PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT IN PRIMARY SCHOOLS: A CASE STUDY OF THREE SOCIO-ECONOMIC DISPARATE SCHOOLS IN ILE-IFE, NIGERIA

by

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<center>**DECLARATION**</center>

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PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT IN PRIMARY SCHOOLS: A CASE STUDY OF THREE SOCIO-ECONOMIC DISPARATE SCHOOLS IN ILE-IFE, NIGERIA.

I declare that the above dissertation/thesis is my own work and that all the sources that I have used or quoted have been indicated and acknowledged by means of complete references.

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Summary

Parental involvement (PI) in three socio-economic disparate primary schools in Ile-Ife in Nigeria was investigated in the study. The study explored the effect of socio-economic status on PI using three schools representing the Lower socioeconomic status (LSES), Middle socio-economic status (MSES) and Higher socioeconomic status (HSES). The study reported how parents of three different income groups practice and perceive PI and how teachers perceive PI at the schools and what their expectations are regarding PI. The data used for empirical investigation was drawn from 15 parents and 15 teachers at each of the three schools. The parents were selected using convenience sampling and were individually interviewed while teachers are selected by purposeful random sampling and data was collected using focus group interviews and survey questionnaires. Results shows that parents' available time, interest, level of education, social capital, parent-teacher contact and socio-economic status (SES) affected PI of which time, SES and interest were the most important factors affecting PI. PI is evidenced in all SES groups as joint cooperation between parents and teachers in support of children's scholastic pursuit. The study suggests that, contrary to conventional opinion, parents of LSES generally have high educational goals for their children and evidence noteworthy PI practices. PI should be strengthened by building on existing positive endeavors and addressing areas of PI which are lagging behind. Strategies to strengthen these endeavors are recommended in conclusion of the study.

KEY TERMS:

Parental involvement; Primary education; Schooling in Nigeria; Social capital; Socio-economic status; Teachers' perception on PI; Parents' perception on PI; Interest in schooling; Parent-teacher contact

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

List of Abbreviations

BSC ED   Bachelor of Science in Education

EFA   Education for All

HSES   High socio-economic status

LEA   Low Educational Attainment

LSES   Low socio-economic status

MSES   Middle socio-economic status

NCE   Nigerian Certificate for Education

NCLB   No Child Left Behind Act

NEL:88   National Education Longitudinal Study

OECD   Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development

PI   Parent Involvement

PISA   Program for International Student Assessment

PTA   Parent Teachers Associations

PTOs   Parent Teacher Organizations

SACE   South African Council of Educators

SASA   South African Schools Act

SES   Socio-economic status

SGB   School Governing Body

SMS   Short Messages System

TV	Television
UBE	Universal Basic Education
UK	United Kingdom
UNISA	University of South Africa
US	United States

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CHAPTER ONE

1. AN ORIENTATION TO THE STUDY

Childhood is a vital period for learning and development and most parents regardless of their background want the best education for their children and try to be conscientious about supporting them as best they can and helping them succeed (Moore & Lasky, 1999:16). Generally every child has two major sets of educators who have an impact on their learning and development – their parents[1] and their teachers. Parents are the primary educators whose responsibility commences from birth. Parents retain their influence on the child's life throughout formal schooling and beyond. Teachers are the secondary, professionally trained educators whose influence on the child's development, although most apparent during schooling, often outlasts the schooling phase. The significant role of parents and teachers on a child's development during schooling cannot be contested since they jointly provide for, shape and enhance learners' progress and academic development (Eugenia, 1991).

The literature suggests that involving parents in formal education processes enhances children's school success and is an important facet of children's development (Yan & Lin, 2005:116). Parents' involvement in their children's schooling has been found to improve learner performance, reduce drop-out rate, reduce delinquency and generally fosters a more positive attitude towards school (Squelch & Lemmer, 1994:93). Research suggests that when teachers make Parent Involvement (PI) part of their regular practice at school, parents increase their interaction with children at home, feel more positive about their abilities to help their children and rate the teachers as better teachers (Epstein, 2001:134; Chrispeels, 1992 in Lemmer & Van Wyk, 2004:183).

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[1]It is acknowledged that not all children have two parents and that some only have either a father or mother or are cared for by a guardian or guardians. However, throughout this dissertation, the plural 'parents' will be used to signify both parents – or the child's guardian[s] - as well as only a single parent.

Various studies mention different types of PI practices as well as models for implementing PI which should inform school programs in which PI is core. The models of involvement are geared towards helping schools properly plan for PI within the school program. The work of Epstein, Coates, Salinas, Sanders and Simon (1997) highlights six major types of PI namely:

a. parenting: the effort by the school to assist parents with parenting and childrearing skills;
b. communication: schools communicate with parents about school programs and pupils' progress with school-home and home-school communication;
c. volunteering: schools train and provide avenues to involve parents as volunteers in both curricular and extracurricular activities;
d. learning at home: schools involve parents in learning activities at home that inform homework;
e. decision making: schools include parents as participants in acts of taking schooling decisions, and decisions relating to governance as well as involving them in advocacy activities through parent organizations; and
f. collaborating with the community: this involvement includes efforts in coordinating the work and resources in the community to strengthen school programs.

Clearly, PI is a multifaceted construct, but as Lemmer and Van Wyk (2004) point out, home-school communication probably is the most typical form of involvement. However, these authors are of the opinion that in most schools, communication tends to be one way – usually from school to the home and not the other way around – and PI, despite it multifaceted nature, is generally limited to this. However, in many countries, one of the strongest trends in educational reform has been and continues to be giving parents and certain community members an increased role in governing and a say in what happens in schools (Lemmer, 2007:218).

Despite the benefits associated with PI, it is generally nominal in many developing countries' educational structures. PI is more prominent and successful in developed countries like the United Kingdom (UK) and the United States (US). For example, PI gained prominence on the UK government agenda in 2006 with the introduction of the Parent Involvement Act. The Education (Scotland) Act 2006 makes PI a top priority in schooling emphasizing three major aspects of involvement: involvement at home, through the school (by providing opportunities for parents to support and contribute to school life) and through formal participation in school governance.

Similarly, in the US, section 1118 of the No Child Left Behind (NCLB) Act 2001 is solely devoted to PI. The policy provides a guideline for parents and schools to design a written procedure to sustain active parent-school partnerships (NCLB, 2001).

The acknowledgement and implementation of PI in African countries' education systems is mostly very limited except in South Africa, where the right to be involved in school governance is supported by legislation. The South African Schools Act (SASA) (Act 84 of 1996) and the South African Council of Educators (SACE) Act (Act 31 of 2000) stipulates that teachers should recognize parents as partners in education and promote harmonious relationships with them (SASA,1996). These policies decentralize school governance and foster shared decision making through the School Governing Body (SGB). But, unlike in South Africa, there is a dearth of information on PI activities in most African countries which is made more obvious when one takes into consideration the importance attached to PI in South Africa.

Although provision has been made for PI in education policy in Nigeria, its actualization remains minimal (Labo-popoola, Bello & Atanda, 2009:254). Ahead of the Education for All (EFA) forum held in Dakar in 2000, the Nigerian government launched the Universal Basic Education (UBE) program in 1999 (Feese, 2011). When the UBE was passed into law in May 2004, free and compulsory education for all Nigerian children was guaranteed and the government was mandated to oversee all educational responsibilities (Olofintayo, 2008:238). In the Nigerian educational context, Parent Teachers Associations (PTA) facilitate PI and ensure that civil society supports government to give all Nigerian children access to good quality education. The PTA was introduced as a mechanism to formally bring parents and teachers together as partners in mobilizing community support in the funding and administration of the school (Asobie & Ikekeonwu, 2005:14). Through the PTAs parents can raise issues relating to disciplinary procedures, the raising and management of school funds, maintenance of school-community relations and the provision and maintenance of infrastructural facilities (Abdullahi, 1996). PI as it relates to the individual child entails involvement with homework and fostering a positive attitude towards learning; showing an interest in the child's schooling; organizing and monitoring a child's time; attending to and actively supporting school activities; and advising the teacher on any issues at home that may affect the child's school performance (Adelodun, 2013:148).

1.2 CONTEXTUALIZATION OF THE STUDY

The literature on PI suggests three approaches to investigating the implementation and actualization of PI (Griffith, 1998 in Garcia, Akiba, Palacios, Bailey, Silver, DiMartino, & Chin, 2002: 304) namely:

a) descriptive studies that summarize the way through which parents are involved in their children's school[2];

b) outcome-based studies that show the positive correlation between PI and pupil's academic performance and other positive outcomes[3]; and the

c) 'at risk' studies that examine PI amongst populations with lower than average PI.

This study followed a descriptive approach to establish the nature and scope of PI in the three socio-economic status (SES) linked research contexts.

Garcia et al. (2002:304) note that researchers have documented lower levels of PI amongst low-income parents and also mention that in most research, PI is seen to constitute participation in only school-based activities (also see Lemmer & Van Wyk 2004) despite the increasing recognition that PI is a multifaceted construct as suggested by other authors and researchers mentioned previously. Studies (Anderson & Minke, 2007; Desimone, 1999; Fan & Chen, 2001; Garcia et al., 2002; Hong & Ho, 2005; Muller, 1993; Sui-chu & Willms, 1996) support the notion that the practice of PI and its influence on children's schooling differs and varies across socio-economic class levels. It is also the researcher's assumption that PI in children's education should be viewed as constituting a variety of dimensions, with the relevance of each dimension being assessed in terms of the value and meaning each community attaches to it since PI might reflect, in part, culturally and socially relative factors.

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[2] Epstein (1995) categorizes PI activities as six types of involvements as discussed previously. Lemmer and Van Wyk (2004) note that a substantial amount of work on descriptive studies has been done by Cherlynn (2008), Coleman (1987), Comer (1984), Gordon (1977)and Swap (1993).

[3] A study conducted by Cherlynn (2008) through the Partner in Education (PIE) program indicates that PI as a form of social capital has a contagious effect that has the potential to positively influence pupils' performance, the school, as well as the parent. Similar outcome-based research has also been conducted by Dianes Kaplan (2000), Ejieh (2005), Lemmer and Van Wyk (2004).

Various researchers' positions on the place, scope and significance of PI are noted and from this arose the desire to explore the issue of PI in the Nigerian schooling thereby contributing to the body of knowledge on PI as it pertains to certain contexts in Nigeria.

1.3 MOTIVATION FOR AND CONTRIBUTION OF THE STUDY

Nigeria has a population of over 140 million people and is the sixth largest oil exporter in the world (Nuhu & Nuhu 2010:31). However, 54 per cent of her citizens live below the poverty line which means that a substantial proportion of the population is faced with significant financial difficulties and could be described as having a low socio-economic status (LSES) (Nuhu & Nuhu ,2010:31). Olubadewo (2007:3) claims that educational development problems in Nigeria originate from socio-economic and structural imbalances dating from the mid-1980s when rapid inflation, wage-policy problems and harsh staple food price adjustments marked a notable reduction in people's living standards. He noted that the effect has also manifested in areas other than education, such as human development, health, nutrition, housing and employment (Olubadewo, 2007:3). These national problems result in a wide gap between the rich and the poor, and, it can be expected given the literature on the subject, also to impact on the level of PI in schools.

Due to LSES many families cannot satisfy the basic needs of life and subsequently find it difficult to have their children educated (Osonwa, Adejobi, Iyam & Osonwa, 2013:119). Furthermore, many impoverished parents are, through circumstances, obliged to burden their children with responsibilities like hawking which leaves them with little or no time to attend school. In some cases parents are said to believe that education has limited benefits and are consequently reluctant to ensure that their children attend school. Furthermore, the falling standard of education is attributed to a drop in the SES (Osonwa et al., 2013:115). LSES is the plight of a significant proportion of Nigerians and substantially impacts society. For example, a cross-sectional study carried out by Nuhu and Nuhu (2010:31) among the Oja-oba community in Kwara State in northern Nigeria, revealed that a correlation between parents' SES and child abuse practices in the area. The study indicated that low income parents believe that children must work as a way of contributing to the family income before being fed or provided with their basic needs. The work that the child is expected to carry out generally occurs during school hours which results in poor

school attendance. The fact that basic needs of children are not met unless they contribute to the family income through work is indicative of both physical and psychological abuse. Similarly, a study conducted by Eneji, Ubombassey, Eneji, Obogo and Dunnamah (2013:008) in Old Ogoja Zone of Cross River in southern Nigeria shows that the lower the SES, the greater the rates of school drop-out especially of female students. LSES appears to have a negative effect on children's development and opportunities for advancement in life and of diminished PI.

The focus of this thesis, namely to explore PI in three socio-economic disparate schools in Ile-Ife, Nigeria, is located in the field of Educational Management which as a field of study, has as core objective the examination of interactive and inter-related processes that primarily focus on achieving an effective culture of learning and teaching as well as life-long learning (Van Deventer & Kruger, 2010:72). The motivation for the study originates from the researcher's observation of inequalities in educational opportunities and achievement based on the SES of parents – a stance supported by the literature on the topic. Amaele (2003) claims that a lack of social equality in Nigeria and that equality within the Nigerian educational system is confounded by the presence of social stratification. Furthermore, it has been posited that differences in children's socio-economic background results in differences in academic performance. Daramola (1994, in Amaele 2003) further argues that parents of higher socio-economic status (HSES) have positive attitudes towards their children's education which in turn enhances their performance at school over that of children of LSES backgrounds. In other words, parents from HSES backgrounds are more involved in their children's schooling than parents from LSES backgrounds.

Although much research has been done on PI throughout the world, little has been done on how parents' socio-economic status (SES) influences the nature and extent of their involvement in their children's schooling. Every child in Nigeria should have equal access to educational opportunities as proposed by the Nigerian Government in the UBE Act 1999. Consequently, a study that critically analyzes PI practices across various SES levels in Nigeria could greatly contribute to identifying factors responsible for disparities among primary school pupils' educational opportunities. Furthermore, such a study could be useful to determine what it is about being associated with a particular income group that affects the development and progress of school-going children based on the extent of PI in these children's schooling. It is anticipated that the outcome of this research will be valuable in suggesting sustainable PI practices that will enhance

pupil achievement regardless of SES. The study will also proffer a better understanding of existing school PI programs, teachers' practices in supporting and promoting PI and how parents of different SES are currently involved in their children's schooling in the particular district focused on in this study.

1.4 RESEARCH PROBLEM STATEMENT AIM AND OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

This research focused on determining the nature and scope of PI practices in three socio-economically disparate primary schools in Ile-Ife, Nigeria.

1.4.1 Research problem and questions

The main research question has been formulated as follows:

What PI practices are currently evidenced and practiced in three socio-economically disparate primary schools in Ile-Ife, Nigeria?

1.4.1.1 Research sub-problem statements

Since this study examined the nature and scope of PI as evidenced and practiced in three disparate socio-economic contexts (an affluent school; a middle-class school; and a low income school), the research sub-problems identified below applied to each of the contexts. Since parents and teachers' views and experiences were probed to identify the PI practices which currently occur at the three different research sites, the research sub-problems pertained to both categories of respondents.

The main research question suggests several sub-questions formulated as follows:

➢ What are parents' views concerning their child's education and schooling?
➢ How do parents perceive their roles in their child's education?
➢ What are teachers' views and expectations concerning PI in the schools where they teach?
➢ Do parents from different socio-economic environments view PI differently?
➢ Do teachers from different SES schools views PI differently?

1.4.2 Aim of the research

The aim of the research was to establish what PI practices are evidenced and practiced at three socio-economically disparate Nigerian primary schools in Ile-Ife.

1.4.2.1 The research objectives

The research objectives that emanated from the research aim formulated above can be stated as follows, namely to:

➢ Establish parents' views concerning their child's education

➢ Identify what roles parents play in their child's education

➢ Establish what roles parents would like to play in their child's education

➢ Establish what teachers' expectations of PI in general

➢ Establish teachers' views and experiences concerning PI in the schools where they teach

➢ Outline parents' views on the effect of SES on PI

➢ Point out teachers' views on the effect of SES on PI

➢ Examine whether parents from different socio-economic environments view PI differently.

➢ Establish whether teachers from different SES school view PI differently.

1.5 THE RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Since it was the researcher's intention to obtain an in-depth understanding of how parents of differing SES are involved in their children's schooling, a qualitative approach to the study was followed. Qualitative studies are by nature descriptive and interpretative (McMillan & Schumacher, 2010:325) and, given the purpose and nature of the study, a qualitative study was deemed appropriate. The study aims to provide multiple perspectives – that of parents as well as teachers in three different socio-economic contexts – on PI and consequently a qualitative approach that lends itself to this type of enquiry was selected (Donmoyer, 2006:30).

Donmoyer (2006:25) mentions the 'truth' seeking purpose of qualitative research which requires in-depth interrogation of the phenomenon being researched. He also mentions the detailed descriptive and personal narrative characteristic of qualitative research that allows for examining how individuals idiosyncratically interpret, experience, observe, describe and attach meaning to a particular phenomenon or event. A qualitative method of inquiry is furthermore characterized by research conducted in the actual, natural setting which means that the study describes the behavior as it occurs naturally without any manipulation or control of behavior or setting. This method also considers the situational context of human action which is based on the belief that human actions are strongly influenced by the settings in which they occur (McMillan & Schumacher, 2010:322).

Within the qualitative paradigm, the researcher chose a case study design for the investigation since a case study examines a bounded system over time in depth, employing multiple sources of data found in the setting (McMillan & Schumacher, 2010:344). In addition, qualitative case studies focus on providing a detailed account of one or more cases (in the context of the study three socio-economically disparate schools); they adopt an interpretive approach to data, study phenomena within their context and consider the subjective meaning that people bring to their situation. Case studies are characterized by multi-perspective analyses which allow the researcher to consider the voices and perspectives of the participant as well as this interpretation in relation to others (Feagin, Orum, & Sjoberg, 1991). A case study was considered appropriate for this study because it enabled the researcher to use narrative reports from the research participants (parents and teachers) with contextual descriptions and comments of their experiences and perceptions on PI in the schools studied.

1.6 THE RESEARCH DESIGN

The research design refers to a plan for selecting subjects, research site, and data collection procedures to answer the research questions (McMillan & Schumacher, 2010: 102). A research design defines the study type, research problem, data collection methods and a data analysis plan. The function of a research design is to ensure that the evidence obtained enables the researcher to answer the research question as unambiguously as possible.

1.6.1 Research population and sample

A research population is the collection of all individuals or entities that are the main focus of a scientific enquiry. All individuals or entities within a certain population usually have a common, binding characteristic or trait (Mouton, 2001:35). Due to the large sizes of populations, researchers often cannot test every individual or entity in the population because it is too expensive and time-consuming. Consequently, researchers resort to identifying and using a sample that is taken from the larger population. A sample refers to a group of individuals chosen because they are likely to be knowledgeable and informative about the topic the researcher is investigating (McMillan & Schumacher, 2010:326). In this study, the research sample consists of a purposefully selected group of teachers and parent volunteer respondents in each of the three socio-economically disparate schools that were selected for the study. The individuals who were included in the sample thus conformed to specific criteria and it was presumed that it would be likely that the research findings could be generalized to similar contexts. However, the generalizability of case studies, as applied in this study, is considered to be marginal and generalization not necessarily of primary importance in case study research (see 3.4.1 and 3.4.2).

The qualitative investigation undertaken in this study was related to examining the nature of PI in three purposefully selected economically disparate primary schools in Ile-Ife, Osun State, Nigeria. The town is mid-sized and accommodates 45 private and 30 public primary schools. These seventy-five schools constitute the research population from which the three schools in the area were purposely selected as the research sample. These schools were selected on the basis of the socio-economic differences of the schools and by inference, the socio-economic differences among the parents of pupils attending each of the schools. The schools chosen for the study are located within the central part of the town. One school is situated on a local university campus (of which the researcher is an alumnus) while the other two are about 8km apart and about 12km from the university campus. Although the schools are all located in the same area, the schools are clearly different from each other in terms of the school environment, academic activities offered, available learning resources and school infrastructure. These differences can be attributed to the SES of the school and, as noted above, the inferred SES of the parents. At each of the three schools, data was collected from a sample of five purposely selected teachers and five parents identified through invitation to volunteer participation in the study (see 3.4.1).

TABLE 1: THE ENROLMENT STATISTICS OF THE SCHOOLS

School	Number of teachers	Number of pupils	SES
Private School A	14	125	Affluent (HSES)
Public School B	45	850	Middle (MSES)
Public School C	28	450	Low (LSES)

Purposeful sampling requires the selection of information-rich key informants who are knowledgeable and informed about the topic of enquiry from a given research population. According to McMillan and Schumacher (2010:326), purposeful sampling is done to increase the usefulness of information obtained from a small population sample. Parents were invited to voluntarily participate in the study. Voluntary sampling is one of the main types of non-probability sampling methods. A voluntary sample is made up of people who self-select into the research and it is noted that often the participants have a strong interest in the research (Judd, 2006).

1.6.2 Data collection

Data collection refers to interwoven strategies that occur in overlapping cycles indicating the researcher's effort in gaining admission to the site, finding a network of persons from whom data can be collected, and the organisation of the data obtained into meaningful interpretations (McMillan & Schumacher, 2010:330).

In this research, survey questionnaires, individual interviews and focus group interviews were employed as data collection instruments. A questionnaire was specially designed to collect data from the teachers at the sampled schools. According to McMillan and Schumacher (2010:195) questionnaires are relatively economical and can ensure participant anonymity. Typically questionnaires comprise both open ended and closed items. The closed items are used to gather data such as biographical details and information of a generic nature. Open ended questions enabled the researcher to obtain valuable in-depth responses to questions that by nature require introspection and thought. As a result of the small number of participants and since the purpose of

the research was to generate specific individual's responses, a number of open-ended questions were included in the questionnaires. According to McMillan and Schumacher (2010:198), open-ended questions exert the least amount of control over the participants and are valuable in capturing idiosyncratic observations and perceptions.

Individual interviews were conducted with five parents from each of the three selected schools. These interviews can be described as semi-structured interviews. The value of semi-structured interviews lies in the fact that the method is based on the posing of a series of open-ended questions which is most appropriate for small groups of participants. The interview allows for the discovery of information on issues the researcher may not have considered important since semi-structured interviews encourage the respondents to elaborate when answering the questions posed. From these interviews, the researcher hoped to evoke responses that are meaningful and culturally salient to the participants, unanticipated by the researcher and to establish rich interview data (Moriarty, 2011:4).

Focus group interviews were conducted only with the teachers. Three focus group interviews were held – one at each of the three selected schools. This data collection method allows observation of group dynamics, discussion, and firsthand insight into the participants' behaviors and attitudes. The hallmark of focus groups is the explicit use of the group interaction to generate data and insight that would be unlikely to emerge without the interaction found in the group. The primary advantage of focus group interviews is that a social environment in which group members are stimulated by one another's responses and perceptions is created and this increases the richness of the data collected from the interview. Through the interaction among the group members, peer pressure is valuable in challenging the thinking of participants and at the same time stimulates a richer response or new and valuable insight. In addition, focus groups allow for confirmation of what was seen and heard during individual interviews because during the focus group session, the moderator may have a colleague present in the room to take notes and to record observations, allowing the researcher to concentrate on asking questions, facilitating the group interaction, following up on ideas and making smooth transitions from issue to issue (National Science Foundation, 1997).

1.6.3 Procedures relating to access of research sites and data collection

In Nigeria, access to undertake research in schools is gained through the school principal. The researcher sought written permission from the school principals to undertake the research in their schools. The research topic aim of the research and expectations of the researcher were outlined in a letter that was sent to the principal. The principal was asked for permission to approach selected teachers to participate in the study. These teachers were selected on the grounds of their extensive teaching experience at the school and the principal was asked to assist in identifying the teachers who had the longest teaching experience at the school. Assurance was provided that the name of the school and the teachers would not be disclosed and that pseudonyms would be used if necessary to refer to an individual or to the school. Furthermore, the principal was assured that the information would remain confidential and that the participating teachers would specifically be assured of confidentiality and anonymity. The researcher assured the principal that the teacher interviews would not encroach on the teachers' teaching time. It was indicated that the interviews would take approximately three-quarters of an hours to complete and would be audio recorded with the teachers' permission. Teachers would also be asked to complete a questionnaire in their own time. Once this permission was granted by the principal, letters were distributed to the selected teachers requesting their participation in the study. Teachers were requested to sign letters of informed consent if they agreed to participate in the study. Prior to signing the letters of consent, participants were informed in the letter of the nature and purpose of the study, to whom questions regarding the study could be directed, that their anonymity and confidentiality was assured and that they had the right to withdraw from the study at any point if they choose without penalty. Participants were informed how long the interview would take and that it would be audio recorded only if they consented to this. They were also informed that they need not answer all questions posed if they chose not to. The contact details of the researcher and the supervisor were provided should clarification regarding the research be sought at any time.

Teacher participants who participated in the focus group interview were asked to sign confidentiality declarations to ensure confidentiality within and amongst the group of participants. The underlying assumption was that, given this assurance of confidentiality, participants would speak freely without being concerned that what they said would be discussed by others after the

focus group interview had been completed. The interview responses of the teachers were audio recorded with their permission and transcribed for further analysis.

The researcher also requested five parents from each selected school to participate in the study and the confidentiality procedure outlined above was followed. The five parents selected at each of the three schools were individually interviewed and the information audio recorded for transcription and further analysis.

1.6.4 Data analysis

Qualitative data analysis is primarily an inductive process of organizing data into categories and identifying patterns and relationships among the categories. In other words, qualitative analysis is a relatively systematic process of coding, categorizing and interpreting data to provide explanations of a phenomenon of interest (McMillan & Schumacher, 2010:367). Data in this qualitative research emanated from notes taken that related to observations and impressions gained during the interview process, transcribed semi-structured and focus group interview data and questionnaire responses. Through the process of transcription of the interviews, the information was analyzed and categorized first into broad categories from identified clusters of data. These categories facilitated analysis and the identification of particular themes that emerged from the interview findings. For this study, the researcher analysed the data as soon as it was collected to ensure that valuable insights were not lost to time. The researcher ensured that the transcription contained all the information from the interview by requesting member checking of the transcripts by the research participants. The data from the open-ended responses to the questionnaires were also analysed in such a way as to obtain a meaningful reflection of teachers' answers which were then similarly coded and categorized. Methods such as Tesch's procedure (1992, in Creswell, 1994) were used for data encoding.

1.6.5 Research validity and reliability

The validity of a qualitative research design is the degree to which the interpretation and concepts have mutual meanings between the participants and researcher (McMillan & Schumacher, 2010:330). These aspects are discussed in detail in Chapter 3 of the study.

1.7   CONCEPT CLARIFICATION

Certain concepts underpin this study and it is essential to provide a clear indication of what is meant by the key terms.

1.7.1   Parental [parent] involvement

PI is defined as a dyadic relationship between the parent and the child, the teacher, or another parent (McNeal, 1999:120). Mestry and Grobler (2007: 176) describe PI as the participation, contribution and commitment of parents to the education of their children and the role they play in school management. Kingsley (2011:378) refers to PI as the engagement of parents in their children's school activities with the aim of fostering their children's academic success. In the context of this study PI encompasses parental activities and the use of resources in such a way that they contribute towards the improvement of the child's academic achievement. PI is consequently parents' engagement with their children in school activities and school management.

1.7.2   Teacher

The Oxford English Dictionary (2014) defines teacher as someone that imparts knowledge or instructs someone on how to do something. A teacher who facilitates education for an individual student may also be described as a personal tutor. A teacher is a person or object that teaches something: especially a person whose job it is to teach students about a certain subject (Merriam-Webster Dictionary, 2009). According to the Collins English Dictionary (2003), a teacher is a person whose occupation is to teach others especially children. In the context of this study, a teacher is a person whose occupation is to give instruction and impart knowledge to children on how to get something done or to acquire knowledge. It is understood that this practice of teaching by a teacher occurs in a formal education environment.

1.7.3   Pupil

A pupil is a person under the direct supervision of a teacher or professor (The American Heritage Dictionary of the English, 2009). According to the Collins English Dictionary (2003), a pupil is a student who is taught by a teacher. The Random House Kememan's College Dictionary (2010)

defines a pupil as a person, usually young, who is learning under the supervision of a teacher at school or under the supervision of a private tutor. In the context of this study a pupil refers to a young boy or girl who is taught and supervised by a teacher in a formal teaching and learning environment.

1.7.4 Private school

According to the Oxford English Dictionary (2014), a private school is an independent school supported wholly by the payment of fees by the parents or supporting organizations. Merriam-Webster Dictionary (2014) describes private schools as schools that do not receive money from the government and which are run by a group of private individuals. In the Collins English Dictionary (2003), a private school is described as a school under the financial and managerial control of a private body or charitable trust, accepting mostly fee-paying pupils. In this research a private school refers to a primary school owned and managed by individuals or an organization. The school is funded through school fees paid by the parents of the pupils attending the school. A private school is assumed to represent a context and be attended by pupils whose parents are of a HSES given the financial implications of having to pay fees upon which the financing of the school is dependent.

1.7.5 Public school

The American Heritage Dictionary of the English Language (2009) describes a public school as an elementary or secondary school supported by public funds and providing free education for children of a community or district. In the Oxford English Dictionary (2014), a public school is described as a school supported by public funds. In the Collins English Dictionary (2003), a public school is defined as a school that is part of a free, local education system. In the context of this study, a public school refers to a primary school owned and funded by any of the three tiers of the government (federal, state, and local). The school is funded through an annual public monetary budget allocation made by the Government. The two public schools selected for the study represented a MSES and a LSES background.

1.7.6 Socio-economic class or status

The term SES is commonly conceptualized as the social standing or class of an individual or group. It is often measured as a combination of education, income, and occupation (American

Psychological Association, 2014). According to the Thesaurus Dictionary (2014), socio-economic class refers to a person's position in a social hierarchy. In the context of this study, socio-economic class refers to the categories of people having the same general educational attainment and income level in the Nigerian society. Three SES were identified as being pertinent to this study namely HSES, MSES and LSES.

1.7.6.1 Lower class

The socio-economic class or status of people whose income is below that of the middle rank in a society constitutes the lower (socio-economic) class (The American Heritage Dictionary of English Language, 2009). According to the Collins English Dictionary (2003), lower classes refer to the social stratum having the lowest position in the social hierarchy. The Random House Kememan's College Dictionary (2010) defines lower classes as a class of people below the middle class in the social standing and generally characterized by low monetary income and a lack of education. In the context of this research, lower classes indicate people in the lowest position in the social stratum having low income and who generally lack having secured a basic education.

1.7.6.2 Middle class

The middle class is that socio-economic class between the lower class and the upper class. It usually includes professional and highly skilled individuals (The American Heritage Dictionary of English Language, 2009). According to the Collins English Dictionary (2003), middle classes refer to a social stratum that is not clearly defined but is a position between the lower and the upper classes and which usually consist of businessmen and professionals. The Random House Kememan's College Dictionary (2010), defines middle classes as a class of people intermediate between those of higher and lower economic or social standing generally characterized by average income and education. In the context of this research the middle classes are people between the upper and the lower classes and who are part of a working class who earn an average annual wage/income.

1.7.6.3 Upper class

The Collins English Dictionary (2003) describes the upper class as individuals who occupy the highest position in the social hierarchy and who are characteristically wealthy or individuals who are part of the social aristocracy. According to The American Heritage Dictionary of English

Language (2009), upper class refers to the highest socio-economic class in society. The Random House Kememan's College Dictionary (2010) defines upper class as a class above middle class characterized by wealth and social prestige. In this study, upper class refers to people in the highest hierarchy in the society who are wealthy and prestigious.

1.8 CHAPTER DIVISION

Chapter 1 provides the introduction and background to the study, the problem statement, aim, and objectives of the study. In this chapter, the research design and methodology were outlined and important keywords used in the study were clarified.

Chapter 2 provides a review of the literature arising from previous research on PI. It outlines the framework for the effective practice of PI as suggested by researchers in the field of PI. Within this framework a historic view to PI is outlined, theoretical views are described, and the scope of and need for PI is defined. When the literature review was undertaken, an effort was made to examine the topic from a variety of socio-economic contexts in order to facilitate the analysis and interpretation of the data that emanated from this study. The issue of social capital and how this could impact PI was also examined.

In Chapter 3, the research approach and design are described. Data collection methods and the process of data analysis is explained.

Chapter 4 contains the presentation of the findings while in Chapter 5 the research summary, conclusions and recommendations relating to the research are made. This chapter also highlights the limitations of the study.

1.9   CLOSING

This chapter has outlined the background to and motivation for the study. The research problem statement and aim as well as the objectives of this study that relate to providing an understanding of how PI is practiced in socially disparate schooling contexts were stated. The format of the dissertation was also outlined.

In the next chapter, a review of the literature on PI in schools with specific emphasis on how PI occurs in different socio-economic contexts will be provided. This chapter provides the

theoretical framework of the dissertation. It is against this background that the research results from the study that will be discussed in Chapter 4 will be reflected.

CHAPTER TWO

AN OVERVIEW OF THE CONCEPT PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT

2.1 INTRODUCTION AND ORIENTATION TO THE CHAPTER

Sound schooling is generally perceived to be fundamental to success in societies where ability and achievement are highly regarded. Youth who are successful in their schooling are at an advantage when it comes to occupational or vocational placement (Lemmer & Wyk, 2004; Parcel & Dufur, 2001: 881). Academics, teachers, parents and policy makers widely believe that meaningful PI in children's schooling promotes academic achievement (Adelodun, 2013; Fan & Chen, 2001; Hoover-Dempsey & Sandler, 1995; Jeynes, 2005). In addition, sound PI ensures quality parent-teacher relationships (Kohl, Lengua & McMahon, 2000:517) which facilitate meaningful teamwork between parents and teachers in jointly working towards and achieving assured developmental and scholastic goals amongst pupils. In such cooperative relationships both parties are in a position to speak openly and honestly on matters that may positively enhance pupils' scholastic achievement and their ability to cope at school in general.

Research indicates that socio-economic factors such as family income and parents' level of education influence PI (Akpan, 2014; Anderson & Minke, 2007:311; Kohl et al., 2000; Lareau & Hovat, 1999; Sui-chu & Willms, 1996; Trotman, 2001). Certain studies suggest that parents with LSES were less involved in their children's education than higher socio-economic status parents. It is generally believed that HSES parents have the required resources to be able to send their children to exclusive schools, that they communicate with their children's teachers and have comprehensive networks to enable them to effectively help their children's educational achievement while LSES parents have less access to resources, and communicate less with teachers and have fewer social connections which could contribute to facilitating their children's schooling (Amaele, 2003; Desimone, 1999; Gracia Coll et al,, 2002; Hornby & Lafaele, 2011:41; Horvat, Weininger & Lareau, 2003; Marks et al., 2006; Stacer & Perrucci, 2013:341).

Some research evidences that teachers may also fail to encourage parents from a LSES and low educational attainment (LEA) to become involved in their children's schooling (Horvat etal. 2003; Marks et al, 2006). The argument is that some teachers believe that LSES parents are not

knowledgeable about their children's schooling needs and that they face financial demands that constrain them from becoming involved in their children's education since their focus is on meeting the basic living essentials. It would appear that the ability for parents to meet teachers' expectations regarding their involvement in their children's schooling is influenced by the SES of the parents. It would appear that this factor could be responsible for parents and teachers viewing PI differently which eventually could lead to misunderstanding and miscommunication between parents, teachers and other stakeholders in the educational system.

The SES differences may thus determine the degree to which parents are involved in their children's schooling and school activities and also the education of their children at home. In addition, SES differences may be responsible for maintaining inequalities in the educational system and likewise maintaining the gap between the achievement levels of children from different SES communities (Desimone, 1999). This disparity in achievement capacity needs to be addressed, because it potentially affects equality and equal opportunities, pupils' quality of life and their ability to thrive economically in adulthood since their scholastic achievement could be constrained through a lack of PI. This present study builds on past PI research by examining how parents from different socio-economic classes are involved in their children's education as well as how teachers' perception of PI is affected by the SES of the parents.

Through the researcher's observation, the society is hierarchical (upper, middle, and lower class). Each with its unlikeness and characterized by people moving from one to the other. It was believed that education is an important factor that enhances a positive shift from lower to higher level in the social hierarchy. Assuming that the major outcome of attending schooling is education and emanating from present day literatures findings proves that PI promotes school success. However, it was assumed that PI practices is limited in our schools, also the mobilization and management of necessary human and material resources to ensure that children receive sound education is a complex challenge and which requires the collaboration of many partners which includes teachers, parents, administrators and community leaders.

These observations are indicative of the fact that studying the issue of PI would benefit from being done within the context of the social capital theory of which the premise is that social networks and interactions influence productivity and have value. It appears that all stakeholders in educating a child need to come to terms, share the same value, belief and trust one another to achieve a

common goal. It appears that the school as a system is characterized by its own norms values and beliefs. It is also assumed that the home at which the child grows up in is another system with its own norms, values and beliefs. Therefore, to achieve successful PI, there should be mutual understanding and the transmission of values, norms and beliefs within the school and the home. This could be in terms of effective exchange of information between the school and the home, sharing the same values through interaction among the stakeholders (family, school, peers siblings, neighborhood). Respecting one another's beliefs and trusting one another is pivotal.

The level of social participation (social capital) is claimed to be directly linked to the quality of conditions (Ferragina, 2010). Social capital theory is consequently also an issue that is considered in this study and consequently this chapter will provide an overview of this concept where after other concepts and theories pertinent to the study will be outlined and discussed.

2.2   SOCIAL CAPITAL THEORY: A BASIC OVERVIEW OF THE CONCEPT

Social capital is a concept that is generally interpreted as a positive sentiment (Kreuter & Lezin, 2002: 228). James Coleman (1990) is often cited as one of the principal protagonists of the social capital theory. Summarizing various definitions of social capital, Hawe and Shiell (2000) conclude that social capital is not a single entity and that the concept has material, relational and political aspects or dimensions that may impact either positively or negatively on the concept. Woolcock (1998) defines social capital as the norms and networks that facilitate collective action. This explanation regarding social capital links to Lin's (2002) explanation that social capital defends the idea of the importance of using social connections and social relations in achieving goals. Social capital, or resources accessed through such connections and relations, is critical (along with human capital, or what a person or organization actually possesses) in achieving goals for individuals, social groups, organizations, and communities. Leana and Pil (2006) indicate that the overall network of relationships has the potential to facilitate information sharing and exchange of knowledge among individuals. This brings about high levels of trust which encourage collaboration among individuals of a group and in the end transpires in a shared vision and common goals. Social capital furthermore brings about a sense of shared responsibility and enhanced communication which is important for disseminating information and expertise across the networks (ibid.).

Coleman (1988: 100) explains the implications of social capital by referring to an example of relationships that exist among merchants in the Kahn El Khalili market of Cairo. The author expresses how difficult it is for an outsider to recognize boundaries between merchants in the market and to understand the ramifications of the interactions among them. The scenario used to illustrate the point is as follows:

> *The owner of a shop that specializes in leather will, when queried about where one can find a certain kind of jewelry, turns out to sell that as well – or, what appears to be nearly the same thing, to have a close associate who sells it, to whom he will immediately take the customer. Or he will instantly become a money changer, although he is not a money changer, merely by turning to his colleague a few shops down. For some activities, such as bringing a customer to friend's store, there are commissions; for others, such as money changing, merely the creation of obligations.*

Therefore, the market can be said to consist of a set of individual merchants each having an extensive body of social capital on which to draw based on the relationships amongst them.

According to Coleman (1988:102), the example of the Kahn El Khalili market in Cairo described previously constitutes an extreme case of a social structure. According to the author, within a social structure, people are always doing things for each other, thus, within the market structure merchant A does something for merchant B and trusts B to reciprocate in the future. This establishes an expectation in A and obligation in fulfillment on the part of merchant B. Within this social structure, each merchant trusts one another. Obligation, or for that matter reciprocity, is by deduction, based on trust.

Coleman (1998: 109-110) explains the material and relational aspects of the social capital theory as follows. Social capital constitutes the quantity and quality of relationships between the individuals, and in the context of this study, this would refer to the quantity and quality of relationships between the parents and their children (irrespective of their SES) and amongst and between significant others involved in the child's schooling such as teachers, other parents and others who are involved in the school. According to the author, social capital theory supports the idea that it is the family's responsibility to adopt certain norms to advance children's life chances (Dika & Singh, 2002:38).

The family social capital which is understood as the bond between parents and children reflects the time and attention parents spend in interacting with their children, in monitoring their activities, and in promoting child wellbeing including achievement thereby achieving social and academic goals. Family social capital in this context thus refers to parental resources used in the socialization process. Social capital in families is greater when the family system is characterized by time-closure meaning that when the parents' commitment to each other is long term, children benefit from the stability of the union. Also, children benefit from continued exposure to the social connections both parents have with others outside the family group, such as neighbors, other parents or work colleagues and the child's teachers. These bonds can reflect community ties with the school that contribute to the promotion of the child's well-being (Dika & Singh, 2002: 38; Parcel & Dufur, 2001:884).

According to Coleman (1988:103), social capital can be in the form of information within a social structure that provides the potential for interaction among individuals. According to the author, social relations are valued in terms of obligations held on the basis of each other's performance. For example, obtaining information might be a costly and time-consuming process. A means by which an individual can obtain information is through reliance on social relations that are maintained for that purpose – in other words, relying on his or her social capital. For instance, a person who is greatly interested in current events and is interested in being informed about important developments can save the time taken to read a newspaper by depending on a spouse or friend who pays attention to such matters to provide the relevant information and keep this person updated on current events.

Social capital can also be in the form of norms and effective sanctions (Coleman, 1988:104). Norms specify what actions are regarded by a group of people as proper and correct, or improper and incorrect (Coleman, 1990: 243). Such norms are referred to as prescriptive norms. It constitutes an important form of social capital that informs that one should forgo self-interest and one should rather act in the interest of others. In addition, norms of this sort reinforce social support, status, honor and strengthens families by directing family members to act selflessly in the family interest and encourage a person to act in order to satisfy the public interest. According to the author, this norm does not facilitate positive action alone, but also exerts constraints and sanctions on actions that are detrimental to the community.

PI reflects in what Coleman calls intergenerational closure (Coleman, 1988). Carbonaro (1998: 295) explains that by intergenerational closure, Coleman is referring to whether the parents know the parents of their children's friends and whether there is a social interrelationship between them. This theory suggests that family norms as intergenerational closure promote PI, educational achievement, school-related motivation and engagement (Dika & Singh, 2002:40). According to Coleman (1988), intergenerational closure may be described by the diagrams (provided and explained below) that represents relationships within and outside the family such as what is typical of the community of schools.

In Figures 2.1 (a & b) (Coleman, 1988: 107) A is the parent of the child represented as B; D is the parent of the child labeled C. According to Coleman, the vertical lines between A and B and D and C in Figure 2.1(a & b) represent relations across generations i.e. between the parent and their individual child, while the horizontal line between B and C represents the relationship within a generation, the relationship between the children. The vertical line AB and DC thus represents the relationship between the parents and their individual children while the horizontal line between B and C represents the relation between the children.
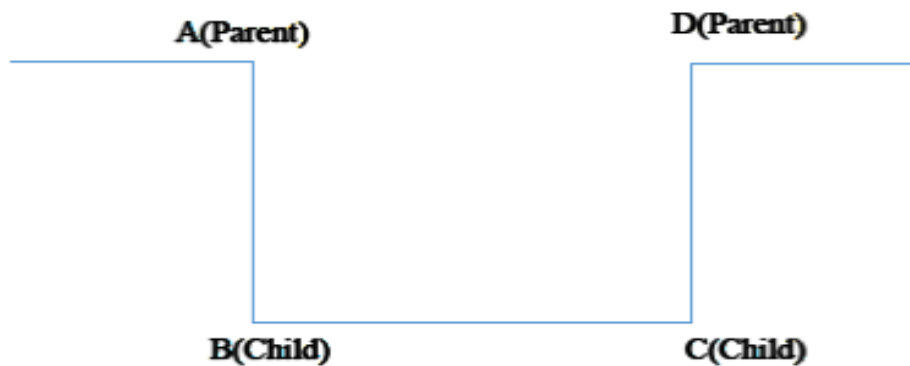
Figure 2.1a: Network involving parent (A, D) and children (B, C) without intergenerational closure (Coleman, 1988:107)
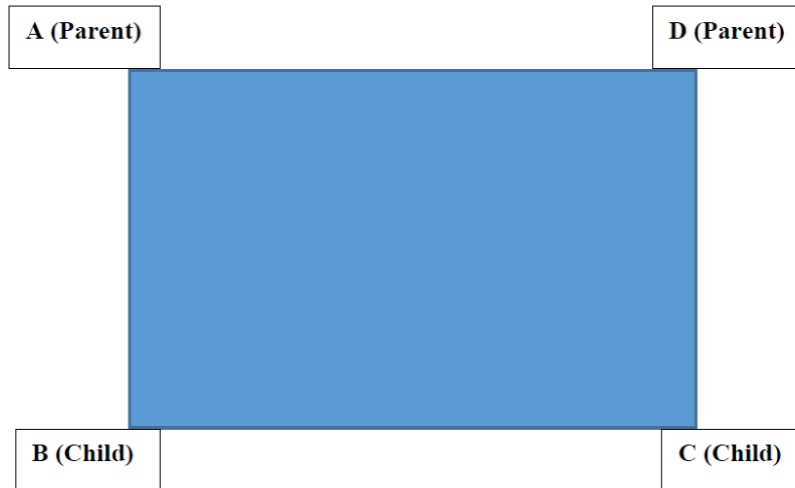
Figure 2.1b: Network involving parent (A, D) and children (B, C) with intergenerational closure (Coleman, 1988:107)

Figure 2.1a indicates networking involving parents and children without intergenerational closure while Figure 2.1b indicates networking involving parents and children with intergenerational closure. The horizontal line between B and C in both diagrams represents the relationship between the children that exists in the school. This also represents the existence of high degree of closure among peers who see each other daily, have expectation towards each other and develop norms about each other's behaviours.

The school represented in Figure 2.1a differs in the absence of closure between the parents of the children in the school. While in the school represented by Figure 2.1b there is intergenerational closure between the parent and the child and between the two children and also the two sets of parents. In this type of community where the parents are connected, parent A and D can discuss their children's activities and come to consensus about standards and about sanctions. Parent A is reinforced by parent D in sanctioning his child's action. Beyond that parent D constitutes a monitor not only for his own child but also for the other child B. Thus intergenerational closure provides a quality of social capital to each of the parents in raising their children as well as the peers of their children in issues concerning their education and other matters. The closure is important not only for the existence of effective norms but also facilitates trustworthiness that allows for a proliferation of obligations and expectations among parent members of the school community. However, in the community of school represented in Figure 2.1a where closure does not exist

between the parents, obligation can only be sanctioned by the person to whom obligation is owned, reciprocity cannot occur, and collective sanction cannot be applied in such an open structure.

Based on this framework it can be concluded that PI is a form of social capital that exists in the family, school and the community in which parents, children and teachers create a network closure through which information, monitoring norms, obligations, reciprocity, expectations and trustworthiness are effectively ensured. However, social capital is mostly enhanced and affected by the resources within the network as well as the potential resources that can be drawn from outside the network (Mc Neal, 1999:102; Aida, Kondo, Kondo Watt, Sheiham & Tsakos, 2011: 1563; Subramanian, Lochner, Kawachi, 2003). However, parents have various forms of social capital available to their children. Therefore, the potential benefit of social capital is likely relative and dependent upon the parents' position in the social hierarchy (ibid.).

2.3 PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT IN SCHOOLING

A wide variety of definitions of PI have been produced from a broad range of literatures written from various perspectives. Each of the descriptions of PI has its own uniqueness and contribution to the field of study. However, the literature reveals that PI has not been well defined and neither are its boundaries clear-cut which results in the parameters, effects and outcomes remaining relatively undefined and perhaps even ambiguous. From the preceding it would appear that it is necessary to probe what is meant by PI in children's education by investigating the concept across various dimensions, with the relevance each dimension carries, and to assess PI in terms of the value and meaning that individual communities attach to the concept since PI may reflect in part, culturally and social relative factors (Garcia et al., 2002).

Researchers have afforded the concept various interpretations and consequently PI is perceived as a multifaceted construct (Anderson & Minke, 2007; Garcia et al., 2002). Research by Anderson and Minke, (2007), Fan and Chen (2001) and Hong and Ho (2005) reveals the importance of understanding PI as a multifaceted construct. Simply put, PI is understood to be a process through which parents meaningfully participate in their children's various activities (Myeko, 2000: 12). In general, PI is seen to encompass parents advising and supporting their children regarding academic

and extramural school activities as well as keeping their children safe, meeting their basic needs and getting them to school (Anderson & Minke, 2007:311).

The review of the research conducted by Olatonye and Ogunkola (2008, in Ushang et al., 2010:313) claim that traditionally PI in education comprised parents' contribution to their children's home-based and school-based scholastic activities. For instance, home-based activities include parents helping their children with their homework, and encouraging them in reading activities, keeping abreast of learners' academic progress and responding to academic achievement or the lack thereof, impacting parental values, and level of parental control and giving autonomy of support in the home environment (Gonzales-Dehass, Willems, Holbein, 2005, in Mestry & Grobler, 2007:176). School-based activities include attending PTA meetings and parent/teacher conferences, participating in fundraising activities, and involvement in extra-curricular activities such as inter-house sports and social activities (Mmotlane, Winnaar & Wa Kivilu, 2009:529). In addition, PI is seen to encompass parents' advising and supporting their children regarding academic and extramural school activities as well as keeping their children safe and getting them to school (Anderson & Minke, 2007:311). From the preceding it can be deduced that PI manifests in parents' interest and active participation in school activities whether they take place at school, at home or extramurally, and in their children's school work. The research reported in this section appears to focus on school-based PI which could be described as planned involvement: parents make a decision to become involved in their children's school life world. PI that could be described as home-based is spontaneous and comes with good parenting such as providing a nurturing, loving environment for the child to develop into a confident, well cared for individual who can make the best of the schooling opportunities which will later on come his or her way (Desforges & Abouchaar 2003: 84-85).

In a study conducted by Anderson and Minke (2007: 318), it was noted that PI at home was well represented and acknowledged by teachers. They claimed that this finding was striking because PI at school is much more visible to school personnel than PI at home. School personnel may overlook and underestimate the importance of PI if they consider only those activities that occur in the school and negate those that occur at home. PI implies parents' all-embracing investment in the education of their children that will ultimately bring about the much-desired socio-economic development and stability of the nation (Tezel-sahin, Inal & Ozbey 2011, in Khadijat, 2012:4;

Ushang, Bassey, Idaka, & Akaase, 2010:312). Likewise, Akpan (2014:539) describes PI as a partnership between the school and the parent, involving decision making and participation in school development projects. Heystek (2003:331) asserts that PI is the active participation of parents in school governance. Uzoechina and Obdike (2007, in Ushang *et al*., 2010:315) posits that PI is not a friendly acquaintance between parents and teachers but an obligation of both parties to partner with each other to ensure children's effective and efficient academic performance. The existence and strength of this relationship is indicative of the social capital.

However, in some literature, PI in the school is viewed as choices based on parents' perceptions of their involvement and experience with the school and the possession of resources that facilitate the choice to be involved. Thus, parents' choice to be involved is a product of both the desire to act and the ability to act that is shaped by incentives provided by the school to involve parents, time and socio-economic resources that parents possess. This issue again points to the concept of social capital and that the relations and networks that exist have value and result in reciprocal interactions of worth (Stacer & Perrucci, 2013:342; Hoover-Dempsey & Sandler, 1997; Lewis & Nadioo, 2004:105). Generally, different studies have reported a variety of PI activities involving parents in their children's scholastic activities either at school, at home or in the wider community. Parents normally tend to want to be involved and their involvement varies within these identified environments.

According to the researcher's epistemological view, PI is perceived to be a shared responsibility among parents and teachers. This is the theoretical framework underlying this research. PI imparts values and beliefs which facilitates and generates social interaction among parents, teachers, students and their peers which can promote the child's intellect and improve the child's ability to strive well and to perform optimally in society in the future.

Furthermore, regardless of the parents' SES, PI is perceived to be germane by the parents in which they ensure that the child is given adequate and necessary learning materials for school, and also give their children a cognitive-intellectual learning when they are at home. This makes PI a daily routine among parents.

2.3.1 PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT MODELS

Two PI models developed by Grolnick & Slowiaczek, (1994, in Pomerantz, Moorman and Litwack, 2007:376) demonstrate the nature of PI and the importance of PI on children's academic lives and are subsequently outlined.

2.3.1.1 Skill development model [1994]

PI in learners' academic lives improves their achievement because of the skill-related resources which it provides. Skill-related resources provided by their parents include cognitive skills such as receptive language, capability and phonological awareness and meta-cognitive skills such as planning, monitoring and regulating the learning process (Baker & Stevenson, 1986, in Pomerantz et al., 2007: 376). When parents are involved in their children's academic lives, they gain useful information about how and what their children are learning in school. Such information may aid them in helping their children build cognitive and meta-cognitive skills. Secondly, when parents are involved in their children's academic lives, they may gain accurate information about and insight into their children's abilities. Holding such information could enable parents to assist their children at a level that fosters maximal skill development (Connors & Epstein, 1995; Epstein, 1987, in Pomerantz et al., 2007: 376). Thirdly, even when parents do not have such knowledge, their home-based involvement may provide children with opportunities to learn from practice and instruction (Senchal & Le Fevre, 2002, in Pomerantz etal., 2007: 376). Fourthly, according to Epstein & Becker (1982, in Pomerantz et al., 2007:376) when parents are involved on the school front, teachers give these parents' children heightened attention towards supporting the development of their skills. The reason teachers are more attentive to these children could arise from the fact that they are aware that the child's progress and their contribution to this is being monitored by the parents and consequently the teachers believe their involvement is noticed and valued.

2.3.1.2 Motivational development model [1994].

The motivational development model proposes that PI enhances children's achievement because it provides children with a variety of motivational resources such as intrinsic reasons for pursuing academics, a sense of control over academic performance, and positive perception of academic competence that fosters their engagement in school activities (Pomerantez et al., 2007:376).

According to this model, when parents are involved in their children's academic lives they highlight the value of school to their children, which eventually encourages the children themselves to view school as worthwhile (Hill & Taylor, 2004 in Pomerantez et al., 2007: 376). Over time, children may internalize the value of school so that their academic engagement is driven by intrinsic rather than extrinsic forces. Secondly, PI in children's schooling represents an active strategy for dealing with school and the challenges school presents. When parents are involved, they provide an exemplary way of taking control of situations in order to make positive changes that lead to positive outcomes and children gaining knowledge on how to take control of their performance and interaction in school (Grolnick & Slowiaczek, 1994 in Pomerantez et al., 2007:376). When parents are involved in their children's academic lives, this could lead to making children more familiar with school tasks which in turn builds children's sense of competence in the academic arena thereby motivating them to achieve (Grolnick & Slowiaczek, 1994 in Pomerantez et al., 2007:376).

2.3.2 Benefits of parental involvement

A review of PI research indicates that pupils whose parents are involved in their schooling display higher levels of achievement and better coping mechanisms than children whose parents are less involved (Adelodun, 2013; Anderson & Minke, 2007; Garcia et al., 2002; Jeynes, 2005,106; Lemmer & Van Wyk, 2004). Barnard (2004:40) posits that over the decades, attempts have been made to increase PI because it could be a cost-effective way to improve pupils' school success since it is believed that PI has a long-term positive effect on pupils' academic achievement. Additionally, Desforges and Abouchaar (2003:86) posit that research on spontaneous PI has shown that a range of activities in which parents involve themselves promotes their children's educational progress. According to the authors, the activities range from basic good parenting that provides security and meets all the child's needs to visiting the school and participating in school events and activities.

Early onset PI in children's schooling is an important component of schooling success (Durand 2011, in Kadijah, 2012:2). From a longitudinal study conducted by Barnard (2004:57) who examined the relationship between PI early on in schooling and long-term school success, the study indicated that efforts to involve parents in their children's education early on in the educational process appears to have positive benefits lasting through adolescence to early

adulthood. Lewis and Forman (2002:61) similarly suggest that involving parents in their children's schooling is one means of supporting schools, most especially public schools that are often short of funds and educational supplies and consequently struggle to achieve success. Likewise, Muller and Kerbow (1993, in Sheldon, 2002: 302) point out that when parents are involved in their children's schooling activities, it provides them with firsthand information about the school environment, allows them to interact with and observe teachers as they perform their jobs and enables parents to observe their children interacting with their teachers and other pupils. Ultimately, this experience may place parents in a better position to support their children's learning and social engagement.

Adelodun (2013:148) posits that PI in a child's education is an advantage money cannot buy. He further elaborates that with parents being involved in their children's schooling, this not only helps a child to achieve more academically, but also lifts teachers' morale and provides parents with the satisfaction of making a difference in and contributing towards their child's education. Furthermore, findings from research conducted by Dearing, Kreider, Simpkins and Weisis (2006) in which they examined the relationship between PI in children's schooling and literacy achievement from kindergarten and primary grade five of approximately 300 LES families suggests that increased PI in school predicts an increase in learners' literacy achievements. These findings indicated that increased PI had greater implications for learners' literacy achievements than did parents' income, maternal level of education or child ethnicity.

Interestingly, from a study conducted by Ogunsola and Adewale (2012), it became evident that pupils from LSES backgrounds may compete as well in academic activities as their counterparts from HSES backgrounds. This research outcome could be attributed to the fact that the parents of LSES might be very well aware of the socio-economic necessity of their children to succeed at school and that they therefore assist and encourage their children to be adequately involved in their academic endeavors and provide as far as possible, the basic needs that might enhance their children's academic performance.

Research conducted by Driessen, Smit and Sleegers (2005:527) indicated that PI is strongly influenced by ethnic and cultural factors. According to the authors, schools with numerous ethnic minority pupils consider PI to be very important and therefore dedicate valuable time and effort to encouraging PI. However, from their study, it was deduced that these efforts met with little or no

success. It was found that parents played a minimal role in their children's schooling and this was attributed to the cultural differences between the parents and the teachers. For ethnic minority parents, the school often constitutes a foreign place, a place where they think they do not belong. Driessen et al. (2005:529) argues that families from ethnic minority groups could benefit from cooperation with the school. The study suggests the establishment of educational partnerships as a measure to bridge the gap between the families of the ethnic minority pupils and the school. According to the authors, educational partnerships assume mutual respect, shared interest and open communication between parents, teachers and the school. Driessen et al. (2005: 528) are of the opinion that when stakeholders are in partnership, a real interest exists and there is an acceptance of cultural and social diversity of child-rearing practices and educational opinions that is demonstrated across the board.

Jeynes's study of PI (2005:112) acknowledges the importance of parental support in the home environment as contributing to learners' scholastic achievement. The study points out that parental support in terms of parents' discussion of school events with their children on a daily basis, and parental availability and interaction with their children at home impacts more positively on learners' academic achievement than parental participation in school functions and activities on an occasional basis. The research suggests that PI positively enhances pupil achievement through the building of a healthy home-climate (Driessen et al., 2005:526). Furthermore, findings from the study of Driessen et al., (2005:526) suggest that parents who talk with other parents regarding the choice of secondary education were found to have a more school-supportive home climate and thereby foster greater achievement, wellbeing and confidence on the part of their children. This interaction is an example of intergenerational closure as per Coleman's (1988: 107) theory on social capital referred to previously.

2.3.3 Parents' perception of parental involvement

Parents, as the most important role-players in a child's life, play an important role as mediators between the child and social institutions like the school. It could be argued that parents' participation in school activities would contribute towards reinforcing the transmission of cultural and social interests. PI would consequently elevate not just children's cultural identity, but would also facilitate their socialization, and improve attitudes and behavior towards those around them within and outside of their communities (Agabrian, 2007, in Mmotlane et al., 2009:528). The

government and policy makers recognize that parents are their children's first and most important teachers, and for children to succeed at school, parents need to participate actively in their children's academic lives. Active participation means that parents work closely with the school as partners in their children's education. Importantly, parents need to become involved early on in their children's schooling and to stay involved throughout the school years (Deplanty, Coulter-Kern, & Duchane, 2007: 361; Mmotlane, et al., 2009:529).

According to Deplanty et al. (2007:362), there is evidence that many parents want to become involved in their children's schooling but are not encouraged or supported to do so. In certain instances, this lack of support is due to the absence of open communication or support from the school. In their study it was consistently established that PI was crucial to scholastic success and that ensuring that children attend school daily was one of the most important aspects of PI. The teachers indicated that the most important involvement should be on the home front, thus suggesting that parents' presence in the school was not that important as long as parents emphasize the importance of education at home. According to the authors, the teachers reported that parents are not involved in their children's schooling for fear of being overwhelmed by certain school matters. Communication between the teachers and parents was not as open as was to be expected. In a study conducted in the US involving Latino families, Garcia et al. (2002:102) found that many parents construe their parental role as meeting basic family obligations and providing general support for their children's learning. Parents do not believe that they should be directly engaged in their children's learning for fear of being disrespectful of the teachers or meddling in their work.

Stacer and Perrucci (2013:348) claim that parents who acknowledge the school's encouragement to participate in their children's schooling are most likely to be inclined towards becoming involved in their children's school activities. From the Stacer and Perrucci (2013) study it becomes evident that parents who reported significant school contact and outreach were also involved with their children in the home. The converse was also evidenced by the study. In addition, the researchers found that parents with more income, a higher level of education and whose time was flexible were more likely to become involved in their children's school lives. An important finding from the study was that parents who had negative experiences with the school and who found the school unwelcoming did not become involved with their children's schools and schooling despite having the social and economic resources to do so.

Kohl, Weissberg, Reynolds and Kasprow (1994, in Kohl et al., 2000:506) found that the quality of the parent-teacher relationship is more strongly associated with positive academic outcomes than the amount of parent-teacher contact. The quality of the parent-teacher relationship appears to influence the parent's level of school involvement and the parent's positive perception of the school (Kohl et al. 2000:519; Olsen & Fuller 2008:98)). According to Kohl et al. (2000) several interventions are in support of the hypothesis, suggesting that when teachers reach out to parents, the relationship between the parent and the teacher as well as the communication between them is improved. Consequently, parents become more involved in their children's school in a variety of ways. The study suggests that parents' perception of the school is measured by the parents' feeling about the school in general and that this may influence their willingness to become actively involved in schooling activities that relate to their children (Kohl et al., 2000:518). In another study conducted by Hoover-Dempsey and Sandler (1995), it was suggested that parents are more likely to become involved in their children's education if they view such participation as one of their responsibilities as a parent.

Hoover-Dempsey and Sandler (1995) proposed a comprehensive theoretical model that examines PI from parents' perspectives. The model presents the link between parents' initial decision to become involved in their children's education with learners' academic outcomes. These researchers suggest three major factors that are believed to motivate PI.

a. *Personal psychological belief.* According to Hoover-Dempsey, Walker, Sandler, Whetsel, Green and Wilkins (2005:107), this type of belief includes parental role construction for involvement and parents' sense of self-efficacy in helping their children succeed in school. Parental role construction is defined as parents' belief about what they are supposed to do in relation to their children's schooling. The reasoning is that parents become involved because they construe the parental roles as including personal involvement in their children's education. The meaning attached to this role is developed through parents' own observations, their school-related involvement or through their friends' involvement in their children's schooling. Parents' sense of self-efficacy for helping their children succeed in school is defined as the parents' belief that their personal actions and their involvement activities will make a positive difference in their children's academic

performance. Parents who have a stronger sense of efficacy show a high level of PI. A weak sense of efficacy has been linked to a lower level of PI (Hoover-Dempsey & Sandler, 1995:314, Hoover-Dempsey et al., 2005:109). In the schooling context, the sense of self-efficacy is shaped by the expectation of pertinent social groups and relevant personal beliefs that are created from role players' experience over time with individuals and social groups in relation to the schooling context. Furthermore, this research asserts that parents' sense of efficacy for helping their children stems from four sources namely:

> (i)   the direct experience of success in others' involvement (family members, social groups) or involvement-related activities by family members or a social group
>
> (ii)   the parents' experience over time with others (family members, social groups) related to schooling which includes parents' personal experience with schooling, prior experience with involvement and ongoing experience with others related to the child's schooling. According to the author, this sense is subject to change because it is socially constructed. It changes in response to variations in the social conditions of the parent
>
> (iii)   verbal persuasion by others that involvement activities are worthwhile and achievable; and
>
> (iv)   emotional encouragement induced when parents highly rated issues concerning his/her child's success or well-being over theirs.

Thus, Hoover-Dempsey and Sandler (1995) suggest that when parents' personal sense of efficacy for helping their children succeed in school is awakened, then they believe that they have the required skills and knowledge to help their children achieve in their schooling.

b. *Contextual motivators of involvement*. This factor includes general invitations from the school to the parent to become involved, specific invitations from the teacher, and a specific invitation from the pupil (Hoover-Dempsey & Sandler, 1997; Hover-

Dempsey et al., 2005; Walker et al., 2005). When the school directs general invitations to parents to become involved in their children's schooling, the parents feel welcome and perceive the school as positive and encouraging and are responsive to the invitation. Furthermore, it was found that staff's positive attitudes and behavior and a nurturing school environment supported increased PI. Parents felt that they were valued members of the community and were valued participants in their children's education. Research by Epstein and Van Voorhuis, (2001) and Green, Walker, Hoover-Dempsey and Sandler (2007) suggest that a specific invitation from the teacher has also been identified as an important motivator for parents' active engagement in supporting their children's learning at home and at school. Hoover-Dempsey et al. (2005) likewise identified a specific invitation from the pupil as a powerful predictor of PI especially for home-based involvement activities. The research found that parents generally want to be effectively involved in supporting their children's interests, habits, and needs relevant to school learning and success. According to the authors, parents across cultures and developmental lines tend to respond to these invitations with the effort to help, ask questions, offer suggestions or seek further advice from teachers, family members and social network members (Hoover-Dempsey et al., 1995, 2005 & Walker et al., 2005).

c. *Perceived life-context variables*. According to Hoover-Dempsey et al. (2005), the model assumes that parents' level and form of involvement are influenced by their perception of their skills and knowledge, time, resources and energy they can afford to give to being involved in their children's schooling. The authors assert that many parents find their skills and knowledge sufficient for supporting their children during the early years of schooling. However, as the child advances to middle and secondary school, many parents experience their skill and knowledge to be inadequate to support their children's learning. In addition, Hoover-Dempsey et al. (2005); Garcia et al., (2002) and Pena (2000:52) claim that parents' perception of the time, resources and energy that they are able to contribute to involvement may present challenges for lower-income families. LSES parents often need to juggle job demands and extended family needs with the invitation to become involved in

their children's education. These parents find that the other demands on their time and resources leave less time for PI.

2.3.4 Teachers' perceptions concerning parental involvement

To most teachers, having good relationships with parents is crucial in their work (Keyes, 2000:107). However, Keyes (ibid.) explains that when teachers reflect on their work with parents and families, they often have mixed feelings. Keyes (2000) opines that there are good feelings of shared efforts and mutually valued achievements with some parents while with others there is a sense of frustration, helplessness or even anger over conflicting perceptions and understanding and lack of collaborative and cooperative engagement.

In her studies, Keyes (2000:107) places the teacher-parent relationship on a continuum. At one end of the scale, a good teacher-parent relationship is viewed as the effective separation of roles and functions between the home and the school; on the other end of the scale, the school is viewed as an extended family, and an amicable and constructive relationship exists. Keyes (2000:108) suggests that there are a number of factors that affect teachers' ability to develop effective relationships with parents. She identifies three major factors that may affect the development of effective relationships.

The first of these factors is the degree of match between the teacher and the parents' background and culture. She is of the opinion that this factor is the one that has the greatest effect on parent-teacher relationships. When the parent and the teacher share different cultural backgrounds, the relationship is constrained. The author claims that unlike in the past, the world of today is more mobile. Nowadays, parents and teachers do not necessarily share the same community any longer. According to Keyes (2000:108), teachers and parents are less likely to originate from the same community or share the same background since teachers often come from a socio-economic class, race, and community that is different from that of their pupils. This results in differences in interactive realms and increasingly also in the language system.

The second factor considered by the author to affect the nature of the parent-teacher relationship is the effect of societal forces on families and schools. According to the author, new family constellations have evolved thereby shifting from the traditional two-parent

family to single parent families. This shift results in family roles becoming flexible and fluid. The consequence is that mothers may function in what is traditionally the role of fathers and vice-versa. In addition, the children themselves may be in a position where they are required to perform parental functions for their siblings attending the school as in the case of child-headed families or where siblings are expected by the parents to perform certain parental responsibilities. According to Keyes, (2000:109) this shift in roles hampers effective communication between the home and the school thereby hampering effective communication. Apart from the changed family structures mentioned, other societal forces that affect both parents and teachers and that places constraints on the parent-teacher relationship include job-related stress, job demands, and the number of working hours worked.

The third factor that impacts the parent-teacher relationship is how teachers and parents view their roles. According to Reed, Jones, Walker and Hoover-Dempsey (2000, in Keyes, 2000:110), teachers may either view their role as parent-focused, school-focused and partnership-focused. According to the authors, the parent-focused teacher would choose to work side by side with parents and empower them by presenting them with teaching roles. The school-focused teacher believes in an effective separation of role between the school and home while the teachers who have a partnership-focused construct would seek a balanced cooperative relationship between families and the school.

Keyes thus posits that the match between parents and teachers' cultural background, the impact of societal forces and how teachers and parents view their roles are factors which significantly influence effective parent-teacher relationships.

2.3.4.1 Teachers' roles in involving parents

Greenwood and Hickman (1991) acknowledged that teachers' attitudes, knowledge and skills with regard to parents' involvement in schooling affect the effectiveness of their roles as teachers. In an earlier study by Hoover-Dempsey Bassler and Brissie (1987, in Greenwood & Hickman, 1991) these researchers found that teachers' efficacy or teachers' belief in their own teaching effectiveness was the strongest predictor of teachers' facilitation of five types of PI. In each of

these groupings of PI, teachers' key roles as facilitator are clearly defined. The five types of PI are described as follows:

a. ***Parent as audience***. The most common and traditional form of PI in schools is by maintaining home-school communication. Through these contact sessions the parent connects with the child and the activities at the school. These contact sessions involve parent-teacher conferences, open houses, communication through child's delivered notes and parent attendance of classroom events and so on. Greenwood and Hickman (1991) suggest that teachers should begin to view such activities as a type of PI since they are more familiar and accepted forms of PI. Also, this role is generally perceived to be the precursor for other forms of PI. The authors urge that although the parents' role in such involvement compared to other types of PI may be passive, the ensuing communication is neither unimportant nor necessarily easy to facilitate. In other findings, Lemmer and Van Wyk (2004) also maintain that home-school communication as a type of PI is one of the most traditional and vital forms of PI, but that it is often poorly implemented. Furthermore, they emphasize the roles of teachers as initiators and controllers of communication between the school and the home. In addition, Lemmer and Van Wyk (ibid.) suggest that in order to optimize PI and to realize a true partnership, parents must also speak and be heard. The researchers emphasize that communication must flow in both directions and the school must encourage and create channels whereby parents can easily and with ease speak to teachers and the school community. The authors claim that true partnerships with parents cannot succeed without effective two-way communication. Communication becomes a collaborative process with the sharing of ideas for determining ways to meet the needs of pupils (Binford & Newell, 1991).

b. ***Parents as volunteers or para-professionals.*** When parents act as volunteers or para-professionals they assist in both curricular and non-curricular aspects of the classroom and school activities. Involving parents as class volunteers or as paid para-professionals requires the teacher to play a direct and central role in the interaction with the parent (Greenwood & Hickman, 1991). For instance in Richmond's parent education program (which will be discussed in the forthcoming paragraphs), the role of the teacher is described as follows:

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In the classrooms where the program is most effective, teachers foster positive attitudes in volunteers by involving the parents along with the para-professionals in planning and staff development sessions. Furthermore, the program suggested that teachers have to assess parents' interest, strengths and availability and then determine roles for them to play. The program further explains that it is quite necessary for teachers to determine the range of activities that the parent can perform successfully (Greenwood & Hickman, 1991:284).

c. ***Parents as teachers of their own child***. This type of involvement takes place in the home. Parents are involved as teachers of their own child or children in their homes. According to Greenwood and Hickman (1991), the teacher's role is direct and central to the success of this type of involvement. Teachers serve as the team leader responsible for planning, selecting and developing home learning materials and teaching procedures as well as the delivery, monitoring and evaluation of the activities. The planning session focuses on classroom and home visit activities. Each session involves a teacher and two parent educators who are placed in each classroom. The parent educators function as home visitors and classroom teaching assistants under the direction of the teacher. According to Greenwood and Hickman (1991), the home visits by the parent educator serve as a vehicle for delivering home learning material, and as a medium for demonstrating and explaining to the parents how to use the learning materials. In addition, through home visits the effectiveness of the learning activities is monitored and evaluated.

d. ***Parents as learners.*** Greenwood and Hickman (1991) point out that much of the PI activities where parents play the role of learners (such as when they participate in workshops) take place at schools. In these instances, the involvement of teachers is either indirect or transient. Furthermore, they assert that teachers' participation in such activities whether formal or informal should be perceived as being of great importance since teachers play a key role in communicating and encouraging parents to attend such programs.

e. ***Parents as decision makers.*** Greenwood and Hickman (1991) claim that many parents are skeptical whether parent organizations can make a significant difference in the school or that they (parents) as individuals can affect their children's educational opportunities and

outcomes through involvement in school advocacy and advisory committees. He also points out that there is the belief that it is the principal's responsibility to involve parents in school governing activities. Again, he maintains that teachers have a definite role to play in this process by establishing effective two-way communication between the home and school and informing parents of the importance of the relationship.

According to Greenwood and Hickman (1991), teachers are instrumental in ensuring effective PI. Teachers are able to involve parents in various ways that range from traditional PI which requires establishing two-way communication with the parents regarding their child's schooling to involving parents as volunteers facilitating and supporting their children's learning to decision makers who are able to affect their children's educational opportunities.

2.3.4.2 Parent education: Ira Gordon's approach

The Ira Gordon model of parent education emphasizes the development of innovative PI in children's education. The innovative Parent Education Involvement model developed by the late educationist, Ira J. Gordon and his associates in 1968 was brought under the spotlight in Binford and Newell's article in 1991. The model was described as 'a hand-up approach' that emphasized assisting parents to teach their children. Improving this parent-as-teacher role has resulted not only in the enhancement of children's academic performance but also in the improvement of parents' abilities to develop skills that result in a more positive home-school relationship as well as enhanced personal-life endeavors. According to Binford and Newell (1991), the model makes use of the combination of human and material resources in the home, the school, and the community to create a partnership that enhances the teaching-learning process for both children and parents. The model is a home-school learning cycle that has four major components:

a. A planning session during which a classroom teacher and a 'parent educator' develop a home-learning activity appropriate for the child and paralleling classroom learning.

b. A presentation of the home-learning activity by the 'parent educator' to other parents – usually mothers – and a discussion of relevant 'desirable teaching behaviors'.

c. Role-playing of the presentation of the activity by the 'parent educator' and the mother of the child on the selected home-learning activities at their home.

d. A 'debriefing' session between the 'parent educator' and the teacher to assess the effectiveness of the home-learning activity and to share suggestions and project development by the parent and other issues of importance that comes out of the planned home-learning activity.

The term 'parent educator' refers to an individual, typically a mother who lives in the same neighborhood as the mother(s) she visits and whom she supports in the learning cycle. This 'parent educator' schedules half of her available time for home visits and the remainder of the time for working with the teacher and children in the classroom. In this role, the 'parent educator' becomes the critical link between the home and school (Binford & Newell, 1991).

Ira Gordon's model was incorporated into the existing curriculum of the Richmond public school system and in about 40 schools in the Virginia school districts in the US. A report from the Department of Education (1977) stated that the parent education model facilitated growth and development in the cognitive and affective domains of the children both at school and at home. Binford and Newell (1991) added that the model not only benefited the pupils but also enhanced parents' skills as teachers of their children, as decision makers in school activities, and as more effective participants in the community. Furthermore, the 'parent educators' developed educational skills that enhanced the achievement of their own children. As the 'parent educators' work alongside the mothers of the children in their homes, they acquire new skills in working with their children and their own educational background and efficacy improves. Then again, the parents of the pupils became more active participants in school and community activities. Learning to work with groups and to develop decision-making skills led to parents advocating for their children's education. The secondary beneficiaries are the younger siblings of the children who were the actual focus of the program. The younger children benefited from their mother's improved teaching skills acquired during her own training to initiate and present learning activities to her children at home.

2.3.5 Parental involvement in Nigeria

The impact of positive PI in children's academic activities and their performance cannot be overemphasized. A significant proportion of research literature evidences that learners' scholastic achievement improves when their parents are involved in their education (Adelodun, 2013; Ejieh,

2005). After independence in Nigeria (1960), schools were adequately funded by the government. Sufficient physical facilities were made available to staff and pupils. However, as the years passed the educational sector experienced numerous challenges (Abdullahi, 1996). Among these challenges was the expansion of student enrollment coupled with inadequate resources to cope with the increment. This situation has made school leadership and management much more difficult and complex. As a consequence, the principal, teachers, other school staff, parents and other members of the larger community are obliged to become involved in decision making processes of the schools (Abdulkareem, Fasasi & Akinnubi, 2013).

As it became increasingly aware of these challenges in the educational sector, the Federal Government of Nigeria was obliged to intervene to attempt to rectify the inequalities in the educational sectors in order for every Nigerian child to have access to quality education. This led to the introduction of 'The Compulsory Free Universal Basic Education' (UBE) Act, in 2004. The UBE is a nine-year free and compulsory basic education program covering six years of primary education and three years of junior secondary school education. The use of the term Universal in the title of the Act points to the fact that the program is intended for every Nigerian child, without exception. Every child in Nigeria should have access to basic education without exception or hindrance (Aluede 2006:99). The aim of the UBE is to ensure that every citizen enjoys the fundamental human right to education (Eskay, Ezegbe & Anyanwu 2013:179). The UBE Act 2004 includes a mandate that requires the involvement and participation of voluntary agencies, communities, and private individuals – particularly parents – in school management (FRN, 2004).

According to Olofintayo (2008:328), the UBE was designed to increase learner enrolment, to improve retention and to increase the number of pupils who completed their basic education. The motivating factor for the preceding was to reduce gender bias and equity disparities in basic education and to strengthen partnerships in education provisioning. In addition, the UBE Act 2004 mandates state and local government participation in the provision of basic education to public schools. In order to ensure adequate implementation of the UBE objectives, the Federal Government made available funding and supervision to the state and local governments. The Act also ensures that poverty should not be a hindrance to successful schooling. The Act provides for the dissemination of free textbooks in the core subjects and abolishes the necessity of paying tuition fees at the primary and junior secondary school. The Act also prescribes penalties for

parents and guardians who fail to send their children and wards to school (Labo-popoola, Bello & Atanda 2009:254; Olofintayo, 2008:238).

However, in Nigeria, school management is not completely in the hands of school principals and teachers. Pupils' parents are involved in the decision making on a wide range of matters concerning their children' schooling through the PTA (Amanchukwu, 2011:144). According to Abdulkareem et al (2013), PTAs are a formal institution found in every primary and secondary school in Nigeria. The membership of the PTA comprises the headmistress or principal, teachers, and the parents of children who are currently registered at the school. The members elect their own chairperson while the principal or the headmistress of the school becomes the secretary, or any other person appointed to substitute for the principal or headmistress. A PTA meeting is held once every school term, while the Annual General Meeting (AGM) is held once a year (Amanchukwu, 2011:145).

Through their interaction at the PTA meetings, pupils' parents and guardians are able to exchange ideas with teachers in relation to pupils' academic performance or on matters concerning general schooling and conduct issues. This forum also gives an opportunity for the principal or headmistress to discuss the issues concerning school finances. This ensures that parents who are represented on the committee are able to identify closely with the school through being actively involved in decision making processes (Amanchukwu, 2011:145). In addition, Ekundayo and Alonge (2012:18) posit that PTAs encourage good relationships between the school and the community, support the maintenance of discipline in the school, enhance the mobilization of parents on matters such as enrolment, regular school attendance and the retention of their children in school, and complement government efforts in the provision and maintenance of infrastructures in schools. PTAs are thus a formal link of communication on school matters between the school, teachers and parents (Ekundayo & Alonge, 2012:16).

However, literature suggests that public school PTAs in Nigeria are not performing according to the expectations (Ugwulashi, 2012:107; Ekundayo & Alonge, 2012:17). The inadequate performance is due to several factors. Ekundayo and Alonge (2012:17) note that the major problems that compound school financial inadequacy is the inadequate financial support by the PTA which was planned to complement the statutory Government provisions which are becoming inadequate for running the schools. Owuamana, 1991 (in Ekundayo & Alonge, 2012:17) notes that through the PTA body, Nigerian communities are expected to make financial contributions through

the PTA and that personal donations are also received from members of the community who are philanthropic towards the schools in their community. According to Owuamana (1991), it was believed that the money generated from the PTA levies would be utilized to complement government effort in the provision of funds for the smooth running of school financial matters but are not forthcoming as planned. Another constraining factor that was identified is the lack of cooperation that appears to exist between parents and the principal. This lack of cooperation results in the principal not involving parents in school governance supposedly for fear of being criticized by the parents. In addition, most principals claim that schools are not as well supervised by the PTA members as was expected. This negligence constrains effective teaching-learning activities in both primary and secondary schools (Ayodele 2002, in Ekundayo & Alonge 2012:18). Ugwulashi (2012:107) argues that PTA practices are consequently being rendered less effective in public schools. He notes that in certain cases, principals unlawfully conspire with parents serving on the PTA to exert pressure on parents and guardians in general to pay the compulsory levies on every pupil attending the school. Furthermore, he explains that although the PTA is supposed to be geared towards helping in the development of the school, this imposition of levies makes the parent shoulder the responsibilities of the government to provide funds for running the public schools despite the fact that the parents have already paid their taxes – these paid taxes should ordinarily be used towards funding their children's schooling rather than relying on additional levies from PTA bodies. In addition, the author notes that recently many governments have introduced a compulsory levy on infrastructures in public schools. This attempt was made to augment the shortfall of government funds for providing infrastructural facilities in public schools. Ugwulashi (2012:108) claims that this levy is actually discouraging pupils' enrolment in the public schools due to the government acclaimed free education provision in the first two tiers (primary and junior secondary school) of schooling.

2.4 PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT AND SOCIO-ECONOMIC STATUS

Previous studies have shown that PI patterns vary according to parental social, ethnic-racial and economic backgrounds (Cherlynn, 2008; Desimone, 1999; Garcia et al., 2002; Hoover-Dempsey, Bassler & Brissie; 1987; McNeal, 1999). A study conducted by Garcia et al. (2002:314) revealed that the perception of PI as related to both school and home-based involvement was linked to the

availability of and access to material resources. Several studies have reported that low-income parents often have different beliefs about the parent's role in school involvement and are less involved in school activities (Lareau, 1987; Stacer & Perrucci, 2013).

Despite the positive benefit of education, it has been found that generally LSES parents participate less in school than their HSES counterparts – although, as mentioned previously there have been studies which indicated the converse or that LSES parents were similarly involved in their children's schooling as HSES parents. This may be due to a number of barriers that low-income parents face in their attempt to becoming involved in their children's schooling. According to Vanvelsor and Orozco (2007), some barriers originate from demographic and psychological obstacles. Demographic factors that may prevent participation in school centered PI activities include inflexible work schedules, lack of transportation and being employed in several jobs at the same time in a bid to try to earn sufficient money to support the family. Psychological barriers experienced include lack of confidence in their own intellectual abilities and having negative connotations about school that stem from their own unfavorable schooling experiences. In addition, Vanvelsor and Orozco (2007) note that certain barriers preventing PI may originate within the school itself. For instance, teachers may make sweeping negative generalization about parents of LSES children which deters such parents from becoming involved. Furthermore, teachers tend to communicate less frequently with this group of parents probably based on their perception that these parents will not be inclined to becoming involved in their children's schooling or have the ability or capacity to do so. Bradley and Corwyn (2002:383) also found that teachers provide LSES children with less positive attention and less reinforcement for good performance than children in the HSES category.

Davis-Kean and Sextan (2009) suggested that the influence of SES on parenting is significant. Parents of LSES may not have access to the resources that provide an optimal home environment in which intellectual stimulation is the norm and education is of high priority. The social capital available in such households could be deemed to be meager in comparison to that available in HSES households. This situation may lead to a high risk for lower achievement among LSES pupils. Guo and Mullan-Harris (2000) further show from their research that low-income parents may not have the financial capability to purchase resources that stimulate the child cognitively such as books, newspapers, educational games and magazines.

Corwyn and Bradley (2000) used data from the National Longitudinal Survey of Youth and the National Household Education in the US to indicate that children from poor families have less access to a variety of recreational and learning materials from infancy through to adolescence. They are less likely to go on trips, visit a library or museum, attend a theatrical performance or be given lessons directed to enhancing their cognitive, physical and social skills. In their findings, it was noted that access to educational material and cultural resources meditates the relations between family income and children's intellectual and academic achievements from infancy through adolescence (Bradley & Corwyn, 2002:381).

In addition, Bradley and Corwyn (2002:381) found that LSES parents are less likely to purchase reading and learning materials for their children, less likely to take their children to educational and cultural events and less likely to regulate the amount of TV their children watch. As a result, LSES children more frequently experience school failure in early schooling which moves them on a trajectory of either conduct problems or withdrawal behavior (Bradley & Corwyn, 2002:377). In a study by Bradley and Corwyn conducted in 1996 (Bradley & Corwyn, 2002:377) it was found that SES indicators were strongly related to cognitive development from infancy through to middle childhood. The research suggested a strong relationship between SES and verbal skills.

One of the driving forces of educational policy in the US is the desire to equalize disparities in schooling opportunities and outcomes (Desimone, 1999:11). Research by Desimone (1999), Horvat, Weininger and Lareau (2003), and Dika and Singh (2002) note the prevalence of unequal distribution of school opportunities, educational resources and outcomes among pupils in different SES societies. Also, earlier work of Coleman (1996) evidences that the unequal distribution and allocation of resources including school facilities, the unequal implementation of the school curriculum, the unequal allocation of teachers and poor family background contributes considerably to inequality in educational opportunities and achievement for LSES school pupils.

As a step towards understanding variation in school performance on the basis of group level distinction such as race-ethnicity, income and parent level of education, Desimone (1999) uses the National Education Longitudinal Study (NEL:88) to analyze the relative contribution of different types of PI to several measures of student achievement across student racial-ethnic and economic background. The study evidenced that parent-school involvement was more predictive of grade test scores for all children regardless of race or ethnic differences and income level. The study

indicated that PI through Parent Teacher Organizations (PTOs) resulted in the positive academic achievement of low-income learners, especially in relation to black students. This positive achievement was more conspicuous among black pupils than for any other racial-ethnic minority students. Desimone (1999) noted that inequality in educational opportunities generates job market disparities that affect an individual's earning potential and ability to become economically self-sufficient. The study suggests the need to re-examine school practices in order to develop methods that do a better job at encouraging low-income parents' involvement in their children's education.

In a study conducted by Marks, Cresswell and Ainley (2006) using data from the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development Program for International Student Assessment (PISA) (2000) to examine the influence of material, cultural, social resources and school factors on student achievement in three domains (reading, mathematics and science) of 15 year old pupils across 32 countries, they found that the effects vary markedly between countries. The study also revealed that socio-economic background affects learners' achievement more in reading than in mathematics and science. The availability of material and cultural resources account for greater impact on the effect of socio-economic background on reading, mathematics and science. The authors noted that the availability of cultural resources play a greater role in socio-economic inequalities on student achievements than the availability of material resources in the home. However, the study points out that the availability of social resources has little or negligible impact on the effect of socio-economic background on reading. The study also indicates that there is no evidence that school factors had a greater role on socio-economic inequalities on performance of pupils in mathematics and science than in reading. The authors concluded that the impact of school factor is general. In her research that focused on investigating the gap between white and black pupils' test scores in the US, Orr (2003) found that since black learners generally have fewer educational opportunities and are largely more disadvantaged than white learners, black learners' academic achievement assessed according to standardized tests are below that of their white counterparts. The deduction to be drawn from this finding is that there is a significant relationship between family background and statuses and academic achievement. It would seem that parents' SES is a factor that influences academic achievement.

2.4.1 Parental involvement and socio-economic status in Nigeria

Several studies indicate that despite the vast resources the country possesses, Nigeria ranks among the most unequal countries in the world. The inequality manifests in unequal income distribution, differential access to basic infrastructures, educational training and job opportunities (Amaele, 2003). In addition, Enyinnaya (2010) emphasizes that the greatest impact of inequality in Nigeria is on the social level which manifests in terms of individuals' social networks, participation in public and communal organizations, and the engagement in legal and social duties. He further noted that inequality reduces social capital and subsequently has a negative effect on most social aspects – from the effectiveness of education to the development of civil society. Daramola (1994, in Amaele, 2003 concludes that unequal educational opportunities exist in the Nigerian educational system. These inequalities are manifest mainly through the provision of schools. Access to educational opportunities varies amongst SES classes and pupils are not all provided with the same educational opportunities. Daramola (1994, in Amaele, 2003) found that children from HSES classes have access to more sophisticated and dynamic learning aids such as television, radio, and visual stimulus. These resources are generally beyond the reach of their LSES counterparts. He further argued that upper class parents develop positive attitudes towards their children's education which in turn enhances their children's performance at school.

Amaele (2003) argues that the spread of private schools in Nigeria is evidence of sponsored inequality in the Nigerian educational system by the federal government. He claims that these categories of private schools are so expensive that the children of the less privileged in the country are unable to attend due to financial constraints. Consequently, these schools only serve the interests of the upper class. Children from the lower income bracket have little choice but to attend the public schools which in general have insufficient and inadequate materials and human resources. Amaele (2003) also mentioned the existence of federal schools in the country. These schools are characterized by the levying of high school fees and the fact that admission to the school is generally limited to children of HSES classes. The author contends that these schools are well equipped, well-staffed and adequately funded by the federal government. Contrarily the public schools that belong to the state and community are lacking in the provision of adequate material and human resources.

However, Maduagwu (2004) in Ugwulashi, 2012:105) argues that private schools help to promote a sustainable educational system resulting from good academic performance, healthy discipline and sound moral practices. The development of these private schools has been welcomed by many parents and subsequently the enrollment of pupils into private schools has been enhanced. Pupils attending these schools have access to quality education (Ugwulashi, 2012:102). The study suggests that the social capital derived in the private schools attracts parents' patronage despite the high fees levied by the school proprietors (Ugwulashi 2012:105). In addition, Onuka and Arowojolu (2008, in Ugwulashi 2012:105) enumerate factors that attract parents' patronage of private schools. These factors include the availability of educational materials, pleasing uniforms, a conducive learning environment, attractive and well-resourced classrooms, individual attention, an adequate number of teaching staff, no strike action, and the inculcation of sound social norms and values.

Graetz (1990, in Parcel and Dufur, 2001) notes that private schools create some advantages for pupils who attend them. Some of the advantages are attributed to pupil's socio-economic background and the combination of social capital that the schools present in terms of teachers with advanced degrees that are highly experienced, earning higher salaries, and who can provide a better learning environment.

2.5 SUMMARY

PI entails different activities among the three groups of participants in the schooling context: pupils, parents and teachers. Researchers agree that PI activities ultimately benefit pupils, parents as well as the teachers. In Nigeria, research indicates that society is characterized by unequal access to social economic opportunities thereby creating disparities in schooling opportunities and learning outcomes. The purpose of this study was to determine what PI practices are prevalent in three primary schools of different socio-economic backgrounds in Nigeria. This implied that parents who were involved in the study had to identify the roles they play in supporting their children in their schooling. Teachers were asked to indicate what they expect parents to do in support of their children's academic performance. These issues will be reported on in subsequent chapters.

In this chapter PI models were described as well as the benefit of PI. The social capital theory framework developed by Coleman (1990), and Parcel and Dufur (2001) was used to better understand the practice and implication of PI in schools from a social capital theory point of view. This theory formed a pivotal axis for investigating the nature and scope of PI in the three socio-economically disparate schools chosen for the study.

In the next chapter, an outline of the adopted research methodology, research design, sampling techniques, data collection methods and data analysis are presented.

CHAPTER THREE

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 INTRODUCTION

The main focus of this chapter is to describe the research design and methodology according to which the research was undertaken. The methodological paradigm selected for the study was a qualitative case study approach given the exploratory and descriptive nature of the study. Data were collected from the participants who took part in the study by means of questionnaire, focus group interviews and individual semi-structured interviews. The study aimed to investigate the nature and scope of PI in three socio-economic disparate schools in Ile-ife, Nigeria. The study examined parents' involvement in their children's education in three primary schools and established teachers' opinion regarding PI in these schools. In this chapter, the research design, research processes and ethical issues related to the study are discussed.

3.2 THE RESEARCH PARADIGM

The choice of a methodological paradigm determines the research methods, techniques and data collection instruments that should be used in the study (Mouton, 2001:35). At the same time, the choice of a methodological paradigm is determined by the nature and purpose of the research (ibid.). Research paradigms or approaches are generally categorized as quantitative or qualitative or mixed methods which is a combination of the use of both qualitative and quantitative paradigms, and each has its own unique underpinning ontology and epistemology (ibid.).

In quantitative studies, the aim of the research is to obtain statistical results and since this was not the purpose of this study. However, the qualitative data lent itself in part to statistical analysis and consequently the study could be viewed as employing a mixed method approach. According to McMillan and Schumacher (2010:402), sequential exploratory design is a method in which qualitative data collection and analysis is followed by a quantitative data collection and analysis.

In this study, the quantitative portion is used to confirm and expand the findings on the qualitative part of the study. According to the author, the design enhances in-depth understanding of information emanating from the study also it confirms relationships in the qualitative phase. However, in this study, the researcher employed the use of semi-structured interviews and focus group interviews which were entirely qualitative data collection. The study also required the completion of a survey questionnaire of which some of the findings, given their specific nature, could be expressed quantitatively although the questionnaire was predominantly qualitative in design.

Qualitative research is primarily exploratory research which seeks to gain an understanding of underlying reasons, opinions, and motivations of human participants about a phenomenon (Neuman, 2013). An outline of the characteristics and nature of qualitative research follows.

.2.1 Qualitative research

Qualitative research is a research approach that seeks answers to a research question or number of questions by systematically using a predefined set of procedures to answer the central questions, collect evidence, and produce findings that were not determined in advance. The data are characterised by being narrative, descriptive and explanatory (Mack, Woodson, Mac Queen, Guest & Namey, 2005). Additionally, qualitative research generally seeks to understand a given research problem or topic from the perspectives of the local population that it involves (ibid.).

The underpinning philosophy of qualitative studies is that the researcher is interested in establishing meaning and how people make sense of their lives, experiences, and their structures of the world. Researchers who use this method are particularly interested in understanding how things occur and how they are experienced. The researcher interacts with participants in the study and tries to minimize the distance between the researcher and the research participants (Creswell, 1994:6). Qualitative methods aim at providing an in-depth and interpreted understanding of the social world of research participants by learning about their social and material circumstances, their experiences, thoughts, feelings, perspective and histories in their natural social settings (Snape & Spencer, 2003:5). In qualitative studies, the researcher collects data from small samples of research participants usually by having close contact with them in an interactive manner. According to Snape and Spencer (ibid.), data collected are developed as emergent issues hence the information is well detailed, rich and extensive.

Based on these attributes of the qualitative approach, and the fact that qualitative research has the ability to provide information about the 'human' side of an enquiry, I decided to use the approach in the study which aimed to explore the issue of PI in children's schooling from parents' and teachers' perspectives. McMillan and Schumacher (2010:340) claim that the importance of qualitative research lies in the fact that the method accommodates the formation of new ideas during the data collection. According to an overview on qualitative research, the method is effective in identifying the impact of intangible factors such as social norms, SES, gender roles, ethnicity and religion. The role of these factors might not be readily apparent in the research and need to be established through deduction and interpretation (Mack et al., 2005).

3.2.2   Case study research

 It was decided to use a case study research design, since a 'case' means 'an instance of' and the central feature of case study research design is the investigation of one or more specific 'instances of' something that comprise the cases in the study. A case study approach focuses on gaining an in-depth understanding of a particular entity or event at a specific time (Baxter & Jack, 2008: 546). Case studies tend to be delimited in some way – either as a specific individual, or a set of individual(s), organization(s), school(s), department(s), or event(s). This specific entity is generally referred to as the 'unit of analysis' (Miles & Huberman, 1994:25).

Simon (2009:21) defines a case study as an in-depth exploration from multiple perspectives of the complexity and uniqueness of a particular project, policy, institution, program or system (which constitutes the 'case') in a real-life context. According to Tellis (1997), case study is an ideal methodology when a holistic, in-depth investigation is needed. Case study design indicates details of viewpoints of the research participants by using multiple sources of data. Yin (2003:13-14), defines a case study as:

   a.   an empirical inquiry that investigates a contemporary phenomenon within its real-life context and is used especially when the boundaries between phenomenon and context are not clearly evident;
   b.   an inquiry that copes with the technically distinctive situation in which there will be many more variables of interest than data points;

      c.   an inquiry that relies on multiple sources of evidence with data needing to converge in a triangulating fashion; and

      d.   an inquiry that benefits from the prior development of theoretical propositions to guide data collection and analysis.

The case study as a research strategy comprises an all-encompassing method incorporating specific approaches to data collection and to data analysis. The case study is thus not either a data collection tactic or merely a design feature alone but a comprehensive research strategy (Yin, 2003:13).

Hartley (2004:332), defines case study research as a heterogeneous activity covering a range of research methods and techniques, a range of coverage (from single case study through a careful matched pair up to multiple cases), varied levels of analysis (individuals, groups, organisations, organizational fields or social policies) and differing lengths and level of involvement in organizational functioning.

Accordingly, to Tellis (1997), a case study is an ideal methodology when a holistic in-depth investigation is needed. Case study design indicates details of viewpoints of research participants by using multiple sources of data. Yin (1994), posits that case study design can be used to explain complex causal links in real-life interventions and situations. It is a frequent criticism of case study research that the results are not widely applicable in real life as a result. Yin (1984) refutes that criticism by presenting a well-constructed explanation of the difference between analytic generalization and statistical generalization. In analytic generalization, previously developed theory is used as a template against which to compare the empirical result of the case study. Yin (1984) stresses that the inappropriate use of generalizing assumes that some sample of cases has been drawn from a larger universe of cases. In support of this idea, Stake (1995) also claims that case study research enhances naturalistic generalization. He argued that the data generated by case studies often resonate with experience from a broad cross section of readers. Case studies thereby facilitate a greater understanding of the phenomenon. Hartley (2004: 325) adds that case studies have an important function in generating hypotheses and building theories because the method has the ability to produce a detailed investigation and data are being collected over a period of time. The author adds that the method is suitable for exploring issues in depth.

3.3 THE RESEARCH DESIGN

Research design refers to the structure of an enquiry (De Vos & Fouché, 1998:123-124). Research is a logical task undertaken by the researcher to ensure that evidence collected enables the researcher to answer the research questions or to test theories as unambiguously as possible (De Vos, Strydom, Fouché & Delport, 2002:88). The research design is the blue-print offering a framework for the research (De Vos & Fouché, 1998:123-124; De Vos, Strydom, Fouché & Delport, 2002:88). The research design is a set of logical arrangements that direct the research process.

Research design can consequently be described as 'the logical steps which will be taken to link the research question(s) and issues to data collection, analysis and interpretation in a coherent way' (Hartley, 2004). In addition, the research design indicates the participants that will be studied, specifies when, where and under which circumstance they will be studied (McMillan & Schumacher 2010:102). A well-planned research design generates results that approximate reality and the results are judged to be accurate, trustworthy and reasonable (McMillan & Schumacher 2010:102).

3.4 THE RESEARCH POPULATION, THE RESEARCH SAMPLE AND THE SAMPLING METHOD

A description of the linkage between populations, samples, the process of the selection of samples and how they were applied in this study is provided below.

3.4.1 The research population and sample

The research population is a group of elements, cases or individuals, objects, or organisations that conform to specific criteria and to which the researcher intends to generalize the result of the study (McMillan & Schumacher, 2010:129) as far as is possible. In other words, the population is the totality of individuals who have certain characteristics and are of interest to a researcher. According to McMillan and Schumacher (2010:129) and Welman, Mitchell and Kruger (2005:52), since the population is a larger representative of the participants for a study or too scattered geographically to study directly, it is impossible and not cost effective to study all the participants and therefore, a smaller group of participants are selected for study by means of a particularly

chosen sampling technique. Thus, the sample selected is a representative of the total research population (De Vos et al., 2002:89). The most basic considerations in sampling are size and representativeness. The size must be adequate to allow estimates of the characteristics of phenomena with reasonable precision. Graziano and Raulin (2000:133 in De Vos et al., 2002:198) stress that it is important to understand the concept of representativeness and its relationship to generalisability. The findings of a study can only be generalized when it is assumed that what is observed in the sample of subjects would also be observed in any other group of subjects from the population.

The accessible population for this study were the primary schools in proximity to the researcher who resides in Ile-Ife Town, south-western Nigeria. Three schools are selected for study in this area. Each of the schools represents different socio-economic characteristics which was the criterion for study. These schools are under the supervision of Ile Ife central Local Government District. All the schools have qualified teachers who are adequately paid. In addition, the schools use English as the language of teaching and learning, and as the language of communication. The schools were named for the purpose of the study: School A –representing a HSES community, School B representing a MSES community and school C representing a LSES community. At school C, in addition to teaching in English, teaching is also offered in the local language, namely Yoruba dialect.

Teachers who teach at the three selected primary schools and parents or guardians of the pupils that are attending the schools further comprised the research population. At school A, the total numbers of teachers are 14, at School B there are 45 teachers while at school C there are 28 teachers. Therefore, the target population of the study consisted of all the teachers from selected schools. At each of the schools, the researcher purposely selected five teachers from the school principals' staff list. These five teachers represented the teacher sample. The guidance of the principal was sought regarding which of the teachers on the staff list would be most able to give adequate information about the topic under investigation and who had substantial teaching experience. The sampling technique used was thus purposive convenience sampling.

At School A 125 pupils are enrolled; at school B, 850 pupils are enrolled; at School C the pupil population comprised 450 pupils on the enrolment list. At each of the schools the researcher sampled five parents who volunteered to participate in the study. Parents were informed of the

study through a letter which the teacher distributed (see Appendix 4). The letters were personally handed to the parents by the teacher when they picked up their children from school. In the letter the research purpose and process were explained. Parents were informed that the research aimed to establish the nature and scope of PI in the particular school and that parent volunteers were sought to be interviewed with regard to their involvement in their children's schooling. They were thus invited to be involved in the study voluntarily. It was through parents volunteering their participation that the parent sample was put together. The parents who elected to participate in the study returned the informed consent slip to the researcher. The informed consent slip was included at the bottom of the letter explaining the study which had been distributed to the parents by the teacher. The first five parents from each school who volunteered participation were selected. When too many parents volunteered their participation, the researcher explained to these individuals that the required number of participants had been found and thanked them for their willingness to be part of the study. It was made clear to them that they would be called upon to participate in the study if more information on the topic was sought.

3.4.2   Sampling technique

Sampling methods are generally categorised as probability or non-probability sampling. Probability sampling is a method of sampling that uses some form of random selection. Non-probability sampling methods are categorized as either accidental or purposive. With accidental or convenience sampling, the units are chosen just because they happened to be there at the time. With purposive sampling the process is approached with a specific plan and group of respondents in mind (Trochim, 2006).

In this research purposive convenience sampling and volunteer sampling techniques were utilized. Purposive sampling entails reliance on certain judgement by the researcher to select a sample that is a representative of the population or that includes subjects with needed characteristics. Convenience sampling implies using a group of respondents on the basis of their being accessible (McMillan & Schumacher, 2010:137). Volunteer sampling, which is a form of non-probability sampling, occurs when research respondents self-select to become part of the study. Most likely these individuals have a strong interest in the topic of the research and want to be involved in having their voices heard (Judd, 2006: 322).

As outlined in 3.4.2 the schools were selected on the basis of convenience since they are located close to where the researcher lives and were easily accessible to the researcher. Furthermore, since one of the criteria of the research was to involve schools representing different socio-economic environments, the three schools were purposively selected on the basis of this requirement. Each of the three schools in the area represented a different SES as required by the purpose of the study. Convenience sampling was thus considered to be the best approach to use in this particular study to select participating schools because the primary purpose of the research was not necessarily to generalize but to gain a better understanding of the relationship that exists between the nature and scope of PI within different SES schools and how parents and teachers perceive this relationship (McMillan & Schumacher, 2010: 137).

Teachers who participated in this study were staff in the three selected schools. Since the teachers were selected on the basis of their ability to best provide key information to address the purpose of the research as judged by the school principal, and also based on the extent of their teaching experience, purposive sampling was used to select teacher research participants.

The parents who participated in the study were selected by volunteer sampling. This sampling technique entails a request from the researcher for the participants to take part in the study. According to McMillan and Schumacher (2010: 145), volunteering sampling tends to be less conforming, less authoritarian and a more sociable approach. Parents were informed of the study through an information letter with an attached consent slip and were asked to volunteer their participation. As explained previously, the first five parents from each school who volunteered were selected. No other sampling criterion was used in selecting parents.

3.5 DATA COLLECTION PROCESSES AND TOOLS

The choice of research methods, data collection techniques and procedures used are determined by the nature of the research problem, the type of data required to provide satisfactory responses that explain and elucidate the problem under investigation and the methodological research paradigm chosen to conduct the research. Data collection methods include a variety of techniques and in qualitative research can include unstructured, structured and semi-structured interviews and questionnaires.

Researchers may use more than one technique to collect data which allows the researcher to triangulate the results. Data collection methods in this study included a review of literature on key concepts underlying the study and the review and analysis of documents such as government policy on primary schools and schooling and parent teacher associations. The researcher also made use of semi-structured interviews with parents and focus group interviews with teachers. A questionnaire was also used to collect data from teachers. When qualitative interviews are conducted, the researcher asks participants broad, open-ended questions to allow them to share their individual views about and experiences related to the phenomena under investigation.

3.5.1 Literature review and document analysis

Primary and secondary data were accessed and reviewed. Concepts central to the study such as the social capital theory, socio-economic status and parental involvement were investigated and reported on in Chapter 2 through reviewing existing literature on the topic. Government documents on the provision of schooling in elementary schools in Nigeria were scrutinized and the current status of schooling in Nigeria was also reported in Chapter 2.

3.5.2 Interviews

The qualitative research interview is characterised by a flexible way of asking participants about their opinions and experiences (Moriarty, 2011:8). Maree (2007:87) emphasises that the purpose of the interview is to ask the participant questions in order to collect data and to learn about the ideas, beliefs, views, opinions and behaviours of the participant. The aim of qualitative interviews is to see the world through the eyes of the participant and to obtain rich descriptive data that will help the researcher understand the participant's construction of knowledge and his or her perception of social reality.

3.5.2.1 Types of interviews

Three types of individual interviews, namely structured, semi-structured and unstructured are distinguished (McMillan & Schumacher, 2010:356). Structured interviews are used to obtain answers to carefully phrased questions. The interviewer is trained to deviate only minimally from question wording to ensure uniformity in the nature of the responses and the subsequent interview administration. In a structured interview, the response options are generally limited or clearly

delineated or split into categories such as male or female; age group, ethnicity or similar aspects. In semi-structured interviews, the interviewer poses a series of questions that are open-ended. The responses received are generally detailed. Lastly, in an unstructured interview questions emerge from the immediate context, there is no predetermined wording (McMillan & Schumacher, 2010:356; Moriarty, 2011:8) and the interviewer is led to pose questions based on the responses received from the interviewee. When semi-structured and unstructured interviews are conducted, the interviewer needs to be flexible regarding how the questions are phrased and in which sequence the questions are asked. Instead of an interview schedule, an interview guide is used. However, researchers need to consider the impact of the interview location on the data (Moriarty, 2011:9). According to the Moriarty (ibid.), meeting participants on their home ground, whether it is their actual home or a place of their choice, is thought to help participants to be more relaxed and forthcoming with information.

A focus group interview shares features with less structured individual interviews. However, in a focus group interview there are a number of research participants from whom information is collected as a group. The purpose of a focus group interview is to generate information on collective views and meanings underlying these views. A focus group interview thus collects data from several participants at once (Kritzinger, 1994). A focus group could also be described as a group discussion on a particular topic organised for research purposes and is guided, monitored and recorded by a researcher. A focus group encourages participants that are reluctant to be interviewed on their own or who feel worried that they have nothing to say, participate and express their opinions. A focus group interview needs to be well managed by the interviewer to make sure that the discussion is not dominated by a more confident and outspoken participant and that all focus group participants get the opportunity to contribute to the discussion. Furthermore, focus group interviews are known to generate discussion on a greater number of topics in a more naturalistic environment (Kritzinger, 1995 in Moriarty, 2011:10).

During the research process the researcher made use of semi-structured interviews with parents and focus group interviews with the teachers at each of the selected schools. The nature and scope of these interviews are next described.

3.5.2.2 Semi-structured interviews with parents

Semi-structured interviews were conducted with the parents of children in the three schools selected for the study. During semi-structured interviews the researcher has a list of themes and questions to be answered by the respondents. In addition the main researcher made use of a co-researcher who ensured that the interviews were accurately captured by recording the interviews with a video camera and a voice recorder. The primary purpose of the interview was to elicit explanatory responses and to explore the answers provided to ensure clarity of understanding. This is done by asking follow-up questions which might not be on the interview guide but which needed to be asked to probe the respondent's response (McMillan & Schumacher, 2010:206).

The key purpose of the interview with the parents was to establish the roles parents play in involving themselves in their child's education and their views of the effect of SES on their involvement in their children's schooling. Questions that were used during the interview are attached as Appendix 6.

3.5.2.3 Focus group interviews with teachers

Teachers from the three schools who participated in the study were asked to participate in a focus group interview in addition to completing a survey questionnaire. The key purpose of the focus group interview was to establish the teachers' perspective on how parents involved themselves in the education of their children and to determine their views on how the parents' SES influenced their involvement in their children's schooling. The interview question schedule is attached as Appendix 5. In addition, three focus group interviews were conducted, namely one with each of the five teachers from each of the three schools.

3.5.3 Questionnaires

Questionnaires are written sets of questions that are used to obtain information from the research participants. In the process of developing the questionnaire, the researcher must be able to justify the extent that the theory and previous research supports the use of the instrument. Thus it requires a review of literature to ensure that the questionnaire questions are appropriate and address the core aspects of the subject under investigation (McMillan & Schumacher, 2010:195). In addition, the review has several other advantages in relation to drafting the questionnaire as it provides

guidance on the limitation of the approach, indicates cogent items that are essential to be included amongst the questions and suggests how and which questions should be asked (McMillan & Schumacher, 2010:195).

Questions are usually posed in an open or closed ended form. The former allows the participants to provide any response they want and allows them to explain and digress, while the latter limits the participants to choose predetermined responses. According to McMillan and Schumacher (2010:202), a questionnaire must have an accurate layout so that the respondent will have a clear understanding of the questions and will be able to provide the best answer. Thus the following guidelines should be taken into consideration in the design of a questionnaire:

➢ The spelling, punctuation and grammar should be carefully checked.

➢ The researcher should ensure that the print is clear and easy to read.

➢ Avoid cluttering the questions by trying to squeeze too many items onto one page.

➢ Avoid the use of abbreviations.

➢ The questionnaire must be kept as to the point as possible.

➢ The researcher should provide enough space for answering open-ended questions.

➢ Related items should be grouped in a logical manner.

➢ All pages and items contained in the questionnaires must be indicated by numbers.

➢ The researcher may use examples if there is the possibility that the questions may be difficult to comprehend.

➢ Put important items near the beginning of a long questionnaire.

In the context of the study at hand, apart from their participation in a focus group interview, teachers were also asked to complete a questionnaire which was aimed to establish respondents'

primary perspectives on matters related to the focus of the research namely the nature and scope of PI as well as their expectations regarding PI in the schools where they teach. Most questions were open-ended in order to ensure accurate and unambiguous response of teachers' views on the effect of parents' SES on PI. The open-ended questions also gave the respondents the opportunity to discuss and explain their responses. The researcher ensured that enough time was given to complete the questionnaire and the questions were clearly stated and objectively formulated to enable the teachers to give trustworthy responses. The researcher personally distributed the questionnaires to the teachers of the three selected schools in the study. The questionnaires were collected after a week. In this study, five teachers were provided with a questionnaire in each of the three selected schools (see Appendix 7).

3.5.4 Pilot studies

Pilot studies are often used to test questionnaires and other instruments used in the research to establish how appropriate the instruments are in acquiring the information sought and to ensure that worthwhile results may be obtained. Anderson 1996 (in Ramisur 2007) asserts that it is always difficult to criticize one's own work hence the importance of conducting a pilot study in which the research instruments are presented to a group of respondents who share characteristics of the target population, but who will not be participating in the study. The pilot group is used to provide information on various aspects such as how long it took to complete the questionnaire and whether the instructions provided, and instrument items are clear. The researcher uses the feedback from the pilot group to fine tune the instruments to ensure that the instruments are appropriate and will provide valid data for the research when administered in the actual research context. Furthermore, McMillan and Schumacher (2010:204) posit that the administration of the pilot pre-test should be about the same as that to be used in the study, and the pilot pre-test respondents should be asked to write comments regarding the improvement of individual items and instructions provided to complete the questionnaires.

A pilot study was undertaken to test the interview questions for parents, the focus group questions for teachers and the teachers' questionnaire. Three teachers participated in the pilot study which tested the appropriateness of the questionnaire. The teachers were chosen from schools that have similar characteristics to the actual schools selected for the study. The questionnaire was administered to pilot study respondents who were asked to complete the questionnaire in their own

time and provide comments on the questions and the instructions for completing the questionnaire. The researcher found that it took longer for respondents to complete the questionnaire than the researcher had anticipated. Also, the respondents indicated that certain aspect of the questionnaire items were difficult to understand. Using this feedback, the researcher reformulated the items to clarify them and some items that were found to be superfluous were deleted to ensure that the questionnaire could be completed in a reasonable time. The questionnaire items were also arranged in a more logical and coherent way.

The individual semi-structured interview questions and the focus group interview questions were pretested with two parents whose children attended schools that were not involved in the study and two teachers from schools that were not involved in the study. Thereafter, the researcher transcribed the recorded interviews to establish the nature and scope of the responses provided. The researcher found that the interviews also took longer than the anticipated time. Therefore a review of the interview schedules was made and some questions were amended to avoid repetition or fruitless digression.

3.6 DATA ANALYSIS

Qualitative data analysis is primarily an inductive process of organizing data into categories and identifying patterns and relationships among the categories (McMillan & Schumacher, 2010:367). Data analysis is an ongoing process that is done during data collection as well as after all the data has been gathered. According to McMillan and Schumacher (ibid.), a qualitative researcher utilizes an inductive process that facilitates coding, categorizing and interpreting data to provide explanations of a single phenomenon of interest. McMillan and Schumacher (2010:369) outlined the steps in analysing qualitative data.

➢ *Collect data*: Data collection and analysis are interwoven and influence one another. Fieldwork leads to data but also data may influence how the field work is approached.

➢ *Transcribe data*: transcription is a process of taking notes from observations, audio-tape, recorded interviews and other information and converting them into a format that will facilitate analysis.

➢ *Organise data*: organising the data separates a large amount of data into a few workable units. The researcher may draw ideas on how to organise the data from research questions, research instruments and personal experience or from the data itself.

➢ *Data coding*: this process begins by identifying pieces of data that stand alone. These data are called segments. Segments contain an idea or pieces of relevant information in a sentence, few lines or several pages. Segments are then analysed into codes so that each segment is labelled by at least one code.

➢ *Categorising*: categories are groups of codes that are used to give meaning to similar data. These represent the first level of induction. Categories are labelled according to the information they provide.

➢ *Developing patterns*: patterns are relationships among categories. Pattern seeking means examining the data in order to understand the complex links among various aspects of peoples' situation, beliefs and actions. Therefore, pattern seeking starts when the researcher searches through the data in order to have an understanding about relationships in the data. At this stage the researcher shifts from an inductive process to a deductive manner of thinking by moving back and forth among codes and categories to determine how well the data illuminates the research problem. The process is tedious and time consuming. Also, it requires making carefully considered judgments about what is important and meaningful in the data.

In this study, the researcher considered the six steps as relevant to the research design. The researcher familiarized herself with the data by reading through the questionnaire data and the transcribed interview responses several times. The questionnaire responses were documented in the form of a spread sheet for each research site using Microsoft Excel in the absence of a more sophisticated qualitative data analysis program such as Atlas ti. The researcher identified similar responses and ideas by coding. Once the data had been captured in patterns, a careful analysis of the data was undertaken. The data was used to draw inferences about the three research sites.

All the interviews were audio-recorded with the assistance of the co-researcher. The researcher also made interview notes during the interviews. The transcript of the interview and the interview

notes were carefully analysed according to the procedure outlined above. The researcher makes use of inductive reasoning to interpret the data by coding, categorising and developing the data into meaningful patterns.

3.7 RESEARCH TRUSTWORTHINESS

In qualitative research, the quantitative criteria of reliability and validity are generally replaced with the parallel concept of 'trustworthiness which comprises four aspects – credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability (Lincoln & Guba, 2000:164). However, some researchers still prefer to use the terms validity and reliability since they have become so entrenched in research traditions and remain in common use. Validity in qualitative research refers to the degree of congruence between the explanation of the phenomenon and the realities of the world (McMillan & Schumacher, 2010:310). The authors posit that validity is the degree to which interpretation have mutual meanings between participants and the researcher. McMillan and Schumacher (2010:331) outlined ten strategies on how to enhance qualitative research. These strategies are prolonged and persistent fieldwork, the use of multi-method strategies, conducting the research in the participants' language; noting verbatim accounts; low-inference descriptors, making use of multiple researchers to avoid researcher bias; mechanically recording data; participant researcher; member checking; participant review and lastly, discrepant data.

In this research, the researcher validated the data by recording the interviews mechanically to ensure that the responses were accurately captured. Mechanically recording data entails the use of tape recorders, photographs, and videotapes. The researcher made sure that the entire interview was recorded by using a voice recorder and a video camera which would capture non-verbal responses which could also be meaningful in interpreting the verbal responses. Recording were done with the interviewees' permission. The researcher also made use of a participant researcher which entails the use of the aid of an assistant to corroborate with the researcher. The co-researcher assisted with the recording of the proceedings and also took notes during the interview while the main researcher kept up the discussion with the participants. Member checking was also conducted. This entailed checking with participants for accuracy of the transcribed data. The researcher ensured this by returning the interview transcripts to the participants and calling upon

them to verify or clarify aspects and to ensure that their responses were accurately recorded, transcribed and interpreted.

According to Johnson and Christensen (2000:208), reliability in qualitative research is viewed as a match between what is recorded as data and what actually occurred in the setting. In addition, reliability refers to the consistency of measurement – that is the extent to which the results are similar using the same instrument for data collection or the extent at which the data collection instruments are error free (McMillan & Schumacher, 2010:179). In this study, the researcher ensured reliability of the instruments by conducting a pilot study. This afforded me the opportunity to make adjustments to the questions and the duration for the interview to improve the reliability of the instrument. In conclusion, trustworthiness in this study was ensured by maintaining credibility of the data through member checking, transferability by purposeful sampling, dependability by peer examination and confirmability by pilot study.

3.8 RESEARCH SCHEDULES

The research schedule according to which this research was undertaken is tabulated below indicating the activity, the date when it was undertaken and the duration of the activity.

Date	Venue	Activity	Duration
14-12-2015	School A	Questionnaire distribution to teachers	20 minutes
15-12-2015		Collection of completed questionnaire from teachers	30 minutes
09-12-2015	School B	Questionnaire distribution to teachers	20 minutes
10-12-2015		Collection of completed questionnaire from teachers	30 minutes
12-12-2015	School C	Questionnaire distribution to teachers	20 minutes
12-12-2015		Collection of completed questionnaires from teachers	30 minutes

Date	Venue	Activity	Duration
15-12-2015	School A	Focus group interview with teachers	50 minutes
10-12-2015	School B	Focus group interview with teachers	50 minutes
12-12-2015	School C	Focus group interview with teachers	50 minutes
15-12-2015	Parent's home	Individual interview with Parent 1 from School A	40 minutes
14-12-2015	Parent's home	Individual interview with Parent 2 from School A	40 minutes
27-12-2015	Parent's home	Individual interview with Parent 3 from School A	40 minutes
28-12-2015	Parent's home	Individual interview with parent 4 from School A	40 minutes
07-01-2016	Parent's home	Individual interview with parent 5 from School A	40 minutes
09-01-2016	Parent's home	Individual interview with Parent 6 from School B	40 minutes
09-01-2016	Parent's home	Individual interview with Parent 7 from School B	40 minutes
13-12-2015	Parent's home	Individual interview with Parent 8 from School B	40 minutes
15-12-2015	Parent's home	Individual interview with Parent 9 from School B	40 minutes
09-01-2016	Parent's home	Individual interview with Parent 10 from School B	40 minutes
02-12-2015	Parent's home	Individual interview with Parent 11 from School C	40 minutes
05-12-2015	Parent's home	Individual interview with Parent 12 from School C	40 minutes
05-12-2015	Parent's home	Individual interview with Parent 13 from School C	40 minutes
08-01-2016	Parent's home	Individual interview with Parent 14 from School C	40 minutes
08-01-2016	Parent's home	Individual interview with Parent 15 from School C	40 minutes

The process of collecting the data transpired over the period of approximately one month.

3.9 RESEARCH ETHICS

Educational research focuses primarily on human beings as research subjects. The researcher is ethically responsible for protecting the rights and welfare of the subjects who participate in the study (McMillan & Schumacher, 2010:15). Moriarty (2011:24) acknowledges that qualitative researchers must be aware of the power they pose over their respondents. Additionally, the researcher may be economically and socially more privileged than the participants and consequently they must be aware that they do not replicate existing power inequalities in their research. Furthermore, Baginsky, Moriarty, Manthorpe, Stevens, Maclnnes and Nagendran, (2010) suggest that researchers should create a sense of mutual trust between themselves and the participants and need to ensure that they are not exploiting the experience of others for their own professional advancement. In addition, participants must be duly informed about the research process, and it is important to ensure that participants are not unduly stressed. In essence the researcher must ensure informed consent of the participants, maintain anonymity and confidentiality of the research participants. The researcher also needs to remind the participants that he or she will be keeping the information they discuss during the course of the research confidential. Research participants should also be informed that their participation in the research is voluntary and that they have the right to withdraw from the study at any time without penalty. Participants need to be informed whether they will be reimbursed for their participation in the study and whether there is any risk to their involvement in the study.

The principles underlying research ethics are universal and are concerned about issues such as honesty and respect for the rights of individuals. Most universities have codes of ethics enforced by research ethics committees which must approve all research projects involving humans or animals that are undertaken under the auspices of the institution. Ethical considerations come into play at three stages of a research project, namely when participants are recruited, during the intervention to which they are subjected and in the release of the results obtained.

The researcher submitted her research design, the proposed methodology and the research instruments to the Research Ethics Committee of the College of Education (UNISA) for approval. The Committee scrutinises applications submitted for ethical clearance to ensure that applicants adhere to institutional research and research ethics policies. Once approval was granted, a

certificate (see Appendix 1) to this effect was issued. Furthermore, the researcher sought permission to conduct the research in the three schools selected for the study (see Appendixes 2, 3 and 4).

The researcher adhered to the four fundamental ethical considerations namely, informed consent, withdrawal without reprisal, confidentiality and anonymity. The researcher attempted to report the findings of the study as accurately and objectively as possible and interview transcriptions were made available to the interviewees for their comment and verification of accurate interpretation. Research participants and gate keepers were informed in detail about the research aims and processes. Research participants all signed letters consenting to their participation in the study. The documentation regarding the above is included in this dissertation as appendixes for the purposes of transparency.

3.10 CLOSING COMMENTS

In this chapter the research design of the study was discussed at length. The methodological paradigm selected for this study was described and the justification for the selection of a qualitative case study approach was provided. The choice of this approach determined decisions regarding data collection processes and the choice of research instruments. The research population and the extraction of a research sample from the population were explained. The chapter concluded with issues related to research ethics and how these were applied in the study.

CHAPTER 4

PRESENTATION AND DISCUSSION OF RESEARCH FINDINGS

4.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter presents and discusses the findings of an investigation into PI practices in three selected socio-economically disparate primary schools in Ile-Ife, Nigeria. The purpose of the research was to establish whether there is a relationship between SES and the extent and nature of PI of parents whose children attend the schools. The research enquired into teachers and parents' perspectives of the nature and status of PI in the three schools which were identified as representing three different SES contexts in the community.

The data is discussed in two sections. The first section presents the data that was collected from the responses obtained from the interviews with the parents as well as from the focus group interviews with the teachers. The discussion is presented in the form of three case studies, namely cases A, B and C. Each of the cases represents the data that was collected at each school identified as School A, School B and School C. Each of the cases portrays the reflections, perceptions and responses of the parents and the teachers who participated in the study at each of the three specific schools.

Case studies are known to offer largely anecdotal evidence which applies to the particular case only. The generalizability of the data obtained from case studies is consequently significantly limited. However, case studies do provide rich, coherent and cogent explanations of circumstances as they occur in the context of the case (Baxter & Jack, 2008; Hartley, 2004) and generalizability is not necessarily of prime concern.

The first case was that of School A and the parents at School A are referred to as parents A1P, A2P, A3P, A4P and A5P, respectively. Additionally, both father and mother are referred to as parents. They both participated in the interview in all the three schools. A distinction is not made between views of the fathers or the mothers and the response is provided as having come from the

'parent'. Teachers are represented as teacher A1T, A2T, A3T, A4T and A5T, vis-a-vis schools B and C.

The second section in relation to the discussion of the research findings presents the data collected from teachers using the survey questionnaires distributed and completed at each of the three research sites.

4.2 DATA EMANATING FROM THE THREE CASE STUDIES

Case studies are a form of qualitative descriptive research used to collect and report on data from individuals, a small group of participants, or a group as a whole. The selection of the schools and research participants as well as an overview of the nature and use of the data collection instruments was discussed in Chapter 3 in section 3.4 and 3.5.

4.2.1 Case study 1: School A

The first case reported is that of School A, which is a private primary school in Ile Ife. Given the nature of the school, it was deduced that the school serves children whose parents are affluent and are from a HSES. However, from the interviews with teachers, it was evidenced that some of the parents whose children attend the school are from MSES and LSES, but the school itself can be categorized as a high-income school given the infrastructure of the school and the facilities it boasts.

Parents are obliged to pay a fee for their children to attend the school. The school is housed in a double story building consisting of ten classrooms and a bungalow consisting of six classrooms. The classrooms are large, well-furnished and adequately supplied with learning materials. The school has a well-equipped e-library and the environment is child friendly with the design of the school and its grounds appropriate for the needs of young children. The parents are well educated and are mostly within the professional white-collar job bracket. The school comprises a teaching staff of 14 teachers including the principal and is attended by 125 pupils. The teachers and parents of nursery two to primary four were selected for participation in the study.

To lead up to the issue of the impact of SES on PI as viewed by the parents and teachers at this school, subsidiary questions needed to be posed and answered (see Chapter 1 sections 1.4, 1.4.1,

and 1.4.1.1). In the presentation of the findings from parents and teachers' replies, the responses to these questions are also reported on. These questions inter alia examined parents' perceptions of education and schooling. These questions were posed to establish the importance the parents attach to schooling, as well as which PI practices are currently evidenced to establish how parents are presently involved in their children's schooling. The questions also probed perceptions of the importance and role of PI to gauge parents' attitudes to PI, and how PI could be encouraged. A profile of the parents who participated in the study is presented in Table 4.1.

TABLE 4.1: A profile of the parents representing School A

Parent	Parenting structure		Age group		Level of schooling		Occupation		SES	No. of children	No. of school-going children	Position of child at school
	Dual	Single	Father	Mother	Father	Mother	Father	Mother	M			
A1P	X		35-40	30-35	MBChB	B Sc	Medical Dr	Nurse	M	2	2	Eldest
A2P	X		35-40	30-35	PhD	M Sc	Lecturer	Teacher	M	5	5	Middle
A3P	X		35-40	30-35	PhD	B Sc	Lecturer	Business woman	M	2	2	Youngest
A4P	X		35-40	25-30	PhD	B Sc	Bank Manager	Business woman	M	2	2	Eldest
A5P	X			35-40	PhD	B Sc	Lecturer	Business woman	M	4	3	Middle

Five teachers at School A were interviewed during a focus group interview. Focus group interviews facilitate rich data generation since interviewees are stimulated by the responses of the other interviewees to be more forthcoming in their own responses and to elaborate on their views (National Science Foundation, 1997). It was believed that richer data would emanate from a focus group interview than from individual interviews. A profile of the teachers who were interviewed at School A is provided in Table 4.2 below.

TABLE 4.2: A profile of the teachers representing School A

Teacher	Gender	Age group	Qualification	Class taught	Class size
A1T	Female	30-35	BSc Ed	Primary 1	18
A2T	Female	30-35	NCE	Nursery 2	20
A3T	Female	25-30	NCE	Primary 2	15
A4T	Female	30-35	BSc Ed	Primary 3	26
A5T	Female	30-35	BSc Ed	Primary 4	24

4.2.1.1 Parents' views on education and schooling

The researcher aimed to establish parents' views on education and schooling in general and they were thus asked to elaborate on what schooling meant to them. The purpose of this question was to determine the importance these parents attach to education. The rationale for doing this is because it is believed that if parents have a positive view of schooling and view education as being important, they will be better inclined to involve themselves in their children's schooling. This assumption is supported by the research of Akpan (2014), Anderson and Minke (2007:311), Desforges & Abouchaar (2003); Tezel-sahin, Inal, & Ozbey 2011, in Khadijat, 2012:4; Ushang, Bassey, Idaka, & Akaase, 2010:312) who all indicate that parents' SES and their own level of education influences the importance they attach to schooling, and, by deduction, their level of involvement in their children's education. (See Chapter 2 section 2.3).`

In each of the five interviews both parents participated in the interview although generally the mother was more informative than the father. In the interview with parent A3P, only the mother was available to be interviewed as the father was out of town. A distinction is not made between the fathers or the mothers' views and the response is provided as having come from the 'parent'. Interaction with and responses from the parents revealed that schooling is considered a means of enhancing a child's learning ability. Parent A1P said that 'schooling means acquiring knowledge at an early stage of life which enhances the child's learning ability and creativity in the future.' Parent A2P noted that schooling means 'giving a child a formal education outside the home environment. It also involves interacting and learning from their peers.' Parent A3P also mentioned that schooling means 'interaction with peers which enhances their learning in a different way from when learning occurs at home.' Parent A4P indicated that schooling means inculcating physical,

moral, and social norms in the child while parent A5P noted that schooling is what takes place in a formal institution where teaching and learning are central. She mentioned that a school is 'a mini society' where children 'gain moral and intellectual attitude'.

Views expressed by the sampled parents are thus positive towards education in general and the education of their children specifically. Parents emphasized the benefit that schooling holds for their children, acknowledged that it is a social process where engagement with peers during the learning process is important, and accentuated the value schooling adds to their children's future. All the parents who were interviewed at this school acknowledged that education is of prime importance to a child's upbringing, development and future. Accordingly, parent A5P claimed that education is not about the acquisition of a [western] ideology only, but rather entails gaining that form of knowledge that guides children in their future endeavors in whatever circumstances children find themselves. In addition, parent A1P opined that parents should make a point of going to the school to find out how their children are progressing in their studies since schooling is so important and parents should be aware at all times of their children's scholastic progress. All the parents who were interviewed made similar comments about the imperative of parents to be knowledgeable about their children's schooling which indicates the importance which parents attach to formal schooling and education and supports the position the parents took with regard to education being of prime importance.

According to these parents, the particular school where their children are enrolled is a good choice since the teachers and the school staff in general instills confidence and the parents believe that they are contributing positively to their children's development. They believe the teachers are preparing their children to realize their potential in life. Consequently, these parents are keenly interested in fully supporting their children and are positive about being involved in their children's schooling.

It is thus deduced that parents viewed schooling in a positive light and specifically viewed the school as a form of social capital which offers their children intellectual and social benefits that will be useful for their future development. They believe that schooling is not only about the activities of teaching and learning. Rather, schooling involves a great deal of social interaction which benefits their children in their preparation for life.

4.2.1.2 Parents' views on their involvement in their children's schooling

In the parents' view, education is not about being the teachers' responsibility alone; it involves the partnership between the teachers and the parents and relies also on parents' personal contribution to and involvement in their children's education. When parents were asked how they were involved in their children's schooling, they indicated that they support their children's schooling in various ways. For example, some mentioned that they personally take their children to school each day. In the process, they are able to check on their child's performance with the teacher and also through this act, indicate to the teacher that they are interested in their child's progress. Other parents (A3P, A4P), apart from dropping the child off at school, made a point of visiting the school to check on their child's school work and progress with the teacher. Parent A3P suggested that her involvement in her child's schooling is of prime importance to her child's well-being and progress and that it is consequently a crucial parental responsibility which she gladly fulfills. Parent A5P mentioned that she makes it a point of duty to drop her child off at school early in the morning. Her children prefer to be at school early and she observed that this instills confidence in them and that they are consequently psychologically self-assured. This observation is an indication that parents are attuned to their individual children's needs and that they subsequently involve themselves in such a way that their children's interests are acknowledged.

Parents also mentioned being involved in their children's schooling through being engaged in their homework. One of the parents (A5P) commented:

> *Teachers alone cannot be left to educate a child, parents have to go through their school work and make corrections. This effort enhances the learning ability of the child.*

This parent also noted that she spent time reading with her children on a daily basis since she believed that this benefitted her child's progress at school.

In addition, parents noted that they should involve themselves in their children's schooling by providing their children with good nutrition and ensuring that their children wear appropriate clothing as this contributes to their well-being, self-image and subsequently their intellectual and emotional development.

From all indications parents at School A are aware of the roles they play in their children's schooling and voluntarily directed their efforts and resources to ensuring that their children experience parental support and involvement in their schooling.

When the parents were asked about the role they would like to play in the education of their children, it became evident that parents' preferences with regard to how they wanted to be involved in their children's education aligned with how they presently involved themselves in their children's schooling. The ways in which these parents involve themselves in their children's schooling and their motivation for doing so is supported by literature on the topic such as that reported by Stacer and Preach (2013:342) and Hoover-Dempsey and Sandler (1997). These authors argue that PI in the school is viewed as choices based on parents' perceptions of the requirement and opportunity for their involvement, how they experience the school and the possession of resources that facilitate the choice to be involved (see Chapter 2 section 2.3.3). These resources could be dispositional, operational or financial. Parents A3P, A4P and A5P respectively agreed that the role they valued most in being involved in their children's schooling was personally taking their children to school daily thereby ensuring that their children were attending school. Personally, taking their children to school also gave them the opportunity to see the teacher every day and to interact with their child's teacher if and when the need arose. Parents A1P, A2P and A3P said that they were interested in assisting their children with their homework and believed that involving themselves with their children's homework was an important role which they were able to play. Parent A3P also mentioned that in her endeavor to support her child's learning, she attends PTA meetings and believes that this is a good way in which parents can be involved in their children's schooling. However, she believes that the most important way in which she is and would like to continue to be involved in her child's schooling, is ensuring the presence of her children at the school on a daily basis. According to her:

> *I like to see my children interacting with their peers because schooling means children interact with their peers, and in the course of their interaction they gain a lot.*

Parent A4P also believed that monitoring her children's homework and attending PTA meetings were important ways to be involved in her child's schooling. However, what she felt has most value was being able to ensure the punctuality of her children at the school every day. She emphatically mentioned that 'schooling is about inculcating physical, moral and social lessons in

a child.' This comment suggests that this parent is aware of and acknowledges the social capital that the school offers her children which will stand them in good stead in their future.

4.2.1.3 Parents' views on parent-teacher interaction

In order to investigate the extent to which parents believed they had a responsibility to interact with their children's teachers, parents were asked how often and for what purpose they visit their child's school and interact with the teachers. Parent A1P indicated that she goes to her child's school regularly to clarify issues regarding her child's learning with her teachers. In addition, she suggested that parents should visit the school to check on their children's school work to be able to gauge their child's progress and performance. Parent A2P mentioned that she visits the school on a daily basis to clarify any issues concerning her child's school work with the class teachers. It will be recalled from the previous discussion on parental roles, that several parents indicated that they interacted with the school on a daily basis. Based on these findings, it could be deduced that parents perceive the school as a friendly environment where they are welcomed, and they feel encouraged to interact with the child's teachers. This indicated that the teachers and the school staff create an enabling environment to accommodate and engage parents at their school. This effort is a form of social capital which facilitates intergenerational closure within the school and among parents as well as the pupils. According to Coleman (1988:103) social capital can be in the form of information within a social structure that provides the potential for interaction among individuals (see Chapter 2 section 2.2). According to Coleman, social relations are valued in terms of obligations held on the basis of each other's performance. Based on this argument it is suggested that parents' school visits are a form of social capital within the school that facilitates interaction in terms of exchange of information between the parents and the teachers. The information could be useful to both parties.

In the course of the discussion all the parents at this school confirmed that they are welcome at any time to approach the school staff and teachers either for raising concerns about their children's schooling, for establishing their children's current engagement in schooling, or for complimenting the teaching staff on their work. Consequently, whenever the school calls for their attendance at a PTA meeting, they welcome the invitation and ensure that they attend the meetings. This also indicated that at School A there is a secure relationship within and outside the family such as the

community and in this particular instance, a community within and of schools (Coleman 1988:103).

When parents were asked about the opportunities that a PTA offers for interaction and communication between parents and teachers, all the parents responded that a PTA is an effective means of communicating with the school. The parents indicated that the PTA is an avenue whereby all the stakeholders at the school and the parents are able to come together to discuss schooling issues and to provide feedback on issues of importance. They acknowledged that such gatherings are of great importance as they offer parents the opportunity to voice their opinions or raise questions about issues regarding their children's schooling that were possibly overlooked by the school personnel in the general course of their work. Such opportunities were important since they offered parents the chance to seek clarification on matters that affect their children's schooling.

However, although the PTA meetings have noteworthy potential, parent A1P noted that the attendance of PTA meetings had recently declined. According to her, parents appeared to be increasingly more concerned about meeting their job demands than attending PTA meetings. She raised the concern that parents placed more value on personal issues than the education of their children. Similarly, parent A5P suggested that the major factor that prevents parents from attending PTA meetings was the economic situation of the country. In her opinion, parents are struggling to make ends meet and are unable to put aside what might be seen as additional time for their children – especially the attendance of PTA meetings which might not have direct bearing on their particular child. Attendance of PTA meetings required time over and above what parents were already spending on their children. She also pointed out that in her experience, parents from LSES backgrounds were usually far better than the working-class parent in terms of making time to attend to the educational needs of their children.

All the parents interviewed were unanimous about the importance of PI in their children's schooling. They had strong thoughts on the importance of parents fulfilling their role in their children's education. As such, responses from the sampled parents indicate that parents accept PI as a major responsibility that contributed to ensuring their children's success at school. PI was thus an imperative and not merely an option.

4.2.1.4 Parents' views on the effect of socio-economic status on parental involvement

Families differ in their nature, composition, social, human and financial capital, and also with regard to their SES in society. Literature on the issue indicates that this fact could have an influence on the level of PI (Garcia et al., 2002; Hoover-Dempsey et al., 2005; Pena, 2000:52; Stacer & Perrucci, 2013). (Also see Chapter 2 section 2.4). However, most parents interviewed from School A do not believe that parents' level of income necessarily influences their involvement in the education of their children. According to these parents (A2P, A3P and A4P), parents' actual interest in their children's schooling is more important than parents' SES when it comes to the extent and quality of their involvement in their children's education. Children need care and attention regardless of the level of the parents' income. Parent A4P emphatically said that

> *Parents should prioritize the care of their children no matter the* circumstances *in which they find themselves. They should devote giving time for their children; mothers especially must not prioritize their work over the care of their children. In case they cannot strike a balance between their job and the care of their children, it's better for them to quit the job.*

This response points to the importance of 'spontaneous' PI as discussed in Chapter 2 section 2.3. Parent A3P likewise noted that money is not the main factor to be considered by parents when it comes to their involvement with their children's upbringing and schooling. Of prime consideration is the quality time they put aside to spend with their children and this is not linked to SES in her opinion. She pointed out that a child can belong to a wealthy family and yet fail at school. It was the adequate monitoring of the child by their parents or guardian at home that would ensure success. This opinion was equally shared by Adelodun (2013:148) and Dearing, Kreider, Simpkins and Weisis (2006) who posited that increased PI had greater implications for learners' literacy achievements than did parents' income, maternal level of education or child ethnicity (See Chapter 2 section 2.3.2).

However, the other two parents believed that parents' level of income does influence their involvement in their children's education. Parent A1P indicated that working class parents are much more concerned about their career development thus their involvement in their children's schooling is far less compared to that of LSES parents who seem to readily put aside time to monitor and support their children's school work. She is of the belief that parents of higher SES do not have sufficient time to spend with their children since their time and effort is taken up

pursuing their careers. In addition, parent A5P also acknowledged that the economic situation of the country has prevented parents from spending as much time as they should or, perhaps, even what they would like to, with their children. Most parents are more concerned about being able to provide for the family than setting aside time to monitor their children's schooling and as a result the children lack parental support in view of their schooling. She noted that the impact is mostly felt when both parents are working. This observation is consistence with the view of Olsen and Fuller (2008:94), who noted that when both parents are working, they spend less time with their children and they are less familiar with their children's friends and what is going on in their children's lives (see Chapter 2.2.3.3). In the course of the discussion she suggested that parents should be willing to share their time and act responsibly with regard to the education of their children. She further mentioned that it would be preferable if one of the parents was self-employed rather than both of them working for an employer as this would enable the self-employed parent to be more flexible and be able to monitor and support their children's school work.

However, being a HSES or working class working parent does not exclude involvement in children's education and, as mentioned previously, three of the five parents interviewed believed that SES did not influence PI. When the researcher further probed parents about the effect of SES on their involvement in the education of their children, parent A1P acknowledged that although she is a middle-class parent, she needs to make a concerted effort to engage in her children's education after work. Thus, despite the fact that she is a working mother, she indeed finds time for this. Parent A2P stated that she believes that education is key to life's sustainability and added that parents generally want their children to achieve more than their parents have done. To achieve this, parents must be ready to make sacrifices and give support to their children's schooling. She commented that '…taking care of your children [in relation to their school work], will pay off in the future.' In her opinion, parents, regardless of SES were willing to make this effort.

A3P emphasized the importance of education and suggested that parents should spend more time with their children to support them academically regardless of their SES. Parent A4P added that parents should value the care of their children no matter their SES. She reiterated, supporting a previous comment in this regard, 'Mothers should not value their job over the care of their children else the parent should quit their job.'

Parent A5P indicated that she is a self-employed middle-class parent and consequently she is more flexible and was able to monitor her children's school work on a daily basis. She suggested that all working parents should create time for their children – a point that one of the other working mothers had also affirmed.

When parents were asked the reason for sending their children to the private school rather than a public school, parent A1P indicated that the school is a good choice based on the fact that it is well resourced with learning facilities and learning support materials that aid learning and offer her child the best possible learning opportunities. Her explanation points to the institution's financial capital which enables and supports learning. (The issue of financial capital was discussed in Chapter 2 section 2.4.) She also indicated that the school staff is friendly and diligent. Parent A2P also mentioned that the school is a good choice because the school offers a standard, uninterrupted educational program that is not destabilized by labor strikes unlike what happens in public schools in the area. She also acknowledged that the school is a good place for her children and she has confidence in the abilities of the teachers and school staff. Parents A3P and A4P also mentioned that the school is good for their children in terms of the educational standards that are set and upheld. Parent A5P said her consideration with regard to choosing this particular school for her child was its proximity to her home. Furthermore, she added that the school staff are friendly, and the school meets her expectations of quality education for her children. From the responses it would appear that the parents selected this school (representative of a HSES school) because of the quality of education it provided and the access their children had to good teachers and learning support materials which were probably not available in the other local public schools.

The researcher further asked the parents about the learning aids available in the home and the time spent in reading to assist their children with their school work and to support their children's development generally. This question pointed to the social, human and financial capital embedded in the family which could facilitate learning, and which would support PI in the child's learning experience. All the parents apart from A4P indicated they have a library at home and they regularly read with their children; parents A3P and A5P indicated this was a daily routine, while others indicated that on average they would generally read to their children twice a week and also during the school holidays. Parent A4P indicated that they do not have a library at home, yet despite this, she engaged with her children in reading over weekends.

4.2.1.5 Teachers' expectations of parental involvement in schooling

A focus group interview was conducted with five of the teachers teaching at School A. A profile of the teachers is provided in Table 4.2. The interview occurred outside school hours on the school premises and lasted for just over an hour. The teachers were eager to participate in the interview since their interest in the topic had been heightened after their attention had been drawn to the topic by the survey questionnaire (to be discussed further on in this chapter).

The interview commenced with a question that tried to establish how teachers expect parents to be involved in their children's learning. The discussion was lively and it became clear that teachers expect parents to be involved by assisting their children with their homework, getting their children to school on time on a daily basis, packing appropriate snacks for them, dressing them appropriately according to the weather, and visiting their teacher to check on their progress and performance. These responses pointed to the fact that teachers expect parents to be involved in both planned and spontaneous PI. Arguments in the literature supporting this was found in the work of Keyes (2000) and Greenwood and Hickman (1991) of which the supporting theory was discussed in Chapter 2 section 2.4.

All the teachers agreed that the most effective means of involving parents is through engaging them with their children's homework. They opined that parents should communicate with their children on a daily basis regarding their school work and the assignments. Through engaging with their homework, parents would be able to acquaint themselves with the topics being taught in the school and enable them to establish how their children were progressing. They would also be able to gauge their children's abilities and potential which were important factors in influencing academic achievement. Clearly in their opinion, PI was an important facet of good education and good parenting.

In addition to the above-mentioned activities, the teachers confirmed that the parents also get involved through PTA meetings and during open days and other school events. During the course of the discussion, I asked the teachers how they encourage parents to get involved in the education of their children. The teachers responded that most parents at the school were well-educated and financially secure and that they were encouraged and invited by the school and the teachers to visit

the school regularly to follow up on their children's progress. The teachers also commented that they requested parents to assist their children at home with their homework and school projects. From the responses it was clear that teachers were not adding any new methods of involvement but were merely reinforcing the type of involvement parents carried out already (see chapter 4 section 4.2.1.2).

In order to acquire in-depth knowledge about the teachers' expectation of PI, the researcher further asked the teachers to elaborate on what they think parents need to do to help their children with school work and to involve themselves with their children's education. Some of the teachers responded that parents should participate fully in the educational training of their children. For example, teacher A2T mentioned that parents should make time for their children; they should engage with their children regarding their school work whenever they are able to. The teacher conceded that parents are often tired when they get home from work and it is an extra effort to involve themselves in their children's schooling. Despite their fatigue, it was in the child's best interests if the parents were to involve themselves. Planned PI was as important as general good parenting if the child is to succeed at school.

Teachers pointed out that parents are also asked to report any negative attitudes that they became aware of in their children because when the pupil notices that their parents have a good rapport with their teacher, they are generally more amenable to correction and support. Teacher A1T said it is important for parents to abide by the school rules and regulations so that parents would support their children in line with how the school functions academically. It was especially noted however, that parents are expected to check their children's homework daily and that this appeared to be the most frequent form of PI expected of parents by the teachers.

When the researcher asked the teachers what they think motivates parents to be involved in their child's education, they all agreed that parents of their school are highly motivated to assist their children when their children are performing well scholastically. That good performance acts as a motivator for involvement was also evidenced in the literature (Hoover-Dempsey & Sandler, 1995:314, Hoover-Dempsey et al., 2005:109; Chapter 2 2.3.3). These authors are of the opinion that parents' sense of efficacy is a motivator of their involvement. According to these researchers, parent's sense of efficacy is defined as the parents' belief that their personal actions and their

involvement will make a positive difference in their children's academic performance. Therefore, parents who have a stronger sense of efficacy show a high level of PI. The research by these authors asserts that parents' sense of efficacy for helping their children stems from the direct experience of success in others' involvement (family members, social groups) or involvement-related activities by family members or a social group. Good performance on the other hand would generally be motivated by consistent PI indicating a clear relationship between PI and achievement.

The researcher further asked the teachers why, in their opinion, parents would be negligent of being involved in their children's education. Teacher A1T said parents who are less involved in their children's education are less aware of their responsibilities towards their children's education and that they probably do not see PI as part of their role as parents. The literature also speaks of the fact that parents' willingness to be involved in school-based PI was linked to how important they perceived this role (Hoover-Dempsey & Sandler, 1995; Chapter 2 section 2.3.3). It is evidenced in the literature that PI is to a significant extent determined by parents' skills, the value they attach to education, their motivation to be involved and the opportunities afforded them for involvement. In the opinion of these researchers, some aspects of capacity are shaped by personal attributes, whilst others are shaped by social structures such as SES.

Teacher A2T mentioned that in cases where parents devoted almost all their time to pursuing their careers, there was little time left to spend quality time with their children. The teacher went on to mention that some parents believe the teachers should take full academic responsibility for their children since the parents have paid their children's school fees and their duty ends there. The same teacher indicated that some parents perceived the whole process of being involved in their child's education as stressful when combined with their own busy work schedule. However, it was suggested by A3T that a lack of education could result in some parents being less concerned about their children's school work. It was posited that parents who are illiterate or poorly educated would possibly find it difficult to assist with their children's school work. This sentiment is also reflected in the literature. It is suggested that the lower the SES and level of education, the less inclined the parents are to become involved in their children's education. Low financial capital could also translate to a lack of support mechanisms and materials available to support the child scholastically. It was conceded that a parent's illiteracy may however not be the only reason for

their inability or lack of desire to assist their children with their school activities. This was confirmed from further responses provided by the other teachers. For example, teacher A1T argued that illiterate parents can still devise means of assisting their children with their school work. She added that parents who did not have the opportunity to obtain an education themselves, could acquire a measure of learning by engaging with their children in their school work most especially at the elementary classes. This point of view was also found to be a principle espoused in the Ira Gordon model for parent education (see Chapter 2 section 2.3.4.2). As described by Binford and Newell (1991), the model was designed to assist parents to be in charge of their children's education (also see Chapter 2 section 2.3.4.2). As the parents engage with their children's learning, the parents' own knowledge and skills improve and there is tendency for parents to develop skills that result in a more positive home-school relationship. In addition, due to the value less educated parents seemingly attach to learning, these parents generally make use of all the resources at their disposal to see that their children are properly educated as posited by teachers A2T, A4T and A5T. Ways in which less educated parents assist their children is to enroll them for extra lessons after school where they can receive support that their parents are unable to provide. These extramural lessons are taught by a person other than their class teacher and this could broaden the child's learning experience by exposing them to a different teaching and learning method. However, it needs to be pointed out that this was a hypothetical discussion with the teachers basing their pronouncements on assumed rather than concrete examples from their own experience. The teachers in School A pointed out that most of the parents at this school are middle class, well-educated and that they try their best to support their children academically and that their comments on illiterate or less educated parents or parents from a LSES was hypothetical or indicative of the exception to the rule. Teacher A1T commented however that although most parents at the school are upper and middle class and support their children, it is the lower-class parents – of whom there is a minority – who are especially supportive and involved in their children's schooling – a point that was at odds with the hypothesis previously outlined. This perception was supported by A3T who mentioned that there were some parents that have never visited the school since the beginning of the term and she suspected these parents were middle to upper class since they were professors and doctors at higher education institutions. However, teachers A2T and A4T agreed that all the parents at this school – both upper, middle and lower-class parents – showed a keen interest in the education of their children.

4.2.1.6 Teachers' views on how to encourage parental involvement

Teachers were asked what strategies are used to encourage PI. Teacher A1T mentioned that the school authorities consisting of the school management board and the school principal – make a point of inviting all parents to the PTA meeting to discuss issues of importance. One of the issues discussed regularly with the parents is their involvement in their children's school work and their general welfare. In addition teacher A3T mentioned that during the open days held once a term ,the school calls on parents to oversee their children's school work and to become involved in their children's learning experiences. However, the turnout at the open days is mostly poor since parents have difficulty finding the time to attend. Most parents who do make it to the event, arrive towards the end of the meeting which leaves little time for individual attention and they miss the introductory announcements when parents are generally welcomed and the importance of their involvement is outlined.

Then the researcher asked the teachers to elaborate on what their own strategies are to involve parents. Teacher A1T mentioned that generally she invites parents personally to meet with her when the need arises – she sees them when they come to pick up the child from school – or she contacts them telephonically. She believes that children tend to persuade their parents to respond to the teacher's call. Teacher A2T mentioned that she communicated with the parents through messages in the child's homework book so that when the parent checks the child's homework, the message will be found. Teachers A4T and A5T said they phone the parent if the need to communicate arises. Generally, the call is to request the parent to meet with the teacher to discuss matters of interest and concern. Teacher A5T suggested that when parents are formally invited by the teachers either by a letter or text message, they usually respond to the request.

When the researcher asked the teachers how often the school communicates with parents and what their opinion is on the language of communication as I was inclined to believe that this could possibly influence parents' inclination to respond, they said that the school often communicates with the parents by sending notification letters home through their children. The matters that are commonly communicated are regarding school fees, forthcoming PTA meeting and sport events. Sometimes the written communication is accompanied with a text (SMS) message to the parents. If there is a need to send for the parent on private issues concerning a pupils' welfare and their academic performance the teachers immediately notify the parents telephonically. The teachers

believe that the school has to inculcate moral principles and maintain sound academic standards for their pupils. It was emphasized that parents are welcome to use any language to communicate with the school and teachers. The teachers affirmed that the parents usually speak the native language (Yoruba) or English which are well understood by the teachers and the school staff.

From all indications the school appears to have a well-managed program of communication to involve parents, and the teachers are willing to keep the parents abreast of information about their children and their accomplishments and concerns. The response of the teachers also indicated that they are initiating two-way communication with the parents. The work of Lemmer and Van Wyk (2004) and Binford and Newell (1991) stresses the roles of teachers as initiators and controllers of communication between the school and the home (also see Chapter 2 section 2.3.4.1). In addition, consistent with the work of Kohl et al. (2000) several interventions are in support of the hypothesis, suggesting that when teachers reach out to parents, the relationship between the parent and the teacher as well as the communication between them is improved (See Chapter 2 section2.3.3). Consequently, parents become involved in their children's school in a variety of ways.

4.2.1.7 Teachers' perception of the link between parents' socio-economic status and parental involvement

The responses presented in section 4.2.1.5 indicated that the teachers at School A believe the SES of parents to a certain extent plays a role in determining the nature and extent of parents' involvement in their children's education although most of the observations in this regard in relation to LSES parents were posed hypothetically since the majority of the parents whose children attend this school are either HSES or MSES. This deduction about LSES is based on specific factors, such as the inability to acquire learning aids which usually affects parents' optimal involvement in their child's education. Although teachers generally felt that the parents of School A were suitably involved in their children's education, there seemed to be a minority of LSES parents for whom involvement in their children's schooling was particularly important. The explanation that was put forward was that the LSES parents appeared to show more interest and concern for their children's education than HSES parents since the latter were generally kept very busy with their careers and had limited time to be involved in their children's schooling. Four of the five teachers interviewed agreed that LSES parents are equally or perhaps even more involved with their children's schooling than HSES parents. However, this statement needs to be placed in

perspective as further discussions on this topic indicated that, although the majority of the parents at School A are upper or middle-class individuals, there are also LSES parents, who, although involved in their children's schooling as previously indicated – perhaps even more so than middle and HSES parents – are unable to afford the learning materials (i.e. they lack the financial capital) required to support their children's learning. This finding is consistent with the work of Guo and Mullan- Harris (2000) which shows that LSES parents may not have the financial capability to purchase resources that stimulate the child cognitively (see Chapter 2 section 2.4).

Furthermore, many of the LSES children in this school are sent home from school for not having paid their school fees. Teacher A1T indicated that the learning opportunities for children from LSES are consequently compromised; the children get sent home when school fees are not paid and they miss out on their school work. These parents are generally also unable to supply their children with the necessary resources like writing materials and the children subsequently lose concentration and motivation in the classroom and their ability to progress at school is compromised.

However, teachers pointed out that it was not only SES which could affect PI. Teacher A1T specifically pointed out some of the pupils are from broken homes where the parents are in discord with each other and family stability and care is disrupted. Teacher A3T also indicated that these pupils are often deprived of an adequate diet and arrive at school on empty stomachs indicating a lack of spontaneous PI. This is classified as a psychological barrier in the work of Vanvelsor and Orozco (2007) (also see Chapter 2 section 2.4). Teachers A5T added that such pupils are reluctant to participate in the classroom activities as it would appear that their self-esteem is low. Teacher A4T elaborated on this issue and mentioned the case of a pupil in her class. She had become aware that the relationship between the child's parents was strained and as a result, this pupil did not receive any assistance with her homework. The teacher sent for the parents with the hope of helping their child to improve in her studies but unfortunately the parents did not respond to the invitation and the weakness persisted. Furthermore, the teachers agreed that the level of spontaneous PI appeared to be affected by the parents' SES. Teachers A2T and A3T indicated that when pupils feel deprived of learning materials or snacks, they tend to lose concentration in the classroom and consequently their school work suffers.

The researcher asked the teachers how they would offer help to the pupils who find themselves in such a predicament. Teachers A1T and A2T claimed that they usually motivate the pupil by rewarding them when they achieved in the classroom. Teachers A3T indicated that she goes out of her way to encourage the pupils to participate in class work and class activities. Teachers A4T and A5T mentioned that they opt to send for the parent to advise them on how to help their children with school work despite their circumstances. Teacher A1 emphatically mentioned that the parents are a major factor in a child's success at school, and according to a saying that charity begins at home, the home of a child must be friendly and educationally supportive for a child to achieve at school.

When asked if there is a visible effect of SES on PI, Teacher A2 confirmed that pupils could be apprehensive when parents do not pay the school fees as it happens with the few LSES students in the school. It also happened that these parents tend to withhold payment until it got to the stage that the child was banned from attending school which could also happen during the examination period. Only when the situation became untenable, did the parents settle the fees. Teachers A3T and A5T suggested that parents should be cautious of their spending and should prioritize paying their children's school fees as schooling should be seen as a priority. In their view, some parents were inclined to spend money on nonessentials and neglected paying their children's school fees and buying schooling necessities such as stationery and learning materials. This happened despite the fact that they are educated and middle-class parents, indicating that non-payment of school fees was not necessarily determined by parents' SES but rather sometimes a function of attitude. Teacher A5T emphatically mentioned, 'Such pupils, on getting to school, find it difficult to cope scholastically. In many occasions when their classmates are making use of their textbook they are left out doing nothing because they do not have one.'

The response of the teachers indicates that socio-economic factors such as family income, parents' level of education and parents' commitment to being involved in their children's education can indeed influence PI. LSES parents may have less access to resources that support their children's learning and communicate less with teachers – a point that is supported in the literature (Amaele, 2003; Desimone, 1999; Garcia et al., 2002; Hornby & Lafaele, 2011:41; Horvat et al. 2003; Mark et al., 2006; Stacer & Perrucci, 2013:341, see Chapter 2 section 2.4).

However, unlike the literature findings, in this particular case, there was no clear-cut argument that LSES parents are less involved in their children's' schooling. LSES parents are indeed less able to procure learning materials for their children's school work and are less able to afford the school fees; on the other hand, they appear to be more conscientious than some HSES parents in supporting and encouraging their children's schooling through better and more consistent PI. Therefore, it was indicated that LSES parents could possibly have more time available to be involved in their children's schooling and that, being from a LSES, were especially aware of the importance of education and consequently tried their best to support their children's schooling in other ways.

4.2.2 Case study 2: School B

The second case reported on is that of School B, which is a government public school located within the university staff quarters. Given the location of the school, most of the parents of the children who attend the school are staff at a local university and could thus be classified as middle income. Apart from university staff pupils who attend the school, many of the other pupils attending are from LSES backgrounds. At this school, pupils are exempted from paying school fees, however each pupil is levied by the state government to pay PTA levies to the school authority. These levies are in the form of internally generated funds required for the school's upkeep. The spending of this money is monitored by the school governing board and PTA officials. The teachers' salaries are paid by the government. Most of the teachers are university graduates. The school comprises a teaching staff of 45 individuals including the principal. Student registration totals about 850 pupils. The children of the parents who participated in the study are in primary one to primary grade six. A profile of the parents who participated in the study is provided in Table 4.3 below. In the case of School B, in each of the five interviews conducted, both parents participated in the interview, however mothers are more active and responsive than the fathers. Their views are reported as 'parents' views.

TABLE 4.3: A profile of the parents representing School B

Parent	Parenting Structure		Age		Level of schooling		Occupation		SES	No. of children	No. of school-going children	Position of child at school
	Dual	Single	Father	Mother	Father	Mother	Father	Mother				
B1P	X		35	28	PhD	BSc	Lecturer	Housewife	Middle	5	5	Middle
B2P	X		45	35	PhD	BSc	Lecturer	Teacher	Middle	4	4	Eldest
B3P	X		46	30	PhD	MSc	Scientist	Teacher	Middle	3	3	Eldest
B4P	X		41	30	MSc	BSc	Civil Servant	Trader	Middle	5	5	Middle
B5P	X		40	32	BSc	MSc	Teacher	Housewife	Middle	2	2	Eldest

Five teachers were also interviewed at School B. During the interview the teachers expressed their views concerning the PI at their school and the influence of SES on PI. The interview lasted for about one hour.

A profile of the teachers who were interviewed at School B is provided in Table 4.4.

TABLE 4.4 A profile of the teachers representing School B

Teacher	Gender	Age	Qualification	Class taught	Class-size
B1T	Female	40	BSc Ed	Primary 2	35
B2T	Female	42	BSc Ed	Primary 4	25
B3T	Female	37	BSc Ed	Primary 3	38
B4T	Female	39	NCE	Primary 5	27
B5T	Female	48	NCE	Primary 1	25

4.2.2.1 Parents' views on education and schooling

The researcher first aimed to establish parents' views on education and what schooling means to them. From their responses, I could deduce that in their view schooling is important as it entails

knowledge acquisition in a formal setting that equips a child to achieve in life and overcome hurdles on their way. In addition, schooling takes place in an environment that enhances learning through peer group interaction and interaction with adults (teachers) which benefits the child and prepares him or her for the future.

From these responses it is evident that parents at School B believed that schooling does not focus on teaching and learning alone but that schooling facilitates social interaction and the development of social skills. This social interaction, by the very nature of schooling, is interaction between the child and the teachers and between the pupils individually. Another facet of this interaction is where parents interact with their children, their children's peers and with their children's teachers. This interaction is a form of social capital that enhances a child's development and is geared towards the future. The literature by Uzoechina and Obdike (2008, in Ushang et al., 2010:315) also indicates that PI is an obligation in the educational development of a child of all the stakeholders which requires the establishment of partnerships with one another to ensure effective and efficient academic performance (see Chapter 2 section 2.3). The authors maintain that the existence and strength of the relationship between stakeholders is indicative of the social capital available within that context. The work of Leana and Pil (2006) and Lin (2002) indicates that the overall network of relationships has the potential to facilitate information sharing and the exchange of knowledge among individuals (see Chapter 2 section 2.2). These researchers also claim that the social capital, or resources accessed through such connections and relations, is essential in achieving individuals' goals. In addition, social capital further brings about a sense of shared responsibility and enhanced communication which is important for disseminating information and expertise within and across the networks. Furthermore, during the course of the interview, the parents also acknowledged that schooling enables a child to attain greater heights academically, socially and financially. It is clear from this response that parents believe that education plays an important role in improving an individual's social status and prospects in the social hierarchy. The implication of this statement is that a child who attends school will most likely attain higher status in the social hierarchy.

The responses received thus indicated that parents value schooling. I then asked the parents how important education was in their family. Parents B3P and B4P mentioned that education brings about enlightenment which enables an individual to be able to contribute meaningfully to the

environment in which they live. Parent B2P indicated that in their own situation, education provides the means of livelihood for her family. Emphatically she said, 'Education is very important to my family because my husband and I are earning [an income] from the education that we had.'

These parents believe that education provides a means of livelihood. In addition, education is seen as a process that equips an individual with skills that are useful for their personal development which contributes to the development of society at large. The researcher also asked the parents about their opinion of the school staff and the teachers in general. This question was put to the parents to establish their perception of the school and the teachers and how this contributed to the development of their children. Parents commented that the school staff and the teachers are efficient and are well-equipped to do their jobs. Parents believed that the school is trustworthy and reliable in its performance. Parent B3P however commented that in her opinion the teachers' performance did not meet her expectations. She commented, 'The teachers are trying their best though they have not finally met the set goals of the parents.'

Parents' responses indicated that they are positive about the school and are happy with the school. They view the school as being beneficial for their children. In addition, the literature (Kohl etal., 2000 519; Olsen & Fuller, 2008:98) indicates that the quality of the parent-teacher relationship appears to also influence the parent's level of school involvement and the parents' perception of the school (see Chapter 2 section 2.3.3.).

4.2.2.2 Parents' views on their involvement in their children's schooling

When the parents were asked how they are involved in their child's schooling, all the parents interviewed at School B had similar responses. They acknowledged that they monitor and guide their children through their homework. However, parent B2P noted that…. 'Parents that want their children to succeed in life must be able to contribute and make sacrifices for them to become better persons in the future. I monitor how my children spend their time, and I make sure that they go to school on time daily.'

In addition, parent B4P pointed out that the primary obligation for parents is to pay the school PTA levies on time: 'After paying the school levies the next obligation for parents is to assist them through [monitoring] their homework.'

From the parents' replies, it is clear that the parents at School B are committed to overseeing their children's school work. As pointed out by two parents (B2P and B4P), parents must spend quality time with their children as this helps the children to adequately plan and prepare for their daily activities and cope in the school situation. In addition, parents' commitment to paying the school PTA levies is a type of involvement that is as essential as involvement in homework as indicated by parents. In essence, it could be deduced that in these parents' opinion, parents should make time to guide their children through their school work on a daily basis and that spontaneous as well as planned PI are important (see Chapter 2 section 2.3).

The next question put to parents was in relation to the role they would like to play in their children's schooling, in other words, how they would like to be involved in their children's lives at school. Parents offered various responses, but from what they said, it was clear that the suggestions they offered did not differ from the role they were already playing in involving themselves in their children's schooling. Parent B1P mentioned that she cannot do justice to her parenting role if she does not assist her children with their homework. In her opinion, homework is an effective means of helping her children to succeed academically and it is her responsibility to oversee this aspect of her child's schooling. In her words:

> *I allow them to attempt the questions* [first] *and then* [I] *assist them with the difficult areas. I make sure that the homework is done before they go to school the next day.*

Parent B2P mentioned that what was most important was getting her children to school daily. This effort was also supported by the research findings of Deplanty et al. (2007:362) that established that PI was crucial to scholastic success and that ensuring that children attend school daily was one of the most important aspects of PI (see Chapter 2 section 2.3.3). In addition, this parent said it was essential for children to have a good breakfast before they leave for school. Parent B4P also mentioned that she believed in the importance of her children having a good breakfast before they go to school and she always ensured that her children did not attend school on an empty stomach. Parents noted that the importance of a good breakfast before going to school was something parents were obliged to ensure in their support of their children's day at school. Breakfast is said to be the most important meal of the day and essential in enhancing the child's concentration at school. Parents' response suggests that providing breakfast is an involvement practice that parents should engage in if they want to enhance their children's achievement at school. Such involvement is,

according to Desforges and Abouchaar (2003:85), referred to as spontaneous PI (see Chapter 2 section 2.3.3).

Parent B3P claimed that she especially valued the teacher's feedback on her child's performance at school, specifically the first term assessment feedback. She indicated that the teacher's assessment of the child's performance indicates the extent to which her child is coping with the school work and is indicative of the areas where she, as the parent, needs to intervene and support her child. Parent B5P mentioned that paying of the school PTA levies was one of the other important ways in which parents could involve themselves in their children's schooling. The importance parents attach to the payment of PTA levies is indicative that these parents are aware that these levies are used for the development and extension of the education system and the furtherance of their children's schooling. Through paying school levies, parents contribute to PI.

Parents suggested various ways in which they are and would like to be involved in the education of their children. The response regarding the importance of teacher feedback also indicated that the parents regard the teachers as partners in the education of their children and respect their decision and opinions with respect to their children's performance. This indicates that the parents see teachers not only as partners in education and that they also trust and have confidence in the teachers and their engagement in their children's learning.

4.2.2.3 Parents' views on the parent-teacher interaction

The literature on PI raises the point that the relationship between parents and teachers is often tentative (Olsen & Fuller, 2008:106). Also see Chapter 2 section 2.3.3). This research indicates that parents note that, since they have entrusted the care and education of their children to the teachers, they are cautious not to disrupt or negatively influence this relationship with their child's teacher. Parents are sometimes concerned that through their intervention or involvement in their children's schooling teachers could potentially either complicate or facilitate circumstances for their children. Therefore, in order to understand the parents' motives and rationale regarding their interaction with the teachers and to know if they are actually directly involved in the education of their children in the school itself, the parents were asked to explain how they engaged with the school – how regularly they visit the school and for what purpose.

Parent B1P indicated that she dropped her child at school on a daily basis and if there is need to clarify issues with the teacher, she makes use of the opportunity to interact with the teacher when she drops off her child. Parent B2P mentioned that she visits the school occasionally and that she specifically attends PTA meetings to ensure that she is kept abreast of her child's progress at school. Parent B3P said she visits the school when invited or requested to do so by the teacher. She also attends school events. Parent B4P also indicated that she goes to her child's school whenever there are issues that need to be clarified with the teacher and sometimes to compliment the teacher on her good work. She also approaches the teacher for help in correcting her children's negative behavior. Parent B5P mentioned that she goes to her child's school on a weekly basis to check on her children's school work and progress at school.

From the above explanation, it is clear that parents at School B have a cordial relationship with the teachers and their actions are indicative of their keen interest in involving themselves in their children's education. In addition, it could be deduced that parents at School B recognize the teacher as acting *in loco parentis* and appreciate their endeavors. The cordial interaction between the parents and the teachers signifies the importance of parents and teachers having a good rapport which eventually translates to giving the child an inclusive and balanced upbringing. In essence, when parents and teachers are in partnership, this partnership generates a form of social capital in which the pupil benefits from the parents' interaction as well as the teachers' (see Chapter 2 section 2.2). It also became evident that in this particular school parents were encouraged to be involved in their children's schooling since the teachers specifically invited parents to meet and engage with them. This is consistent with the research by Epstein and Van Voorhis, (2001) and that of Green, Walker, Hoover-Dempsey and Sandler (2007) who suggested that specific invitations to the parents made by the teacher were an important motivator for parents' active engagement in supporting their children's learning at home and at school (see Chapter 2 section 2.3.3).

When the researcher asked parents about the opportunities that a PTA offers for interaction and communication between parents and teachers, all the interviewed parents at School B acknowledged that they are involved in PTA meetings. Although the parents' acknowledged that the PTA is a very effective means of communicating with the parents, they all affirmed that the meeting was beneficial for pupils and teachers as well. For instance, parent B3P noted that the 'PTA is the most effective means of [the school and teachers] communicating with the parents on

general issues concerning the pupils.' Parent B5P also mentioned that the PTA provided a meeting point for all the stakeholders involved in the education of a child. In her opinion the PTA meeting was the forum used to discuss matters that are crucial to pupils' progress at school. She said, 'Most parents do not have time to check on their children at school. Rather most parents often drop their children off at school on a daily basis without bothering to check on the school work. The PTA meeting gears them up to this responsibility.'

Despite the positive stance towards PTA meetings, parents indicated issues of concern. They indicated that despite a week's notice of the impending meeting, the turnout of parents at the PTA meeting could be rated as average. The parents mentioned possible reasons for poor attendance such as parents living far from the school, parents' indifferent attitude and parents not being aware of the importance of PTA meetings. In addition, they mentioned that sometimes parents chose to stay away from the meeting since they had not yet paid the required PTA levies and were embarrassed by this, or when they had a misunderstanding with the teacher or vice-visa. These issues were also mentioned by other researchers (Ayodele, 2004 in Ekundayo & Alonge, 2012:18) as being among the constraining factors that could result in the lack of cooperation between parents and the staff (see Chapter 2 section 2.3.5). This lack of cooperation may result in the staff and principal not involving parents in school governance for fear of being criticized by the parents.

The parents suggested that the school authority, in addition to the written notification of the meeting, could also invite parents through a verbal invitation from the teacher and school staff. They also suggested that the school should communicate the outcome of the meeting on their official school website so that parents could access the information at their convenience. Generally, it would appear that PTA meetings foster effective communication between the parents and the teachers. However, it was suggested that the school authority should make a point of communicating the outcome of the meeting to all the parents regardless of whether they attended the meeting or not.

4.2.2.4 Parents' views on the effect of socio-economic status on Parental Involvement

The parents were asked if their level of income has any influence on their involvement in the education of their children. Three out of the five interviewed parents at school B responded that SES did indeed affect PI. Parents B1P and B5P claimed that 'the rich people do not have time for

their children.' In their opinion, parents who earn a high income are preoccupied with their job and consequently are less involved with their children's schooling. Parent B2P also mentioned that the LSES parents usually choose to enroll their children in public schools. From her point of view, parents' financial capacity is influenced by their SES. However, parent B3P argued that being a LSES parent does not determine the parents' ability or inclination to be involved in their children's schooling. She pointed out that PI largely depends on the individual's interest whether to be involved or not and not necessarily the parents' SES. Parent B4P commented that '[a higher] income assists parents in getting involved, although some parents have the money but do not have the time for their children. But of most importance is the parents' interest.'

In the course of the discussion, the researcher enquired about the parents' own SES and how this impacted their involvement. All the interviewed parents considered themselves to be middle class. In order to have an understanding on the effect of their SES on their involvement, the researcher asked the parents about the educational facilities they are able to provide for their children to support learning at home. Parent B1P mentioned that she reads with her children on a daily basis. This parent also commented that at home they have a library and a computer which are at the children's disposal. Parent B2P claimed that she usually assists her children with their homework. Parents B3P, B4P and B5P responded similarly also commenting that they read with their children on a daily basis. In addition, they have a library at home which the children are free to use.

The importance of education to secure children's future was a sentiment supported by all parents interviewed. Parent B1P emphasized how important it was to create and spend quality time with one's children while B2P suggested the importance of encouraging parents to spend time with their children. Parent B3P pointed out that one should not assume that children can learn on their own and noted that it was important for parents to monitor children's school work regardless of how clever the child is. She also said that parents had a responsibility to constantly check that their children engaged with their school work at home while B4P added how important it was for parents to concern themselves and support their children in their schooling. Parents B4P and B5P agreed that even if parents were not financially well off, they could still afford the interest and time to educate their children.

From the parents' responses, it was deduced that, in these parents' opinion, the quantity and quality of time parents devote to their children is a very important aspect in PI. This suggests that irrespective of parents' SES, the quality and extent of the relationship between the parents and their children constitutes the family social capital as buttressed by Coleman's (1998) theory (see Chapter 2 section 2.2). According to Coleman (1998: 109-110) social capital constitutes the quantity and quality of relationships between the individuals and in the context of this study, this would refer to the quantity and extent of the relationships between the parents and their children (irrespective of their SES) and among and between significant individuals involved in the child's schooling such as teachers and other parents. Therefore, family social capital is understood as the bond between parents and children which translates to the time and attention parents spend in interacting with their children, in monitoring their activities, and in promoting the child's wellbeing and in supporting their children's schooling.

4.2.2.5 Teachers' expectations of parental involvement in schooling

The teachers confirmed that the parents of the children attending the school were generally from the MSES and that these parents are mostly actively involved in their children's schooling. According to the teachers, PI in general includes parents visiting the school to check on their children's progress and performance and on the child's behavior, attending PTA meetings, and assisting children with their homework.

In the context of the study, the researcher asked the teachers what they thought parents needed to do to help their children academically. Teacher B1T mentioned that parents need to show that they care for their children and consequently they must create and spend quality time with their children. In addition, teacher B4T suggested that if parents were too busy to attend to their children's schooling needs due to work commitments, they could employ the help of a suitably qualified person to oversee their children's homework.

Teachers were asked what, in their opinion, motivates parents to be involved in their children's schooling. Teacher B5T suggested that children's good performance is a strong motivator. The response from teacher B3T indicated that PI was enhanced when teachers show love and concern towards the children (see Chapter 2 section 2.3.4). Teacher B2T added that PI was increased when teachers invited parents to the school to discuss their children's progress or chat about any

difficulty their children were experiencing in relation to their school work or relationships at school. This observation was also supported by the research of Epstein and Van Voorhis, (2001) and Green, Walker, Hoover-Dempsey and Sandler (2007) (see Chapter 2 section 2.3.3), which suggests that parents are motivated to become actively involved in supporting their children's learning at home and at school when the teacher specifically invites them to discuss their children's progress and schooling with them.

The researcher was also interested in establishing teachers' views on why some parents are not involved in their children's schooling. The responses ranged from mentioning that some parents are ignorant of their responsibilities towards their children's schooling, some parents have a negligent attitude towards their children's education, and some children who come from broken homes or homes where the parents are frequently in conflict suffer considerably at school due to the tension and dispute between the parents.

Teachers appear to be of the opinion that the school alone cannot educate a child and the teachers expect and encourage the parents to be actively involved with their children at home. Teachers acknowledge the importance of the partnership between themselves and the parents. The research by Anderson and Minke (2007: 318) supports this notion that PI at home is recognized for its importance in supporting a child's schooling and education and is acknowledged by teachers for the vital contribution it makes in this regard (see Chapter 2 section 2.3). Anderson and Minke (2007: 318) concluded that this finding was striking because PI at school is much more visible to school personnel than PI at home (see Chapter 2 section 2.3). A positive relationship or partnership between the teachers and the parents encourages parents' active involvement in their children's school work at home.

4.2.2.6 Teachers' views on how to encourage parental involvement

Studies by Hoover-Dempsey and Sandler, (1997), Hover-Dempsey et al. (2005) and Walker et al. (2005) describe contextual motivators for PI (see Chapter 2 section 2.3.3). The factors mentioned are invitations from the school to the parents to become involved, specific invitations to the parents from the teacher, and a specific invitation from the pupil to the parent. According to these authors, these motivators encourage parents to be involved in the education of their children. Parents are believed to feel welcomed and perceive themselves to be valued members of the community and

esteemed participants in their child development and perceive the school as being positive and encouraging.

For the purpose of the study the researcher was interested in establishing how this particular school encourages PI. I asked the teachers what measures the school takes to encourage parents to actively involve themselves in their children's schooling. Teacher B2T noted that during the PTA meetings parents are always advised on how to become involved in their children's education. She mentioned that if there were specific issues concerning a particular pupil, the parent is invited to the school either by the teacher or the principal. Other strategies that were used to involve parents in their children's schooling were to telephone parents if the need arises. Another teacher indicated that she had, on occasion, visited the parents at their home or at their business to discuss matters of concern or interest. Teacher B2T mentioned that she was in the habit of writing a note to parents to remind them of important matters such as when they needed to buy stationery or textbooks for their children. These strategies employed by teachers to encourage PI are examples of contextual motivators as evidenced in the literature (see Chapter 2 section2.3.3).

When questioned whether the language of communication between the school and parents affects PI and parental commitment to children's schooling, teachers were of the opinion that the language of communication is not a factor. It was pointed out that all the languages spoken in Nigeria are welcomed and spoken at the school.

It would appear that the school as a whole prioritizes the interests of pupils since the school makes every possible effort to encourage PI. Teachers and the school authority act as contextual motivators of PI as proposed by several researchers such as Hoover-Dempsey & Sandler (1997) and Hover-Dempsey et al. (2005) and Walker et al. (2005) (see Chapter 2 section 2.3.3).

4.2.2.7 Teachers' perception of the link between parents' socio-economic status and parental involvement

Davis-Kean and Sextan (2009) suggested that the influence of SES on parenting is significant and consequently, during the course of the research, this issue was explored in all three case studies. In the second case study which focused on the nature and scope of PI in School B from parents'

and teachers' perspectives, the researcher asked teachers about their views on how parents' SES impacts on PI. All the teachers indicated that SES did indeed affect PI. According to teacher B1T she was of the opinion that roughly three quarters of the pupils attending the school are MSES and the parents are well educated university employees while the remaining one quarter are of LSES.

The teachers further commented that middle class parents are more involved in their children's schooling than LSES parents. They also claimed that parents' level of education influenced their involvement indicating that well-educated parents were more involved, noting that pupils residing in the university staff quarters are generally better equipped than pupils off-campus, speaking good English and being well nourished. She claimed that the economic situation of the country is burdensome and that LSES parents struggle to meet the educational needs of their children and also struggle to sustain their children physically. It thus happens that generally LSES children attending the school are poorly nourished, shabby and unkempt. B2T pointed out that the LSES parents were focused on maintaining their jobs and supporting the family. This view was also shared by Vanvelsor and Orozco (2007) in the literature (see Chapter 2 section 2.4). These demographic factors enumerated by the teachers are similar to the factors mentioned by Vanvelsor and Orozco (ibid) that may prevent parents' participation in school centered PI activities (see Chapter 2 section 2.4). Their lack of participation is due to inflexible work schedules, lack of transportation and being employed in several jobs in order to earn sufficient money to support the family.

When the researcher asked the teachers whether they were able to assist such pupils, teacher B1T said at times she encourages her colleagues to contribute financially to meet these pupils' needs, while teacher B4T mentioned that she requests parents to visit her so that they can discuss how the pupils can be assisted. She also raised the point that such issues, namely those pertaining to pupils welfare, were discussed at PTA meetings.

4.2.3 Case study 3: School C
The last case reported in this study was School C. School C is a public school that serves the people at grassroots level and provides education to children from LSES backgrounds. The school is located within the local community where the indigenous people reside. The school is owned by the state and the teachers are paid by the government. The school is served by 28 teachers and 450

pupils attend the school. The school has nine bungalows of three blocks each. Each of the blocks has six classrooms. The school also has a medium size field for recreational and sporting activities.

According to the parents who participated in the study, the school is conveniently located being very close to their homes. Their children easily walk to the school themselves and do not need to be dropped off at school. Most parents who enroll their children at the school are low income earners. According to the parents, the school is serving them well by educating their children. Most of the parents are self-employed and the majority are farmers.

The parents who participated in the study were selected by volunteer sampling. The interviews were conducted at the parents' choice of venue such as their home and at a time convenient to them. The children of the parents that took part in the study are in primary grade one to grade six. Table 4.5 shows the profile of the parents that were interviewed in School C.

TABLE 4.5 A profile of the parents representing School C

Parent	Parenting Structure		Age group		Level of schooling		Occupation		SES	No. of children	No. of school-going children	Position of child at school
	Dual	Single	Father	Mother	Father	Mother	Father	Mother				
C1P	X		35	32	High School	High School	Farmer	Trader	Low	6	5	Middle
C2P	X		44	40	High School	High School	Furniture Maker	Hairdresser	Low	4	3	Youngest
C3P	X		39	35	High School	High School	Mechanic	Trader	Low	5	5	Middle
C4P	X		30	25	High School	High School	Farmer	Housewife	Low	4	2	Eldest
C5P	X		47	40	High School	None	Farmer	Farmer	Low	5	5	Middle

Five teachers took part in the focus group interview at School C. Purposive sampling was used to select teachers to be interviewed. The interview took place after school hours and lasted about one

hour. The teachers showed a keen interest in answering the questions. The questions that were posed related primarily to the influence of SES on PI at their school. The teachers were chosen from primary grade one to grade six. The teachers profile is shown in Table 4.6.

TABLE 4.6: A profile of the teachers representing School C

Teacher	Gender	Age group	Qualification	Class taught	Class size
C1T	Female	45	BSc Ed	Primary 4	30
C2T	Female	40	BSc Ed	Primary 6	35
C3T	Female	37	NCE	Primary 2	38
C4T	Female	36	NCE	Primary 3	35
C5T	Female	35	NCE	Primary 1	35

4.2.3.1 Parents' view on education and schooling

Contemporary parenting relies heavily on mothers who are entrusted with multiple responsibilities ranging from their own professional ambitions, to caring and monitoring the welfare of all members of the household including the education and schooling of their children (Olsen & Fuller, 2008) (see Chapter 2 section 2.3.3) Therefore in order to have more insight into the role of parents in the education of their children at School C, the researcher asked the parents what schooling means to them and how important it is in their view. Parents C1P and C3P indicated that schooling is imperative and is essential for the child to be successful in life. Consequently, it is essential for the child to attend school daily. Parent C2P indicated that schooling involves the acquisition of knowledge and that every endeavor that an individual engages in, requires education. Skills required in life are acquired through education and these skills enable one to have an advantage over others who are uneducated. Parents C4P and C5P also mentioned that school is a place where a child acquires knowledge in order to become a more productive member of society. Parent C4P emphatically mentioned, 'If you observe people in high positions in the society, they are all educated. That is an indication that education is very good.'

Parents at School C attach great importance to schooling as the belief that schooling facilitates children's achievements and gives them an opportunity to be successful and reach recognition in society was generally expressed by all the parents who were interviewed. These parents believe

that education is empowering. According to them, education is the panacea for attaining a better and more desirable status in society.

The parents were unanimous that the school which their children attended was a good choice. The teachers were seen to be doing a very good job in educating their children. They also praised the school staff for the love and concern they have for their children and are for the fact that they are appreciative of parents' interest in their children's schooling. Parent C3P mentioned, 'The teachers are impressed and happy on how I visit the school to ask of [after] my children's work.'

The parents from School C were positively disposed to the school including the teachers and the school staff. The response of the parents at School C indicated that the parents have similar opinions regarding advantages derived from PI. In their explanation these parents' believed that education brings about success in the future and a child should be supported by the parents in order to be successful at school.

4.2.3.2 Parents' views on their involvement in their children's schooling

PI is said to be manifest in a variety of ways (Kohl et al., 2000:518). According to Kohl et al. (2000), parents' perception of the school which is measured by the parents' feeling about the school in general may influence their willingness to become actively involved in schooling activities that relate to their children (see Chapter 2 section 2.3). Owing to the keen interest in the study that was displayed by the parents at School C and their positive impression of the school, I then asked the parents to explain how they are involved in their children's schooling to establish whether their positive disposition towards the school resulted in particular forms of PI. Parent C1P mentioned that she usually helps her child with his homework and added that in her opinion, the teaching of a child cannot be left to the teachers alone. Parents also have a role to play in the education of their children. Parent C2P indicated that she generally delegates the supervision of the younger children's school work to the older siblings. However, this parent monitors the homework and ensures that all the assignments have been completed before the child leaves for school the next day. Parents C3P and C4P both mentioned that they assist their children with their homework. Parent C4P always makes sure that her children have their writing materials and textbooks at hand when they go to school. Parent C5P also mentioned that she helps her children with their homework and added that she makes sure her children are adequately nourished before

they leave for school. She also makes sure that they will also have food to eat at school. She emphasized:

> *When a child is well fed, he will be able to listen to whatever he/she is being taught in the classroom and if they get to the school, children must also be given something to eat so that they will not be disadvantaged by their peer groups who have food to eat at school.*

From the above responses it is clear that the parents at School C who were interviewed are aware of the importance of their role to support their children for them to succeed at school. The support is in the form of academic support and regard to basic provisioning such as ensuring adequate nutrition which supports learning. This role construction is found to be supported in the work of Hoover-Dempsey and Sandler (1995) and that of Desforges and Abouchaar (2003) who refers to this as spontaneous PI (see Chapter 2 section 2.3). The research conducted in their studies suggested that parents are more likely to become involved in their children's education if they view such participation as one of their responsibilities as a parent. Hoover-Dempsey, Walker, Sandler, Whetsel, Green and Wilkins (2005:107) proposed a comprehensive theoretical model that examines PI from parents' perspectives (see Chapter 2 section 2.3.3). According to these authors, parents' *personal psychological belief* includes parental role construction for involvement and parents' sense of self-efficacy in helping their children succeed in school. Parental role construction is defined as parents' belief about what they are supposed to do in relation to their children's schooling. The reasoning is that parents become involved because they construe the parental roles as including personal involvement in their children's education. The meaning attached to this role is developed through parents' own observations, their school-related involvement or through their friends' involvement in their children's schooling. While parents' sense of self-efficacy for helping their children succeed in school is defined as the parents' belief that their personal actions and their involvement activities will make a positive difference in their children's academic performance (see Chapter 2 section 2.3.3). Therefore, it appears that the parents at School C possess a strong parental role construction and a strong self-efficacy for supporting their children' education despite being from a LSES. Parents at School C also indicated that other family members can also take up the parental role. The example cited that supports this view is that of siblings assisting the younger children in the home with their homework. This suggests that the family is a form of social capital at which each member benefits from the other. This observation is consistent with the outcomes of previous research conducted by Dika and

Singh (2002: 38) and Parcel and Dufur (2001:884) (see Chapter 2 section 2.2). According to these researchers, family social capital refers to parental resources used in the socialization process.

Owing to the view espoused by previous studies (Amaele, 2003; Desimone, 1999; Garcia et al, 2002; Hornby & Lafaele, 2011:41) (see Chapter 2 section 2.4) that LSES parents were less involved in their children's education than HSES I aimed to further probe the situation in School C. The researcher asked the parents what role they are playing to involve themselves in their children's school work. Various opinions were put forward. Parents C5P and C1P indicated that under no circumstances could they imagine not assisting their children with their homework. Parent C2P mentioned that most important in her opinion was her children's nutrition and making sure that her children did not leave for school without having had a good breakfast. It was also important to her to monitor her children's hygiene. Parent C3P said that visiting the school is of great importance while parent C4P mentioned that getting her children to school is what she valued most. All these parents have specific ways in which they choose to be involved with their children's schooling and school work. This shows that they believe that this is how they can best be involved in their children schooling. It also portrayed their interest in PI. The findings thus indicate that the PI practices that are most effective are the ones the parent chooses for themselves. The choice of involvement that is intrinsically driven constitutes the most effective PI practices.

4.2.3.3 Parents' views on the parent-teacher interaction

Akpan (2014:539) describes PI as a partnership between the school and the parent, involving decision making and participation in school development projects. Heystek (2003:331) asserts that PI is the active participation of parents in school governance, while Uzoechina and Obdike (2008, in Ushang et al., 2010:315) posits that PI is not merely a friendly acquaintance between parents and teachers, but an obligation of both parties to partner with each other to ensure effective and efficient academic performance (see Chapter 2 section 2.3.2). The existence and strength of this relationship is indicative of the social capital. In addition, Olsen and Fuller (2008:95) suggest that teachers experience a sense of satisfaction and gratification when parents are reasonable towards them; when parents respect them and are interested in learning from them. In these circumstances, the school setting is perceived as welcoming by the teachers and the parents (see Chapter 2 section 2.2).

In the course of our discussion to establish the existence and strength of parent-teacher relationships at School C, the researcher asked the parents how often they visit their children's school and for what purpose. Three parents claimed that they occasionally visit their children's school while the other two parents indicated that they visit the school on a weekly basis. According to parent C2P, she goes to her child's school only when there is a PTA meeting. Parent C3P mentioned that she goes to her children's school to check on their performance and parent C4P said that she goes to the school when she has time. Parent C1P indicated that she goes to her child's school to check on his academic performance and to ensure that he is present at school. She added that she believed it was very important that parents check on their children at school just to ensure that they attend school because some children might be influenced to skip school by their peers. Lastly, parent C5P mentioned that she regularly goes to her children's school to ask their teachers about their performance.

It is clear from the parents' responses, that they attach great importance to their children's attendance of school. The parents' responses indicated the existence of a sound parent-teacher relationship where parents make time to visit the school to check on the child's performance and to ensure that the child is in attendance. However, their response suggests that parents must make time to visit the school voluntarily to check on their children's performance. Such visits facilitate one-on-one interaction between the teachers and the parents. In addition, parents' visits to the school enable them to keep track of their children's performance at school work. As mentioned earlier parents' school visits also prevents absenteeism and negative peer group influence. PI in the sense exhibited by parents at School C is consistent with the research of Grolnick and Slowiaczek (1994, in Pomerantz etal., 2007:376) who found that pupils benefit when their parents are involved on the school front (see Chapter 2 section 2.3.1.1). It is argued that due to the parents' involvement and interest, teachers give the pupils extra attention that may tend towards supporting the development of their skills (Epstein & Becker 1982 in Pomerantz et al., 2007:376).

When I asked parents about the opportunities that PTA meetings offer for interaction and communication between parents and teachers, all parents that were interviewed acknowledged that the PTA meeting is the most effective means of communicating and offers opportunities for interaction with the teachers. According to parent C3P, PTA meetings offer the ideal opportunity to discuss various issues that concern the pupils, parents and teachers. For instance she recollected

that at the last meeting the school management reminded the parents of their obligation to pay the school PTA levies, and they also advised parents to provide their children with good nutrition and to dress them appropriately according to the weather. In addition, parent C4P added that the meeting is important to teachers and parents because the meeting facilitates contact between them and offers the opportunity to clarify any issues that might have arisen. Parent C5P acknowledged:

> *At the PTA meeting a lot of issues concerning our children are mentioned to us and this gives us as the parents' assurance that our children are getting to school. I see that the teachers are also assured that the parents are involved in the education of their children.*

Parents' responses regarding the role and function of PTA meetings indicate that they are aware of the importance of the meeting and of the benefits that the meetings hold. Parents mentioned that the parents' attendance at the PTA meeting was encouraging although some parents might be kept from attending by factors such as not having the time or being pre-occupied with their jobs. In addition, the parents also said that some parents could possibly be less eager to attend due to not realizing the importance of the meetings. To ensure full attendance, the parents suggested that the school should send out reminders about the meeting in good time. In addition, one of the parents remarked that parents should not expect the teachers to do home visits but that they should rather acknowledge the importance of attending the PTA meeting themselves.

From the responses, it became evident that parents appreciate the school management's effort in organizing the PTA meetings as it was a way towards facilitating effective communication and interaction between the parents and the teachers. It is also evident that the parents also acknowledged that it is their responsibility to be present at the PTA meetings because the parents and the teachers come to a better understanding on issues related to the progress of their children. Therefore, a PTA meeting is not only a form of involvement but is also a form of social capital that enhances mutual understanding that promotes conducive interaction between the parents and the teachers which ultimately benefits the child's education.

4.2.2.4 Parents' views on the effect of socio-economic status on Parental Involvement

Studies conducted by Hoover-Dempsey et al. (2005), Garcia et al. (2002) and Pena (2000:52) claimed that parents' perception of the time, resources and energy that they are able to contribute to involvement in their children's schooling may present challenges for LSES families (see

Chapter 2 section 2.4). LSES parents often need to juggle job demands and extended family needs with the invitation to become involved in their children's education. According to these authors, parents find out that the other demands on their time and resources leave little time for PI. Thus, when the researcher asked the parents if parents' SES affects their involvement in their children's school work, four of the five parents acknowledged that parents' income is a factor that determines the extent to which parents are able to be involved in their children's schooling. Parent C2P indicated that securing an income is essential to being able to finance children's education. She responded, 'When parents send their child to the school, they must find a balance between their job and involvement in the school work of their children.' Parent C4P claimed that parents' SES has no effect on their involvement in their children's education. She believes that PI is mostly determined by the parents' concern for education and their choice to be involved than their SES.

To establish how LSES parents establish a learning environment in their homes, the researcher asked the parents about the educational amenities they have at home and how often they read with their children. Parents responded similarly to this question. Parents try to read with their children on a daily basis and also monitor their homework every day. With regards to the availability of educational facilities at home, they confirmed that they do not have a well-resourced library of books or computers to which their children have access. Two of the five parents interviewed indicated that they have a limited number of reading books and textbooks available to supplement their children's school material. Parents C1P acknowledged that in their home, there is no library or computer. Parents C2P and C3P said that they have few books to aid their children with their school work. Parents C4P and C5P mentioned that they wished they could afford buying computers for their children but are constrained by their financial capabilities. Based on these responses from parents at School C, it is evidenced that the parents' SES had some adverse effect on their involvement. However, the responses of the parents on section 4.2.3.2.and 4.2.3.3 portray the practical ways by which the parents are giving support towards their children's schooling at the home front and interaction with the school authorities despite the fact that financial resources are limited. Parents interact with and support their children in their schooling on a daily basis irrespective of available learning materials and parents' SES.

Then the researcher asked the parents about their view regarding the effect of SES on PI. Parent C1P acknowledged that parents have to support their children at school if they want them to be

successful in life and noted that parents are generally financially constrained and were required to devote much of their time to their jobs. She urged that parents should always care for their children in all circumstances. Parent C2P also indicated that PI is essential for a child to become a better person in life. According to her, education makes an individual a respected and well recognized person in society and consequently urged parents to educate their children no matter how poor they might be. Parent C3P also claimed that finances is a major factor that affects parents' involvement in their children's education since education is compulsory and vital to success in an individual's life. Parents generally took care of their children with the hope that their children will take care of them at their old age. Parents C4P and C5P mentioned that parents are generally passionate about educating their children and that they should thus create time to spend with their children. From the responses and suggestions of the parents at School C, it appears that the LSES parents are aware of their financial constraints and they are using all the resources at their disposal to make sure that their children's educational needs are met although according to them it might not be sufficient. These findings are consistent with the study conducted by Ogunsola and Adewale (2012) where it became evident that pupils from LSES backgrounds may compete as well in academic activities as their counterparts from HSES backgrounds (see Chapter 2 section 2.3.2). It could be that LSES parents are well aware of the importance of education and that they therefore assist and try to be involved in their children's academic endeavors and provide as best as they are able in all ways possible – financial and through interest and encouragement – to support their children's academic performance.

4.2.3.5 Teachers' expectations of parental involvement in schooling

Teachers were of the opinion that the majority of the parents whose children attended School C could be classified as LSES. Despite this, the teachers indicated that parents generally show a keen interest in their children's education and are trying their upmost to make sure that their children receive a good education. The researcher asked the teachers how they expect parents to be involved in their children's schooling. The teachers responded that they expect parents to participate in PTA meetings, give their children moral support, provide financially and regularly visit the school to check on their children's academic performance. The teachers indicated that parents have to be involved in school activities daily as this provides the moral support that enhances children's learning. They also emphasized the need for parents to regularly check their children's performance. According to one of the teachers:

If parents come to the school, the school head will advise them on how to give support to their children financially and how to give moral support at home.

From the teachers' responses it is clear that the teachers are grateful for the PI exhibited and they are willing to help the parent with this responsibility.

Further, the researcher asked the teachers what they think motivates parents to be involved in their children's education. The purpose of this question was to get an idea of what, in the teachers' perspective, hinders or facilitates parents' involvement. Teachers believed that parents are motivated to be involved in their children's schooling when they perform well at school (also see Chapter 2 section 2.3.3.) Anderson and Minke (2007: 318) also acknowledge the fact that parents' interest at the school front is heightened. The main factor that constrains PI is a lack of finances and the limited time parents are able to spend with their children due to their work commitments.

Teachers' responses indicated that in their opinion LSES parents are interested in supporting their children at school, but that they are constrained to do so due to a lack of finances and available time. The teachers suggested that LSES parents do not earn sufficient money and are thus obliged to spend much of their time securing a livelihood by taking on several jobs in an attempt to sustain the family. This leaves them with little time to be involved with their children's education. Then the researcher asked the teachers whether the level of parents' education influences their involvement in their children's education. The researcher posed this question to try to establish whether parents' level of education affected their involvement in their children's education. The teachers were certain that the parents' level of education did not affect PI. Teachers C1T declared that…

> *I see that parents without education want their children to be educated because they want their children to attain an upper position in the society. Actually, some illiterate parents regularly come to the school to check on their children's performance with their school work. In case there is a reason and I call on the parent and did not respond, I make sure I pay a visit to their home.*

The response provides an indication of the motives for parents' involvement and especially that of parents from LSES with low educational attainment. According to this teacher's response, even illiterate parents regularly visit the school indicating that parents' level of education is not

considered by the teachers as a factor that constrains them from being involved in the education of their children. In essence this suggests LSES parents also show a keen interest in being involved in their children's education despite their own possible lack of education.

4.2.3.6 Teachers views on how to encourage parental involvement

When the teachers were asked what the school does to encourage PI, teacher C3T mentioned:

> *We call for the parent and advise them on how to take charge of their children's education. In addition, during the PTA meeting we address matters that concern parents regarding the education of their children.*

I also asked the teachers how and how regularly the school communicates with the parents. Teacher C2P declared:

> *We often communicate with the parents through PTA meetings. In addition we send verbal invitations to the parents to notify them of the meeting. We also notify the parents through letters of any other issue that is of importance whenever the need arises.*

Teacher C5P also added, 'Whenever there is an issue concerning the parents I call for them, and if the parent does not respond I visit their home individually to inform them.'

With regard to the influence of the language of communication on parents' inclination to be involved in their children's schooling, all the teachers indicated that the language of communication was not an issue and did not influence matters. Teacher C5P indicated,'When parents come to the school, we speak in our mother tongue (Yoruba dialect). The parents like to hear our mother tongue.' The responses indicate that the school communicates effectively with the parents. This is a distinct partnership between the parents, teachers and the school authority. This is in line with the work of Driessen et al. (2005:529) which suggest that the establishment of educational partnerships is a measure to bridge the gap between the families of ethnic minority pupils and the school (see Chapter 2 section 2.3.2). According to the authors, educational partnerships assume mutual respect, shared interest and open communication between parents, teachers and the school. Therefore, Driessen et al. (2005: 528) are of the opinion that when stakeholders are in partnership, a real interest exists and there is an acceptance of cultural and social diversity of child-rearing practices and educational opinions that is demonstrated across the

board. Teachers' responses to the research question also indicated that invitations from teachers and the school authority to parents is an important aspect regarding how teachers can initiate and sustain PI. As mentioned earlier in the chapter, parents at School C are inclined towards and positive about being involved in the education of their children. In line with this finding, Stacer and Perrucci (2013:348) claimed that parents who accept the school's encouragement through the teachers to participate in their children's schooling are most likely to be inclined towards becoming involved in their children's school activities (see Chapter 2 section 2.3.3). Stacer and Perrucci (2013:348) found that parents who reported significant school contact and outreach were also involved with their children in the home (see Chapter 2 section 2.3.3).

4.2.3.7 Teachers' perception of the link between parents' socio-economic status and parental involvement

Several studies indicate that teachers tend to communicate less frequently with LSES parents (see Chapter 2 section 2.4). This finding is probably based on the perception that LSES parents will not be inclined to become involved in their children's schooling for reasons such as not realizing the importance of education, feeling intimidated by the teachers, being unable to assist their children academically and financially or because of a lack of awareness that PI is one of their responsibilities as parents. In addition, research found that teachers provide LSES children with less positive attention and less reinforcement for good performance than children in the HSES category (Vanvelsor & Orozco, 2007; Bradley & Corwyn, 2002;(see Chapter 2 section 2.4.).

Therefore, when the researcher asked the teachers about the parents' SES and their involvement in the education of their children at their school similar responses were anticipated. However, teachers at School C noted that the present economic situation of the country is affecting all parents' involvement in the education of their children regardless of SES. Teacher C4 indicated that most parents at the school are from LSES; many earn a living as farmers or traders at local farm markets. He mentioned that the parents respond to the needs of their children only when they have the means to care for them. For instance, he said when the parents are on their way to the local market or farm the children are left in the care of their grandparent or older siblings. The teachers indicated that parents are willing and eager to be involved but are currently being hindered by their economic situation. They acknowledged that most parents who are not financially stable tend to spend little or no time with their children, but this is due to circumstances and not

necessarily due to a lack of interest in their children's wellbeing. Therefore, the teachers noted that the two major hindrances to PI are financial capability and lack of time to monitor the children's school work. This finding is consistent with earlier research that discovered that generally LSES parents participate less in school than their HSES counterparts (see Chapter 2 section 2.4). This may be due to a number of barriers that low-income parents face in their attempt towards becoming involved in their children's schooling (Vanvelsor & Orozco, 2007). However, the parents who were interviewed indicated their willingness and desire to be involved in their children's education.

According to Bradley and Corwyn (2002:381) LSES parents are less likely to purchase reading and learning materials for their children, are less likely to take their children to educational and cultural events and are less likely to regulate the amount of TV their children watch. As a result, LSES children more frequently experience school failure in early schooling which moves them on a trajectory of either behavioral problems or withdrawal behavior (Bradley & Corwyn, 2002:377, see Chapter 2 section 2.4). Drawing on these findings, the researcher asked the teachers if they had become aware of ways in which SES impacted on the pupils and PI at the school. Teacher C1 noted that

> *At most times in the class, I notice that the pupils that are low achieving in my class always lack concentration in their school work, they are not fed on a nutritious diet, they look unhappy, and at times when I interrogate them, they will say that their parents have gone to the farm.*

They mentioned that some pupils' clothes are torn and they are unkempt and that some parents cannot afford to buy the required stationery. When the researcher asked the teachers how they would offer help to the pupils that are affected by these circumstances, teacher C2 responded that.

> *We normally call the parent of the pupils to school and counsel them on how to spend quality time and how to save for the capital to cater for their children's school needs. We try to encourage the pupil to do better in the school work even if the parents did not respond to our call.*

The responses pointed to the fact that parents' SES affects the quality of parents' involvement. From the research it would seem that the LSES parents are willing and caring about their children but are hindered to be fully involved in their schooling by the lack of available resources at their

disposal. Their dire financial situation subsequently hinders the quality of their involvement despite their desire to be involved. This suggests that to some extent SES affects the extent and quality of PI for parents in LSES cases. This finding is consistent with the earlier research findings that suggested that children from poor families have less access to a variety of recreational and learning materials from infancy through to adolescence (Bradley & Corwyn, 2002; see Chapter 2 section 2.4) which supports learning. In their findings, it was noted that access to educational material and cultural resources meditates the relations between family income and children's intellectual and academic achievements from infancy through adolescence.

LSES parents do not seem to be less interested or devoted to being involved in their children's schooling; however, their financial situation constrains the ways in which they can be involved and the amount of money they are able to spend on their children to provide for the basics which would enhance their learning. In addition, LSES parents generally have less time to devote to their children's schooling since they need to spend most of their time trying to earn money to sustain their family. The inclination to be involved and the importance attached to PI do not seem to be negatively affected by a LSES.

4.3 RESULTS OF THE RESPONSES TO THE SURVEY QUESTIONNAIRES

As part of the research to determine the effect of SES on PI in the three selected socio-economically disparate primary schools in Ile-Ife, the fifteen teachers at the three schools who participated in the study were asked to complete a survey questionnaire. The primary purpose of the questionnaire was to establish teachers' perceptions and experiences regarding PI on their pupils' schooling and to probe the issue of social capital as it related to SES and PI. The data from the survey complimented and supplemented the data arising from the focus group interviews. A total of 15 questionnaires were distributed and collected by the researcher. The teachers completed the questionnaire in their own time. A copy of the questionnaire which teachers completed is provided as Appendix 7.

The main questions covered in the questionnaire related to establishing:
  ➢ Regularity of teachers' contact with the parents and parents' contact with the school

- The nature of parent contact with the school

- Teachers' perceptions of the quality of the parent-teacher contact

- Teachers' perceptions of parents' views on the value of schooling

- Teachers' perceptions of whether parents foster a positive attitude towards education

- Teachers' perceptions of whether parents are willing to put forward suggestions that promote PI

- Teachers' views on financial and social capital at home

- Teachers' views of the degree of PI and factors that constrain PI

- How teachers believe PI can be promoted

- The effect of parents' SES on PI

Respondents' responses to the issue of parent-teacher contact are outlined in Table 4.7. The data is portrayed as percentages of the responses to the Likert-type categorization of responses namely always, sometimes, rarely and never. The reason for representing the data as percentages is to simplify interpretation.

TABLE 4.7: Regularity of teachers' contact with parents

School	A	B	C
Always	20%	20%	80%
Sometimes	80%	80%	20%
Rarely	0%	0%	0%
Never	0%	0%	0%
Total	100%	100%	100%

This question sought to establish teacher-initiated contact. Teachers at Schools A and B are in less regular contact with the parents than in School C where the teachers reportedly are in very regular

contact with the parents. Teachers' contact in Schools A and B is categorized as sometimes while teachers in School C are described as almost always being in contact with the parents. It should be noted that at all the schools, teachers made contact with the parents indicating a high level of positive reinforcement towards encouraging PI.

In Table 4.8, the regularity of parents' contact with the teachers is represented as a percentage – again the percentages serve merely for interpretation and comparison purposes.

TABLE 4.8: Regularity of parents' contact with teachers

School	A	B	C
Daily	80%	0%	0%
Weekly	0%	0%	80%
Monthly	0%	80%	20%
Annually	20%	20%	0%
Total	100%	100%	100%

This question sought to establish parent-initiated contact with the teacher and differs from the previous question. The data indicate that parents from School A are generally in contact with their children's teachers. Most parents from School B contact their children's teachers monthly. The parents at School C are mostly in contact with the teachers on a weekly basis.

The next survey question sought to establish which school events parents were most likely to attend. PI is most times viewed as the basic planned school-based and spontaneous support of daily children's schooling through processes such as helping with homework, getting the child to school on time, providing adequate nutrition and clothing and communicating with the teacher as discussed in section 2.3 of Chapter 2. Organized or planned PI is evidenced when parents become involved in a more formal way such as attending events organized by school management. Parents are generally invited or requested to attend such events. The teachers all affirmed that the PTA has the largest parent turnout of all the organized events. Parents from School A were inclined to attend all the events such as the open day, sporting events and the end of the year party, but they are more

regular at attending the PTA meetings than these other events. It was interesting to note that none of the teachers at Schools B and C indicated that parents attended the school open day event. At School C sporting events were moderately attended. The responses to the questions are presented in Table 4.9.

TABLE 4.9: Parents' attendance of school events

Events	A	B	C
Open day	20%	0	0
Sports events	20%	0	20%
PTA meeting	40%	80%	60%
End of the year party	20%	20%	20%
Total	100	100	100

Table 4.10 provides an indication of the frequency with which parents are said to attend PTA meetings. Of the three schools, parents at School A are the most regular in attending PTA meetings followed by parents of School C and the least inclined to attend PTA meetings are parents from School B. However, it is interesting to note that parents from all the schools attend PTA meetings since none of the teachers indicated that parents never or rarely attended the meetings.

TABLE 4.10: Parents' attendance of PTA meetings

Frequency	A	B	C
Always	80%	20%	80%
Sometimes	20%	80%	20%
Rarely	0	0	0
Never	0	0	0
Total	100	100	100

The next survey question sought to explore teachers' views of the quality of the relationship they have with the parents. The responses were descriptive and not captured on a Likert scale. It was clear from the responses that the teachers enjoy interacting with the parents. All the teachers at School C indicated that they like talking to their pupils' parents while the majority (four of the five teachers) at Schools A and B said that they liked engaging with parents. When asked if teachers felt comfortable about talking to parents about a pupil's problem, all the teachers at School B indicated that this was not a problem. Teachers at School A were also quite willing to broach the subject of children's problems with the parents and teachers at School C were even more willing to do so.

According to all the teachers at Schools B and C, parents care about their children's school work with the majority of teachers from School A reporting the same. When asked whether parents were keen to get to know their children's teachers, all the teachers at School C said yes, while the majority of teachers at Schools A and B indicated that they believed that the parents were interested in getting to know them as their children's teachers.

Another question focused on the teachers' perception of the value parents attach to education. The literature indicates that if parents have a positive view of education, their inclination towards PI is higher. The teachers were asked if parents encouraged positive attitudes towards education. The responses are summarized in Table 4.11. The majority of teachers at Schools A and B confirmed that parents always encourage positive attitudes towards schooling. At School C teachers were less decisive with regard to their responses with the majority indicating always, some choosing sometimes and a few indicating rarely.

TABLE 4.11: Teachers' perception of whether parents foster a positive attitude towards education

Frequency	A	B	C
Always	80%	80%	60%
Sometimes	20%	20%	20%
Rarely	0	0	20%
Never	0	0	0

Total	100	100	100

Table 4.12 presents the percentage on how the teachers respond on parent's interest on PI. This question was meant to establish how parents attempt to increase their involvement in their children's schooling. According to the literature, perceived-life context variable assumes that parent's level of income and form of involvement are influenced by their perception of their skill, knowledge, time and resources they can affordably acquire to be involved in their child's education as well as being active at the school front (Hoover Dempsey et al, 2005; see Chapter 2:2.3.3). At School A, 80% of the teachers acknowledge that the parents' sometimes put forward suggestions to promote PI, while at school B and C, 60% indicates that parents' bring forth suggestion to promote PI.

TABLE 4.12: Teachers' perception of whether parents attempt to promote PI

Frequency	A	B	C
Always	0	40%	20%
Sometimes	80%	60%	60%
Rarely	20%	0	20%
Never	0	0	0
Total	100	100	100

Teachers were asked to put forward their impression of the material resources (financial capital) available to learners and social capital at home. Material resources refer to anything of material value or usefulness that a person owns. The premise of the availability of material resources is linked to SES with those who are of a HSES being able to acquire more material resources than those who are from a LSES. It is hypothesized that making available relevant material resources is a way in which parents can positively contribute to and involve themselves in their children's schooling.

On the other hand, the central premise of social capital is that social networks have value. These networks are networks of relationships among people who live and work together in a particular society or group, enabling that society or group to function effectively (Coleman, 1998; Lin 2002; Mc Neal, 1999; see Chapter 2 section 2.2.). For individuals, social capital allows a person to draw on resources from other members of the networks to which he or she belongs. There is a link between social capital and SES since social capital is related to factors such as degree of education, income level, occupational reputation and connectedness among other factors (Mc Neal, 1999; Subramanian, Lochner, Kawachi 2003; see Chapter 2 section 2.2).

When the teachers were asked if they think the material resources in pupils' homes are a way in which parents involve themselves in supporting their children's schooling by providing a conducive learning environment, 50% of the teachers in Schools A and B agreed that the material resources in pupils' homes were a positive indication of PI while at School C, 80% strongly agreed.

TABLE 4.13: Material resources contribute to a conducive academic environment

Frequency	A	B	C
Strongly agree	50%	50%	80%
Agree	50%	50%	20%
Undecided	0	0	0
Disagree	0	0	0
Total	100	100	100

The presence of computers in pupils' homes was linked to parents' SES, with parents who were more affluent being able to afford a computer. In the same vein, it was assumed that the better the parents' SES, the better they would be able to provide their children with a conducive learning environment at home. The majority of teachers at Schools A and C strongly agreed that the provision of a conducive environment was a positive sign of PI. Teachers at School B were less positive about the need for a conducive learning environment at home.

To establish a view on social capital available to pupils in their home environment, teachers were asked to what extent they had evidence that pupils received help through their social network with their homework. The network was explained as comprising siblings, family members and friends of the family. At School A, 80% of teachers believed pupils get assistance from their network; at School B, 80% of teachers said the pupils' get help with their homework from their network and at School C 80% of teachers affirmed that the pupils received help from the family network. The responses are presented below in Table 4.14.

TABLE 4.14: Social capital: regularity with which pupils' network help them with school work

Frequency	A	B	C
Always	80%	80%	80%
Sometimes	20%	20%	20%
Rarely	0	0	0
Never	0	0	0
Total	100	100	100

When the teachers were asked how they would rate parents' involvement in their child's education, in School A 20% described PI as fair, in School B 20% said it was fair while at School C, 40% also stated PI as fair.

TABLE 4.15: Rate of parent's involvement in their children's education

Frequency	A	B	C
Very poor	0%	20%	0%
Poor	0%	0%	0%
Fair	20%	20%	40%
Good	80%	60%	60%
Total	100	100	100

Teachers were asked why they think some parents are not involved in their child's schooling. In Schools A, B and C, all the school teachers reported that although parents were generally involved in their children schooling factors that constrain optimal involvement were inadequate finances and a lack of essential skill or education. Teachers at School B mentioned that to a slight degree, parents could feel intimidated by teachers or school authorities. This affects the level of their involvement and contribution towards their children's development at school.

There seems to be correlation between the response of the parents and the result emerging from the survey questionnaire regarding PI and SES generally. In addition, teachers agreed that SES affects PI. There is no doubt that the SES of parents determines the availability of material resources for a child. Also, SES invariable indicates the degree of social capital in their disposal. Again there seems to be positive relationship between the extent of the social network and the degree of PI. This justification emerged through the teachers' response in the survey question.

4.4 SUMMARY

This chapter dealt with the research findings and discussion thereof. A key focus of the research was to gauge the influence of parents' SES on PI in the three economically disparate schools in Ile-Ife, Nigeria selected for study. The data were collected through a survey questionnaire, individual interviews with parents and focus group interviews with teachers. The significant findings of the individual interviews with the parents related to parents' views on education and schooling, parents' views on different ways in which they are and can be involved in their children's schooling, parents' views on parent-teacher interaction, the place and importance of parental involvement in their children's schooling and parents' views on the effect of SES on PI in their children's schooling. In addition, the significant findings from the focus group interview with the teachers related to teachers' expectations on how parents do and should involve themselves in the education of their children, teachers' views on how to encourage PI, and teachers' perceptions of the link between parents' SES and PI at the three selected schools.

In addition, the analysis of the survey questionnaire includes a discussion on the regularity of teachers' contact with the parents, parents' contact with the school, teachers' perceptions of the quality of the parent-teacher contact, teachers' perceptions of parents' views on the value of

schooling, teachers' views on how PI was manifest through making available material resources, teachers' views on social capital at home, the effect of SES on PI and how PI can be promoted.

In the next chapter a summary of the research, the research conclusions and recommendations are presented.

CHAPTER 5

RESEARCH CONCLUSIONS, RECOMMENDATIONS AND STUDY LIMITATIONS

5.1 INTRODUCTION AND OVERVIEW OF THE STUDY

The purpose of this study was to examine the effect of SES on PI in three socio-economic disparate schools at Ile-Ife, Nigeria. This research examined how parents from upper, middle and lower socio-economic classes view education and are involved in their children's schooling. Various theories related to PI underpinned this research as did observations regarding SES and the impact this has on PI. Furthermore, the issue of social capital was also used to explore the scope of and opportunities for PI.

The thrust of the social capital theory is that social capital encompasses those resources in social relations which facilitate collective action. By extension social capital is influenced by individuals' SES and their place in the society since the SES of a neighborhood affects the scope and nature of social interaction (Subramanian, Lochner, Kawachi 2003: 34; also see Chapter 2, 2.2). It has been demonstrated that the range of social capital is also predicted by individual characteristics such as education attainment, income, and marital status (Aida, Kondo, Kondo Watt, Sheiham & Tsakos, 2011: 1563; see Chapter 2, 2.2).

Various studies have suggested that SES influences parents' perception of the importance of education and how they can be involved in the education of their children. The implications and conclusion of the research will be discussed in the context of these theories and in respect of the following aspects which formed the focus of the research questions which guided the study.

o   Parents' views on education and schooling

o   Parents' views on the importance, nature and scope of PI in their children's schooling

o   Teachers' views on PI as experienced at the schools where they teach

o   Parents views on the effect of SES on PI

o   Teachers' views on the effect of SES on PI.

In addition, recommendations for practice and future research are detailed in the subsequent paragraphs. The section concludes with a discussion of the research limitations.

5.2 RESEARCH CONCLUSIONS

The research conclusions are based on the research findings and discussion or explanation of the implications of the findings which were presented in Chapter 4. The statement of the conclusions is a consolidation of the research findings and is an attempt to present what the deductions are in the context of the study and in the broader context of the literature on the topic.

5.2.1 Parents views on education and schooling

The findings indicated that all the parents that were interviewed across the three schools believe that education is of prime importance to a child's upbringing and future development. According to these parents, education plays an important role in improving an individual's social status in the social hierarchy. This means that a child who attends school and receives an education will most likely attain higher status in the society. Most of the parents opined that education is not about the acquisition of an [western] ideology only, but rather entails gaining that form of knowledge and skills which enable the child to become a productive member of the society. Parents' regardless of their income, level of education, occupational status or ability to meet material needs (i.e., SES) believe that education is empowering as evidenced in Chapter 4 section 4.2.3.1. It is consequently concluded that all the parents across the three research schools were unanimous that education and schooling is an imperative and is both essential for and beneficial to their children. This conclusion differs somewhat from what literature on the topic suggests namely that in LSES households schooling is viewed as less important than in higher SES households. The indicators for SES namely level of income, parents' level of education and occupational status and access to material resources evidenced for each of the three socio-economic groupings (LSES, MSES and HSES) who participated in the study were consistent with the norm for each of the three groupings. However, it is concluded that in this study SES did not affect parents' view of the importance of education and schooling.

Schools are communities built on shared common beliefs, values, concerns and interests. Social capital networks permit people to relate to each other to solve common problems and schools are communities which promote such networks built on common norms and reciprocal trust as outlined in Chapter 2 section 2.2. It is further concluded that parents view schooling as a form of social capital. Schooling and education are acts that facilitate social interaction between the child and their teachers as well as between the pupils and their peers and the various sets of parents – social relationships which can be beneficial to the development of the child. In essence the process of schooling is a form of social capital which meets a child's intellectual, physical and social needs that promote a child's upbringing.

In section 2.2, the issue of intergenerational closure following the work of Coleman was discussed. Schools offer the opportunity for intergenerational closure or the opportunity for parents to interact with the parents of their children's friends. The need for intergenerational closure in schools is an imperative since this facilitates the development of partnerships between parents and builds social capital (see Chapter 4 section 4.2.1.1). These views with respect to education and schooling of a child was consistent across the three schools irrespective of parents' SES and it is consequently concluded that SES did not influence parents' understanding and perspective of the importance of education to their children.

5.2.2 Parents' views on the importance, nature and scope of parental involvement

This study found that parents acknowledged the importance of PI and they are gearing their effort towards being involved in their children's education in various ways. Following the work of Grolnick, Benjet, Kurowski and Apostoleris (1997), (see Chapter 2 section 2.3.1.2) personal involvement that parents engaged in included activities such as ensuring that a child takes breakfast, ensuring that a child wears appropriate uniform that suites the weather, ensuring that the child takes nutritional lunch to school, and taking their children to school on a daily basis. Behaviour involvement included activities such as helping with homework, visiting the school, attending PTA meetings and other school events. Cognitive-intellectual involvement that parents engaged in included reading with the child and taking the child to the library if the home did not provide the extra stimulation.

From the findings it can be concluded that the majority of the parents believed that educating a child is a shared responsibility between the home and the school, and parents were involved in their child's education since such participation was seen to be one of their responsibilities as a parent. However, there are numerous forms of involvement and this research reveals that the form of involvement differs to some extent across the three socio-economic disparate schools. At the HSES schools' parents rated getting the children to school as most important (see Chapter 4 section 4.2.1.2) while at the MSES and LSES schools rated homework as the best means of involvement (see Chapter 4 sections 4.2.2.2 and 4.2.3.2). In essence PI has become a daily routine for these parents because they are interested in knowing how their children are learning and thus perceived this role as a mechanism to improve their children's performance at school. It can be concluded that regardless of SES, parents asserted that assisting with homework is the most effective means of being involved in a child schooling and getting the child to school on a daily basis. Additionally, parents voluntarily chose involvement by themselves and are committed to being involved in their children's education. Thus, PI is an uncontested commitment by the parents who participated in the study regardless of their SES.

Parents' feeling about and towards the school and school staff also determines the level of PI. This study reveals that parents at the three schools have good relationships with the teachers and other school staff. This was as a result of the welcoming attitude that was displayed by the school staff and the teachers. The parents communicate at their will and they are given the opportunity to visit the school at their convenience. The parents at the three schools also indicated that they are able to communicate with the teachers in their mother tongue if they prefer. This study thus concludes that effective communication between the school and the home and positive atmosphere at the school enhances PI as outlined in Chapter 2 section 2.3.2 and 2.3.4.1. Conclusively, parents' SES does not affect parents feeling towards the school and does not hinder their communication with the school staffs and teachers.

Another finding of this study was that schools have events to encourage parents to get involved in their children's educational process and they expect parents to be responsive to the events. Among the events are PTA meetings, open days, sport events, and the end of the year party. However, this study reveals that at the three schools, parents are only responsive to PTA meetings while other events are rarely attended by parents. In fact, among the schools, only one out of the three schools

has fair parent attendance in other events. The study further indicates that parental attendance generally at school events (including the PTA meeting) was not good. This was depicted in the turnout rate of the parents' attendance to the PTA meeting in the three schools as shown in Chapter 4 section 4.3. Conclusively, parents are mostly involved at the home front than being involved at the school front.

However, some factors that had an impact on the parents' attendance at these events includes job demands, the economic situation of the country affects parents adversely and necessitates struggling to make ends meet and the inability to set aside additional time for their children, parents living some distance from the school, some parents' indifferent attitude and parents unawareness of the importance of PTA meetings. In addition, sometimes parents chose to stay away from the meeting since they had not yet paid the required PTA levies and could feel embarrassed by this. Another reason for not attending the PTA meetings was when parents had earlier had a misunderstanding with the teacher or vice-visa and a lack of cooperation may result in the staff and principal not involving parents in school governance for fear of being criticized by the parent at the meetings. These factors could possibly result in low PTA attendance as highlighted in Chapter 2 section 2.3.5.

5.2.3 Teachers' views on parental involvement in schools where they teach

Keyes (2000) and Greenwood and Hickman (1991) in Chapter 2 (section 2.3) propose that PI can be categorized as spontaneous or planned. This study reveals that teachers expect parents to demonstrate both spontaneous and planned PI. Most teachers who participated in the study are of the opinion that the school alone cannot educate a child, therefore they expect and encourage the parents to be actively involved with their children at home. It was especially noted that parents are expected to check their children's homework daily and this appeared to be the greatest form of PI expected of parents by the teachers. In accordance with previous research as evident in Chapter 2 (section 2.3), this study reveals that through engaging with their homework, parents would be able to acquaint themselves with the topics being taught in the school and enable them to establish how their children were progressing. They would also be able to gauge their children's abilities and potential which were important factors in influencing academic performance.

The study also shows that teachers expect parents to report any negative attitudes that they became aware of in their children because when the pupils notice that their parents have a good rapport with their teachers, they are generally more amenable to correction and support. They expect parents to show that they care for their children and they must create and spend quality time with their children regardless of their SES. In addition, in situations when parents have busy schedules, teachers expect parents to employ the help of a suitably qualified person to oversee their children's homework in their absence. Additionally, the teachers expect parents to participate in PTA meetings and other school events, give their children moral support, provide required financial support and regularly visit the school to check on their children's academic performance.

Parents tend to be involved when they are encouraged by the teacher as confirmed in the literatures that Green, Walker, Hoover-Dempsey and Sandler (1997) suggested that specific invitations to the parents made by the teacher were an important motivator for parents' active engagement in supporting their children's learning at home and at school. Consistent with this study, teachers are found to be initiators of contact with parents either by inviting them personally through created messages written in a specific section in their children homework book and phone calls. Some teachers make the extra effort to personally visit parents at home individually when necessary as evidenced in Chapter 4 section 4.2.3.6. However, it should be noted that at all the schools, the teachers' regular contact with the parents generates cordial interaction between the parents and the teachers. This helps to maintain good rapport and eventually translates to giving the child an inclusive and balanced upbringing. In essence the relationship between teachers and the parents become a form of partnership in education. This is a form of social capital that benefits the pupils, the parents and the teachers.

Furthermore, the study highlights teachers' perspective on varied parents' non-involvement across the studied income groups. Some parents felt that the teachers alone should take full academic responsibility for their children since they have paid for their children's school fees. Some parents perceived the process of being involved in their child's education as taxing when combined with their own hectic daily work schedule. In addition, some teachers opined that non- involvement of parents in their children's education may be due to the fact that the parents are less aware of their responsibilities towards their children's education and sometimes the parents do not see PI as part of their role. Family discord also impacts on the level of participation as noted in Chapter 4 section

4.2.2.5. Meanwhile, the reason for non-involvement among the LSES as noted in Chapter 4 section 4.2.3.5 is primarily due to a lack of finances and limited available time due to taxing daily chores that need to be completed in order to sustain the family.

5.2.4 Parents' views on the effect of socio-economic status on parental involvement

This study shows that at the HSES School (School A), parents do not believe that parents' level of income necessarily influences their involvement in the education of their children. These parents did not perceive money as a critical factor to be considered when it comes to their involvement with their children's upbringing and schooling as indicated in Chapter 4 section 4.2.1.4. These parents rather consider the time parents put aside to spend with their children as the major factor that influences PI rather than the level of the parents' SES.

Parents at the MSES School (School B) shared two impressions. First was that financial capacity does influence PI. Greater financial capacity – a higher SES – enables parents to enroll their children in private schools and to be able to better cater for their children's educational needs. However, it was also pointed out that parents who earn a high income are preoccupied with their job and consequently are less involved with their children's schooling.

The LSES parents at School C felt that income is a factor that determines the extent to which the parents are able to be involved especially in providing the required learning aids, textbooks and other commodities that usually facilitate PI as shown. (See Chapter 4 section 4.2.2.4). Moreover, it was posited that LSES parents' time to be involved in PI is limited due to the more pressing needs to provide for the family's income and livelihood.

From the above it is concluded that parents' SES can affect PI and that parents of higher SES are better able financially to provide the resources required to support children's learning thereby facilitating PI.

The quantity and quality of time parents devote to their children is a very important aspect in PI (see Chapter 2 section 2.2 and Chapter 4 section 4.2.3.7). Parents' seemed likely to show greater involvement when they are not overburdened by their work or job demands. Research also found out that when both parents are working, they spend less time with their children and they are less familiar with their children's friends and what is going on in their children's lives (Olsen & Fuller,

2008:94; also see Chapter 2 section 2.3.3 and Chapter 4 section 4.2.1.4). Consistent with this observation, this study found that the quantity and quality of time parents have available to them determines their level of PI and the extent of the relationship between the parents and their children. This form of relationship constitutes the family social capital as buttressed by Coleman's (1998) theory as discussed in Chapter 2 (see Chapter 2 section 2.3). It was thus also concluded that parents' time to be involved in PI was affected by SES namely that LSES parents were preoccupied with earning sufficient income to support the family while HSES parents experienced significant work pressure and had less time to devote to PI.

The study thus indicates that in theory and practice, parents' level of income influences the level of PI. Conclusively, parents' SES appears to affect PI.

5.2.5 Teachers' views on the effect of socio-economic status on parental involvement.

As evident from the study (see Chapter 4 section 4.2.3.7), LSES parents are generally unable to afford the learning materials required to support their children's learning as a result of a lack of financial capital to do so. (See Chapter 4 section 4.2.2.7). LSES children in School A were sent home if their parents were unable to pay their school fees (see Chapter 4 section 4.2.1.7). Consequently, these LSES pupils were prone to a loss of motivation and concentration in the classroom.

School B is a MSES school attended by children from middle and lower income backgrounds. Teachers reported that LSES children attending the school were generally poorly nourished, shabby and unkempt. Although LSES parents struggle to meet the educational needs of their children and also struggle to sustain their children, they are willing and eager for their children to learn but are hindered to be fully involved in their schooling by the lack of available financial resources at their disposal as well as possible inadequate amount of time to set aside to be involved in their children's education. Their dire financial situation subsequently hinders the quality of their involvement despite their desire to be involved in their children's education. Conclusively, there was no clear-cut argument that LSES parents are less involved in their children's schooling. However, LSES parents are less able to procure required learning materials for their children's school work and are less able to afford the school fees which influences which type of schools these children can attend. It was also mentioned that LSES appeared to be more conscientious than

some parents of HSES in supporting and encouraging their children's schooling and doing as much as they could to be involved in their children's schooling as their circumstances would allow. LSES parents consequently appeared to be possibly more dedicated to PI than higher SES families.

It could be inferred from the findings that along with other factors that affect PI, family stability plays a vital role in enhancing parents' active involvement. Teachers indicated that family dysfunction deprived the pupils from adequate care which in turns contributes adversely to the pupil's learning. Also, it was observed that in all the three SES disparate schools, communication is used as an effective means to improve PI among parents especially the LSES parents. Therefore, communication is a means of social capital that facilitates effective dissemination of information between parents, teachers and school staff. This enhances a healthy school climate.

5.3 RECOMMENDATIONS

It is hoped that this study will proffer a better understanding of how PI is currently evidenced in the three Nigerian schools representing three different socio-economic backgrounds in Ile-Ife, Nigeria. Given that PI is viewed as conducive to children's education, the recommendations, based on the conclusions drawn from the study, primarily focus on how parents of different SES backgrounds can effectively impact their children's schooling through their involvement in their education.

The research evidenced that PI constitutes a variety of dimensions. Across the three SES backgrounds, parents evidence both planned and spontaneous PI. The relevance of each dimension could possibly be viewed and assessed in terms of the value and meaning each community attaches to the particular dimension since PI might reflect, in part, culturally and socially relative factors (Anderson & Minke, 2007; Desimone, 1999; Fan & Chen, 2001; Garcia et al., 2002; Hong & Ho, 2005; Muller, 1993; and Suichu & Williams, 1996; also see (Chapter 2 section 1.2 and Chapter 4 section 4.2.3.6).

5.3.1 Recommendation in relation to parents' view on education and schooling.

It is imperative that parents should view their children's schooling as a primary assignment and should dedicate time and effort to being involved in their children's schooling. There are several

ways by which this can be achieved as evidenced in this study. Responsible, good parenting such as ensuring that children's basic needs are well met is essential. Apart from that, planned PI should be undertaken. Parents should not only undertake involvement that is convenient to them, but should also plan to become involved in the various dimensions of involvement that the school expects of them. Irrespective of their SES, parents should balance their job demands with involvement in their children's education. Furthermore, it is recommended that parents should make an effort to engage with other parents at the school as the establishment of such relationships has the potential to build social capital which can contribute to being better able to support one's children at school. Such relationships have the potential to manifest into intergenerational closure among the parents and their children. Through their interaction, parents share and exchange ideas and information on how to get things right for their children, gain knowledge from one another and complement one another intellectually and materially. It could thus be recommended that the school should also promote social events where parents of children attending the school could meet and interact and establish friendships which would promote a collective engagement with their children's schooling.

It is evident that children learn from both their peers and their parents. Through this network, each member benefits. In addition, it is highly recommended that the relationship can be strengthened further when parents see it as a duty to visit the school voluntarily and be involved in classroom activities and non-curricular school events such that PI is enhanced on the school front as well. Thus, PI should not be viewed as home involvement alone.

5.3.2 Recommendations in relation to parents' views on the importance, nature and scope of PI

It is recommended that the awareness among parents about the importance of PI should be increased. The reasons for low involvement must be dealt with at the school by the teachers. It was evident that the parents are willing to get involved in their children's schooling but required due and timeous notification of how to be involved by the school. School authorities should explore ways for involving parents in their children's school work as well as in how the school is administered. Proper notification of ways to be involved should be undertaken so that parents do not have the excuse that they were not informed about significant opportunities to be involved to time. To improve attendance at the school's PTA meetings, the date for the meeting could be fixed

on weekends so as to afford most parents, especially the working-class parents, the opportunity to be able to plan to attend the meeting.

At state level, the government should consider improving PI in schools by passing legislation which provides specifically for PI. This recommendation arises from the precedent which has been established for the state taking an interest in schooling and legislating that parents who do not enroll their children at a school according to the UBE Act of 2004, are liable for prosecution. Furthermore, it is recommended that the government mandate all schools to have written policy documents on PI activities at the school. This will ensure that all parents have first-hand information about the school and their roles as parents would be stated clearly from the start when their children are first enrolled at the school. It is further recommended that the parent should be encouraged and supported to spend quality time with their children and be committed financially towards their schooling. Such support could include information sessions on financial planning and also programs on child developmental needs.

5.3.3 Recommendations in relation to teachers' views on PI

The teachers need to facilitate effective communication between the school and the parents. In order to establish educational partnerships, there should be substantial exchange of information between the parents and the teachers. Therefore, it is recommended that teachers should make a concerted effort to knowing the parents of the pupils in their class. They should give feedback to parents at all available opportunities. Teachers should also assist in communicating school programs to parents at the earliest time to enhance parents' ability to plan their programs so that they are able to attend the school events. Parents' schedules should be considered, and it should be remembered that if the school expects parents to be involved, it is important to give them adequate notice of events or activities in which their involvement is sought to enable them to make the necessary plans ahead of time. This provision of adequate notice could be done by sending SMSs to the parents, providing written notifications, through making verbal invitations, WhatsApp group messages and even through home visits especially in instances where parental intervention is crucial. It is recommended that the school authorities take a lead to assist parents by encouraging them towards effective participation in school programs. The school authority should maintain and facilitate enhanced communication between the parents at all times. This can be achieved through inter alia official school newsletters, the official website, workshops, seminars, conference, and

fund-raising projects. The notifications of the various events should be sent at a good time and always backed with reminders.

5.3.4 Recommendations in relation to parents' view on the effect of SES on PI

There is a correlation between the SES of parents and the level of education and income. The level of education does not seem to influence PI to the extent that some research (see Chapter 2 section 2.4 and Chapter 4 section 4.2.1.7) has evidenced since all parents, regardless of SES appear to understand and recognize the importance of PI. However, the level of income has a more evident influence on PI since parents of lower income are unable to afford educational resources, taking children on educational excursions or paying school fees. Therefore, it is recommended that parents need to be conscious of their resource management to improve financial commitment towards the education of their children. Schools could play a role in providing suggestions to all parents on how to budget for their children's educational needs so that the finances are available when required. Furthermore, owing to the economic instability prevalent in the country, the Federal Government has a role to play and should design a policy to regulate educational standards in public and private schools in Nigeria. The LSES pupils should have equal educational opportunities in public schools as HSES pupils have in private schools. This can be achieved by improving the infrastructure in the public schools, improving the staff strength, re-training existing teaching and non-teaching staff to enhance their delivery capability and to be knowledgeable about how to best provide for the needs of children from LSES backgrounds. This will go a long way in facilitating equality in the educational sector across the SES strata in the country. It is highly recommended that the Federal Government should provide soft educational loans with no interest to LSES parents to ensure ease of their financial predicament towards their children's education.

5.3.5 Recommendations in relation to teachers' views on the effect of SES on PI

It is recommended that teachers should assist families (in collaboration with the school authority) to raise funds for indigent pupils in their school. In addition, the Federal Ministry of Education should improve teachers' practice and education relating to PI through training programs that could include workshops, seminars and conferences to equip and update the teachers on the latest and best teaching pedagogy that relates to PI. During the course of the research no evidence could be found of such interventions currently. It is recommended that teachers should be recognized and

awarded for their effort in involving parents in the education of their children. This will motivate the teachers to encourage parents towards reaching sustainable PI practices in Nigerian schools.

5.4 LIMITATION TO THE STUDY AND AREAS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH

This research study was a case study (see Chapter 3 section 3.2.2) of only three schools in Ile-Ife, Nigeria. The study was confined to three primary schools in the town. The participants consisted of small sample sizes (see Chapter 3 section 3.4) limited to parents and teachers at the schools selected for study. In addition, the schools are all situated in urban areas. Obviously the results from this study can consequently not be generalized to schools in Nigeria in general and cannot support the general implication of PI and effect of SES in rural areas.

Purposeful sampling was used to select the teachers while convenience sampling was used for parents (see Chapter 3 section 3.4.2). This implies that the findings were based on the opinion and views of the participants who took part in the study which does not preclude that different results might emerge from research conducted in other circumstances. It is conceded that parents who volunteered participation in the study could have been more aware of their roles as parents in the education of their children which could have influenced the outcomes of the research.

The findings of this study on the effect of SES in three socio-economic disparate schools suggest the following priority areas in future research. The following aspects relating to the effects of SES on PI in Ile-Ife require more detailed research.

o The role of father in effecting/supporting parental involvement.

o The role of the community in achieving PI.

o The reason why parents choose to send their children to private schools when public schooling is free of charge.

o The role of parents in school governance in public and private schools.

o The nature and effectiveness of communication between the home and the school and how this can be used to support PI.

o How LSES parents cope with and address factors which constrain PI,

o The impact of a lack of PI on schooling.

5.5 CLOSING COMMENTS

Most parents strive towards helping their children reach success in their careers and personal life. To achieve this, parents are dependent on the school system. To ensure that schooling is successful, various levels of interaction and communication between the home and the school are necessary. The two mains actors (parents and teachers) must work together and for this to happen, parents need to be involved in a sustained and sustainable way in their children's schooling. In modern times where education is increasingly seen as a joint venture between parents and the school, parents are willing to be involved in their children's education and teachers generally welcome and expect parents to be involved.

The present investigation revealed the current PI practices among parents at different SES levels. It was evident that regardless of SES, parents appeared to be involved in very similar ways and generally attached the same value to education and how it would affect their children. The study presented suggestions on how teachers can support and better involve parents in their children's education. This study provides recommendation on how to improve the collaboration between the parents and the teachers. For teachers to better understand parents at various levels of income (with respect to their SES), appropriate training is advised. PI entails a partnership between the home and the school which should be based on mutual understanding and respect. It is imperative for teachers to understand the circumstances of the parents whose children attend school and they need to be cognizant of the hurdles (stress) of life which affect parents' commitment and ability to be involved in their children's schooling. There could be times where parents do not have the emotional or physical strength to be full partners as expected. On the other hand, teachers are also very busy people who work hard and their work is emotionally, intellectually and physically demanding. However, the task to learn more about pupils and family is beyond the classroom and this might be stressful. However, if teachers are sincere about involving parents in their children's education, they need to recognize the complexity and diversity of children's home circumstance

and must be able to relate this to ways in which they can best involve their parents in their education.

PI requires that parents give their children time – a few minutes of their every day - thus, this study concludes with the words of Jane D Hull (2010 in Sprowl 2011), American politician and educational expert, in which the importance of PI is highlighted:

> *At the end of the day, the most overwhelming key to a child's success is the positive involvement of parents.*

It is not necessarily the SES of the parent which determines whether parents involve themselves with their children's education, but the actual level of interest and willingness of the parent to spend time exclusively on the child every day – ensuring that the child is well cared for and supported in relation to his or her education. This will be the best investment in the child's future – an investment that is emotional and physical and not financial.

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Appendix 1: LETTER TO HEADMISTRESS/HEADMASTER OF THE SCHOOL

The Headmistress/Headmaster   Date:

Primary school: A primary school. Address of school:

Dear Sir,

   Re: Application for permission to conduct research in your school

I am a registered Master of Education student at the University of South Africa. My supervisor is Prof CS le Roux in the Department of Educational Foundations. The aim of my research is to establish what parental involvement practices are followed at three socio-economically disparate primary schools in Ile-Ife, Nigeria. Through my research I hope to make a tangible and meaningful contribution to the literature on the impact of parental involvement on pupil's scholastic achievement and to add to teachers' understanding of the effect of parent involvement in the education of their wards. The result of my research will be shared with the school on completion of the study.

I hereby apply for your permission to conduct my research project at your school. The study will target only five teachers from your school. These teachers have been selected on the basis of suggestion by the school principal and the researcher randomly selected from the list of teaching staff provided by the principal.

I intend to engage these five teachers at your school in the following activities:

1. The completion of a questionnaire. The questionnaire will be completed in the teachers' own time and will be collected by the researcher 3 days after distribution.

2. Focus group interview with the five teachers after school hours

    i.   The teachers to be interviewed are…………………………………………

    ii.   Time…………………………………………………………………………..

iii. Date…………………………………………………………………...

iv. Venue……………………………………………………………

I also would like to assure you that the normal school program will not be interrupted. I will not let the teacher leave his/her classes in order to focus on my project. The focus group interview will take place after school hours. Furthermore, I would like to assure you that the anonymity of the school and the teachers will be upheld at all times. The name of the teachers and the school will not be used. I will use pseudonyms if necessary. The confidentiality of the teachers and the school will also be maintained. The teachers will only become part of the study once I have received their informed consent to involve them in the study. The teachers will also have the right to withdraw from the study if they choose to do so. They will not be penalized in any way should they withdraw from the study.

I am looking forward to your positive response.

Yours sincerely.

R.O Obayopo   Signature

Appendix 2: FOCUS GROUP INTERVIEW LETTER OF INVITATION AND INFORMED CONSENT

To: Mr/Mrs …………..

Subject: Invitation to participate in focus group interview

Dear………………

Good day, my name is Rofiat Omolola Obayopo. I am currently a registered Master of Education student at the University of South Africa doing my research under the supervision of Prof CS le Roux. I am conducting a research study focusing on parent involvement in three socio-economic disparities schools in Ile-Ife town in Nigeria.

I would like to invite you to participate in a focus group interview at which you will have the opportunity to share your valuable teaching experience with four other teachers from your school at which you are teaching. The purpose of the interview will be to establish your views and experiences on the nature and scope of parental involvement as it occurs in the school where you teach. The interview will not exceed an hour and will take place outside of school hours. Please be assured that your name will not be mentioned during the reporting or discussion of the research and your anonymity and confidentiality will be respected and upheld at all times. In order for me to adequately prepare for the interview, I am also asking you to complete a short questionnaire which should not take more than 10 minutes to complete.

If you agree to participate in the focus group interview and to complete the questionnaire, kindly let me have your decision in writing by signing the "informed consent slip" at the end of this letter. You will note that the letter is in duplicate which means you will keep one of the copies for your record while the other one will be kept on record by me. Also note that you will be free to withdraw from the study if you wish and that your withdrawal will have no reprisal.

You will be provided with a copy of the questionnaire for completion in your own time and I will collect it from you

three days later. I will provide you with the questionnaire on …..[date] …. And will collect it from you on …. [date] ….

Here are the details of the interview which has been scheduled:

Date of interview: …………………………………..

Time……………………………………..

Venue: ……………………………….

Contact person: ……………………….

I will send you the interview schedule prior to the interview day so that you can familiarize yourself with the issues to be discussed.

Looking forward to hearing from you.

Yours sincerely,

R.O Obayopo.   Signature

INFORMED CONSENT:

I ………..[full name]…………….. declare that I have been informed about the nature of the research and the role I will play in the research project. I understand that the information supplied will be kept strictly confidential. I further understand that I will not receive any

remuneration for partaking in the research. I hereby consent to participate in the study as outlined and understand that I may withdraw from the study if I chose without reprisal.

Full name	Signature	Date

Appendix 3: LETTER OF INFORMED CONSENT: EDUCATIONAL RESEARCH PROJECT

Dear Teacher,

My name is ROFIAT OMOLOLA OBAYOPO. I am currently a registered student at the University of South Africa UNISA, studying for a Masters in Educational Management at the University of South Africa (UNISA). I need to conduct a research project in order to complete the course. I need your assistance and cooperation in conducting this research.

My supervisor is Prof. C.S le ROUX in the Department of Educational Foundations at UNISA.

The study is divided into two parts, firstly; a questionnaire will be distributed to teachers to fill in their leisure time. These questionnaires will be collected and the information obtained will be used for the research purpose only. The research study focuses on parent involvement in three socio-economic disparate schools in ile-ife, Nigeria.

Secondly, five teachers will be identified and invited to a focus group interview to discuss in-depth matters concerning parent involvement at school at which they teach. The study aim at having a clear understanding of your views and perceptions on the nature and scope of parent involvement at your school.

The following are important for you to consider:

You are under no obligation to participate

All information supplied in the questionnaire and interview will be treated with strict confidentiality

If for whatever reason you feel uncomfortable during the research process, you are welcome to withdraw.

Thank you for your kind co-operation.

R.O Obayopo.   Signature

INFORMED CONSENT FOR TEACHERS

I…………………………… hereby give consent to R.O. Obayopo to use me as a participant in the research process by completing the questionnaire and returning it to her. To use the information in her research. To choose me for an interview if I am selected.

I agree to take part in this research,

Please indicate with a tick if consent is granted/not granted.

For questionnaire……………. /for interview………………………….

Signature…………………………..   Date…………………………..

Appendix 4: LETTER OF INFORMED CONSENT: EDUCATIONAL RESERCH PROJECT

Dear Parent,

My name is ROFIAT OMOLOLA OBAYOPO. I am a student at the University of South Africa UNISA, studying for a Masters in Educational Management under the supervision of Prof CS le Roux, Department of Educational Foundations. I need to conduct a research project in order to complete the course. I appeal to your assistance and cooperation in conducting this research.

The project aims to investigate the issue of parent involvement (PI) in Nigerian schools. The study has the potential benefit of gaining a better understanding of school programs and teacher practice on how PI can be incorporated in schools to the benefit of pupils.

I would like to interview five parents from each of the schools that have consented to be part of the study. I am asking your cooperation to participate in the study and to share with me your insights and experiences regarding parental involvement through an individual interview which will last no longer than 40 minutes. Your name will not be mentioned in the study and I undertake to uphold your anonymity and confidentiality. Furthermore, you have the right to withdraw from the study should you choose to do so for any reason. You will not receive remuneration for your participation, but I believe that your participation will benefit the understanding of parental involvement in schools. The interview will be arranged at a time and place that is convenient to you.

If you agree to participate in this study by engaging in an individual interview, please sign the informed consent slip below.

Thank you for your co-operation.

R.O Obayopo. Signature

INFORMED CONSENT:

I…………[full name]………………… agree to take part in this research, I declare that I was informed about the nature of the research and I understand that the information supplied will be kept strictly confidential. I further understand that I will not receive any remuneration for partaking in the research and that I may withdraw from the study without reprisal. I hereby give consent to R.O. Obayopo to use me as a participant in the research process by attending an interview of no more than 40 minutes scheduled at my convenience. I

Full name   Signature   Date

Appendix 5: FOCUS GROUP INTERVIEW FOR TEACHERS.

1. How do you expect parents to get involved in the education of their children?

2. How often do you think parents should get involved? Please elaborate.

3. What are the most effective means of getting parents involved?

4. Tell me, how you advice parents on how to get involved in their child's education?

5. What do you think parents need to do in order to help their children with school work?

6. What do you think motivates parents to be involved?

7. Why do you think some parents were not involved?

8. Do you think the extent of parental involvement is linked to the parents' level of education? Please elaborate. Do you need to make a special effort to involve parents with less education? Please elaborate

9. Does parents' socio-economic status influence the degree of parent involvement? Please elaborate.

10. At your school which parents are most involved in their children's education? How would you characterize them?

11. How can the school encourage the less involved parents to become more involved?

12. What are the strategies you use as a teacher to involve such parents?

13. What are the ways the school authority uses to get less involved parents to participate in their children's education?

14. Would you say the language of communication influences parents' inclination to become involved in their children's schooling? How often does the school communicate with parents? On what occasions/events please clarify.

15. What are the characteristics of a low achieving pupil from your teaching experience?

16. Would you say that the level of parental involvement is in any way linked to why pupils do not achieve at school?

17. How do you offer help to such pupils?

18. What is your opinion on how socio-economic background impacts on pupils' achievement at school?

19. Are there any visible effects of socio-economic status on pupils' achievement at school? Please elaborate.

20. Do you have any other observation on parents' involvement that you like to talk about?

APPENDIX 6: INDIVIDUAL INTERVIEW QUESTIONS FOR PARENTS

1. Do you think PI is important? Why?

2. How often do you go to your child's school? And for what purpose?

3. What does schooling mean to you?

    a) How does getting your child to school on daily basis important to you?

    b) Why do you want your child to attend school?

4. How do you feel you can help your child with school work?

5. What are the possible/practical ways you value most that can help your child at school?

6. Do you feel welcomed whenever you visit your child at school?

7. How long have you been present at the Parents-Teachers' Association meeting

8. When was the last meeting held?

9. What was the average turnout for the meeting?

10. By what means are parents informed about the meeting?

11. How long before meeting are notices sent out to parents

12. Do you believe that the parents-Teacher's Association meeting is the most effective means of communicating with parents?

13. What is the most effective strategy that brings parents in larger numbers to school/meetings

14. How do you think some parents are not involved in school?

15. Should level of parents' income affect involvement in their children's work? Please elaborate.

    a) What is your suggestion on the effect of parents' social economic status in their children's involvement?

16. How important is education in your family?

      a) How often do you read to your child?

      b) How often do you take your child to the library?

17. Do you think the child's school is a good place for him/her

18. Do you believe that the school staffs are doing good things for your child?

19. Do you have confidence in the teachers at school?

20. How is the school preparing your child for the future?

APPENDIX 7: SURVEY QUESTIONNAIRE: PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT

❖ The information here is strictly for research purpose only. Your name or other personal details will not be divulged to anybody without your consent.

❖ Please use a cross(x) in the blocks to indicate your choice of answers.

This questionnaire is part of a research study based on influence of Parents Social Economic Status on involvement in the education of their children.

1. PARENT-TEACHER CONTACT

a) How often do you call your pupils' parent? Always ☐ Sometimes ☐ Rarely ☐ Never ☐ ☐

b) How often have parents visited the school? Daily ☐ Weekly ☐ Monthly ☐ Annually ☐ ☐

2. PARENTS INVOLVEMENT AT SCHOOL

a) Which school event does the school have large parents turnout? Open Day ☐ Sport ☐ Events ☐ PTA Meetings ☐ End Of the Year Party ☐ ☐

b) How often have parents attended PTA Meeting? Always ☐ Sometimes ☐ Rarely ☐ Never ☐ ☐

3. QUALITY OF PARENT-TEACHER RELATIONSHIP.

a) Do you enjoy talking with your pupils' parents? Yes ☐ No ☐

b) Do you feel that parents care about their childs' homework or schoolwork? Yes ☐ No ☐

c) Are the parents interested in knowing you? Yes ☐ No ☐

d) Do you feel comfortable talking with the parents about their childs' problem? Definitely Yes ☐ Probably Yes ☐ Uncertain ☐ Probably No ☐ Definitely No ☐ ☐

4. TEACHERS PERCEPTION OF PARENT VALUE OF EDUCATION

a) Do parents encourage positive attitudes towards the education of their children?

Always ☐ Sometimes ☐ Rarely ☐ Never ☐ ☐

b) Do parents frequently make suggestions? Always ☐ Sometimes ☐ Rarely ☐ Never ☐
☐

5. SOCIAL CAPITAL AT HOME

a) Do you agree that material resources in the pupils' homes contribute to their success? Strongly Agree ☐ Agree ☐ Undecided ☐ Disagree ☐ Strongly Disagree ☐

b) Do you agree that the ☐ possession of computers, a conducive place to study, and television aid pupils' academic environment? Strongly Agree ☐ Agree ☐ Undecided ☐ Disagree ☐ Strongly Disagree ☐ ☐

c) How often do the pupils' siblings and friends help them with school work? Always ☐ Sometimes ☐ Rarely ☐ Never ☐ ☐

d) How would you rate parents' involvements in their children's education? Very Poor ☐ Poor ☐ Fair ☐ Good ☐ Excellent ☐ ☐

e) Why do you think some parents are not involved? (tick more than one choice if necessary)

☐ They do not have essential skill or education.
☐ They do not have essential experience.
☐ They don't have time.
☐ They feel intimidated by teachers or principals.

Any other reason you wish to include:

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f) Do you think parents can make meaningful contributions to school by their involvement? Yes ☐ No ☐

How can this be achieved?

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g) What could the school management do to get parents involved:

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