Therefore, the main research question for this study is: How does parenting influence a child's performance at school according to parental perspectives?

The Problem Statement

This research report aims at exploring the parental influence on children within a schooling environment. The questions that will be addressed are the exploration of the relationship between parental involvement and school performance, defining the importance of parental support and encouragement and if this involvement influences a child negatively or positively.

1.1 Research Aims

The aim of this research project is to explore the parental influence on children within a schooling environment. The primary focus of this study will be to capture the parent's perspectives and views on parenting in relation to their child's performance at school. Within this study parental involvement and the relationship between parenting and the school performance of a child will be explored. This study will provide insight into the different ideas of parents and the role that parents play in their child's life, thus demonstrating how parenting can influence a child's performance at school. The main intention of this research project will be to focus on the parent's ideas and views about parenting, as well as their opinions and experiences based on actual happenings in their school and home lives.

1.2 Research Questions

How does parenting influence a child's performance at school according to parental perspectives?

1. What is the relationship between parental involvement and school performance?

2. What is the importance of parental support and encouragement within a schooling environment?

3. Does the involvement of parents positively or negatively influence a child at school?

1.3 Rationale

This research study will give insight into the views of parents and how they engage with their children, this is fundamental in explaining the importance of a parent's influence towards their child's performance at school. This study aims at providing parents with guidance and support towards positive parenting, thus identifying various strategies and involvement procedures that parents can rely on. Parental involvement can be characterised as parents being actively involved in their child's school and home life. Parents who attend school events, assist with homework, attend extra-curricular activities and assist their child in making decisions and preparations about their future are all forms of parental involvement (Wang & Sheikeh-Khalil, 2014). According to Joseph and John (2008), parenting is a determining factor to the performance of a child, therefore this study will be based on the exploration of different views and beliefs about parenting, and the influence they have on a child's performance at school. This study will be exploring how active participation and parental involvement can negatively or positively influence a child's performance at school. It is important to consider key concepts within a parenting domain such as cooperation, encouragement, engagement and support, these will form a basis of this study with the use of parents' views and ideas on how they parent their child. Similar studies tend to focus on the impact of parenting on child development, parent-child academic interaction and parental influence on adolescents' academic performance (Joseph & John, 2008; Roopnarine et al., 2006; Schmuck, 2011). However, the strategies, views and different opinions surrounding parenting from a parents' perspective have yet to be explored. This research will differ from those studies, as the primary focus of the study is to explore parenting within a school setting, and the influence that parents may have on the performance of a child within a South African context. The exploration of the strategies, views and different perspectives will be explored from a parents' perspective.

Chapter 2: Theoretical Framework

2.1 Erik Erikson's Psychosocial Stages of Development and Diana Baumrind's Parenting Styles

The fundamental components that are central to my study is the influence of parental involvement and the relationship it has with the performance of a child in school. Concepts that will assist in exploring those ideas are aspects of parental care, support, encouragement and motivation, thus gaining deeper insight into the minds of parents and exploring their beliefs and perspectives about parenting. To support the notion of parental involvement and a child's school performance, Erik Erikson's (1963) psychosocial stages of development will be used to explore the ideas surrounding parental influence. To further support the exploration of parental influence, Diana Baumrind's parenting styles will be discussed in detail and will depict the various parenting styles that parents may demonstrate.

Erikson developed eight stages of psychosocial development from birth until old age (Watts et al., 2009). These stages refer to the developmental changes in an individual's life from birth across the lifespan and all the challenges that are associated with each change and stage (Watts et al., 2009). Erikson's stages refer to the different levels of development, the idea that social and personal attributes lead to growth within an individual, he also believes that there are many challenges that a human being goes through from inception (Watts et al., 2009). The stage that I will be focusing on within this study and in relation to parental involvement and the school performance of a child is the fourth stage known as Industry versus Inferiority, this stage refers to the age group between 6 – 11 years old (Watts et al., 2009). My study relies on the parents' views of children in primary school between the ages from 6-11 years old, this indicates the reasoning of exploring the fourth stage of Erikson's theory. Erikson (1963) places major emphasis on social structures and institutions throughout the lifespan and he suggests that these play a fundamental role in the development of a child (Watts et al., 2009). Although my study will not be discussing the actual development of a child from birth, I have explored the components that assist with the development within a schooling environment, thus referring to the functions of parents, and the role they could play in the performance of a child.

Watts et al. (2009) discuss the importance of parental care and that a child learns basic skills from a parent such as basic trust, a sense of being and is able to form their own identity. This suggests that parents assist with the development of a child and have a great influence in how they make sense of the world around them. Erikson (1963) explores the idea that in this specific

stage, children develop certain abilities and skills to be able to take part in societal programs such as school (Watts et al., 2009). They are now able to apply themselves to tasks at school and they place a huge emphasis on engaging with their peers, school ultimately becomes central to the growth of a child (Watts et al., 2009). This brings in the aspect of the involvement of parents and that without the care and assistance from a parent, the child will have difficulty in applying themselves at school as they will not be receiving any guidance or help to deal with certain challenges in their 'little society' (Watts et al., 2009). Therefore, this study will identity the relationship parents have with their child and how this can be a determining factor towards their school performance.

According to Eccles (1999) within the period of industry versus inferiority, a child will learn how to be competent and complete tasks on their own or feel inferior and be unable to engage with and focus on difficult tasks, thus leading towards a low self-esteem and feelings of unworthiness. Within this stage, a child starts the process of schooling and they begin learning how to read, write and are introduced to arithmetic (Watts et al., 2009). A major emphasis is placed on teachers and parents in this stage as they are the primary facilitators and they contribute to the teaching of these skills, some of which include working with technology and using different tools within the classroom. The focus within this stage of development is technological skill and industriousness, this indicates that a child is becoming an adult and they need to learn the basics to develop a sense of self and be a part of society (Watts et al., 2009). Therefore, this suggests the importance of schooling and the parental influence in relation to the performance of a child. According to Eccles (1999), children are educated by adults at school about how to behave, control and conduct themselves within certain environments which ultimately leads to this undeniable pressure that is placed on children, which could possibly affect their performance at school. This leads us to the exploration of parenting and how this could be a determining factor to the performance of a child within a schooling environment.

Eccles (1999) refers to the independence of children entering this stage of development suggesting that they now have the ability and interest in mastering specific skills and making important choices on their own. Learning takes place within the schooling environment with the assistance from teachers and peers, there is an expectation on children to be able to cooperate, perform, and be competent which leads towards an autonomous and independent child within a schooling environment (Eccles, 1999). There are long-term consequences that may arise if the child fails to exceed expectations, they start feeling inadequate, have a low

self-esteem and cannot participate in social environments (Eccles, 1999). To enable a positive environment for the child to promote industriousness, the adults within their spaces need to be supportive and encouraging allowing the child to help themselves and not suffer from learned helplessness. This suggests that poor parenting and teaching can ultimately be a primary factor in the promotion of children developing the inferiority complex and failing to participate in social events, gatherings and schooling environments.

Erikson's fourth stage namely Industry versus inferiority is primarily focused on children becoming members of society, they need to be recognised by others especially their peers and start doing tasks on their own (Watts et al., 2009). This stage refers to the development of the self, competing against others becomes central in the child's life, they constantly want recognition from peers and teachers which enables the formation of identities (Watts et al., 2009). At ages 6-11, a child wants to break away from their parents by enforcing their own ideas thus starting to become more than just extensions of their parents minds (Hamman & Hendricks, 2005). This stage does not solely rely on the children becoming independent with no help at all, children need to be assisted by teachers and parents showing them positive encouragement thus noticing their achievements and abilities (Hamman & Hendricks, 2005). To enforce the child's independence, worthiness and confidence levels it is crucial to avoid making continuous judgements and negative remarks towards the child as this will hinder the process of development therefore heighten the risk of developing a low self-esteem (Hamman & Hendricks, 2005). This study states that providing children with a safe, accepting and supportive environment will enable a positive identity formation for the child which will ultimately lead towards greater performance within a schooling environment (Hamman & Hendricks, 2005).

According to Dauphin (2017) children are lead to create their own meanings of the world, they want to become productive members of society and view themselves in a positive light. Children start developing the ideas of motivating themselves, appreciating their own achievements and ultimately compete and compare with those around them. However, children learn new skills, vocabulary, values and morals from their primary caregivers and teachers, therefore if there was a lack of parental support, care and preparation within the early stages of the child's life, it will hinder the growth of the child leading towards at-risk behaviours (Dauphin, 2017). An example of this within this article refers to a child suffering from a specific disability, it is crucial to the child's life to provide extra assistance, remediation and help to this child for them to be able to identify with others and be able to participate in the classroom

(Dauphin, 2017). If the child receives no extra support, they will become an outcast in the schooling environment and ultimately unable to participate within society. Dauphin (2017) also refers to the idea that parenting plays a fundamental role in a child's motivation to achieve and if the caregiver gives the child constant assurance, love and admiration the child is more likely to face challenges independently (Dauphin, 2017).

Parenting is considered a major component in influencing the performance of a child at school (Joseph & John, 2008). To further support the exploration of the parental influence in relation to the performance of a child within a schooling environment, I will be using Diana Baumrind's parenting styles to demonstrate the different types of styles parents can choose to use, and how these styles can influence various outcomes for the school going child (Baumrind, 1991). I will begin by defining the four main styles and then will further my exploration in relation to how this will benefit my study. The authoritarian parenting style is linked to parents exerting strict control over their children and being very demanding, they are normally unresponsive and disagree to open communication with their children (Joseph & John, 2008). The authoritative parenting style differs from this, as the parents tend to be more supportive and encouraging towards their children within this style, they allow open communication and enforce a trusting, accepting and autonomous relationship according to Baumrind (2013) and Joseph & John (2008). The third style is known as the permissive parenting style whereby children are allowed to make their own decisions and the parents do not initiate any form of control, which often leads to poor performance at school as they are not receiving any guidance from parental figures (Baumrind, 2012; Joseph & John, 2008). The uninvolved parenting style can be explained in terms of parents being completely unavailable, they do not demand anything from their children and are often unresponsive, and they fail to supervise their children which ultimately leads to problem behaviour (Joseph & John, 2008).

Baumrind (2005) identified the patterns of parental authority and adolescent autonomy whereby many essential concepts were discussed within this study. Baumrind (2005) refers to the idea of responsiveness from parental figures which can be defined as promoting individuality, being supportive towards the needs of the child and promoting autonomy. The provision of warmth and open-communication are central to the above concept. Baumrind (2005) discusses another parenting strategy namely demandingness which refers to the act of controlling the child's behaviour and monitoring their activities. The above concepts are important to discuss because they assist in explaining the behaviours and practices that parents follow which ultimately can distinguish the outcome of child's behaviour. It is stated that

parenting styles have the power to influence and predict the competence levels of children therefore emphasising the essential role a parent plays in the formative years of one's life.

Parenting styles are largely related to the values and norms within individual families therefore the behaviours that parents adopt can be a reflection of their background, culture, financial status and ethnicity. The two parenting styles that are constantly compared within studies is the authoritative parenting style and the authoritarian parenting style. Steinberg (1990 as cited in Baumrind, 2013) argues the above statement by prioritising the authoritative parenting style, suggesting that no matter the background, marital status or race the adolescent will be positively influenced by this specific style. It is evident that children need guidance and support to be able to function appropriately within society, parental authority is defined as someone who enforces rules and behaviours towards their offspring therefore providing a foundation for future decisions and independence (Baumrind, 2013). It is of utmost importance to discuss various ways of parenting concepts thus identifying the possible positive and negative influence they have on a child's school life.

It is crucial that a child needs consistent support and structure within their lives, a child automatically models the behaviour of their parents therefore emphasising the obvious control that a parent has on their child. Baumrind (2013) suggests that the authoritative parenting style enforces comfortability with the self and creates an opportunity for the child to express themselves appropriately leading towards complete independence. She also argues that children do not need to be consulted when setting boundaries and rules, the parent is in control and will always have the last say in discussions (Baumrind, 2013). This gives the child a sense of security, routine and structure as they know what is expected of them and they are able to follow instructions effectively in classroom settings. Baumrind (1991b, 1991c as cited in Baumrind, 2013) then refers to the basis of the authoritative parenting style of balancing freedom and control stating that the main goal within this style is to equalise the rights and responsibilities of the children and encourage a give-and-take mentality. The authoritarian parenting style is focused on the assertion of strict control therefore the child's independence becomes secondary. Permissive parenting solely relies on children making their own decisions and they see control as negatively influencing the child's growth (Baumrind, 2013). Baumrind (2013) states that families are fundamentally different, they all have various characteristics and qualities that differ. This emphasises the reason as to why parent's opinions, ideas and perceptions should not be reduced to measures or scales that provide a result, rather they should be explained thoroughly by actual parents of children who are currently attending school.

These parenting styles will be considered within my study and were explored within the interviews with the parents about their different views and perspectives of the facilitation of their children within a schooling environment. Baumrind's parenting styles are relevant to my research as they demonstrate various ideas about parenting and the influence parents have on their children (Baumrind, 2005). Erikson's psychosocial stages of development and Baumrind's parenting styles are crucial to my study as children develop and learn within a schooling environment, however this process is facilitated with the help of teachers and parents. According to Schmuck (2011) active participating parents who have a genuine interest in their child's life will lead to greater academic performance at school. This is relevant to my study, as I have explored the parental influence on children and the different beliefs parents have in relation to the parenting of children. To conclude this chapter, it is evident that parental support, encouragement, involvement and responsiveness play a fundamental role in a child's life and school performance of a child. Therefore, in accordance with the above theories, teachers, peers and most importantly one's parental figures are the main guiding forces in a young child's life.

Chapter 3: Literature Review

The purpose of this study is to explore parenting and the influence it may have on a child's performance at school. This study is based on the parents' perspectives, thus looking at the different views and beliefs of parents in relation to their children. Important concepts that will be considered within this research will be parental involvement according to the school performance of children, the importance of support and encouragement from parents and the positive or negative influence parenting has on children. The literature review will explore various studies that have explored the importance of parenting in relation to the school performance of children. However, these studies explored the issues children experience in relation to single-parenthood, the impact of parenting styles on child development, parenting self-efficacy, parent-child interaction and the parental influence on adolescents academic performance (de Lange & Dronkers, 2018; Joseph & John, 2008; Junttila et al., 2007; Roopnarine et al., 2006; Schmuck, 2011). My research is the exploration of the parental influence of children's performance within a schooling environment, the reason for discussing these studies is to indicate the different themes, patterns, gaps as well as exploring alternative ideas surrounding parenting.

3.1 Single-parenthood

The first study that I will be referring to discussed the difference between single-parenthood and coupled parents, and how this influences a child's educational performance (de Lange & Dronkers, 2018). According to this study, children who grow up with a single parent compared to growing up with both parents has negatively affected the educational performance of the child (de Lange & Dronkers, 2018). It is also stated that families who have been brought up with single parents often suffer economically and there is significantly less parental support and encouragement, thus affecting the children's performance at school (Amato, 2000; Amato & Keith, 1991 as cited in de Lange & Dronkers, 2018). The similarity within this study is that the authors refer to children's performance within the school context, this is related to my research and indicates the importance of parenting in relation to the school environment. This study explores the idea that financial and social resources are primarily linked to a child's ability to succeed at school, thus implying that if a family has less access to certain resources their children will suffer academically (de Lange & Dronkers, 2018). This is discussed as the outcome of a divorce as it negatively affects the amount of time and money that parents will have for their child, as they will be emotionally unavailable and have less money to be involved

in their children's lives (de Lange & Dronkers, 2018). A relevant concept that hugely relates to my research is the idea of parental involvement and how this can be a determining factor to a child's performance at school, however a difference is that this study does not explore the parents' views and perspectives on parenting which is the basis of my research.

3.2 Parenting Self-Efficacy

Junttilla et al. (2007) primary focus of their study is from the view of children, they explored parenting self-efficacy (PSE), this can be defined as how parents evaluate themselves and how capable they feel they are as parents (Coleman & Karraker, 1998 as cited in Junttilla et al., 2007). The authors discuss an important concept known as children's social competence and they described two main aspects surrounding this term, which include prosocial and antisocial behaviour (Junttilla et al., 2007). Prosocial behaviour is defined as being able to help, share with peers and be accepted in a group setting, antisocial behaviour is linked with negative behaviour traits, therefore these children are often not accepted by their peers according to Junttilla et al. (2007). Hence, it is suggested that a child's social behaviour can be related to the behaviour of parents thus emphasising that parents play a fundamental role in the performance of a child in a social setting. The limitations of previous studies is that the researchers eliminated the analysis of the fathers' beliefs and solely focused on the mothers' self-efficacy beliefs, therefore demonstrating a form of bias as both parents were not studied, this study focused on identifying both categories when collecting the data (Junttilla et al., 2007). The methodology of this study relied on peer evaluations thus identifying the perspectives of children as well as teacher ratings and scales to explore parenting self-efficacy (Junttilla et al., 2007). Considering the parents actual lived experiences, beliefs, views and ideas based on parenting was not the primary focus.

3.3 The Importance of Parental Care

Joseph and John (2008) discuss parenting styles within families and they demonstrate ideas that link parenting styles to mental health problems in adolescence. This study discusses how good parenting can be a determining factor towards child development, they suggest that parents enable a child to grow and be able to deal with situations in society (Joseph & John, 2008). The importance of parental care will be considered within my research as I will be discussing this in terms of Erik Erikson's psychosocial stages of development. Erikson explores the importance of parental care and places a large emphasis on social structures and institutions hence I will be demonstrating this within a schooling environment (Watts et al., 2009). This

study benefits my research as it suggests many patterns that I will be exploring, it refers to the various parenting styles which I will be using to demonstrate the influence parents have on children. The discussion within this study is based on the various behavioural outcomes of the children in relation to the parenting styles that different parents use (Joseph & John, 2008). A common theme that has been discussed within these studies is the discussion of the effects of divorce and single parent households, it is suggested that these issues create problems for the children ultimately causing detrimental effects to their performance at school. Time is another important concept that is prevalent within these studies, this concept plays a fundamental role within a child's life as children need constant encouragement and support at school, my research will explore the beliefs surrounding time spent with children and the influence on the child's performance.

Roopnarine et al. (2006) conducted a study involving the influence of parenting styles, parent-child academic performance, parent contact and social behaviours from kindergarten aged Caribbean immigrants. Families were interviewed in their households or at a childcare center, and were given questionnaires to complete (Roopnarine et al., 2006). Information was collected that discussed the history of the child, parenting styles and beliefs about the child's education, skills and parental care within a schooling environment (Roopnarine et al., 2006). The results determined that the authoritarian parenting style eliminates positive interaction with parents and thus ultimately limits language development (Roopnarine et al., 2006). This is relevant to my research, as I will be exploring the relationship between certain parenting views and the influence it has on the performance of a child whilst using Baumrind's parenting styles to demonstrate the different perspectives that parents rely on.

The final study within this section that I will be referring to explored the relationship of parental involvement and parenting styles and the influence it has on the academic performance of a child (Schmuck, 2011). The findings were that the adolescents perceptions about themselves is largely linked to the beliefs their parents have about them, and the more actively involved a parent is in the child's life the greater their performance at school (Schmuck, 2011). This is critical to my research and provides a recurrent theme between all the studies I have explored as they all have some relation to the involvement of parents and their beliefs about their child. The methodology of this study involved questionnaires whereby they asked questions based on parental guidance, how parents assist their child in stressful situations and the discipline the parent partakes in when dealing with inappropriate behaviour (Schmuck, 2011). 36 students ranging from the ages between 14 and 18 years old were asked to answer questions based on

their own experiences (Schmuck, 2011) and many key concepts came to the fore and are hugely relevant to my research. The results from this study concluded that children do believe that parents have a strong influence on their performance and they require the support from their parents in order to feel confident within a schooling environment, also emphasising the importance of parental care when coping with difficult and stressful situations (Schmuck, 2011). Key concepts discussed within this study are the importance of affection, appreciation and encouragement from parents (Schmuck, 2011), these are important to consider when exploring parental influence and will be used in my exploration of parental influence on children within a schooling environment.

3.4 Parental Involvement

Various studies found discuss the implications of parenting styles on the development of a child within a schooling environment. Issues that were explored within these papers involved the influence of parenting styles on socio-emotional development from childhood to adolescence, the transmission of parenting styles towards children, positive and negative implications of the parent's behaviours and styles towards their children, parenting styles being the main mediator between the child's behaviour and emotions, and how the involvement of a parent can ultimately predict a child's motivation to succeed at school (Doinita & Maria, 2015; Fan et al., 2012; Lomanowska et al., 2017; Ong et al., 2018; Paulussen-Hoogeboom et al., 2008; Torry & Billick, 2011). The purpose of the inclusion of the above studies is to indicate the importance of various parenting styles, behaviours, backgrounds, ethnicities also providing a backdrop for the reasons as to why it is important to consider multiple ideas when discussing parenting. Many themes, gaps, patterns and contradictions arose within the studies which will be discussed in more detail below.

3.5 Negative and Positive Parenting

Ong et al. (2018) refers to the influence of parenting styles on the socio-emotional development from pre-puberty into puberty, the participants included within the study ranged from the ages between seven and nine years old and were Singaporean (Ong et al., 2018). This study referred to negative and positive parenting whereby negative parenting is associated with punishment, low warmth which ultimately leads towards disruptive behaviour in children, and positive parenting provides warmth thus benefitting the child's cognitive and social development (Ong et al., 2018). This study recruited 1979 children to be a part of the study, a longitudinal design was used to promote reliability and validity (Ong et al., 2018). Various techniques were used,

some of which included: A questionnaire, a child behaviour checklist and a parental bonding instrument. The findings suggested that maternal and paternal care are both important to the development of the child and the styles that parents adopt are largely dependent on their culture and beliefs (Ong et al., 2018). The limitation within this specific study is that the researchers identified the mothers' and fathers' parenting styles independently which may have skewed the findings (Ong et al., 2018). This is relevant to my research as the mothers were interviewed on their own, therefore speaking on behalf of the father of their child which may have influenced a different outcome.

An important theme that has come to the fore within this study is that both parents are indicative in protecting a child from externalising disorders and psychopathologies in adulthood (Ong et al., 2018). The study was conducted over a period of 10 years which indicates a thorough research study suggesting that optimal parenting throughout a child's life is detrimental to their wellbeing and will prevent certain disorders (Ong et al., 2018). This study did not focus on the school performance of the child, however they did refer to certain parenting style definitions such as; affectionate, controlling and neglectful which are connected to Diana Baumrind's parenting styles which will be referred to throughout this paper.

3.6 The Influence of Background, Culture and Ethnicities

Many studies have discussed the differences in parenting styles according to their culture, background and ethnicities suggesting that the way in which they react towards their offspring is largely dependent on either the way they were parented or the culture in which they grew up in. Ong et al. (2018) refers to the difference in parenting styles across cultures stating that a large number of Singaporean mothers and fathers demonstrated affectionless and neglectful parenting strategies towards their children whereas fewer parents indicated more caring and nurturing styles in comparison with European cultures. The idea that parenting styles will differ depending on the context of the family, lifestyle and circumstances is a topic that will be explored in further detail in my data collection chapter as the participants chosen within my study were located in private and public schools within South Africa, indicating a difference in lifestyles and how they react towards their children.

Lomanowska et al. (2017) refers to the idea that parenting has a domino effect suggesting that parenting styles are primarily dependent on how a specific parent was parented within their childhood. A trend is coming to the fore suggesting that parenting is the cause of future parenting and one's parenting history predicts the actions of their present parenting strategies.

Therefore, this study discusses the mothering styles and that adversity in the mother's life can predict the behaviour of a mother in later life (Lomanowska et al., 2017). Within my interview process, I posed the question to the parents of whether the way in which they parent is connected to the parenting styles of their parents which enables a continuous theme of parenting begets parenting. Lomanowska et al. (2017) discusses maternal history and parenting stating that the maternal figure plays a fundamental role in the development of a child. Robert et al as cited in Lomanowska et al. (2017) agrees with this, stating that if a mother suffers from trauma such as sexual abuse within her primitive years of life she will be less interested in motherhood. This would ultimately lead towards the mother displaying negative parenting skills and she will be at a greater risk of low confidence levels, therefore the reactions towards the children will include harsh punishment and limited amounts of emotional care. The above study discusses the differences in parenting styles and that all parents are different, parents interact with their children in various ways depending on their teachings and childhood, therefore this argues that parenting is not a one size fits all idea and is largely dependent on the life circumstances of each individual child, their behaviour, temperament, personalities and the primary caregivers history (Lomanowska et al., 2017).

3.7 Motherhood and Parenting

The overarching trend within this study is the overreliance on the female perspective of parenting as this study relies on mothers as the primary predictor of children's life outcomes. This creates an introduction to the reason as to why only mothers were present during my interview process as their role is central to the upbringing of the child and I wanted to argue the importance of motherhood and the implications this has on the developing child. Torry and Billick (2011) discuss the implications of antisocial parenting stating the influence this has on a child's inability to form new relationships, it is stated that antisocial behaviour towards a child can ultimately impair a child's emotional, social and cognitive development therefore hindering their abilities to partake in social environments such as school or sport activities and friendship groups. If a parent maintains an antisocial behaviour, it is stated that they will have neglectful, erratic and inconsistent parenting strategies which will negatively influence the behaviours of the child (Torry & Billick, 2011).

3. 8 Good versus Bad Parenting

Torry and Billick (2011) discuss the transmission of parenting styles and antisocial behaviour. They suggest that if a parent is cold, affectionless and displays negative attributes towards their child, children do not feel safe and will ultimately respond in impulsive and inappropriate ways. This provides evidence to the idea that a child learns from their primary caregivers and will ultimately model their behaviour, therefore parents need to interact with their children in positive and healthy ways to promote optimal functioning in all areas of their lives (Torry & Billick, 2011). Although this study does not refer to the school performance of children in relation to their parents, it provides definitions and analyses the importance of parents and the responsive attitudes they should exhibit. This study also provides a discussion towards Erik Erikson's psychosocial stages of development specifically the Industry versus Inferiority stage referring to children between the ages of 6 - 11 years old, which is the age group of my research focus. Children learn to be competent and independent within this stage, they begin to do things autonomously, however if they were not taught and have learnt negative responses from primary caregivers it can hinder their performance and they will become stagnant within this stage of development (Eccles, 1999). This leads to the discussion of Donald Winnicott's (1953) analysis of the mother, he referred to the concept of the "good enough mother" defining it in terms of a mother's ability to be completely present in a child's life enabling them to be reliant on their mother which leads towards total independence (Torry & Billick, 2011). His theory relies on the idea that the mother gives the child a sense of security by metaphorically holding onto the child thus allowing them a sense of comfortability and providing a safe environment (Torry & Billick, 2011). The mother will continue guiding the child allowing for some individuality which leads towards a child developing a positive sense of self and independence. If the mother does the opposite, such as acting in a distant manner, or is completely unresponsive towards the child, it will negatively influence the child's behaviour leading towards an insecure attachment with the self and others (Torry & Billick, 2011). The above analysis argues the importance of the mother-child relationship referencing the idea that a child grows and learns with the help of the mother which is solely dependent on her parental attitude and style.

3. 9 Positive Reinforcement and Parenting Styles

Children have an innate need to please their parents whether they receive good or bad attention from their parents they are still receiving a response, therefore a child will behave in any manner to bring attention to themselves (Torry & Billick, 2011). This article states that positive reinforcement from a parental figure can positively influence a child's behaviour, however if a parent acts in a negative or aggressive way towards their child, the child will most likely model this behaviour and copy their parents responses. Within a schooling environment, parents who participate in negative reinforcement for example: swearing, screaming, shouting and threatening will ultimately be transferred into the child's mind and will project these behaviours towards their peers at school. This will lead towards rejection and the inability to respond appropriately in social situations, this will negatively affect the school performance of the child as the child will react aggressively when doing homework, extra murals or playing with friends (Torry & Billick, 2011). This article signifies the importance of one's reactions towards a child suggesting that a parent needs to follow specific constructive ways when dealing with their children.

Doinita and Maria (2015) agree with the above article illustrating a common theme between the studies. This study indicated a relationship between attachment experiences and parenting styles mainly referring to secure adult attachment and the authoritative parenting styles. 74 Romanian parents were involved within this study whereby they all had children between the ages of four and eight years old (Doinita & Maria, 2015). Two questionnaires were used as the methodology technique namely an adult attachment questionnaire and parental styles questionnaire (Stancu, 2010, by Bartholomew & Horowitz, 1991; Nanu, 2015 as cited in Doinita & Maria, 2015). The questionnaire included statements that were to be answered using a 7 point Likert scale whereby the measures were associated with the authoritative style, the authoritarian style and the permissive style (Doinita & Maria, 2015). These are important to consider as I will be referring to the above styles within the following chapters and discussing the implications of the styles and if they were prevalent within my interview findings. The main findings within the above study stated that there was a positive connection between responsive caregiving practices and secure attachments with the authoritative style and indicating a negative link to the authoritarian and permissive parenting styles (Doinita & Maria, 2015). According to Doinita and Maria (2015), avoidance and anxiety attachment were interconnected with unresponsive caregiving strategies therefore suggesting that permissive parenting strategies can influence a child's anxiety levels when dealing with stressful situations.

Although my study does not refer to the specific attachment styles in relation to parents and their children, this study suggests that there is a recurrent theme between parenting styles and adversities within children later in life (Doinita & Maria, 2015). This can result in the development of possible psychopathologies or a discrepancy in one's attachment towards peers or teachers within a schooling environment. This study did not refer to specific opinions and perspectives of parents towards their children which is the primary focus of my research. I will be identifying the opinions of parents and the ways in which they parent their children within a South African environment therefore providing a greater analysis and explanation.

3.10 Maternal Sensitivity

Paulussen-Hoogeboom et al. (2008) argues that parenting styles act as facilitators between a child's emotionality and problem behaviour. The sample included children aged three years old and their mothers mainly referring to the authoritative and authoritarian parenting style. The age groups identified within this study is different to my sample, however it assists in the discussion of the first three years of life, namely sensitive periods. Sensitive periods is a concept that is defined as the developmental period whereby an individual's brain is most vulnerable to external input (Woodard & Pollack, 2020). This suggests that early care is detrimental to the child's life and will enable a positive lifestyle and growth if they are nurtured and cared for by the mother.

Paulussen-Hoogeboom et al. (2008) study was conducted in North Holland which reiterates the idea that parenting styles will differ according to the geographical area. The study focused on the characteristics of authoritarian and authoritative parenting styles, enabling a thorough discussion of the styles. The study used various scales that were to be completed by each mother on a Likert-type scale, the scales to be rated were under headings namely; responsiveness, consistency, acceptance, induction, power and love withdrawal (Paulussen-Hoogeboom et al., 2008). It was found that parenting ultimately is the primary mediator between children's temperament and problematic behaviour and it's stated that the authoritative parenting style is crucial in maintaining the behaviour of children within a preschool environment (Paulussen-Hoogeboom et al., 2008). Many limitations were identified within this study such as limited generalizability, the participants included within the study were mostly from middle to high socioeconomic backgrounds and only mothers were involved within the study therefore excluding the feelings of the fathers (Paulussen-Hoogeboom et al., 2008). This is a prevalent theme of the studies mentioned above as most are all in relation to

the mothers feelings, ideas and opinions which also argues the importance of the maternal figure in one's life.

An important issue to consider is the socioeconomic status of parents, there is a large amount of external threats that can ultimately influence the beliefs and styles of parents towards their children. Paulussen-Hoogeboom et al. (2008) suggest that parenting styles are largely related to stressful family circumstances, financial problems and lack of facilities which promotes a more strict and authoritarian parenting style. This is an important aspect to consider as my research involved parents from public and private schools suggesting a difference in status and monetary values, a discussion on stressful events that have occurred in the past, such as COVID-19 has played a significant role in how a parent responds to their child.

Lastly, the final study that I will be discussing is focused on how parental involvement plays a fundamental role in a child's motivation at school specifically referring to academic success (Fan et al., 2012). It is stated that direct involvement from parents, including attending school events, parent meetings and checking homework has a positive influence on a child's motivation and academic success (Domina, 2005 as cited in Fan et al., 2012). Another important concept within this study is that parental involvement assists in providing a child with the ability and willingness to be successful, hence the supportive and responsive parenting techniques will provide a stepping stone for the child to be self-governing and autonomous. Supportive figures in one's life can assist in one's ability to believe in themselves and be intrinsically motivated (Fan et al., 2012). Self-efficacy and intrinsic motivation are the two main concepts within this paper, it is suggested that a child is more likely to achieve, participate in extra murals and engage with school peers if they are motivated from within than children who solely rely on external rewards (Fan et al., 2012). The reward system can be negative and positive within a schooling system because if a child is able to be intrinsically motivated they will work for their own personal gain however, if the child constantly receives rewards for good work they will change their view and it will be an expectation to receive a reward once a task is completed (Fan et al., 2012). It is fundamental to promote a balance and open-communication in a child's life and teach a child to reach their potential to eventually become independent adults which is a common theme within my data collection chapter and will be discussed in more detail below.

Fan et al. (2012) included a large sample of 12, 721 grade 10 students from various ethnic groups namely, Asian American, Hispanic, Caucasian and African American. A main finding within this study was that Caucasian and African American parents gave their children advice more so than Asian American and Hispanic parents (Fan et al., 2012). This is similar to Ong et al. (2018) as their findings illustrated that Asian parents are more likely to display controlling, affectionless and neglectful parenting styles than the parenting behaviours of other ethnicities. This emphasises that culture and context plays a fundamental role in parenting styles and should be considered when identifying the reasons behind parent's opinions and beliefs. Fan et al. (2012) also stated that although open-communication between the parent, school and child can promote school motivation it could also be related to poor performance of the child leading towards lower confidence levels. If parents are too involved and have continuous conversations with teachers and principals it can also negatively affect a child's performance as they may feel discouraged and unworthy if they are constantly reminded of their failures (Fan et al., 2012).

This chapter has discussed multiple studies that have all referred to many themes, patterns and gaps relating to the parental influence on a child's performance at school. The studies have shown the great importance that parenting has and the major emphasis that should be placed on the repercussions of one's parenting styles and techniques. Thus, this chapter has indicated that parenting styles, past experiences and childhood instances can be a determining influence on a child's performance and their actions at school. A significant finding illustrated the importance of the mother-child relationship and the importance of a mother's response towards her child. This literature review primarily reiterates the major concern and issues that may come to the fore as a result of various parenting techniques. This is crucial to discuss as this will be further explored within the results section with the assistance from interviews surrounding actual lived experiences from mothers situated within Johannesburg.

Chapter 4: Methodology

4.1 Research Design

The research design chosen for this study is the qualitative research approach, thematic analysis was used for data analysis. Qualitative research methods are highly effective as they assisted in providing an in-depth understanding of our social world thus enabling human beings to talk freely about their own lived experiences and perspectives (Snape & Spencer, 2003 as cited in Moriarity, (2011). The sample size is generally small when using qualitative methods (Snape & Spencer, 2003 as cited in Moriarity, 2011) this was relevant to my study as my sample included 8 parents (4 per school). Qualitative research methods provide extensive data and represent people's views and ideas thus identifying various recurrent themes and patterns. My research explored the parents influence on a child's performance at school according to the parental perspectives. This type of research design assisted me in exploring different opinions and ideas surrounding the parental influence. Using a qualitative, thematic analysis is appropriate in the context of my research as thematic analysis can be defined as exploring themes and patterns thus identifying key concepts that will result in high quality data (Braun & Clarke, 2017).

4.2 Sample and Sampling Procedure

The scope of the research is limited to parents aged 35 – 55 years old, 8 parents were interviewed at a private school and a public school within Johannesburg. The schools chosen are situated in the North of Johannesburg. The parents within this purposive sample are parents from the middle to upper income bracket with different backgrounds. This sample is representative of the study and offers a diversity of views. The recruitment procedure of the above participants will be explained further. The two schools were approached through email whereby a permission letter was attached explaining the study and what will be required of the potential participants. Participants from the schools were requested to partake within the study in this letter. The response was limited from both schools chosen, therefore I contacted various teachers by directly messaging them whereby I received a response. The parents from the private school chosen were recruited through word of mouth whereby the parents then volunteered to participate in my study, I then messaged each parent privately. The message contained the relevant information explaining the research and what will take place at the interview. Each interview was set up to accommodate each participant, the meeting places

varied according to accessibility, convenience and comfortability. Therefore, the interviews took place at public restaurants, one of which was within their household and workplace.

The four parents at the private school agreed to be a part of the study, I brought all the forms on the day of the interview. These included: A participation information form, consent forms for written interviews and interviews being audio recorded. Refer to the appendix section for copies of these forms. The participants were asked to sign these forms before each interview commenced. Once the forms had been signed the interview process begun. Recruiting parents was a difficult process due to confidentiality and the POPI (Protection of Personal Information Act) of not being able to give out numbers without the permission of each parent. This created a difficult process in finding parents from the public school originally chosen as I did not receive a response. This is when I contacted an employee of another public school whereby I received a response stating that they would be able to assist in recruiting more parents. This procedure became a long process, the emails were sent where I received two parents willing to participate and then the other two participants agreed at a later stage. Due to the above difficult process of recruiting parents, this study relies on mothers from solely white backgrounds. The inclusion criteria was a primary caregiver of children at a public or private school that volunteered and were willing to participate within the study. All female caregivers that were willing to participate needed to be between the ages of 35 – 55 years old and their children should be between the ages of 6 – 11 years old currently attending a public or a private school within Johannesburg. I only interviewed one parent per household, therefore the mothers of the children were only interviewed. Parents of children with disabilities were not excluded in the study.

4.3 Data Collection Procedure

The data for this study was collected through interviews, which are described as the most common data collection method (Moriarty, 2011). I devised the interview questions myself with the assistance and guidance of prior research articles as well as my own research questions and aims. On the day of the interview, each participant were asked to sign the consent forms and then had to fill in the type of school their child is currently attending, their name and age. I filled in the date and time of each interview. The interviews were in-depth and structured, this assisted in the exploration of important opinions and recurrent themes (Moriarity, 2011). The location of the interviews were crucial as it helped the interviewees become more comfortable and relaxed during the interview process (Moriarity, 2011), therefore the interviews were

conducted at a public place such as a restaurant, shopping centre or the at participant's home or workplace which enabled the parents to feel trusting when answering questions. Face-to-face interviews were useful within my research as my topic contained sensitive information about children that parents felt more at ease answering face-to-face. One interview was conducted online as this was the preferred meeting place for the specific participant, this was due to work as the participant was on leave at the time of the interview and requested to rather meet online. However, I was still able to see the participant face-to-face enabling a sense of security. Each interview varied in time and were approximately 30-45 minutes, this allowed flexibility when asking and answering the questions. I recorded each interview which was used during the data collection procedure and was then transcribed making sure no important information was left out.

An interview is a verbal form of data collection thus influencing greater conversation during the process that was crucial to my study (Potter & Hepburn, 2005). It is discussed that interviews influence authenticity as the participant and researcher ultimately form a bond when they are speaking, the discussion on sensitive topics enable positive interaction, therefore interviews were relevant to my study and assisted me in the data collection process (Potter & Hepburn, 2005). According to Potter and Hepburn (2005), interviews can be described as a narrative as participants are sharing their life experiences and perspectives with the researcher allowing them to create meaning from it and explore peoples' different thoughts and ideas. This was beneficial to my research, as parents' beliefs surrounding parental involvement were explored, thus providing background knowledge of the parents parenting strategies.

4.4 Data Analysis

The method of analysis for this research is Thematic Analysis (TA), which is defined as an analysis that identifies meanings, patterns and themes from data (Braun & Clarke, 2012). It ultimately enables the researcher to make sense of certain experiences and meanings thus recognising important issues during the interview process (Braun & Clarke, 2012). Thematic Analysis assists in exploring ideas and perspectives that would not be possible if another method were to be used. The focus of the study is on the perspectives of parents thus focusing on the parents' different realities and how they participate in their child's lives, therefore this method is used to enable flexibility and accessibility within the research (Braun & Clarke, 2012). The reason for choosing thematic analysis is that the purpose of the study is solely based on parental involvement and the influence it may have on a child's performance at school.

Therefore, by exploring different reflections and experiences from the parents it enabled recurrent themes and perceptions within the study thus generating key features or themes from the data (Braun & Clarke, 2017). Although the advantages of thematic analysis are extremely prominent and beneficial within my research and relevant to my aims and purpose, it is relevant to mention the various drawbacks that this specific method entails. This method can become a complex and time-consuming process as the themes and examples chosen need to be convincing and justified (Braun & Clarke, 2012). Furthermore the researcher cannot merely use the interview questions at the themes, the themes need to be well thought out thus strongly supporting the data found (Braun & Clarke, 2006). However, it can be deduced that the benefits supersede the said drawbacks as the flexibility of thematic analysis allows the researcher freedom of discussion, expression and the promotion of new ideas that may arise during the process of extracting the data. The process which was used for the data collection is as follows: Interviewing the participants, recording each interview, writing notes, developing themes and making connections between each interview. Identification of the various themes or language usage of each participant and comments made were explored in detail. Each transcript was analysed with the use of note taking and highlighting, this enabled me to make connections with the various themes and promoted a better understanding when writing up the final paper. Finally, I used the notes and transcripts to write up my findings based on the specific themes found during the interview process.

4.5 Credibility, Trustworthiness and Reflexivity

It is of utmost importance to consider all the aspects that are involved within the research process and explore the validity and reliability of the data. The information that was gathered from the participants is described as subjective as it involved the parents' own ideas, beliefs, feelings and perspectives in relation to parenting. I used audio records and transcripts to explore the different ideas surrounding parenting and to ensure complete involvement. I am aware that my participation within the research process influenced the outcome of the research report due to my background and context of being an educator. Credibility within qualitative research is defined as the active involvement of the participants during the research process, this suggests that it is fundamental to ensure all participants that were included are represented truthfully within the research (Creswell & Miller, 2000). Respecting and supporting the opinions of the interviewees was considered within my research, I generated specific themes from what the participants discussed within the interview process by taking notes and documenting all information (Creswell & Miller, 2000). This research report was sent to my supervisor and an

external reader to review the study and ensure validity. This term is defined as the accurate representation of the participants lived experiences and realities (Creswell & Miller, 2000) it will ultimately influence the trustworthiness of the study.

Researcher reflexivity is defined as the process whereby the researcher will include and discuss their own views within the research, this is important to consider as it will enhance greater understanding from the readers reviewing the study (Creswell & Miller, 2000). To facilitate the process of reflexivity, this final research report includes my own beliefs and ideas surrounding parental involvement and the relationship it has between parenting and the school performance of a child. Considering one's own beliefs and biases about a certain topic enable a better understanding of the position of the researcher (Creswell & Miller, 2000). I have a background in teaching and have taught for over six years at multiple schools within Johannesburg, working with children from various age groups specifically from grades RR to grade 7. During the process of teaching, I have had multiple interactions with the parents of the children that I have taught which involved parent-teacher meetings as well as general communication throughout the school year. Having a background in teaching has shaped my beliefs of parental influence indicating the major influence that parents have on their child's performance at school. This suggests that I as the researcher may have influenced the findings that were reported and discussed. I kept notes with all the information from the interviews, this assisted in my research process of developing certain ideas, opinions and themes of my own.

4.6 Ethical Considerations

Protecting participants is highly important when conducting a research study and all ethical considerations need to be ensured within studies involving human subjects (Roshaidai & Arifin, 2018). This study followed specific ethical guidelines prior to the data collection process. The first step was to obtain ethical clearance through The University of the Witwatersrand Ethics Committee. Informed consent involved explaining to the possible participants what the research is about thus including the type of questions that will be asked as well as the purpose of the study (Roshaidai & Arifin, 2018). Potential participants were given the following: A participant information sheet that indicated all the information about the study and what will be expected of the participants, an informed consent form to participate in the research and finally an informed consent form for interviews to be recorded (Roshaidai & Arifin, 2018). Participants were informed that participation in the study is voluntary and that they are free to withdraw from the interview process at any given time (Roshaidai & Arifin,

2018). To ensure anonymity and confidentiality within the study, pseudonyms were used, and all information received from the interview process is stored in a password protected computer (Roshaidai & Arifin, 2018). All of the above ethical procedures were carefully followed within my study.

Chapter 5: Results

This chapter presents the data that was collected from the eight (8) interviews, capturing the parents' perspectives and views on parenting in relation to their child's performance at school. During the interviews, various concepts came to the fore that will be used as themes and sub-themes to illustrate the relationship between parental involvement and school performance, the importance of parental support and encouragement within a schooling environment and the negative and positive influence of the involvement of parents. The five (5) themes and twelve (12) sub-themes emerged from the interview process and will be discussed and illustrated in further detail below. The gender, ethnicity and relationship status of the parents were all uniform, they were white females and were all married with partners. The parents are labelled as follows: Parents A1, A2, A3, A4 were recruited from school A, which is a private school, while parents B1, B2, B3, B4 were recruited from school B, a public school).

Table 1: Summary of demographics of the participants:

Parent	Age of Parent	Occupation of Parent	Type of School	No. of children	Age of children
Parent A1	41	Teacher	Private School	2	10 6
Parent A2	38	Stay at home mom/home executive	Private School	2	7 5
Parent A3	39	Account Executive and Project Manager	Private School	2	6 6
Parent A4	44	Personal Trainer	Private School	3	10 9 5
Parent B1	32	Teacher	Public School	1	7
Parent B2	39	Teacher	Public School	2	10 13
Parent B3	37	Fitness Trainer	Public School	3	7 7 10
Parent B4	43	Teacher/Principal	Public School	3	14 11 8

Table 2: A Summary of themes and sub-themes:

Themes	Sub-themes
Theme 1: Competitive Parenting	• Parent Pressure • Financial Pressure • High Expectations
Theme 2: Maternal Overprotection	• Learned Helplessness • Gentle Parenting Approach
Theme 3: Inclusive Parenting	• Family Communication • Promoting Independence
Theme 4: Proactivity versus Reactivity	• Realistic Routines and Consistency • Modelling Positive Behaviour • Parent-teacher Interaction
Theme 5: Child-centred Approach versus Adult-centred Approach	• Accountability • Child Anxiety and Behavioural Problems

5.1 Theme 1: Competitive Parenting

'Competitive parenting' is the first theme that emerged from the interviews, it refers to the competitiveness of parents within a schooling environment and the pressures of being a parent. It was indicative within the interviews that the parents are pressurised to push their children academically and sporting wise which creates a competitive schooling environment for the parent and the child.

The three (3) sub-themes that emerged under this specific theme are 'parent pressure', 'financial pressure' and 'high expectations'. 'Parent pressure' refers to difficulties that parents' experience which relates to maintaining consistency as a parent and the continuous worrying and stress towards their children. 'Financial pressure' refers to the time, money, expenses that parents need to keep up with and provide for their children. Lastly, 'high expectations' refer to the expectations that the school and parents enforce on the children, these are related to the grading systems, homework, speeches, projects and the intense pressure and expectation to succeed within the schooling environment.

5.1.1 Parent Pressure

Six (6) parents discuss the many pressures that are related to parenting and will be discussed in further detail below.

Parent A1 expressed that the pressures of being a parent have largely increased, she suggests that this is related to women becoming more career orientated within this generation therefore having less time to be a parent. For example parent A1 stated: "*Now I find with the younger generation the women are more career orientated whereas I'm not so. We've got jobs, now it's become very career orientated and having a child. You either need to do it properly or don't.... And I feel that I don't agree with parenting that's taking place today at all I really don't. I don't believe that people are being fair to their children, they (are) making their children weak and I think parenting is one of the most stressful things on earth".*

She also refers to the pressures in relation to the amount of extra-murals being offered at schools nowadays, the struggle of timing, fetching and dropping children from school and home creates an enormous amount of pressure on the parent and the child. Therefore parent A1 points out the limitations of time for parents and that it ultimately causes a large amount of stress within her family and life. Parent A1 expressed this by stating: *"I've struggled a bit with the amount of things being offered, and so you know there's sport happening and they have netball matches till 5 o' clock at night and then they still get homework and then you know so juggling that kind of stuff".*

Parent A2 expresses her extreme involvement within her children's lives and that she pushes them to get out of their comfort zones to achieve and be better within the schooling environment. She is exerting the pressure towards her children as she suggests that by pushing them, they give more effort. For example, parent A2 states that: *"I think if you're not involved with your child at school I don't think they will give the effort um that they need to give. I know with um my child, he's very shy and he will never put himself out there to do something like a reading or anything and one instance he said no to doing it, and I got quite upset and he saw how important it was to me and he actually went and did it".* Parent A4 is relatively older than all the other parents and has not experienced any pressures with parenting as she states: *"I never struggled. You hear the younger the younger parents struggled and I've just loved it. I enjoy it, it's like a blessing, the best thing"*. Parent B1 expresses parenting as being a continuous sacrifice for example she states: *"I think the big thing is, is like self-sacrifice so for the next 18 years you can't do you and you kind of just doing the child's thing and sometimes*

it's a bit strenuous um sometimes it takes patience". She also refers to the emotional pressures that are related to parenting for example parent B1 states: *"it's just driving her everywhere sometimes I do feel like a taxi especially after being at school with kids all day and then driving your child around all afternoon it's quite tiring".*

Parent B2 refers to parenting as being very difficult, she relates the pressures to the prevalence of technology and the negative effects that it has on children: *"It's hard, it's so difficult and I think that at every stage I felt like it was hard"*, she further states that: *"Technology has made them a lot more difficult to communicate with face to face, they don't really know how to communicate face to face".* She also reports the competitiveness of parenting and always trying to keep up with other parents stating that it is easy to want to do the project or work for the children if they know other mothers are going to help for example parent B2 states: *"it's important to not do it for them but it's really easy to. Especially when you know that they really want a good mark and their friends got a mom whose gonna help them so it's hard not to help them".* Parent B3 relates parent pressure to the difficulties of consistency of being a parent and if the child does not achieve it all gets blamed on the parent. For example parent B3 states: *"Parenting is very difficult to try and keep it consistent, consistency is very hard. And it's tough being the bad guy all the time. So you are the one that is responsible for everything, your child's misbehaving that reflects on you so parenting is hard".* Parent B3 also refers to the project and academic pressures that are related to parents wanting to do the projects for the child which results in competition between the children for example parent B3 expresses: *"I find that communication can be a bit off when it comes to projects um and I think it's because of parental involvement that parents tend to look deeper into the topic when it's a simple topic".*

Parent B4 points out the many pressures that she associates with parenting stating that it is a huge commitment for example parent B4 states: *"it's not a decision to be taken lightly to become a parent",* she further explains: *"it's actually a commitment for a very extended period of time. And there's fun bits but there's also bits that are not so much fun and you have to be in it for all of it".* She refers to the negative influence that parents may have on their children, suggesting that if parents are too involved or want to be present at all extra murals it can also negatively affect the child and may result in certain anxieties. For example parent B4 states: *"also if they don't want me there to not take offense because sometimes knowing mom is coming to watch or dad for that matter puts extra pressure kind of but not and then sometimes performance anxiety".* Another example is parent B4 who explains that it is important not to push your children unnecessarily for example she expresses that: *"I think it's very tricky*

because… there (are) a lot of children that are… as busy as they are because that's actually what they want to do or it's mom or dads dream being lived out through their children".

5.1.2 Financial Pressure

Four (4) parents expressed the financial pressures that act as a contributing factor to the school performance of the child, the parents gave various examples including specific expenses relating to extra-murals, entertainment and monetary rewards.

Parent A1 refers to the financial pressure that is connected to being a parent, she gives various examples and states: *"But it is very stressful, both of you are gonna have to work because financially it's expensive. Because if you want your child to do well, you have to pay now for extra lessons, they have to go to soccer clubs, they have to go to everything extra whereas before everyone sort of got the same training and we all did our thing. But now, you want your child to excel you got to pay for all the extra stuff… also your child's gonna be raised by au pairs, people fetching your kids, taking them home, doing their homework with them".* Parent B1 refers to the extra-mural financial pressures of being a parent as she states: *"my daughter does piano lessons so that's like an extra add on and it costs a fortune if you have children and you want to teach them musical instruments, it's like a whole other school fee".* She further reports that money is central to a child's life within this generation and children need to be constantly entertained which costs money. For example parent B1 states: *"You know whereas nowadays with parenting it feels like every weekend is one activity to the next".* Parent B2 and B3 rely on using monetary reward systems to motivate their children to complete their work for example parent B2 states: *"per mark they get a specific amount for over 80, a specific mark for over 70 amount and a specific amount for over 60".*

5.1.3 High expectations

Parent A1 strongly disagrees with the parenting and the unrealistic expectations that are set for their children, she states that parents have unnecessarily high academic expectations for their children whereas she is not concerned with this. Parent A1 expressed her feelings by stating the following: *"I never actually, even with reports I read the comment at the end first before I even look at marks so you know cause I also see especially being a teacher some of the expectations that some parents put on some children, it's not practical it's not realistic, not every child is gonna get 90%, so I don't know why these parents expect 90% but I do expect my children to make sure they play their part, make sure their homework is done properly, is done neatly".* She does not believe that marks should be the central focus and she believes that

as long as her children are trying their best and playing their part then she is not concerned with their grades. Parent B1 and A1 share similar opinions in relation to academics, for example parent B1 states: *"I'm not very hard on her like you know I've got quite a few friends that where like they message me in a panic because I'm a teacher, and they think I know everything and I don't um because their children are getting 6's instead of 8's on their grade 1 report and my attitude to that is like: "who cares" um because I don't believe in setting a number for them at this age especially".*

Parent A2 expresses that she can become competitive with regards to her child's academics and expects them to always be the best. For example she states: *"obviously all parents expect their kids to be the best and I often expect him, my oldest to be the best and to do everything the best and to shine and to be noticed and to put his hand up first".* However, she has a realisation that every child's personality is different and some children don't need to always shine and thrive. Parent A3 concurred by stating: *"I mean they too little to be 100% committed but we always expect them to try and do their best. Um they have to go to every class unless they (are) not well or there's an issue".* Parent A3 further expresses that she can have very high expectations of her children which is when her husband will provide assistance, for example parent A3 states: *"I think sometimes I can be a little bit too hard on the girls or I might have too much of an expectation um and then when that happens my husband might realise".*

Parent A4 refers to high expectations in relation to her husband's beliefs for example she states: *"I encourage them to participate doesn't matter how they do"* whereas she then expresses that her partner would rather do the work for their children because he is an academic and has higher expectations for their children. For example Parent A4 states: *"To help them not to do it for them so literally my husband wanted to do it for them".* Whereas parent B1 rather focuses on commitment and participation but expects her child to take part in a specific sport as she states: *"But I do think that some sort of team commitment or participation kind of sets you up for a future".* She further states that she places a large emphasis on socialising as she only has one child, she states: *"I think the biggest influence I have on my daughter is the, the need to socialise her",* parent B1 further expresses: *"I only have one child so unfortunately for her to socialise I spend a lot of time with other people and their children".* Parent B2 discusses the overemphasis on success and achievements within the schooling environment which can contribute to anxiety within the children, whereas she rather believes in participation and always trying your best for example parent B2 states: *"I don't mind what they do, how they do*

so long as I know they have tried their best". Parent B3 places a large emphasis on homework and has to sometimes take a step back and allow her children to work independently, she describes herself as being overinvolved for example parent B3 states: *"So I get more excited about projects than my child does. And I want to help and I and have to learn to let go because you not going to be there so that's been the most difficult part".* Parent B4 expresses the importance of not continuously comparing yourself to other parents or children and rather focus on doing your best with less expectations as it can cause unnecessary animosity between parents and children for example parent B4 states: *"I just think it can create unnecessary animosity between children, it's not a You against your friend, it's You against yourself, try do better next time and if we did less um comparing maybe we'd have a whole lot of happier society".*

5.2 Theme 2: Maternal Overprotection

Maternal overprotection was a significant theme that arose within the interviews, it refers to the idea of a mother maintaining a strict control over their child's life especially in relation to the completion of homework, projects, speeches and the daily routine activities. It can be defined as a parent wanting to do everything for the child therefore eliminating their freedom of expression and choice.

The two (2) sub-themes that emerged from the above theme are: 'learned helplessness' and 'gentle parenting approach'. 'Learned helplessness' refers to the elimination of any form of independence towards the child from the parent, it is the act of a parent ensuring that everything is done for the child, therefore teaching the child to be helpless and not giving them the chance to practice and learn from their own mistakes. The 'gentle parenting approach' is related to limiting strict behaviour and discipline and allowing children to bend boundaries and make their own decisions. Ultimately it relies on the idea that parents are becoming submissive towards their children and enforcing the idea that the final decision is allowed to be the child's choice.

5.2.1 Learned Helplessness

The parents that participated in the study referred to learned helplessness in various ways and expressed the difficulties with letting go and not being in control.

Parent A1 expressed that she may have a slight control issue as she has a strong desire to complete homework and projects for her children. For example parent A1 said: *"maybe my parenting does look likes it's smothering cause I do check everything but I expect them to do it whereas some parents leave them completely to their own devices so I don't actually know which ones the right way to go".* Parent A1 further states that she has to make an effort to leave her children to their own devices and at first it was a difficult process for her to deal with. She expresses this with an example of a recent occurrence, she states: *"I've had to learn this though because my personality is naturally to take control and I try and I've only learnt it this year. I want them to do it how I want them to do it and only now after I spoke to her teacher did she say just let her do what she wants to do which has been a difficult lesson".* Parent A1, A3 and B3 strongly believe that if children are left to their own devices, they cannot cope. For example parent A3 states: *"we do have a structure, and we kinda have, we try do that consistently or else for them it's quite difficult to, ya they struggle without that".*

Parent B3 promotes a sense of learned helplessness as she strongly believes in incentives for the completion of work, she will reward her children for their work as she believes this is how the real world works. For example parent B3 states: *"just like an adult that if you work hard at a job, it's incentivised you get a bonus or you get an increase or something it's the same with parenting and you preparing them for that type of world".* Parent B4 strongly disagrees with the idea of teaching your child to be helpless she rather focuses on providing children with the opportunities to practice for example parent B4 states: *"But if they never practice getting dressed, how are they gonna get better at it so you teaching them to be helpless because you not giving them an opportunity to practice something".*

5.2.2 Gentle Parenting Approach

The six (6) parents that participated within the study rely on a very gentle parenting approach, however the findings showed that without consistent discipline and boundaries a child does not know what is expected of them and behaviour problems may arise.

Parent A1 expresses her concern that children nowadays are treated with the utmost care, parents are so besotted with their children bordering on the issue of smothering. She disagrees

with the approach of gentle parenting and states that she likes to maintain a slight element of fear with regards to discipline and guidance. However, she does state that she will discipline and set boundaries by maintaining calmness for example: *"I don't scream, I don't shout, I don't raise my voice I just click and they know they heading towards my end of the line".* She further refers to the gentle parenting method that her own mother used towards her as a child and she expresses that she would have wished her mother would have been stricter and pushed her harder in her life. Parent A1 expresses this by stating: *"But then I also wish my mom had pushed me harder so that's why I feel like with my kids I always say bring me your homework, I check their homework to see they've done it properly and then I'll sign it so I don't do it with them. But so I've taken, I wish my mom had pushed me harder and I wish my dad had also pushed me harder but they sort of, "okay, okay". They accepted things where I would love to have, I would love to if you could go back, see how far I could go if they had encouraged me and pushed me and put a little more effort into me".*

Parent A2 describes herself as a stay at home mom, therefore she is always with her children and maintains a very gentle approach towards them. Parent A2 states: *"I do think that kids need to learn and the only way to learn is by letting them do things so they are pretty much and it's the way I was brought up, they are pretty much allowed to do anything if they asked".* She further states that she is not strict with rules, they can be changed if needed. Parent A2 points out her own relationship stating that she is in a two-parent household, her husband is the much stricter parent and assists with discipline. For example Parent A2 states: *"I do think that I am a little bit gentle um I know that I could be a stricter parent but that's where my husband comes in. So for us it's a balance um I do think the kids need boundaries that they need to know that certain things do get done".* Parent A3 maintains the similar gentle style of parenting as she expresses: *"we try and limit the amount of shouting and screaming, we try avoid that as much but it's not always possible".* She further reports her attempts to avoid negative reinforcement and enforcing other forms of discipline for example parent A3 states: *"we do sometimes do timeout, it's not always very effective probably because I don't have the staying power to chase them around and put them back in timeout".* Parent A4 disagrees with the above as she believes in following through with discipline and if the parent backs down that is when problems will arise. For example parent A4 states: *"if you don't follow through then I think you lose your power and they see the weakness".*

Parent B1 maintains an extremely gentle approach towards her child as she is not very strict with her and does not focus on the grading system within the schooling environment. For example parent B1 states: *"if she says to me: "I got 4 out of 10 for spelling", I'm like: "oh, oh well", I don't, it doesn't bother/bug me I'm not a competitive parent. Also I came from an environment where my parents never asked to see my report".* Parent B1 also does not believe in complying and conforming with the school rules as she refers to the concert that occurred in September last year. For example parent B1 states: *"recently they sent out a thing to say so there's a concert happening in September and the children have to perform three mornings at 10am and then they have to perform every night for a whole week and I kind of haven't said anything to her teacher but I feel like that's a huge responsibility for a seven year old to fulfil".* She further states: *"I feel like the school is trying to make a puppet out of my daughter. Personally, what I've decided was I booked tickets for the Wednesday and if she's tired after that I might keep her home for two days, I just don't feel it's fair to push them".* Parent B2 discusses her challenges with disciplining her children and will often rely on taking away pocket money to enforce control. For example parent B2 states: *"I don't know how to discipline and it's something I go to my mom with often and I'm like: "I don't know how to discipline her, I don't know what to do".*

Parent B3 also maintains a gentle approach of parenting towards her children as she relies heavily on the reward system of constantly incentivising her children for example parent B3 explains: *"I originally told my little kids that they could have two days off of school if they worked harder at school so a Saturday and Sunday would be their holiday motivation".* She relies on a child-centred approach to discipline and rather agrees with choosing your battles to keep the peace within her household for example parent B3 states: *"So uh I think that sometimes you do need to keep the peace and you choose your battles and she might get away with a bit more just to keep the peace at home which might not be fair to the other two so I do realise that, but I think that the parents sanity also uh if the parent goes insane then everybody's affected so I do question my parenting".* Parent B4 strongly disagrees with parent B3 as she does not believe in rewarding a child for doing work or activities that should be expected. For example parent B4 states: *"you got the marks because those are the marks you wanted"*, she further states that: *"That's never been where we are because that's not necessarily how life works".*

5.3 Theme 3: Inclusive Parenting

Inclusive parenting was a prominent theme that was prevalent in the interview discussions, it refers mainly to the inclusion of children in discussions within the household, explaining the reasons for certain actions or events and ensuring children understand why things happen and what is expected of them.

The two (2) sub-themes that emerged from the above theme are: 'family communication' and 'promoting independence'. 'Family communication' refers to having an open-communication policy between the parent and child which could involve frequent family meetings and assisting with homework or projects. 'Promoting independence' refers to the homework procedure within the household, the availability of the mother in relation to schoolwork and the monitoring of children therefore enforcing independence.

5.3.1 Family Communication

Four (4) parents discuss the importance of having an open-communication policy within their households and focus on having frequent family meetings with each members of the family.

Parent A1 strongly agrees with an open-communication policy with her children, they have family meetings in the car on the way to school to ensure they are aware of all the daily occurrences and also to avoid any confusion. For example parent A1 states: *"but every morning we have a family meeting in the car and because the children they get dropped off nowadays, they don't know who's fetching them, they don't know what time they being fetched, they don't know anything".* She also points out the importance of providing her children with encouraging words to ensure they always feel loved and are safe, she states that every night before bedtime she will ask them what are the four things that they are grateful for which promotes feelings of self-love and heightens a child's self-esteem. For example Parent A1 states: *"my other thing is before they go to bed every night I say what are your four things: And then like my daughters is: I'm kind, beautiful, I'm clever and I'm loved. And then my son's is I'm strong, I'm handsome, I'm adored and I'm smart".* She relies on communication and maintains a strong close bond with her children therefore emphasising the importance of verbal praise and encouragement. Parent A2 agrees with open-communication and is a huge advocate for discussing things openly with her children which is also the mirroring of her own mother's parenting techniques as parent A2 states: *"my mom has always been open and it's a policy I have at home too, tell me everything even if it's bad because at the end of the day I can't help you if I don't know about it, so I'm blindsided by something that happened well then I can't*

help but if I know about it then we can try I mean it might not be a good thing you might still get punished but at least we know where we going".

Parent A4 expresses the importance of a two-parent household stating that both parents always need to be on the same page, for example parent A4 states: *"I think some parents also battle with that where the one parents weaker than the other and won't listen to the other parent. I think that's when problems will come in you know".* Parent B1 also refers to her two-parent household and that they strongly believe in an open-communication policy with their child for example parent B1 states: *"We always try and uplift her um we talk a lot one-on-one and if there's been something that's happened in the family um and we've always kind of included her because we are only a family of 3".* Parent B2 expresses that family meetings are frequent within her household, she also refers to her husband stating that they communicate effectively with each other before they make a final family decision. For example parent B2 states: *"we have a lot of talks where we talk about how we feeling, we try to discuss it ourselves without the kids being there so we at least we present a united front".* She also states the importance of the presence of her husband and that he helps her children with their homework that she is unable to assist with for example parent B2 states: "*I think when it comes to my passions especially like I want to help them with their speeches perhaps more than I should. I try to make the conscious effort, my husband helps a lot with that".*

Parent B4 is a strong believer in communicating effectively with her children, she relies on being present during homework times, however the children also need to play their role within the household and in relation to schoolwork or homework, and she relies on discussing problems as a team. For example parent B4 states that she will always ask her children: *"Did you try your best?" because how can you ask someone to do more than their best and if you can actually can honestly look me in the eye and say: "Yes, I did my best."*, she furthers states that she will then discuss any other problems that occurred when studying or during the test and work from there.

5.3.2 Promoting Independence

Four (4) parents discuss the ideas of participation and encouragement, ultimately allowing the child to try the work on their own before they ask for assistance from the parent.

Parent A2 ensures she promotes independence by allowing her children to do their homework on their own, she will be available to assist with homework but strongly believes in independent working. For example parent A2 states: *"if he's struggling with a word, or he says it wrong*

then I correct him but I like to just let him do it himself, I don't like to help too much because I'm not there to help when he is at school". She then concludes: *"I do think that being a little bit open with them and letting them be their own people is good".* Parent A3 and A4 rely on encouragement and participation for example parent A3 states: *"we try encourage them to like if they forgot something and there's a problem we'll try encourage them to come up with a solution themselves so we give them the tools but then we try and get them to figure it out themselves".* Additionally parent A4 expresses: *"try not to do it for them or try let them do it themselves just and then often they'll ask me what the answer is and I'll say: "Well what have you been taught to do", so they'll use me so often I'll try that approach and it normally works*".

Parent B4's parenting strongly relies on promoting independence, she focuses on providing her children with the correct support and appropriate assistance. For example parent B4 states: *"So I think it is very different coming from a teaching background, you know the value in having children try first so my children all know they have to at least tried the homework first and then come to me and ask me because it gives you so much information if they've done it incorrectly"*, she further expresses: *"You want to teach your children to be able to listen to it, look at it, decide if they think it's appropriate or not".*

5.4 Theme 4: Proactivity versus Reactivity

Being a proactive parent rather than always reacting negatively to situations was a significant theme that relates to giving a child the correct attention, using encouraging words and assisting them completely to eliminate any negative behaviours in the future. It also refers to the idea of removing any threatening parenting strategies by reacting negatively therefore placing an emphasis on proactivity.

The three (3) sub-themes that emerged from the above theme are: 'realistic routines', 'modelling positive behaviour' and 'parent-teacher interaction'. 'Realistic routines' refers to having a structured daily routine for the child, limiting screen-time on electronics as well as the extra-mural and homework procedure. 'Modelling positive behaviour' discusses the promotion of verbal praise, guidance, being present and available to their children and using encouraging words or actions as a parent. Lastly, 'parent-teacher interaction' refers to communicating effectively with the school and teachers and allowing for support from teachers therefore following their guidance and ideas surrounding the child.

5.4.1 Realistic Routines and Consistency

All eight (8) parents maintain a consistent and structured routine within their households and they believe their children need consistency to be able to achieve. All parents discuss the homework routines after school, extra-murals and screen time limitations. For example parent A4 states: *"So normally when we get home the days are pretty busy it's sport and that, they've got half an hour of down time. They can watch TV then, then we start homework and then its bath, supper and they can watch a little bit more so basically maximum an hour a day spilt up they can watch".* Parent A4 further states the importance of boundaries, rules and discipline stating that they are exceptionally important within the child's life. For example parent A4 states: *"I think kids thrive with boundaries and rules. I think if they left to go free I think it's a disaster".* Parent B1 reports on her child's homework procedure and that she also relies on a reward system to be an incentive for her child's academic work, for example parent B1 states: *"she enjoys working so she does her homework with quite a bit of pride um ya and then on a Thursday for the tests the next day, I will draw up my own little mental maths test for her and she does some sums and then I'll test her spelling".*

Parent B2 follows a guided routine with her children after school that resembles the above parenting strategies for example parent B2 states: *"I find one of the biggest things is when they get home they tired, I'm tired so I try to give them a half an hour where they can just unwind. Our rule is generally no screen time Monday to Thursday".* Parent B3 follows a strict homework routine after school and promotes realistic expectations for her children. She explains that one of her children has cerebral palsy and she will always push her realistically and ensure she participates to the best of her ability. For example parent B3 states: *"I do expect them to participate, so even in school I have one of my um children have got cerebral palsy and she's in mainstream schooling and in her eyes she can take on the world especially sports wise but physically she can't. As long as she participates I'm happy and as long as she tries".* Parent B4 promotes the idea of modelling positive behaviour towards her children, she discusses the rules she has in place which include the limitations of screen time and teaching her children to manage their time effectively. For example parent B4 states: *"we need to teach them from the start how to manage their technology time appropriately".* She refers to the idea that some things should not be choices for the child and do not give the child too many options to choose from, for example parent B4 states: *"like the way we discipline at school is rather than being reactive you want to be proactive. So um I know especially when the children were young to give them choices that aren't choices".*

5.4.2 Modelling Positive Behaviour

Parent A1 expresses the importance of verbal praise and being fully committed to activities at school, she models the behaviour to her children that if they choose an extra-mural, they are allowed to participate but she promotes the attitude that they need to follow through and not give up for an entire year. For example: *"like my daughter now, she wanted to be in the netball team so we bought her the netball post and she has to practice every day so we have an agreement for example she does Irish dancing. She asked to do it, I'll pay for it, I will buy her every piece of equipment or merchandise but she will not give up for a year".* Parent A3 expresses her proactivity in relation to her child's academics by promoting a positive attitude towards schoolwork even though they are still very young as she states: *"Okay so we do a lot of reading, we try do a lot of like play and learning".* Parent A3 and A4 emphasised the importance of religion in the guidance of the child's behaviours and referred to parental influence in relation to the beliefs, values and morals that a parent models at home. For example parent A4 states: *"we are religious at home so also that I always include that and guide them and with morals and what to do and what not to do and what not to speak about and what's appropriate so I think it all comes from the home".* Parent B1 promotes positive behaviour by enforcing her child to rather use her words if she wants something and to always give of her best as she states: *"What you, or the work you do you just do it even if you don't know how to do it right, you do it with pride and you give your best so as long as it's neat and you happy with the finished and final product who cares if it's right or wrong".*

Parent B2 and B3 state the importance of time spent with children and a parent being present during the completion of homework for example parent B2 states: *"And then we have a space at our dining room table where they sit and I generally sit with them while they doing their homework so I'm just in the room so should they have questions or need me they can ask me".* She further expresses: *"it also creates panic on a Sunday when they haven't done what they needed to do and you didn't follow up and check on it and again I think it makes it really difficult for parents. I'm in a lucky position where I do have my afternoons to check, I think a lot of parents don't have the time to do that".* Parent B2 strongly believes in modelling the correct behaviour towards her children for example parent B2 states: *"if their parents have a negative attitude towards school, towards a specific teacher I think it makes it more difficult for the school and for the teacher to get things right. I think that you have to try as hard as you can to let them form their own opinions, (it) is very hard".* Parent B3 further points out the importance of communication within discipline, she discusses that her children are aware of

the consequences to actions and should be held liable for example parent B3 states: *"I tend to give a warning and say: "This is your warning, if you do it again this will be your consequence", so that they know that they are responsible for their consequence".*

Parent B4 focuses largely on being a positive role model towards her children as she will always be completely present during homework time, she discusses the procedure she follows as she will always be completely available to her children as she states: *"And a lot of it also comes from um modelling so if I'm waiting or sitting close by while they do their homework am I just on my device aimlessly scrolling through or am I doing something, so I don't work because I find if I'm working then it feels like they interrupting me but I'm supposed to be available for homework, but I enjoy crocheting so I will sit and crochet so I'm not doing their homework for them but it's easy to put it down and then help so I'm close by them doing something that's not on a device and you have something to show at the end of it".*

5.4.3 Parent-teacher Interaction

Parent A2 reports her over involvement with her children and the school, however she does emphasise the teacher's role and that they should always be in charge. For example parent A2 states: *"I'm involved to the point where the teachers are in charge".* Parent A2 states the feeling that her child gets when she is involved stating that: *"it makes him my oldest one especially feel like I'm paying attention to him which is what I want as a parent".* Parent A2 does refer to a specific challenge that she experienced in relation to the parent-teacher interaction, she did not take the advice given by the teachers and followed her own strategy. For example parent A2 states: *"when my oldest was in a… different school he was 3 and they would bring up all of these things about core and how you need to go to all of these therapies, and as a parent you don't know if you're jumping onto a therapy train and you're gonna be on it forever or if you're gonna not listen to what the teachers say and ignore it. I personally ignored it and I ended up going a different route cause we were in a foreign school and I ended up coming back to an English school and it actually made a difference".* Parent A3, A4 and B2 express the benefits of the teachers' interventions and support systems within the schooling environment as parent A3 states: *"our teachers have been great at giving us the tools to help",* she further states that: *"we haven't had any obstacles in achieving those goals as parents because we've had a great support system".*

Parent B1 strongly believes in communicating with teachers as it benefits children with their school performance significantly. For example parent B1 states: *"I am a teacher so for me the biggest thing is the communication so often teachers don't like communicating with the parents. I find it's the best route to take is from the go have that communication open um often I've taught at schools where the children I've never met parents, I never see parents and find those children are often a little bit unsure of themselves. So you know they don't have that support at home and then they come to school sometimes unprepared most of the time unprepared and when you try and assist them they just can't accept the support because they don't understand why an adult would do this for them".* Parent B4 also points out the importance of positively influencing her child's beliefs surrounding teachers and subjects. For example parent B4 states: *"I'm unconsciously influencing my child and giving him a negative mind-set before he's even started so try and not influence on the negative".*

5.5 Theme 5: Child-centred Approach versus Adult-centred Approach

This theme refers to the discussion of whether a child is in control in the parent-child relationship or if the parent makes the final decision. It discusses different ideas relating to discipline, guidance and boundaries therefore arguing who should have the final say during conflict situations.

The two (2) sub-themes that emerged are: 'accountability' and 'Child anxiety and behavioural problems'. Accountability refers to the responsibilities of children and the idea that although the parents are the main caregivers and decision makers within the relationship, it is important for the children to also play their role in relation to homework, projects, extra-murals and other daily activities. Child anxiety and behavioural problems refer to anxiety, behaviour issues, disrespectful attitudes that could be brought on by the lack of discipline and absent parents.

5.5.1 Accountability

Parent A1 states the importance of always doing things properly and to the best of your ability, she states that she is able to help her children if they are struggling with a specific concept when doing homework and will be present but they need to play their role in the relationship and there will be consequences if they don't do something properly, they need to be held accountable because it teaches them a life skill. For example parent A1 states: *"as long as they ask me I will do anything to help them but I promise you if they don't deliver on something there will be a consequence for it because I feel that they have to play their part in this. As a teacher myself, they have to play their part".* Parent A3 has a different approach to her children

as she believes in child-centred communication for example parent A3 states: *"if one of them has misbehaved then we might reprimand them and then we'll sit with them and explain why they've been reprimanded, what we didn't like about it, how it made us feel and we try and get down on their level".* Parent B1 concurs as she also allows her child to make her own decisions for example parent B1 states: *"I realised that parenting is a guiding response, I can advise her what to do and I can advise her not what to do but to tell a child they have to do something um that's not something I follow".*

Parent B4 reports the importance of how her children need to play their part in the parent-child relationship and also strongly believes in an adult-centred approach whereby the parent should always have the last say. For example parent B4 states: *"If you can actually have your children understand why whatever rule or boundary is in place they more likely to keep to it than because I said so. Which is the way my parents were more with us that you could negotiate certain things but in the end if you prove that you were unable to fulfil your side of the bargain, my choice is back".*

5.5.2 Child Anxiety and Behavioural problems

Three (3) parents refer to the anxiety that their children experience in result of their parents actions or behaviours. Parent A2 refers to the anxiety issues that her children experience in relation to the absence of their father when he attends business trips. For example parent A2 states: *"With my kids, if my husband goes away they can't sleep and it becomes an anxious thing".* She points out the direct influence parenting has on a child and that their behaviour will be a reflection of what they are currently going through within their lives. Parent A2 confronts these anxiety issues and tries to help her child and guide them in the right direction. Parent A2 states: *"I know my oldest is a little bit anxious so I put him into situations where I know that he is gonna be anxious but he needs to learn to deal with them".* Parent A3 states: *"for example one of my girls struggles with a bit of separation anxiety um and when I'm calm, when I'm not as busy, when I'm not rushing around she performs much better".*

Parent B1 expresses the challenges her child had with starting a new school, however she assisted her with the transition process for example parent B1 states: *"emotionally in the beginning of the year my daughter struggled because of having such big classes with so many children and the school is so big that she had this fear that she was gonna be lost in the school you know so I try to take it upon myself to walk her around the school".* Parent B2 further expresses: *"I think that it's a big worry and it's why it's so hard is that you look at them have*

an anxious day and you worry a lot. Is it something that I did, did I make her feel anxious, did I make her feel afraid to fail".

Parent B4 expresses the rigid rules for children nowadays and suggests that when there is continuous pressure to follow specific rules, that's when certain behaviour problems arise. For example parent B4 states: *"they also need to be allowed some freedom of just not being so rigidly prescribed to their entire day because sometimes I think that's where some behaviour issues can come through/from because your entire day is set up for you".* She further states that parents need to be aware and present for their children, they need to be consistent rather than react in a threatening way towards the child as parent B4 states: *"Everything else that happens is often not what they wanted to happen and it was a cry for help in a way but we ignore it and punish them for asking for help".*

Chapter 6: Discussion, Limitations, Recommendations, Implications and Conclusion:

The purpose of this study was to explore the parental influence on children's schooling and academic performance between the ages of 6 – 11 years old. Therefore, this study explored parents' views, perspectives and opinions in relation to their child's performance at school.

The three (3) main research questions that will be referred to throughout this section are namely i) exploring the relationship between parental involvement and school performance, ii) the importance of parental support and encouragement, and lastly iii) the positive or negative influence parents have on a child's performance at school. The study involved parents from two schools within the North of Johannesburg, South Africa whereby face-to-face interviews were conducted. Five (5) themes and twelve (12) sub-themes emerged from the interviews and will be discussed in further detail below.

This discussion will follow the order of the result section, therefore discussing and summarising the main findings within each theme and sub-theme. The themes that will be discussed are as follows: Theme 1: Competitive Parenting which includes three (3) sub-themes namely: 'Parent Pressure', 'Financial Pressure' and 'High Expectations'. Theme 2: Maternal Overprotection which includes two (2) sub-themes namely: 'Learned Helplessness' and 'Gentle Parenting Approach'. Theme 3: Inclusive Parenting which includes two (2) sub-themes namely: 'Family Communication' and 'Promoting Independence'. Theme 4: Proactivity versus Reactivity which includes three (3) sub-themes namely: 'Realistic Routines and Consistency', 'Modelling Positive Behaviour' and 'Parent-teacher interaction'. Theme 5: Child-centred Approach versus Adult-centred Approach which includes two (2) sub-themes namely: 'Accountability' and 'Child anxiety and behavioural problems'. The findings will be discussed in further detail below including previous literature reviewed.

6.1 Theme 1: Competitive Parenting

6.1.1 Parent Pressure

The findings of this study indicated that parents define parenting as being a very difficult job, they associate the pressures of being a parent by referring to the idea that it is a full-time commitment, it is time-consuming, there is a large amount of extra-curricular activities being offered and parents often become overinvolved with their child's homework and projects. The findings showed that the parents sometimes put unnecessary pressure on their children to progress, this has shown to improve their effort levels but can also result in certain performance

anxieties. Another aspect that the parents discussed in relation to parent pressure is that if parents are too involved they will complete the work for their children and maintain a strict controlling attitude towards the work being done. The findings discussed the major pressures of technology and how this is negatively influencing a child's performance at school and children ultimately become very difficult to communicate with. It was found that the parents feel this innate pressure within the parent-child relationship, this is due to the blame that gets placed on the parent if the child misbehaves within the schooling environment. Prior research refers to the idea of parenting self-efficacy stating the importance of how a parent evaluates themselves and how capable they feel as a parent (Coleman & Karraker, 1998 as cited in Junttilla et al., 2017), it also discussed how a child's behaviour is merely a reflection of their parents' behaviours, therefore suggesting that if a parent feels inadequate within their own parenting styles, the child will be at a greater risk of social incompetence or antisocial behaviours hence negatively affecting their school life (Junttila et al., 2007;Torry & Billick, 2011).

6.1.2 Financial Pressure

The current study showed the financial pressures that the parents experience and are seen to contribute to the school performance of the child. Financial pressures were discussed in terms of extra expenses including extra-mural equipment, extra piano lessons and monetary reward systems. The parents discussed that the academic success of a child is largely related to extra lessons, au pairs and extra-murals. De lange & Dronkers (2018) concur with the above stating that if a family has a lack of finances and has low access to certain resources or facilities, the children tend to suffer academically as well as socially, therefore negatively affecting their performance within the schooling environment. Monetary rewards or incentives were a recurrent theme that the parents discussed frequently during the interview process, some of the parents relied heavily on the idea of giving their children incentives, gifts, money or rewards if they achieve at school. Fan et al. (2012) refers to intrinsic motivation discussing that a child is more likely to succeed if they are motivated from within whereas if they are constantly expecting external rewards from teachers or parents, it can become a negative influence as the child's success is solely dependent on receiving and it becomes unsustainable in the long-term. The findings also revealed that parents become financially pressurised more so than in previous years because children want to be constantly entertained and instantly gratified, this can cause stress and an unhealthy competition between the parents' and the children.

6.1.3 High Expectations

The findings indicated that the high expectations are related to the pressure that is exerted from the parents' towards their children's schoolwork, and showed that a parents' involvement can influence negative competition and animosity with parents and the child's peers. However, the findings showed that some of the parents also do not believe in the grading system for the younger children and it is suggested that a child should be judged according to their behaviour, personality and who they are as a person. The findings placed a major emphasis on encouragement, participation and team commitment suggesting that grades and marks should not be the central focus within the schooling environment. According to Watts et al. (2009), Erikson's Industry versus inferiority stage states that competition between peers is central to the growth of a child as it assists with the forming of identities, therefore the external pressure from parents to succeed and compete with others can be positive to the performance of the child. Watts et al. (2009) suggests that a child learns to become independent through socialising with others especially within a schooling environment. This suggests that there needs to be a balance and a parent should maintain constructive ideas of competition by always using positive and encouraging words towards their children.

6.2 Theme 2: Maternal Overprotection

6.2.1 Learned Helplessness

The findings within the study showed that the parents' have had many challenges with letting go and allowing their children to work independently leading towards a strong sense of learned helplessness. It was indicative that there was a sense of authority that the parents' want to always be in control of their child's school life and eliminate the opportunity for the child to help themselves before parent intervention. The findings revealed that the parents' faced struggles when allowing their children to complete basic activities for example homework and projects, they would rather do the work for their children. It was further reported that children cannot cope without the support of parents, therefore there needs to be a balance to eliminate complete helplessness. However, the findings also showed that the parents' attempt at trying to take a step back and allow independence for their children. The authoritarian parenting style comes to the fore within this sub-theme as it is discussed to be exerting strict control over children eliminating any form of mutual communication between the child and parent (Joseph & John, 2008). An important concept to consider from prior research is the concept known as 'demandingness' which is defined as maintaining a strict control over the child and constantly

monitoring their behaviours and activities (Baumrind, 2005). This can cause negative affects to a child as they do not have the opportunity to work independently without the parents' assistance, therefore stating that the over controlling behaviour that is exerted towards the child can negatively influence the child within a schooling environment.

The findings further discussed that the parents' within the study need to balance their control, therefore it is suggested that a child needs assistance and a present parent in order to cope in various situations. The parents' also placed an emphasis on rather than doing the work for the children, the parents' should guide them and give them the opportunities to practice. The findings indicated that a mother and child relationship is central to a child's abilities and if the mother is available and present, the child is more likely to achieve at school. Previous research refers to the idea of the "good enough mother" by Donald Winnicott (1953) discussing the implications of a mother being consistent and present within the child's life, this ultimately enables a child to feel safe, secure and is able to complete things independently. Whereas if a mother maintains a permissive sense of parenting, she is unavailable and unresponsive, it can result in a child being unsure of themselves and the support towards the child's schooling will be limited (Torry & Billick, 2011). The findings suggest that there needs to be balance in relation to control and support, therefore parents should provide the tools to the child but also allow the child to practice and try independently, this will avoid the child becoming too reliant on caregivers hence resulting in helpless children that cannot do work autonomously.

6.2.2 Gentle Parenting Approach

The findings showed that a large amount of parenting techniques are primarily from a gentle approach, the parents' referred to the various ways they discipline, communicate and set boundaries for their child. The parents avoid threatening behaviours towards their children as they do not use inappropriate language, screaming or shouting they rather focus on constructive ways of discipline, for example timeout and consequences to actions. The results showed that if a parent maintains a calm behaviour or attitude and uses encouraging words towards the child, the child feels more at ease and performs better. However, the parents' did refer to the fact that sometimes they would rather keep the peace than follow through with discipline and often rules can be bent and changed depending on the situation. The Covid-19 pandemic was discussed as an external pressure that arose, challenges were discussed during this time as it was difficult to maintain the same boundaries and discipline that were in place before the pandemic, therefore suggesting that boundaries can be altered depending on specific situations

however, this should always be communicated effectively to the child. If a child is unsure of what is expected of them or there is constant threatening during conflict situations, a parent could ultimately lose their power therefore, enabling a sense of permissive or uninvolved parenting. Prior research discusses that if a parent maintains a permissive parenting approach to their children, it ultimately becomes a child-centred household whereby the child is able to make the decisions and rules, it is suggested that this can result in poor performance from the child as well as bad behaviour in a classroom setting (Baumrind, 2012; Joseph & John, 2008).

The study also included the parents' experiences of how they were parented in relation to their own present parenting strategies. The way someone was parented can either enable positive opportunities for the parents to enhance their parenting styles or it could lead towards a sense of learned helplessness and intense smothering or attachment between the parent and child. It was discussed that some parents will take what they enjoyed within their childhood and avoid what they did not enjoy, suggesting that if no effort was put into them as a child then they are more likely to push their own children, this could be positive however it could also be seen as smothering behaviour. Lomanowska et al. (2017) refers to the idea that 'parenting begets parenting' stating that if a mother experiences hardships or adversity within her childhood, she will respond in different ways towards her own children in later life. Therefore, this study suggests that a parents' history can be a determining factor to the behaviours of their future children, parents should be aware of the influence that this will have on their children. This was evident within the results and the parents' showed awareness of the above.

A main finding within the study was the fact that some parents' play a role in hindering their child's performance which is related to the maternal overprotection that gets placed on the child, this can eliminate the child's ability to achieve and perform. It is fundamental that a parent does not hold their child back and focus on their own insecurities rather allow their child the space to be independent and try things on their own.

6.3 Theme 3: Inclusive Parenting

6.3.1 Family Communication

The findings showed that family meetings, constant open-communication, discussions between family members and being available during homework time promotes prepared and independent children as they know what is expected of them. It ultimately eliminates any confusion with schoolwork, projects or extra-murals. The parents in the study strongly believe in constant verbal praise and positive reinforcing language. The findings showed that if there

is a close bond and attachment between the parent and the child, the child feels comfortable to share their feelings and emotions with them, the parent can assist and help them when dealing with stressful situations. According to Dauphin (2017) it is the parents' role to give constant assurance and assistance to the child, it leads towards greater confidence and a heightened self-esteem, and children are more likely to deal with challenges if they have present parents.

The study findings revealed that two-parent households are very beneficial to the school performance of children, the parents' discussed various ways in which their partners assist with them with maintaining control in relation to discipline, boundaries and homework. Evidence showed that both parents need to work together when disciplining and guiding children, it also discussed that if one parent has a certain weakness, the other parent will intervene and assist. This enables a sense of security with the children as they will feel they can rely on both parents when completing projects, homework or any extra-curricular activities. Previous literature discusses the detrimental negative influence that a single-parent household may have on a child's academic performance, it is stated that single parents will be less supportive towards their children, emotionally unstable from past traumatic relationship experiences and have less money to assist their children at school (Amato, 2000; Amato & Keith, 1991 as cited in de Lange & Dronkers, 2018). This is evidence of the importance of having two involved parents in the child's life also illustrating the negative and positive influence parental involvement has on a child's performance at school.

A study by Baumrind (2013; see also Joseph & John, 2008) refers to the positive influence of the authoritative parenting style, they discuss that this specific style relies on open-communication and a trusting relationship between the parent and child. Another study by Baumrind (2013) reveals that by allowing a child to express themselves and communicate their ideas to parents ultimately gives them the ability to become independent. The parent-child relationship should be guided by a give-and-take approach whereby the child and parent should both play their role in the relationship (Baumrind, 1991b, 1991c as cited in Baumrind, 2013). The results in the study also showed that the parents expect their children to participate and should be held accountable. This discusses the relevance of the authoritative parenting style stating that it provides a balance between control and fairness.

6.3.2 Promoting Independence

The findings within the study revealed that the parents will always promote the idea of working independently, they will be available to assist if the need arises however they will rather encourage their children to participate and find a solution before they intervene. The findings also suggested that if a child becomes too reliant on their parent, it can cause problems as the child will not be competent at a school level, and will always need extra assistance from teachers or peers. The main focus within the study is that the parents ensure they provide the correct and appropriate support to their children, they will not do the work for them but will provide the relevant tools to help with the process. A specific finding referred to a child that suffers from cerebral palsy, her mother discussed that she attends mainstream schooling and she will always promote realistic expectations towards her child, therefore stating that she will give her the extra help she needs but she will not do the work for her child. Dauphin (2017) states that it is crucial to provide a child with learning difficulties or disabilities extra support and guidance as it will assist in their well-being and ability to participate in the classroom. The findings further stated that although her child struggles with certain activities in the classroom, she will still promote independent work and pushes her to always give of her best.

Erikson (1963) refers to the importance of school and various social institutions, he discusses the major importance of allowing children to socialise which leads towards a sense of trust in the world. Children learn basic skills and concepts from the schooling environment therefore learning how to be in social situations, hence it is fundamental as a parent to promote a positive attitude towards the schooling environment as this will be directly reflected in the child's ability to trust and become independent (Watts et al., 2009). By enforcing a positive outlook on schooling activities, extra-murals, homework and projects it ultimately creates a foundation for future life and shows children the importance of school. It was also discussed within the findings that if a parent leaves their child to their own devices, they will not be able to cope therefore illustrating the importance of parental support and guidance.

6.4 Theme 4: Proactivity versus Reactivity

6.4.1 Realistic Routines and Consistency

The findings showed that all the parents' maintain a consistent structure and routine in relation to the homework procedures. Evidence indicated that children should be allowed occasional free time after a busy day at school, however they do need to follow specific rules when completing their work. The parents interviewed placed a major emphasis on boundaries, rules

and discipline suggesting that children need certain boundaries in place to ensure work gets completed and that they are able to achieve as well as perform at school. The inclusion of realistic routines and consistency can enable greater responsibility for the child and a better understanding towards the importance of academics. A parents' consistent attitude can benefit a child if they are struggling in a specific subject or having problems with a teacher or peers. The findings discussed the importance of limiting the amount of time spent on screens or electronics, the parents suggested that this enforces a proper structure during the week and ultimately models positive behaviour. Baumrind (2005) refers to the importance of responsiveness from parental figures suggesting that the inclusion of warmth and communication will enhance a child's ability to become independent. This can be in the form of structure and specific routines within the household. A study by Joseph and John (2008) state that if a parent is uninvolved, unresponsive and unavailable to their children it can ultimately cause problems within the child's behaviour. This emphasises the importance of consistent and realistic routines that parental figures need to implement to promote academic performance.

6.4.2 Modelling Positive Behaviour

The findings revealed that a parent needs to always promote positivity and model appropriate behaviour as children tend to imitate their parents' behaviours and beliefs. The study showed that the parents' promote positive behaviour by enforcing a sense of commitment in relation to starting an extra-curricular activity. It was discussed that the parents' believe in following through with plans or sporting activities for an extended period of time, this promotes the idea that when a decision has been made it is important to commit and not give up. This teaches the children a basic life skill of finishing a project and not stopping in the middle before it has been completed. Previous research suggests that if a parent is active within their child's life and is able to show an interest and give their children attention it will lead towards greater schooling performance (Schmuck, 2011). The study also revealed that parents strongly rely on maintaining the correct beliefs, morals and values which all start from the home environment. The findings also state the importance of spending quality time with their children, giving a child an appropriate space to work at home and continuously checking and ensuring that work is done on time. It is discussed that the presence of parents' will ensure children have a positive attitude towards school and will give more effort within classroom settings. Prior literature concurs with the above stating that if a parent is involved with school events, parent meetings,

homework and projects, the child will be more motivated to achieve at school and will more likely perform within the schooling environment (Domina, 2005 as cited in Fan et al., 2012).

6.4.3 Parent-teacher Interaction

The findings showed the importance of having an open-communication policy with the teacher and the parent, the parents discussed that they are able to see the value in contacting the teachers frequently and maintaining good relationships with them. The interaction between teachers and the parents can assist children with any issues they may have within the schooling environment in relation to peers and difficult subjects. Communicating frequently will allow intervention strategies and support from the school teachers. According to the participants, the teacher should always be in control and make the final decisions to eliminate a power struggle between the parent and teacher. Evidence states that parents who regularly communicate with the teachers can distinguish where their children are academically therefore they are able to observe their progress. The findings stated that children who have present and available parents are more likely to accept support from the teachers as they receive the support at home, whereas if parents are unavailable the child tends to come to school unprepared and are unable to accept the help from teachers because they cannot comprehend why an adult would help them. Therefore, it is important to model a supportive environment at home as it will be reflected into a classroom setting.

A study by Eccles (1999) refers to the Industry versus Inferiority stage of development stating that there is a large emphasis placed on parents and teachers within this stage. They play a significant role in teaching children basic skills and ultimately give them the tools to partake in society enabling a sense of industriousness. It is of utmost importance that parents and teachers work together and provide the child with a healthy and supportive environment, it is discussed that if a child has suffered from poor parenting or teaching it can negatively influence their self-esteem, therefore developing a sense of inferiority. Hamman and Hendricks (2005) discuss the importance of teachers within the schooling environment stating that teachers play a fundamental role in assisting children to develop a sense of identity and independence. Therefore, teachers need to ensure they use encouraging language and avoid negative statements towards children as it will hinder the child's performance within the classroom (Hamman & Hendricks, 2005). This suggests that the parent-teacher interaction promotes the performance of a child within a schooling environment.

6.5 Theme 5: Child-centred Approach versus Adult-centred Approach

6.5.1 Accountability

The findings suggested that the parent-child relationship should be based on a give-and-take mentality, the parent should be available to assist and guide the child, however the child needs to play their role and be held accountable when completing homework, projects and participating in extra-curricular activities. The findings revealed the importance of a parent making the final decisions within the parent-child relationship, it was also reported that if the child had been continuously reminded to complete a certain task or pack their extra-mural bags, then the child will suffer the consequences if they did not follow through. The parents' expressed the importance of explaining and communicating their opinions to their children rather than merely shouting, screaming and punishing bad behaviour. The findings discussed that the parents' would rather focus on guiding and advising the child towards appropriate behaviour rather than merely dictating and enforcing strict rules and expectations. However, the study revealed that a balance between the parenting styles needs to be maintained also emphasising that the parent always needs to be in control to avoid negative behaviour. Baumrind (2013) further concurs that a child should be able to express their desires and should be given the opportunity to decide certain things independently, however she further argues that children do not have to be consulted with when setting rules or boundaries as the parent is the provider and the primary caregiver. If a child is left to make all their own decisions and there are no consequences to actions or boundaries in place, it leads towards a permissive and involved parenting style which can result in poor performance at school (Baumrind, 2012; Joseph & John, 2008).

Ong et al. (2018) further refers to the idea of negative parenting, they relate this concept to large amounts of punishment and low-warmth suggesting that this will result in disruptive behaviour from children leading towards a sense of uncertainty and confusion with the self. Torry and Billick (2011) further discuss the importance of enforcing positive reinforcement and to rather use constructive methods of communication eliminating any form of aggressive behaviour towards the child. The child tends to imitate behaviour from parents and respond in similar ways in school settings leading towards a negative attitude towards schoolwork, homework and peers (Torry & Billick, 2011).

6.5.2 Child Anxiety and Behavioural Problems

The findings revealed that a child's anxiety and behavioural issues are all closely related to the actions and behaviours of parents. It was found that when a child develops specific issues such as anxiety issues, separation anxiety problems and bullying at home or at school, it is a reflection of their current situation and experiences. It was found that a child's current behaviour and performance levels solely rely on the mothers emotions, therefore if she is busy, stressed and tired, the child's performance will be negatively influenced. Another example found was that if a parent specifically a father leaves for a business trip, the child suffers significantly and anxiety issues arise. Therefore, it was discussed that instead of ignoring the problems it is important to confront them, provide assistance to the child or enforce intervention strategies. It is of utmost importance to pay close attention to the change of children's behaviours as it will indicate an underlying issue that the child is either too scared to communicate with the parent or they will start reacting in inappropriate ways. Previous research suggests that by promoting a consistent and supportive response towards children it will assist in the prevention of future adversities (Ong et al., 2018).

6.6 Limitations of the Study

The current study had some limitations. The first limitation was the time-consuming process of the qualitative research method used, the selecting of participants and the interview process had many difficulties due to the inaccessibility into the various schools chosen, one of which was due to the lack of responses from schools and participants. The second limitation included refers to the inclusion of two (2) schools in the North of Johannesburg, this suggests that the findings were not representative of the wide area of South Africa, stating that the findings were only specific and relevant to a small area of parents. The third limitation refers to the demographics of the participants, this was limited due to the POPI (Protection of Personal Information) Act, as I had limited access to the schools whereby I was unable to choose my own participants. The fourth limitation refers to the restricted age groups of the participants involved as they were limited to a small range and so I was unable to explore the major changes in the opinions and experiences of older and younger parents within this generation. The study was mainly from the perspectives of the maternal figures therefore the paternal figures were not present within my interview process, this may have changed my results and findings. Lastly, during the interview process the interview questions often deviated from the original questions referring to the central aim of this study.

6.7 Recommendations

Parents play a fundamental role in a child's performance at school, they teach their children basic skills and ultimately give them the tools to become independent adults. The findings within this study showed the importance of primary caregivers and the implications of their specific parenting styles towards their children. It was also discussed that a teacher is also crucial in providing the child with guidance therefore referring to the importance of the parent-teacher interaction. The following recommendations are based on the findings of the study and will be discussed in further detail below.

There is a need to provide extra homework classes for children after school, the parents expressed the struggles of finding time to assist their children with schoolwork after school hours due to the pressures of working full-time, therefore by allowing extra classes it will ensure children receive the correct support and help when completing homework that does not contribute to the extra parent pressures. It is also recommended that tutors or extra-lesson teachers be present on the school premises, they should be made available to children who are struggling with specific concepts and subjects, extra homework can be sent home for the parent and child to revise and practice in the evenings.

It is recommended that all projects should be done on the school grounds during school hours to avoid the parents doing the work for the children at home and eliminating competition from parents. This will also give the child an opportunity to practice and work out new strategies of completing specific tasks independently without the over involvement and unnecessary pressure from parents.

Teamwork and participation was discussed frequently within the findings, the parents promoted the idea of taking part in at least one extra-curricular activity per term, therefore it is recommended that both schools should enforce a rule that participating in one sport and one cultural activity is compulsory per term, this will promote teamwork, basic life skills and socialising with other children.

The parents expressed their perspectives on communication with the teachers discussing the importance of having good relationships with their child's teacher. Open-communication with the teachers provides the parents with knowledge about any concerns, strengths, weaknesses and problems that their child is dealing with in the schooling environment. The parent is able to intervene and give the child the assistance they need if there is frequent communication with

the teacher. Therefore, it is recommended that monthly parent meetings should be considered with the teachers and parents to discuss the child's progress.

Additionally, the implementation of a parent centred meeting whereby parents from a specific grade or class meet up frequently to discuss any concerns with bullying, homework pressures or new ideas for the school. A support group for parents that are feeling the pressures of being a parent, they will come together and discuss strategies or ways that they can eliminate these pressures.

The parents expressed their concern with constant rewards that children receive for achieving at school suggesting that this is negative reinforcement and is unsustainable in the long-term. It is recommended that reward systems should be implemented at the school in the form of class rewards for example civvies day, fun/picnic days or a movie day. This will eliminate the negative competition between children and parents and will influence fairness between the children.

Lastly, parents expressed the difficulties of being a parent, it is a consistent effort and is a complete sacrifice. The parents also discussed the challenges they experience in relation to discipline. It is recommended that government and private schools should have frequent assemblies, guest speakers and meetings after school hours with the parents of the schools and provide parents with different disciplinary techniques, parenting techniques and provide more knowledge on the different parenting styles and the influence these have on children.

6.7.1 Implications for Future Research

The findings within the study revealed the various pressures of parenting and the implications of different parenting styles, it indicated the importance of the involvement of parents within a child's life and how it can promote greater school performance. I identified the perspectives, opinions and views of parents specifically mothers therefore my main focus was to explore the opinions from a maternal perspective. Future studies could therefore explore the views and perspectives of an educator in a child's life, also identifying the relationship between a child and teacher and how this directly influences their performance at school.

The study also revealed the motivation techniques that parents follow to incentivise their children to complete work and achieve high marks. It was found that certain parents agree with the act of continuously rewarding children whereas others stated that it promotes the idea that

a reward is a prerequisite to the completion of work. Future studies could explore the relationship between achievement at school and reward systems.

A vital component within the study was to offer insight to positive parenting that could influence a child's performance at school. Therefore, placing a major emphasis on the consistency of being an involved parent and the various methods a parent can use to guide and support their child. Future studies could investigate the complex relationship between negative parenting and a child's achievement at school primarily focusing on abnormal behaviour within a school environment.

Additionally, the parents who participated within the study came from a two-parent household, it was found that they all need extra help and their partners play a significant role in maintaining order and discipline within the household. It was discussed that both partners contribute to the child's performance at school. Future studies can explore the relationship between a single-parent household and couple-parented households investigating the implications this has on a child's achievement levels at school.

6.8 Conclusion

The findings of this study were representative of eight (8) parents from two primary schools situated in Johannesburg, South Africa. The results and discussion were reported in relation to existing literature and the theories, the findings were consistent with the literature review and theoretical framework used throughout the research report.

The primary aim of this study was to explore the parental influence on children's schooling and academic performance, therefore the findings illustrated the views, perspectives and opinions of parents on how parenting influences the performance of the child in schooling. The aim of the study was to identify and provide various ideas, strategies and styles of parenting also exploring the importance of a parent in a child's school life.

The study showed that the parental involvement, support and encouragement is central to the academic growth of a child, evidence showed that if parents are available to their children consistently they will perform better within the schooling environment. Parents referred to the many pressures that they relate to being a parent however they reported various ways to overcome these struggles by promoting realistic expectations and modelling positive behaviour.

The study also presented the importance of maintaining a consistent, safe and encouraging approach towards children with the inclusion of certain boundaries and rules that need to always be in place for a child to respond appropriately. Therefore, the study prioritised the authoritative parenting style which is seen to be the most effective. Evidence showed that open-communication, give-and-take mentality and a trusting relationship between the parent and child is conducive to great performance levels from the child within a schooling environment. The study discovered that parents need to maintain a balance between gentle parenting and a strict approach, therefore avoiding the over involvement attitude towards children and rather allowing a sense of independence. The influence parents have on their children's performance at school is highly prevalent within this study and it is indicative that there is a positive relationship between parental influence and the school performance of the child.

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Appendices

The following documents are included in the appendix of this research report:

- Participants Information Sheet
- Participant Consent Form
- Consent Form for Recorded Interviews
- Permission Letters
- Interview Schedule
- Ethics Certificate

UNIVERSITY OF THE WITWATERSRAND, JOHANNESBURG

Participant Information Sheet

Dear Sir/Madam

My name is Justine Baron and I am a Masters Student by Coursework and Research Report in Psychology at the University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg. As part of my studies, I have to undertake a research report that will be exploring the parental influence of children's performance within a schooling environment in South Africa, Johannesburg. The aim of this research is to explore the parental influence on children and to capture the parent's perspectives and views on parenting in relation to their child's performance. The study will focus mainly on the parent's ideas and views about parenting, as well as their opinions and experiences based on actual happenings in their school and home lives.

I am inviting you to participate in this research. As part of this project, I would like to invite you to take part in an interview by answering questions about parenting, which will include your own views, opinions and perspectives on this topic. The interview will include 16 questions and will take approximately 30-45 minutes of your time. With your permission, I would like to record the interview using a digital device. The questions will involve your views surrounding parental support and involvement, encouragement and the influence of a parent in a schooling environment.

You will not receive any direct benefits from participating in this study, and there are no disadvantages or penalties for not participating in the interviews. You may withdraw at any time or not answer any question if you do not want too. The interview regarding the parental influence on children's performance will be completely confidential and anonymous as I will not be using your name or identifying information unless you agree to allow me to use your name, and the information you give to me will be held securely and not disclosed to anyone else. I will be using a pseudonym (false name) to represent your participation in my final research report. If you experience any distress or discomfort, we will stop the interview or resume another time. If you need some support or counselling services, these are available free of charge at The Emthonjeni Centre (EC), the contact details are paballo.lepota@wits.ac.za (011 717 – 4513), 1 Jan Smuts Avenue, Wits University Braamfontein Johannesburg, South Africa.

If you have any questions afterwards, feel free to contact me on the details below. This study will be written up as a research report and may be published. If you wish to receive a summary of this report, I will be happy to send it to you upon request.

Yours sincerely

Justine Baron

Researcher: Justine Baron 854748@students.wits.ac.za

Supervisor: Dr. Mambwe Kasese-Hara

Mambwe.Hara@wits.ac.za

Informed Consent to participate in the research

UNIVERSITY OF THE WITWATERSRAND, JOHANNESBURG

I ……consent to participate in this research project regarding Parental influence of children's performance within a schooling environment conducted by Justine Baron. I have understood the nature of this project and wish to participate. I have read the participant information sheet and I understand what this research involves, and all my questions have been answered regarding this research. I am not waiving any of my legal rights by signing this form. My signature below indicates my consent to participate.

The rights and privacy of the participant will be completely protected as well as the confidentiality and anonymity as discussed in the participant information sheet. There will be no harm to participants, yet if the participant feels uncomfortable at any time we will stop the interview immediately. The identities of the participants will remain anonymous unless otherwise agreed upon and there will be no deception or risks involved. This research will remain professional and will ensure confidentiality throughout.

Thank you for being a part of my research.

Justine Baron

Participant:

_____	_____	_____
Name of Participant	Signature	Date

Researcher:

_____	_____	_____
Name of Researcher	Signature	Date

Informed Consent form for recorded interviews

UNIVERSITY OF THE WITWATERSRAND, JOHANNESBURG

I…….....agree to participate in this research project and give full consent to this interview being audio recorded.

The data gained from the interviews will be recorded and will be used to translate directly into the final report so no information is left out, therefore there will be no deception when transcribing the interviews. The answers from the interview will be used in the research project and quotes from the interviews will be added into the final report.

…… (signature)
…… (name of participant)
…… (date)

UNIVERSITY OF THE WITWATERSRAND, JOHANNESBURG

University of the Witwatersrand,
De La Salle Holy Cross College

13th Street Braemar Road,
Victory Park
Johannesburg
2195

Mrs Debbie Cohn
debbyc@dlshccj.co.za

03-05-2022

Dear Sir/Madam,

Re: Permission to conduct research at De La Salle Holy Cross College Primary School

My name is Justine Baron.

I am studying for a Masters of Arts by Coursework and Research Report Psychology at the University of the Witwatersrand. I am seeking permission to do research at De La Salle Holy Cross College.

I am conducting research on the exploration the parental influence of children's performance within a schooling environment in South Africa, Johannesburg. The aim of this research is to explore the parental influence on children and to capture the parent's perspectives and views on parenting in relation to their child's performance. The study will focus mainly on the parent's ideas and views about parenting, as well as their opinions and experiences based on actual happenings in their school and home lives. I have chosen De La Salle Holy Cross College Primary School because I would like to interview parents from a private school in Johannesburg, your school will provide me with sufficient data to carry out my research report.

The research will entail collecting data from parents between the ages of 35-55 years old of children in the primary school between the ages of 6 – 11 years old. I will invite parents from your school to participate in this study and answer questions based on parenting, their views, opinions and perspectives surrounding parenting. If they agree, they will be asked to be interviewed. The interview will include 16 questions and will approximately take 30-45 minutes. With the parents' permission, I would like to record the interview using a digital device.

Participants will be asked to give their written or verbal consent before the research begins. Their responses will be treated confidentially, and identities will be anonymous unless otherwise expressly indicated. Individual privacy will be maintained in all published and written data resulting from the study.

This study will be written up as a research report and may be published. If the participants wish to receive a summary of this report, I will be happy to send it to you upon request. The research participants will not be advantaged or disadvantaged in any way. They will be reassured that they can withdraw

their permission at any time during this project without any penalty. There are no foreseeable risks in participating in this study. The participants will not be paid for this study.

All research data will be preserved anonymously for reuse by other researchers.

I therefore request permission in writing to conduct my research at your organisation. The permission letter should be on your organisation's headed paper, signed and dated, and specifically referring to myself by name and the title of my study.

Please let me know if you require any further information. I look forward to your response as soon as is convenient.

Yours sincerely,

Justine Baron

Justine Baron
0731011616
854748@students.wits.ac.za

Dr. Mambwe Kasese-Hara
Mambwe.Hara@wits.ac.za

UNIVERSITY OF THE
WITWATERSRAND,
JOHANNESBURG

University of the Witwatersrand,
Northcliff Primary School

176 Weltevreden Park
Northcliff
2195
info@northcliffprimary.co.za
03-05-2022

Dear Sir/Madam,

Re: Permission to conduct research at Northcliff Primary School

My name is Justine Baron.

I am studying for a Masters of Arts by Coursework and Research Report Psychology at the University of the Witwatersrand. I am seeking permission to do research at Northcliff Primary School.

I am conducting research on the parental influence of children's performance within a schooling environment in South Africa, Johannesburg. The aim of this research is to explore the parental influence on children and to capture the parent's perspectives and views on parenting in relation to their child's performance. The study will focus mainly on the parent's ideas and views about parenting, as well as their opinions and experiences based on actual happenings in their school and home lives. I have chosen Northcliff Primary School because I would like to interview parents from a public school in Johannesburg, your school will provide me with sufficient data to carry out my research report.

The research will entail collecting data from parents between the ages of 35-55 years old of children in the primary school between the ages of 6 – 11 years old. I will invite parents from your school to participate in this study and answer questions based on parenting, their views, opinions and perspectives surrounding parenting. If they agree, they will be asked to be interviewed. The interview will include 16 questions and will approximately take 30-45 minutes. With the parents permission, I would like to record the interview using a digital device.

Participants will be asked to give their written or verbal consent before the research begins. Their responses will be treated confidentially, and identities will be anonymous unless otherwise expressly indicated. Individual privacy will be maintained in all published and written data resulting from the study.

This study will be written up as a research report and may be published. If the participants wish to receive a summary of this report, I will be happy to send it to you upon request. The research participants will not be advantaged or disadvantaged in any way. They will be reassured that they can withdraw their permission at any time during this project without any penalty. There are no foreseeable risks in participating in this study. The participants will not be paid for this study. All research data will be preserved anonymously for reuse by other researchers.

I therefore request permission in writing to conduct my research at your organisation. The permission letter should be on your organisation's headed paper, signed and dated, and specifically referring to myself by name and the title of my study.

Please let me know if you require any further information. I look forward to your response as soon as is convenient.

Yours sincerely,

Justine Baron

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Dr. Mambwe Kasese-Hara
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UNIVERSITY OF THE
WITWATERSRAND,
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University of the Witwatersrand,
Bryandale Primary School

131 Cumberland Ave,
Bryanston, Sandton
2191
administration@bryandale.co.za
03-05-2022

Dear Sir/Madam,

Re: Permission to conduct research at Bryandale Primary School

My name is Justine Baron.

I am studying for a Masters of Arts by Coursework and Research Report Psychology at the University of the Witwatersrand. I am seeking permission to do research at Bryandale Primary School.

I am conducting research on the parental influence of children's performance within a schooling environment in South Africa, Johannesburg. The aim of this research is to explore the parental influence on children and to capture the parent's perspectives and views on parenting in relation to their child's performance. The study will focus mainly on the parent's ideas and views about parenting, as well as their opinions and experiences based on actual happenings in their school and home lives. I have chosen Bryandale Primary School because I would like to interview parents from a public school in Johannesburg, your school will provide me with sufficient data to carry out my research report.

The research will entail collecting data from parents between the ages of 35-55 years old of children in the primary school between the ages of 6 – 11 years old. I will invite parents from your school to participate in this study and answer questions based on parenting, their views, opinions and perspectives surrounding parenting. If they agree, they will be asked to be interviewed. The interview will include 16 questions and will approximately take 30-45 minutes. With the parents permission, I would like to record the interview using a digital device.

Participants will be asked to give their written or verbal consent before the research begins. Their responses will be treated confidentially, and identities will be anonymous unless otherwise expressly indicated. Individual privacy will be maintained in all published and written data resulting from the study.

This study will be written up as a research report and may be published. If the participants wish to receive a summary of this report, I will be happy to send it to you upon request. The research participants will not be advantaged or disadvantaged in any way. They will be reassured that they can withdraw their permission at any time during this project without any penalty. There are no foreseeable risks in participating in this study. The participants will not be paid for this study. All research data will be preserved anonymously for reuse by other researchers.

I therefore request permission in writing to conduct my research at your organisation. The permission letter should be on your organisation's headed paper, signed and dated, and specifically referring to myself by name and the title of my study.

Please let me know if you require any further information. I look forward to your response as soon as is convenient.

Yours sincerely,

Justine Baron

Justine Baron
0731011616
854748@students.wits.ac.za

Dr. Mambwe Kasese-Hara
Mambwe.Hara@wits.ac.za

Interview Schedule

Parent Interview Questions:

1. How many children do you have and what are their ages and grades?
2. Does your child/do your children get homework tasks and what are the procedures of completing the tasks in your household?
3. What are your various strategies or techniques that you follow when assisting your child with their homework/schoolwork?
4. Do you have rigid/specific rules within your household that you follow in relation to the completion of homework, chores, entertainment and so on?
5. What are your views/perspectives of being a parent?
6. What are some of things you associate with positive parenting?
7. Do you think your parental involvement influences your child's performance at school?
8. What is your participation/involvement with your child/children's school events, sporting activities, extra-curricular activities and school projects/speeches/homework?
9. What are your expectations of your child in relation to schoolwork, sporting activities or any other activities?
10. What are your thoughts on parental influence and what do you understand by this term?
11. In what ways do you encourage or motivate your child/children to influence their performance at school? (techniques/strategies).
12. What are some of the challenges that you have experienced in relation to the pressures of schoolwork, homework, tests, projects, extra support and involvement in the schooling environment?
13. Is the way you parent your child/children similar to the way you were parented? (Explain your answer)
14. What are your views on discipline and guidance as a parent? (Explain the procedures you follow at home).
15. What specific parenting strategies do you follow? (strict, provide guidance, consequences for bad behaviour, rules in the household).
16. In your opinion, do you think your parenting methods are effective? If so why?

UNIVERSITY OF THE WITWATERSRAND, JOHANNESBURG

SCHOOL OF HUMAN AND COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT ETHICS COMMITTEE
CONSTITUTED UNDER THE UNIVERSITY HUMAN RESEARCH ETHICS COMMITTEE (NON-MEDICAL)

CLEARANCE CERTIFICATE:	**PROTOCOL NUMBER: MAPSYC-22-01**
PROJECT TITLE:	Parental influence of children's performance within a schooling environment in South Africa, Johannesburg..
INVESTIGATOR	Baron Justine Anne (854748)
SCHOOL/DEPARTMENT OF INVESTIGATOR	SHCD/Psychology
DATE CONSIDERED	26 May 2022
DECISION OF THE COMMITTEE	Approved unconditionally
RISK LEVEL	Low Risk
EXPIRY DATE	31 December 2024

ISSUE DATE OF CERTIFICATE 19 July 2022 **CHAIRPERSON** __ _
(Dr Nkululeko Nkomo)

cc: Dr Mambwe Kasese-Hara (Supervisor)

DECLARATION OF INVESTIGATOR

To be completed in duplicate and **ONE COPY** returned to the Chairperson of the School/Department ethics committee.

I fully understand the conditions under which I am are authorized to carry out the abovementioned research and I guarantee to ensure compliance with these conditions. Should any departure to be contemplated from the research procedure as approved I/we undertake to resubmit the protocol to the Committee.

_____ 27 / 07 / 2022
Signature **Date**

PLEASE QUOTE THE PROTOCOL NUMBER ON ALL ENQUIRIES