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Managing Parental involvement: A case study of a private primary school in South Africa



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ABSTRACT

This study acknowledged that parental involvement is an educational imperative in children's education in line with global perspectives and endeavoured to draw greater insights, in a South African school context, diverse in race, culture and language background. Guided by the theoretical framework of Epstein's model of *overlapping spheres of influence*, this exploratory case study draws on a qualitative inquiry into the management of parental involvement in a private primary school. The qualitative research design situated in an interpretivist paradigm generated data through semi-structured interviews.

This study worked on the premise that the school aims is to provide quality education and the success of school outcomes is dependent on factors that extend beyond education policy on curriculum, teaching and learning to include the benefits that can be derived from parental involvement. Given that, it was argued that education policy incorporating managing parent partnerships is an important factor that impacts educational success which is not confined to the school but remains a joint effort between the home and the school.

The study revealed that the management of parental involvement aims for a long-term shared partnership that guides and empowers all role players to achieve the desired outcomes in education. Parent-school partnerships were found to be multifaceted and dependent on relationship building where managers' display high levels of awareness and sensitivity to the complexity of contexts prevalent in partnerships. It was determined that for the school be able to develop long term parent partnerships that are functional and sustainable, a deep understanding of the needs of its parent population and forming suitable means to engage with and navigate the steep terrain that may be existent in partnerships is required.

Managing parental involvement remains an important focus for school management as it is integral to quality education and the establishment of a powerful alliance with the parent community. A key factor is that for partnerships to be functional and beneficial, a high level of meaningful connection and mutual understanding of the reciprocal roles and responsibilities of role players for achieving goals is necessary.