Original Paper

Challenges of Parental Involvement in the Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statement in Five Secondary Schools in Rural South Africa

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Abstract

Parental involvement in South Africa's educational curriculum is a contentious issue. This paper explores the complexities of parental involvement in the Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statement at five rural secondary schools. Employing interpretivism as the guiding paradigm, this qualitative case study utilized a purposive sample of 15 participants, drawing on the Game Theory of Participation and Stakeholder Theory as frameworks. Data collection comprised literature reviews and semi-structured interviews, with Thematic Analysis employed for data interpretation. The study uncovered significant barriers to parental involvement, including limited capacity, socio-economic challenges, systemic obstacles, power dynamics between parents and head teachers, and lingering effects of apartheid and colonialism. Findings indicate that parental participation in CAPS is minimal. To address this, the paper advocates for regular capacity-building workshops to enhance parental competencies in curriculum-related activities. Furthermore, it suggests the Ministry of Basic Education should formulate clear guidelines to better define parental roles within the curriculum.

Keywords: Challenges, Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statement, involvement; parental involvement; rural

1. Introduction

Parental involvement in the curriculum, particularly in the context of the Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statement (CAPS) in rural South African secondary schools, presents both challenges and opportunities. Although the concept of parental involvement may seem daunting at first, its importance is increasingly being recognized by educational institutions (Oranga, Obuba, & Boinett, 2022). Nyamai (2021) emphasizes the central role of parents as stakeholders in the curriculum, bringing valuable perspectives that promote democratic and diverse educational experiences. Grace (2022) concurs, noting that parental engagement boosts students' motivation, self-esteem, and confidence, thereby promoting academic achievement. The positive effects of parental engagement extend beyond individual students and benefit the entire school community (Thompson et al., 2017; Epstein, 2018; Puccioni, 2018). This engagement means that parents devote time and resources to their children's education (Singh & Mahajan, 2021). Although parental engagement is valued in all cultures, it varies and reflects different cultural norms and practices (Garbacz & Sheridan, 2011). Students who benefit from such engagement often demonstrate commendable behaviour, better attitudes toward education, greater school engagement, lower dropout rates, and better academic performance. The literature supports the premise that effective parental involvement is a cornerstone of a successful curriculum. When parents are actively involved, not only is the curriculum more inclusive, but it is also more likely to lead to positive outcomes (Mbhiza & Nkambule, 2022). By addressing challenges and leveraging opportunities, we can create a supportive educational environment that benefits everyone (Mbhiza & Nkambule, 2022).

The legacy of apartheid and colonialism casts a long shadow over the South African education landscape, particularly in the area of parental involvement in the curriculum. Under the apartheid

regime, the education system was an instrument of control, with measures that systematically excluded South African parents from meaningful involvement in their children's education. Matshe (2014) highlights that the role of parents in educational processes was significantly diminished by the dual force of colonization and apartheid. This marginalization was exacerbated by the Bantu Education Act, which Gumede (2012) describes as a barrier that deprives black South Africans of the skills required for gainful employment. Ferris (2017) criticizes the South African education system for its failure to challenge and dismantle the colonial foundations that are still embedded in school curricula and practise, which hinders teacher creativity and innovation. Du Plessis (2021) echoes this sentiment, pointing to the lingering effects of centralization and standardization that perpetuate the country's class divide and hinder equal access to quality education. Conversely, Lopez and Rugano (2018) argue for breaking the colonized histories and knowledge systems, especially those that have been used as a weapon against the black population. The introduction of the concept of 'empowered parents' in 1994 marked a significant shift, but the path to genuine participation in curriculum development remains fraught with challenges rooted in a complex historical context.

The involvement of parents in the South African education system has improved since the end of apartheid. However, this progress is not without its problems. Uleanya, Gamede, and Kutame (2020) highlight inadequate infrastructure as a major obstacle, while West and Meier (2020) point out that resource scarcity affects parents' ability to engage with the curriculum. The digital divide, as noted by Akintolu and Uleanya (2021), exacerbates these challenges as it limits communication between parents and schools, a point echoed by Tuli and Tarekegne (2019), who also cite the lack of basic communication tools such as telephone and email. Hornby and Blackwell (2018) cite other factors that affect parental engagement, such as lack of interest, lack of time for working parents, and the belief that their involvement has no impact on their children's education. This paper attempts to bridge the gap between policy and practice in relation to school-parent relationships, an area that has received limited research to date. By examining the Vhembe district in the Limpopo province, this study aims to answer the pressing question: What are the challenges of parent involvement in curriculum and assessment policy in rural South African secondary schools?

• The DBE's initiatives to involve parents in the curriculum in the Vhembe district in South Africa's Limpopo Province

• How can schools overcome the challenges of involving parents in the curriculum?

• How can parents deal with the challenges they face in curriculum involvement?

• The DBE's methods of promoting parental involvement in the curriculum in the Vhembe district in the Limpopo province of South Africa.

2. Literature Review

2.1 The role of parents in curriculum-related issues

Parental involvement in education plays an important role in shaping a child's learning experience. Although educational institutions recognize the importance of parental engagement, effective parental involvement in curriculum-related matters remains a challenge. Parents are important stakeholders in their children's education. Their active involvement can have a positive impact on student outcomes, including academic achievement, social development, and overall well-being. Oranga, Obuba, and Boinett (2022) emphasize that while some educational institutions actively involve parents and recognize their crucial role in the educational process, it is still difficult to involve them in curriculum-related matters. Singh and Mahajan (2021) define parental engagement as the commitment of parents' time, effort, and resources to their children's education. This engagement goes beyond attending parents' evenings and includes a range of activities, such as homework help: Parents help with homework to support learning in the classroom at home. Communication: A regular exchange between parents and teachers promotes cooperation. Volunteering: Parents volunteer to help with school events, field trips, and extracurricular activities. Advocacy: Parents advocate for their child's needs within the educational system.

Some parents may not be fully aware of their role in curriculum decisions. Warsi (2018) emphasizes

that parents contribute directly to the curriculum in various ways: parents often supplement classroom resources by providing books, materials, or expertise. Parents' contributions to curriculum content, teaching methods, and assessment strategies are valuable. Parents share practical experiences and provide a link between classroom learning and real-life situations. Parents advocate for diverse perspectives and inclusive content. In summary, parent involvement has a significant impact on curriculum-related issues. Schools need to actively address barriers and create opportunities for meaningful collaboration between parents and teachers. By recognizing parents as partners in education, we can improve the overall learning experience for students.

2.2 Barriers to parental involvement

Liu, Sulaimani, and Henning (2020) find that parental engagement is often focused on supporting children's education and meeting school expectations. However, in South Africa, socio-economic inequalities and parents' lack of skills can hinder effective involvement. Nevertheless, parental contributions in the form of school fees are recognized as important financial support for schools (RSA, 1996). The historical context of apartheid and colonialism has had a lasting impact on the educational landscape and has influenced parental participation in schools. This legacy has contributed to the socioeconomic challenges that continue to affect the education system. The power dynamics between parents and school leaders can lead to conflict, as Vellymalay (2012) notes. Although parents are an integral part of school governing bodies in terms of the South African Schools Act (SASA) of 1996, their involvement is sometimes overshadowed by the authority of head teachers.

The involvement of parents in the curriculum is significantly hindered by socioeconomic challenges. Despite various initiatives aimed at increasing parental involvement, persistent issues such as weak family structures, poverty, single parenthood, and unemployment continue to hinder progress (Abrahams, 2013; Karibayeva & Bogar, 2014; Mtshali, 2015). Koch (2018) highlights the fact that some parents do not have enough time to devote to their children's education due to these constraints. The imposition of a rigid and coercive curriculum by schools often fails to address the needs of parents, leading to a lack of parental involvement and engagement. As a result, many parents feel helpless, frustrated, and marginalized in the educational process. Matshe (2014) describes power as a set of actions in response to the actions of another and points to a struggle for authority between parents and school leaders in the classroom. Bagarette (2011) notes that many school leaders continue to undermine the role and reputation of parents, encouraging a power struggle that can escalate into conflict. The lack of clarity about responsibility and accountability for school finances further complicates the relationship between school administrators and parents (Mestry, 2006).

2.3 Strategies for parental involvement

Despite the challenges, there are concerted efforts to promote parental involvement. Duristic and Bunijevae (2017) found that active parental involvement increases confidence in homework help and promotes positive attitudes towards school staff. In addition, Yulianti (2015) points out that collaboration between parents and schools is beneficial in organizing extracurricular activities such as family reunions and field trips. In summary, while there are significant barriers to parental involvement in curriculum and assessment policy, the collaborative efforts of parents, educators, and policymakers are critical to overcoming these challenges and improving the educational experience for learners in rural South Africa. Parental involvement in education is critical to learner success, but in rural South Africa, this involvement is hindered by various barriers. This report examines the challenges faced by parents in participating in the Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statement (CAPS) in five secondary schools. In Vhembe District in Limpopo Province, Maluleke (2014) found that parents' understanding of their role in the curriculum suffers significantly. Similarly, Mncube (2009) found that parents' lack of skills contributed to their low involvement. Parents often rely on educators in curriculum matters, suggesting that they respect teachers' expertise. While many parents value education as a means to a better future for their children, some see their educational deficits as a barrier to participation in school-related activities.

To bridge this gap, schools need to develop strategies that cater to the needs of illiterate parents. Mwarari, Githui & Mwenje (2020) suggest utilizing the collective focus of African traditions by having retired teachers help children with homework, thus promoting community engagement and providing

psychological benefits to retirees. Parental involvement is a critical factor in a child's success in school. Oranga, Obuba & Boinett (2022) found that children perform better at school when their parents are actively involved in their education. This involvement can take various forms, such as serving on school committees, volunteering, and attending parent-teacher conferences. Syomwene (2022) suggests that the government should conduct workshops to educate parents about the importance of their role in the curriculum and improve their skills. Dani and Shah (2016) argue that education is crucial for empowering people in rural communities to make them more meaningful to themselves and society. Mohapi (2014) supports this view, noting that the availability of resources affects the quality of teaching and learning and the extent of curriculum management and delivery. Dlamini (2018) suggests that mobile technologies such as cell phones and smartphones can reduce these communication gaps. These technologies allow parents to monitor their children's attendance, access continuous assessment profiles, and improve resource utilization, thereby enhancing cognitive development and academic achievement. For CAPS to be implemented successfully, effective collaboration between schools and parents is essential. Overcoming the challenges of engaging parents can lead to better educational outcomes and a more stable educational framework in rural South Africa.

3. Theoretical framework

To position this study accurately, two theoretical perspectives were critically examined to ensure parental participation in curriculum and assessment policy: game theory of participation (GTP) and stakeholder theory. Game theory of participation (GTP): originally developed in economics, GTP explains social interactions in which individuals or entities perform actions that affect the outcome of the game (Chiong & Jovanovic, 2012). In the context of CAPS, the 'game' involves various 'players' including the government, curriculum developers, teachers, and parents. The theory states that a game can only be successful if the rules are set in advance and agreed upon by all stakeholders to ensure cooperation towards a common goal. Stakeholder theory: According to this theory, introduced by Freeman (1984), the actors in any organizational scenario are called stakeholders, all of whom have their own interests. In the 'education game', these stakeholders include the government, teachers, and parents. The theory highlights that the success of the curriculum depends on the recognition and integration of the interests of all stakeholders, especially those who have been marginalized in the past, such as black parents in the South African context.

The following challenges have been identified: Exclusion of parents from decision-making. In the past, black parents were excluded from curriculum design, development, and implementation, resulting in a lack of ownership and disengagement from the education process: The imposition of state-created curricula without prior consensus transforms the educational "game" into an adversarial one in which parents are marginalized and become mere spectators without influence; and the absence of negotiated rules: Without pre-negotiated rules, the role of parents in the curriculum "game" remains undefined, leading to a lack of engagement and cooperation in achieving educational goals. The study emphasizes the need for a participatory approach to education policy that involves all stakeholders, especially parents, in the design and evaluation of the curriculum. By adopting principles from the GTP and stakeholder theory, a more inclusive and effective educational framework can be created that fosters a collaborative environment conducive to the progress of rural education in South Africa.

The process of curriculum development is often compared to a game in which different interest groups participate with the common goal of educational advancement. However, the effectiveness of this "curriculum game" depends on the pre-established rules that define the roles and contributions of each participant. In this framework, it is assumed that if these rules are not mutually agreed upon, the game becomes an adversarial competition and players such as parents are relegated to mere spectators with no ability to influence. In education, the curriculum serves as a roadmap for learning. However, its design and implementation often become a contested "game" played by different teams instead of pursuing a common goal. In this framework, the impact of such a game is examined when key stakeholders, especially parents and marginalized communities, are excluded from the decision-making process.

Government-appointed experts often create curricula and expect them to be strictly followed. This top-down approach can cause the curriculum game to become an adversarial one, where the lack of

consensus on goals leads to a lack of collaboration in achieving a common goal. Parents, especially those of historically marginalized groups, do not have a "ticket in" and cannot shape or change the curriculum their children are involved with. The curriculum has a far-reaching impact on society and shapes the knowledge and skills that are taught to the next generation. When key stakeholders such as black parents are left out of the design, development, and implementation of the curriculum, the exclusionary practices of apartheid and colonialism are perpetuated. Factors such as socio-economic status, lack of leadership experience, and academic qualifications further hinder the inclusion of parents in the institutional framework.

Stakeholder theory is relevant to this discussion as it argues for the inclusion of all relevant stakeholders in curriculum work. This inclusive approach suggests that teachers, principals, parents, and, most importantly, the government, as the main party responsible for monitoring and promoting curricula, should participate together in curriculum development. For the curriculum game to be effective and equitable, it must move from an adversarial model to a collaborative model. This requires the negotiation of rules that allow for meaningful participation of all stakeholders to ensure that the curriculum meets not only the requirements of government but also the needs and aspirations of society as a whole.

4. Research design and methods

This study adopted an exploratory case study approach within the interpretive paradigm to investigate the complexities of parental involvement in the Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statement (CAPS). The qualitative research design is chosen to delve into the nuanced perspectives, experiences, and opinions of participants, providing a rich, contextual understanding of the underlying challenges. Qualitative methods are employed to capture the depth of information from participants. Data collection was conducted as follows: Semi-structured key informant interviews and literature review. Semi-structured key informant interviews allow for flexibility in exploring topics while ensuring that all relevant areas are covered. Semi-structured key informant interviews were utilized to gather nuanced perspectives from individuals with informed viewpoints on parental involvement. A comprehensive review of existing literature (Mohajan, 2018; Qwabe, Maluleke & Olutola, 2022) informs the study on various dimensions such as the historical role of parents, capacity challenges, the legacy of apartheid and colonialism, socio-economic barriers, power dynamics between parents and school authorities, and strategies to enhance parental engagement. A literature review was conducted to establish a foundational understanding of the topic. The study is grounded in an interpretive paradigm, drawing on Neuman (2006), who posits that interpretive research aims to understand social life by uncovering how individuals construct meaning within their natural environments. A total of 15 participants were purposively selected to provide diverse insights into the research question, categorized as follows:

Semi-structured key informant interviews allow flexibility in exploring topics while ensuring that all relevant areas are covered. Semi-structured key informant interviews were used to gather nuanced perspectives from individuals with informed views on parent involvement. Literature review: A comprehensive review of existing literature (Mohajan, 2018; Qwabe, Maluleke & Olutola, 2022) served as the basis for the study on various aspects such as the historical role of parents, capacity issues, the legacy of apartheid and colonialism, socio-economic barriers, the power dynamics between parents and school authorities, and strategies to improve parental involvement. A literature review was conducted to gain a basic understanding of the topic. The study was based on an interpretive paradigm drawing on Neuman (2006) who posits that interpretive research aims to understand social life by uncovering how individuals construct meaning within their natural environments. A total of 15 participants were purposively selected to gain different insights into the research question, categorized as follows:

- 5 retired parents not affiliated with school boards, offering an independent parental perspective.

- 5 retired School Governing Body (SGB) members, providing insights from experienced governance roles.

- 5 former school principals, contributing administrative and leadership viewpoints.

Participants were chosen based on their potential to contribute unique and valuable perspectives on the challenges of parental involvement, informed by their varied experiences and roles within the educational landscape of rural South Africa. Principals were chosen due to their direct observations and comprehensive understanding of parental involvement levels at their schools. Parents were included as they could provide first-hand accounts of parental engagement and detail their involvement with the Curriculum and Assessment Policy Standards (CAPS). School governing body members (SGBs) were selected for their governance roles and insights into the degree of parental participation.

Thematic Analysis was employed to dissect the data, following the methodological framework of Braun & Clarke (2013). This involved the identification, examination, and documentation of recurring themes. To ensure the fidelity of the data, interviews were tape-recorded (with consent) and transcribed verbatim. This approach aimed to capture the informants' responses comprehensively and mitigate information loss. Interviewees were informed about the study's purpose, and consent was obtained for both participation and audio recording. Confidentiality and anonymity of the participants were maintained throughout the research process.

5. Results and discussion

This section delineates the emergent themes and findings from the empirical investigation conducted. The insights presented herein are directly aligned with the research inquiries posited at the outset of this study. The results, predicated on data meticulously garnered through interviews, are further substantiated by the application of the game theory of participation and stakeholder theory, which have been instrumental in data analysis. The thematic analysis unveiled several challenges to parental involvement in curriculum and assessment policy within five rural secondary schools in South Africa. These challenges are encapsulated in the following themes:

Theme 1: Financial literacy and parental involvement in rural schools

The study shows that parents lack financial education. Parental involvement plays a decisive role in students' school performance. However, in many rural areas, parents face the problem of financial literacy, which can affect their ability to effectively engage in their children's education (Simweleba & Serpell, 2020). Many parents lack adequate financial education. This lack hinders their ability to engage meaningfully in their children's education. Matshe (2014) highlights a major barrier to parental engagement in the Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statement (CAPS) in rural South African schools: financial literacy. The study shows that some parents have been excluded from important financial decisions and assessments and their role has been reduced to simply signing checks without understanding the implications. This lack of financial literacy is not unique but reflects the lack of effective financial management mechanisms in these schools. In communities struggling with poverty, the lack of resources, knowledge, and organizational skills severely limits parents' ability to influence educational decisions or curriculum issues. The expectation that parents can skillfully manage their finances and turn them into cost-effective material resources to improve the quality of education is often unrealistic. Particularly in schools where parents have limited skills, knowledge, or experience and a low level of education, the responsibility for managing and monitoring the budget inevitably falls to the head teacher. LeBaron, Holmes, Jorgensen & and Bean (2020) emphasized that family educators, guidance counselors, and financial counsellors with expertise in financial education should encourage parents to openly educate their children about finances. Financial education courses in secondary schools and colleges could include a unit on teaching financial literacy to children so that students are prepared to teach their own children accordingly. Policymakers could help improve parents' financial knowledge and skills and prepare parents to teach their children about finances by incentivizing educators to involve parents in financial education.

In schools where parents have limited skills, knowledge, or low levels of education, the responsibility for managing and monitoring the budget often rests solely with the school administration. Providing parents with knowledge and skills that enable greater involvement has had a positive impact on student achievement. Interventions that provide parents with financial literacy knowledge and skills can be effective in improving student achievement. However, overcoming financial literacy challenges in rural schools requires a concerted effort by parents, educators, and school leaders. Remember that parental involvement goes beyond financial issues. More generally, fostering collaboration between home and

school contributes positively to children's intellectual development (Simweleba & Serpell, 2020). By addressing deficits in financial literacy, we can create a supportive educational environment for all students.

Theme 2: The legacy of apartheid and colonialism for parental involvement

The study found that the lingering effects of apartheid and colonialism strongly influence parental involvement. The legacy of colonialism and apartheid has left an indelible mark on parental engagement in educational processes. South Africa's history has been shaped by both apartheid and colonial rule, which has had a lasting impact on various aspects of society, including education. Despite decentralization efforts in the post-apartheid era aimed at democratizing education and promoting parental involvement, many parents remain uninvolved. This disengagement is partly due to the persistent belief that the responsibility for children's education lies solely with principals and teachers. Du Plessis (2021) argues that the centralization and standardization of the education system in post-apartheid South Africa can be traced back to colonial rule. This system perpetuates class structures and unequal access to quality education. As a result, parents often believe that the responsibility for their children's education lies solely with school principals and teachers. This belief contributes to a lack of parental engagement. The centralized system has marginalized parents in the past. They were deprived of the opportunity to question or criticize the education provided.

The legacy of colonialism reinforced this power dynamic, leaving parents feeling powerless and unable to advocate for change. Lopez and Rugano (2018) argue for moving away from colonial knowledge systems. These systems have contributed to the oppression of indigenous populations. By challenging these historical norms, there is an opportunity to empower parents and encourage greater engagement in education. Matshe (2014) points to the limited rights afforded to parents in the existing system. This restriction hinders their ability to challenge the status quo. The study on parental involvement in the Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statement (CAPS) in rural South African secondary schools reveals a complex picture. The legacy of apartheid and colonialism continues to shape parental engagement in South African education. By acknowledging these historical influences and advocating for change, we can work towards a more inclusive and participatory education system.

Theme 3: Parental involvement and socio-economic status

An important theme that emerged was the socioeconomic adversities faced by families. The study found that most students live with their grandmothers, as their biological parents are either deceased or absent. For the parents present, the daily struggle for economic survival — exacerbated by unemployment and dependence on state benefits— - is a significant barrier to active involvement in their children's education. Research consistently shows that parental involvement has a significant impact on students' educational outcomes. However, socio-economic factors play a crucial role in shaping the extent and nature of parental involvement. Parents' educational background influences their involvement in their children's education. In a study by Darko-Asumadu and Sika-Bright (2021), it was found that the educational level of parents had no significant impact on students' academic performance. However, parental involvement, occupation, and family size were statistically related to students' academic performance (Darko-Asumadu & Sika-Bright, 2021). West and Meier (2020) emphasize that resource scarcity is a crucial factor influencing parental engagement. Families facing economic challenges may struggle to find the time and resources to actively engage in their children's education. Akintolu and Uleanya (2021) point out that the digital divide exacerbates inequalities in parental engagement. Families who do not have access to technology face additional barriers when it comes to staying connected to school and participating in virtual learning environments.

The lack of infrastructural support is a major challenge to parental involvement: Families living in economically disadvantaged areas often struggle with transportation. Limited access to reliable transportation can prevent parents from attending school meetings, events, and parent-teacher conferences. Economic hardships can prevent parents from actively participating. For example, attending workshops or volunteering at school events may require time off from work, which can be a financial burden for low-income families. The power dynamics in educational institutions can lead to tensions between parents and school administrators: Matshe (2014) suggests that power dynamics are a series of reactions to the actions of others. Both parents and school leaders engage in behaviors aimed

at asserting their authority. When conflict arises, it is important to find collaborative solutions that prioritize the well-being of students. Bagarette (2011) notes that some school leaders belittle the reputation and role of parents. Promoting a more collaborative environment requires recognition of the valuable contribution parents can make to their children's education. Mestry (2006) points to the continuing lack of clarity in relation to financial accountability. Clear communication and transparency regarding school finances can help ease tensions between school administrators and parents. To address socioeconomic challenges and improve parental involvement, schools should raise awareness among parents about the importance of active engagement, provide accessible communication channels (including digital options), and encourage collaboration between parents, teachers, and administrators. Parent involvement is a shared responsibility that benefits students and contributes to a more inclusive educational environment (Pole, 2017).

Theme 4: Barriers to parental involvement

Research has identified several factors that hinder parents' active engagement in their children's schooling. Many parents face time constraints due to work, family responsibilities, and other commitments. Balancing work, household chores, and parenting can be challenging, leaving little time for active involvement in school activities. Some parents may lack the necessary skills or knowledge to actively participate in their child's education. This could include understanding curriculum content, assisting with homework, or navigating educational systems. Effective communication between schools and parents is crucial for fostering involvement. When communication channels are inadequate or unclear, parents may feel disconnected from the school community. Although not explicitly mentioned in your initial text, financial barriers can also impact parental involvement. Families facing economic challenges may struggle to participate in school events or contribute financially. The remnants of historical education systems, such as the Bantu education system, can influence parental attitudes and perceptions. These legacies may perpetuate a lack of awareness about the importance of parental involvement. Gumede (2012) and Maluleke (2014) indirectly highlight historical and cultural factors. Parents may not fully understand the significance of their involvement in shaping their child's education. Raising awareness about the benefits of parental engagement is essential. Overcoming barriers requires forging successful educational partnerships between schools and parents. Identifying and addressing these obstacles is crucial for meaningful collaboration. While barriers exist, school leaders must actively address them to promote parental support and enhance student success. By creating welcoming environments, improving communication, and recognizing the unique needs of parents, schools can bridge the gap and foster effective partnerships with families (Cox-Peterson, 2011).

Theme 5: Strategies to promote parental involvement in the curriculum

The findings highlight the need for greater parental involvement. The study advocates the organization of workshops to impart curriculum-related knowledge to parents. Syomwene (2022) calls on the government to increase the frequency of such workshops and seminars and emphasizes the importance of involving parents in the curriculum to improve their children's education. Research shows that there is a clear need for training programs that can improve parenting skills. Dani and Shah (2016) advocate the implementation of training initiatives aimed at fostering a sense of empowerment among members of rural communities and making them valuable contributors to society. The study suggests involving parents in all aspects of the curriculum process and taking their insights into account when making curriculum decisions. In order to remain competitive and meet the demands of both the local and global economy, it is important that the curriculum provides parents with relevant skills. It is recommended that schools, in collaboration with the Ministry of Basic Education, develop strategies to promote greater parental involvement in curriculum matters in order to create a more inclusive and effective educational environment.

6. Conclusion and recommendations

This paper, entitled "Challenges of Parental Involvement in CAPS in Five Secondary Schools in Rural South Africa"," addresses the multiple barriers to parental involvement in the education system. Using an interpretive paradigm, this qualitative case study explores the intricacies of the parental role within the Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statement (CAPS) through the lens of game theory and

stakeholder theory. The findings show that the remnants of apartheid and colonialism, combined with limited capacity and socio-economic constraints, have created a significant gap between parents and school authorities. This divide is exacerbated by the lack of parent-tailored curriculum workshops, suggesting that curricula are passively imposed on parents at the district level. In light of these findings, the study argues for a proactive approach by the Department of Basic Education (DBE) to encourage parental involvement. This includes the introduction of regular capacity-building workshops and seminars, which should be included in the training manuals for the trainers of the parent component of the School Governing Body (SGB). In addition, it is imperative that schools, especially at the district level, formulate and implement strategies to actively promote parental involvement in CAPS. To solidify this framework of involvement, the DBE is urged to formulate comprehensive guidelines that clarify the role of parents in curriculum development. Such measures are central to bridging the gap between parents and educational institutions and creating a collaborative and inclusive educational environment.

Recommendations:

• Workshop development should be considered. It is imperative to initiate and sustain workshops tailored specifically for parents, enhancing their understanding and engagement with the curriculum.

• Comprehensive involvement should be taken into account. Parents should be integrated into all facets of the curriculum process, moving beyond mere adoption to active participation and decision-making.

• Capacity building should be necessary. The Department of Basic Education (DBE) must regularly offer capacity-building workshops and seminars. These should be designed to empower School Governing Body (SGB) parent component trainers, equipping them with effective strategies for fostering parental involvement.

• Guideline formulation should be given priority. The DBE should craft detailed parent involvement guidelines, delineating the roles and responsibilities of parents in the curriculum, thereby providing clear direction and support.

Acknowledgments

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