



**EXPLORING THE EFFECT OF TEACHER–PARENT INVOLVEMENT AS A  
CURRICULUM-AS-PRACTICE PARTNERSHIP AND ITS INFLUENCE ON GRADE  
6 LEARNERS' COMPREHENSION DEVELOPMENT**

by

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**I declare that this 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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# **EXPLORING THE EFFECT OF TEACHER–PARENT INVOLVEMENT AS A CURRICULUM-AS-PRACTICE PARTNERSHIP AND ITS INFLUENCE ON GRADE 6 LEARNERS’ COMPREHENSION DEVELOPMENT**

## **ABSTRACT**

Grounded in Bronfenbrenner’s Ecological Systems Theory (EST), this study investigated the impact of teacher–parent involvement on learners’ comprehension development. Within contemporary Curriculum Studies, curriculum is understood not merely as a prescribed body of knowledge, but as a lived and negotiated practice shaped through interactions among teachers, learners, families, and communities. In response to this perspective, the study foregrounded teacher–parent involvement as a curriculum-as-practice partnership that influences learners’ comprehension across home and school contexts.

The study adopted an exploratory research design within a pragmatic paradigm, aligning with its aim to generate evidence-based recommendations to enhance teacher–parent communication and engagement. This paradigm supported the development of practical strategies to strengthen collaboration between home and school, ultimately improving learners’ comprehension and academic performance.

A qualitative research approach was employed, utilising open-ended questionnaires, focus-group interviews, and narrative analysis to gain an in-depth understanding of teacher–parent collaboration and its influence on language comprehension. This approach allowed for the consideration of contextual factors such as time, place, and participant roles, ensuring a holistic understanding of the phenomenon.

The literature review highlighted the importance of a holistic approach to learning and identified strategies that teachers and parents can implement to promote engagement, improve reading comprehension, and build learner confidence. However, challenges including time constraints, communication barriers, and varying levels of parental involvement were also identified. Through the application of EST, these challenges were contextualised within the interconnected microsystems of home and school, with particular attention to how mesosystem influences, such as parental literacy levels and socioeconomic factors, shape learner outcomes.

Findings indicated that sustained teacher–parent engagement fosters supportive learning environments that reinforce comprehension both inside and outside the classroom. The study contributes to Curriculum Studies by repositioning teacher–parent involvement as an integral curriculum partnership rather than a supplementary practice, and by offering practical recommendations to strengthen collaboration and enhance learners’ comprehension within an ecological framework.

## **KEY TERMS**

Teacher-parent involvement

Curriculum at practice

Comprehension ability

Household involvement

Mother tongue

Communication

Resources

Microsystem

Mesosystem

Exosystem

## **VERKENNING VAN DIE UITWERKING VAN ONDERWYSER–OUER- BETROKKENHEID AS 'N KURRIKULUM-AS-PRAKTYK-VENNOOTSKAP EN DIE INVLOED DAARVAN OP GRAAD 6-LEERDERS SE BEGRIPSONTWIKKELING**

## **OPSOMMING**

Met Bronfenbrenner se Ekologiese Stelselteorie (EST) as grondslag, het hierdie studie die impak van onderwyser–ouer-betrokkenheid op leerders se begripsontwikkeling ondersoek. Binne hedendaagse Kurrikulumstudies word kurrikulum nie bloot as 'n

voorgeskrewe kennisbasis verstaan nie, maar as 'n geleefde en onderhandelde praktyk wat gevorm word deur wisselwerking tussen onderwysers, leerders, gesinne en gemeenskappe. In reaksie op hierdie perspektief het die studie onderwyser–ouer-betrokkenheid as 'n kurrikulum-as-praktyk-vennootskap wat leerders se begrip oor huis- en skoolkontekste beïnvloed, vooropgestel.

Die studie het 'n verkennende navorsingsontwerp binne 'n pragmatiese paradigma aangeneem, in lyn met sy doel om bewysgebaseerde aanbevelings te genereer om onderwyser–ouer-kommunikasie en -betrokkenheid te verbeter. Hierdie paradigma het die ontwikkeling van praktiese strategieë ondersteun om samewerking tussen huis en skool te versterk, wat uiteindelik leerders se begrip en akademiese prestasie verbeter.

'n Kwalitatiewe navorsingsbenadering is gebruik met behulp van oop vraelyste, fokusgroeponderhoude en narratiewe analise om 'n diepgaande begrip van onderwyser–ouer-samewerking en die invloed daarvan op taalbegrip te verkry. Hierdie benadering het kontekstuele faktore soos tyd, plek en deelnemerrolle in ag geneem, wat 'n holistiese begrip van die verskynsel verseker het.

Die literatuuroorsig het die belangrikheid van 'n holistiese benadering tot leer beklemtoon en strategieë geïdentifiseer wat onderwysers en ouers kan implementeer om betrokkenheid te bevorder, leesbegrip te verbeter en leerdervertroue te bou. Uitdagings, insluitend tydsbeperkings, kommunikasiestruikelblokke en verskillende vlakke van ouerbetrokkenheid, is egter ook geïdentifiseer. Deur die toepassing van EST is hierdie uitdagings gekontekstualiseer binne die onderling gekoppelde mikrostelsels van huis en skool, met besondere aandag aan hoe mesosisteam-invloede, soos ouer-geletterdheidsvlakke en sosio-ekonomiese faktore, leerderuitkomst vorm.

Bevindinge het aangedui dat volgehoue onderwyser–ouer-betrokkenheid ondersteunende leeromgewings bevorder wat begrip binne en buite die klaskamer versterk. Die studie dra by tot Kurrikulumstudies deur onderwyser–ouer-betrokkenheid te herposisioneer as 'n integrale kurrikulumvennootskap eerder as 'n aanvullende praktyk, en deur praktiese aanbevelings te bied om samewerking te versterk en leerders se begrip binne 'n ekologiese raamwerk te verbeter.

# **UKUHLOLA UMPHUMELA OBANDAKANYA OTHISHA NABAZALI BEBAMBISENE KWI-CURRICULUM-AS-PRACTICE KANYE NOMTHETHO OTHUTHUKISWA UKUQONDISWA KWABAFUNDI BEBANGA LESITHUPHA**

## **UKUBUYEKEZWA**

Ifakwe phakathi e-Grounded in Bronfenbrenner's Ecological Systems Theory (EST), lolucwaningo luphenya umthelela wokubandakanya othisha nabazali ekuthuthukiseni ukuqonda kwabafundi. Ezifundweni ze-curriculum zangaleso sikhathi, i-curriculum ayiqondwa njengendikimba yolwazi enqunyiwe, kodwa njengomkhuba ophilayo nokuxoxiwe ngawo owenziwe phakathi kokusebenzisana nothisha, abafundi, imindeni kanye nomphakathi. Ngokuphendula lombono, ucwaningo lwandulela ukuzibandakanya kothisha nabazali njengokubambisana kwi-curriculum, emsebenzini wokuqonda kwabafundi kuzo zonke izimo zasekhaya nezesikole.

Lolucwaningo lwamukele i-design yokuhlola phakathi kwe-paradigm ye-pragmatic, ukuhambisana nenjongo yokwenza izincomo ezisekelwe ukufakazi ukuze kuthuthukiswe ukuxhumana nokuzibandakanya kothisha nabazali. Lomqondo usekele ukuthuthukisa amasu asebenzayo okuqinisa ukusebenzisana phakathi kwekhaya nesikole, ekugcineni kuthuthukiswe ukuqonda kwabafundi kanye nokusebenza kahle kwezemfundo.

Kusetshenziswe indlela yocwaningo esezingeni eliphezulu, kusetshenziswa uhlu lwemibuzo oluvulekile, izingxoxo zamaqembu okugxilwe kuwo, kanye nokuhlaziya ukulandisa ukuze uthole ukuqonda okujulile ngokubambisana kothisha nabazali okunomthelela wokuqonda ulimi. Lendlela yokwenza ivumela ukucabanga kwezici nengqikithi njengesikhathi, indawo nezindima zabahlanganyeli, ukuqinisekisa ukuqonda okuphelele kwaleso simo.

Ukubuyekezwa kwezincwadi kugqamisa ukubaluleka kwendlela yokufunda ephelele iphinde ihlonze amasu othisha nabazali abangawasebenzisa ukuze bakhuthaze ukubandakanywa, ithuthukisa ukuqonda nokufunda uphinde wakhe ukuzethemba kwabafundi. Kodwa-ke, izinselela, okuhlanganisa ukulinganiswa kwesikhathi, izithiyo zokuxhumana, namazinga okubandakanye abazali, nabo abatholakele.

Ngokusetshenziswa kwe-EST, lezizinselela zihlanganisa i-microsystem exhumene nekhanye nesikole, njengamazinga okufunda nokubhala kwabazali kanye nezici zenhlalo nomnotho, obubumba imiphumela yabafundi.

Imiphumela ibonise ukuthi ukuhlanganyela okuqhubekayo kothisha nabazali kukhuthaza izimo zokufunda ezisekela ukuqonda kokufunda kwangaphakathi nangaphandle kwekilasi. Ucwango luneqhaza Ezifundweni Zohlelo Lwezifundo ngokubeka kabusha ukuzibandakanya kwabafundi nabazali njengobudlelwano obubalulekile be-curriculum esikhundleni sokwenza okongeziwe, nangokunikeza izincomo ezisebenzayo zokuqinisa ukusebenzisana nokuthuthukisa ukuqonda kwabafundi ngaphakathi kohlaka lwezemvelo.

## **ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS**

MT:	Mother tongue
EST:	Ecological Systems Theory
TPC:	Teacher-Parent Communication
LoLT:	Language of Learning and Teaching
DBE:	Department of Basic Education

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# CHAPTER 1: ORIENTATION

## 1.1 INTRODUCTION



Ahmed (2015) is a firm believer, and I quote: "Together, parents and teachers are the perfect team to guide a child's success" (Ahmed, n.d.:online).

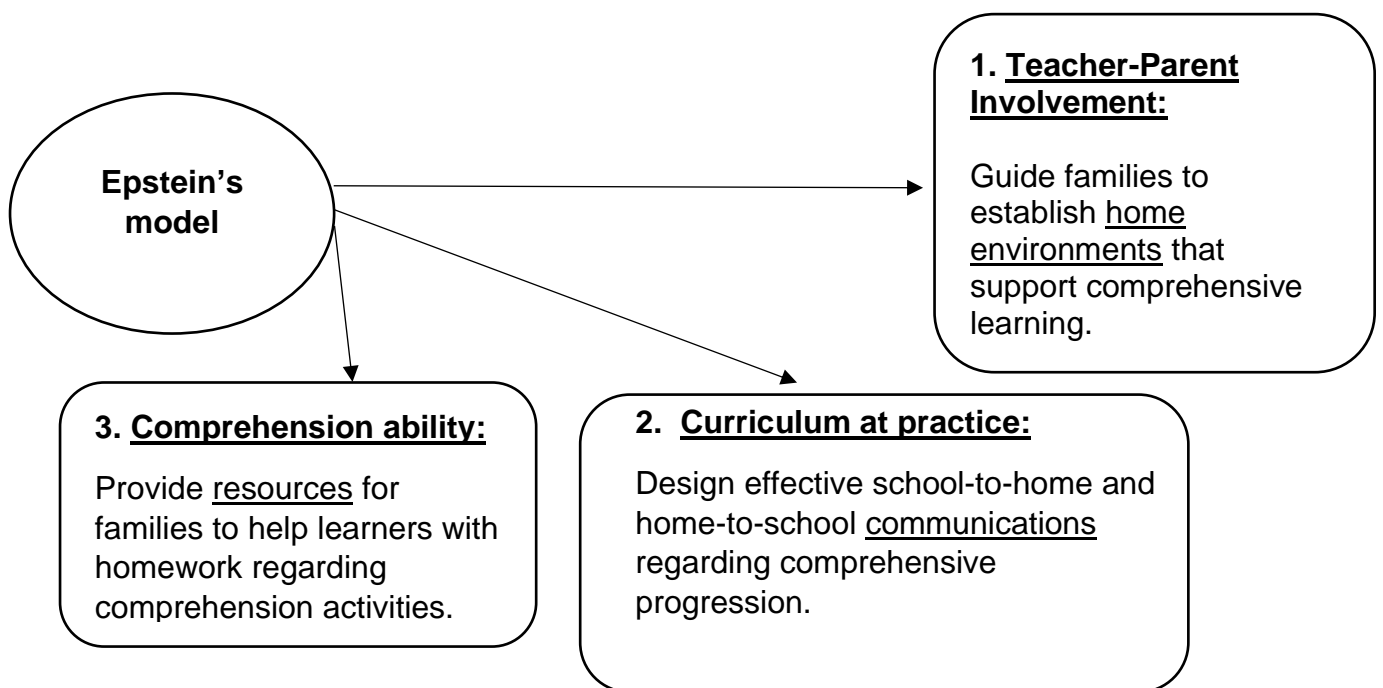
In the contemporary educational landscape, the pursuit of improved learner achievement increasingly foregrounds the collaborative roles of key stakeholders, particularly teachers and parents. Parents are widely recognised as critical partners in education (Page, 2016), and sustained teacher–parent collaboration has been shown to play a central role in supporting learners' academic development. Such partnerships provide a foundation for enhancing learners' engagement with curriculum practices and for strengthening comprehension across learning contexts.

This doctoral study examines teacher–parent involvement as a curriculum-as-practice partnership and explores its influence on Grade 6 learners' comprehension development. Drawing on research that emphasises collaborative responsibility for learner success (Mapp, Karen & Kuttner, 2003), the study positions teacher–parent involvement not as an auxiliary support mechanism, but as an integral component of curriculum enactment. In this sense, curriculum is understood as a lived practice, shaped through interactions between teachers, parents, and learners within and beyond the classroom.

Epstein's model of parental involvement (2023) provides a structured framework for understanding how teacher–parent partnerships can be strengthened to support curriculum goals and learner performance. Within this framework, the study highlights three interrelated dimensions. First, the creation of supportive home learning environments through teacher–parent collaboration extends curriculum practice beyond the classroom, reinforcing comprehension development (Kaur, 2024). Second, effective communication channels—such as parent–teacher meetings, newsletters, and digital platforms—are essential for aligning home and school practices and for informing parents about learners' progress in comprehension-related activities (Wang et al., 2019). Third, the provision of guidance and resources enables parents to support reading and comprehension activities at home, thereby reinforcing curriculum content and fostering independent learning habits. Although parents

frequently seek online resources to support their children’s learning, such resources are often inaccessible or incomplete (Wozney et al., 2017), highlighting the need for clearer guidance from schools.

Figure 1.1 illustrates key factors derived from Epstein’s model that inform teacher–parent involvement and communication practices, with a specific focus on comprehension as the primary learning outcome. By conceptualising teacher–parent involvement as a curriculum-as-practice partnership, this study contributes to a deeper understanding of how coordinated efforts across home and school contexts can enhance learners’ comprehension development.



**Figure 1.1: Adapted from Epstein’s model (Epstein, 2023)**

Creating an environment where teachers and parents work together, focusing on grasping content, and providing necessary resources to improve comprehension ability and communication regarding comprehensive progression, is crucial. Therefore, the goal is to highlight the powerful impact when teachers and parents join forces to shape the educational environment, influence the minds of the upcoming generation and propose guidelines. These guidelines should focus on fostering effective teacher-parent collaboration to support learners' comprehension. This includes strategies for improving comprehension ability and providing necessary resources. Clear communication channels between teachers and parents should be established to monitor learner progress and ensure continuous feedback. Additionally,

the guidelines should include practical methods for parents to actively engage in their child's education, reinforcing classroom instruction at home.

## **1.2 BACKGROUND TO THE RESEARCH**

In the contemporary educational landscape, teacher–parent collaboration emerges as a decisive factor in shaping learners' comprehension development, yet the nature and quality of this involvement vary significantly across contexts. Although parents frequently support homework and media-based learning at home, their comparatively limited engagement in reading-related activities suggests a misalignment between parental practices and curriculum priorities, particularly where reading is not perceived as central to academic success (Chow, 2022). This imbalance has direct implications for comprehension development, as sustained reading engagement is foundational to meaning-making across subjects.

International literature reveals that teacher–parent involvement is strongly mediated by sociocultural and institutional expectations. In contexts such as Korea and China, hierarchical schooling traditions and contested teacher authority complicate collaborative partnerships, often constraining meaningful parental participation (Aziz et al., 2023). In contrast, European contexts, including Norway, demonstrate that systematically structured parental engagement is associated with improved academic outcomes, notably in comprehension (Hornby & Blackwell, 2018). These contrasting findings indicate that parental involvement alone is insufficient; rather, its effectiveness depends on how it is integrated into curriculum practices across home and school settings.

Within multilingual and under-resourced contexts, the literature consistently points to communication as a central mediating mechanism between teacher–parent involvement and learner comprehension. Where communication is infrequent, unidirectional, or linguistically inaccessible, parental support remains fragmented and disconnected from classroom expectations. Conversely, active and reciprocal communication strengthens alignment between home literacy practices and school-based curriculum goals, thereby enhancing comprehension development.

In the South African context, persistent challenges such as limited parental engagement, language barriers, overcrowded classrooms, and insufficient teaching resources further complicate comprehension outcomes (Bridgette, 2020; Nieuwoudt,

2022; Verner et al., 2022). These factors do not operate in isolation but interact to constrain teachers' capacity to engage parents as curriculum partners. Importantly, schools that succeed in fostering meaningful teacher–parent partnerships tend to demonstrate stronger learner performance, suggesting that contextual constraints can be mitigated through deliberate partnership practices.

As learners in the intermediate phase undergo significant cognitive and linguistic development (Ochanji et al., 2016), fragmented support across home and school contexts risks undermining comprehension development. Although home literacy practices are widely recognised as beneficial, many school initiatives fail to establish sustained links between curriculum expectations and parental support (Brown, 2021). This disconnect underscores the need for two-way, relational partnerships that position parents as active contributors to curriculum enactment rather than passive recipients of information (Kyzar & Jimerson, 2018).

This study responds analytically to these tensions by examining teacher–parent involvement as a curriculum-as-practice partnership, focusing on how communication, resource provision, and shared responsibility can strengthen learners' comprehension. By foregrounding teacher–parent collaboration within diverse and multilingual educational contexts, the study seeks to advance a more integrated understanding of how curriculum practices extend beyond the classroom and are co-constructed across ecological systems. This study is significant that it contributes to Curriculum Studies by repositioning teacher–parent involvement as an integral curriculum-as-practice partnership, rather than as a supportive educational function.

### **1.3 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK**

The theoretical framework plays a central role in guiding the research process, informing the formulation of the research problem, the selection of participants, the interpretation of data, and the analytical lens through which findings are understood (Grant & Osanloo, 2014). In this study, the framework functions not merely as a descriptive backdrop but as an analytical tool through which teacher–parent involvement and learners' comprehension development are examined.

This study is grounded in Bronfenbrenner's Ecological Systems Theory (EST), which conceptualises learner development as the result of sustained interactions between individuals and their environments across multiple, interconnected systems (Shelton,

2018). EST provides a holistic lens for understanding how comprehension development is shaped not only within the classroom, but also through relationships and practices operating across home and school contexts. As discussed in detail in Chapter 3 (see Figure 3.2), EST enables the examination of learning as a situated and relational process rather than an isolated cognitive outcome.

Within this framework, learners are understood as active participants whose comprehension development is influenced by interactions within the microsystem, particularly the home and school environments. The mesosystem, representing the connections between these settings, is especially significant for this study, as it foregrounds teacher–parent involvement as a key relational space where curriculum practices are negotiated and reinforced. External influences within the exosystem, such as parental work commitments or access to resources, are also acknowledged for their indirect effects on learner engagement and comprehension. These ecological layers are elaborated in Chapter 3 and visually represented in Figure 3.2.

EST further informed key methodological decisions in this study. Participant selection focused on teachers and parents positioned within the learner’s immediate ecological systems, reflecting the theory’s emphasis on proximal processes. Data interpretation was guided by an ecological reading of participants’ experiences, allowing comprehension development to be analysed in relation to home practices, school expectations, and communication patterns rather than as an individual learner deficit.

To operationalise EST within educational practice, Epstein’s model of parental involvement was employed as a complementary framework (Figure 1.1). While EST provides the theoretical explanation of why teacher–parent involvement matters within interconnected systems, Epstein’s model offers a structured articulation of how such involvement can occur through communication, learning support at home, and collaborative partnerships. The conceptual relationship between EST and Epstein’s model illustrates teacher–parent involvement as a curriculum-as-practice partnership influencing learners’ comprehension development.

Through the integration of EST and Epstein’s model, this study advances an ecological understanding of comprehension as a socially situated outcome, co-constructed through sustained teacher–parent interaction. This framework therefore provides a

coherent and analytically robust foundation for examining how curriculum practices extend beyond the classroom and are enacted across home and school contexts.

## **1.4 ELUCIDATION OF KEY CONCEPTS**

Hammarström, Johansson, Annandale, Ahlgren, Aléx, Christianson, Elwér, Eriksson, Fjellman-Wiklund, Gilenstam and Gustafsson (2014) define it as essential to clarify how central concepts are used within theory and how to apply them to research. This study aims to explore collaboration and communication in education, focusing on current practices and practical ideas for positive change to uncover how interaction influences collaboration and communication by teachers and parents and how these dynamics contribute to improving learners' reading comprehension.

### **1.4.1 Basic concepts**

#### **1.4.1.1 Teacher-parent involvement**

Parents recognise the critical role teachers play in shaping effective teacher–parent partnerships, and these relationships become strained when teachers overlook parents' perspectives (Kyrönlampi, Böök, Karikoski & Hannele, 2020). In this study, I argue that successful collaboration depends on open, respectful dialogue, mutual willingness to cooperate, and proficiency in a shared language, supported by sufficient time and approachable communication. I position teacher–parent involvement as a strategic partnership, where both parties actively contribute to learners' comprehension development. I assert that although establishing and maintaining such partnerships requires effort and resources, they constitute the primary conduit through which teachers and parents jointly enhance learners' understanding and academic growth. By foregrounding these collaborative dynamics, I emphasise that teacher–parent involvement is not peripheral but an integral component of curriculum-as-practice that directly influences comprehension outcomes. (Margerum & Robinson, 2015).

#### **1.4.1.2 Curriculum as practice**

Giving instructions is a critical skill in multilingual classrooms. I argue that children's ability to support each other in schoolwork reflects the interplay between their mother tongue (MT) and the Language of Learning and Teaching (LoLT), and understanding this interplay is essential for examining how teachers strategically use language to shape learners' comprehension and classroom participation (Cazden, 2017). In this

study, I contend that when teachers alternate between MT and LoLT, it directly influences how learners engage with and apply their first language in learning activities, enabling them to access curriculum content more effectively (Thompson & Harrison, 2014). I further assert that learners benefit most when teachers incorporate MT selectively—using it strategically to scaffold understanding rather than replacing LoLT entirely—thereby supporting comprehension in multilingual contexts (Neokleous, 2017).

#### 1.4.1.3 Comprehension ability

This study primarily focuses on learners' comprehension ability. I argue that teachers and parents exert a profound influence on learners' understanding through their decisions, guidance, and the learning environments they create. Their roles extend beyond instruction, shaping how learners interpret, process, and engage with language and texts. In this study, I emphasise that the active involvement of both teachers and parents is critical for fostering comprehension development, as they co-construct learning experiences that reinforce curriculum objectives (Seashore, Leithwood, Strom & Anderson, 2010). I further contend that, as Osabinyi (2023) suggests, parents and teachers must deliberately cultivate supportive language, reading, and writing environments at home and at school, thereby directly enhancing learners' literacy skills and comprehension outcomes across developmental stages.

### **1.4.2 Related concepts**

#### 1.4.2.1 Household involvement

Parental involvement, defined as the extent to which parents actively engage in their child's education, both within and beyond the school setting, plays a significant role in fostering collaboration and ultimately impacting learner achievement. When parents actively participate in comprehension activities, they gain a better understanding of the content being taught in the classroom. Children in second and fourth grades, as well as sixth graders (Brown, Palincsar & Purcell, 2020), who struggle with reading, tend to rely on sounding out words. Consequently, when parents highly value education, learners are more likely to succeed academically (Aldridge, 2015). Notably, parental involvement, both in and outside the classroom, has a significant influence on the collaborative process and subsequent learner performance.

#### 1.4.2.2 Lived curriculum

Parents encourage the use of the MT at home because it strengthens children's ties to their family, culture, history, and identity (Tackie-Ofosu, Mahama, Vandyck, Kumador & Toku, 2015). Unfortunately, Naom and Sarah (2014) identify the different experiences with MT education in Africa. These differences arise from a need for more research on how effective the application of MT is in classrooms and other settings (such as the home environment).

#### 1.4.2.3 Scholastic growth

Learners encounter obstacles to their academic progress due to behavioural issues. This study examines these behavioural issues from the perspective of the teachers who work in schools (Ahmad, Iqbal, Ali, Jabeen & Imran, 2024).

The progress and growth of learners occur cognitively, socially, behaviourally, and academically during education. Regrettably, Loudová, Havigerová and Haviger (2015) discovered that as children grow older, their parents tend to rate their education lower. Saneka and de Witt (2019) pinpoint that young children find their own ways to understand and make sense of things both at home and at school.

Since effective teacher-learner conversations can significantly boost learning, studies like this are essential for understanding how classroom discussions contribute to teaching grammar for writing. These results demonstrate that teacher-led talks during group writing activities facilitate learners' transfer of knowledge from their understanding of language to its effective use (Watson, Newman & Morgan, 2021). Therefore, the interaction among communication, where parental involvement plays a crucial role in shaping how learners perform during education, especially in comprehensive activities, is necessary.

### **1.5 PROBLEM STATEMENT AND RESEARCH QUESTIONS**

Regrettably, as reported by Muralidharan and Singh (2021), a staggering majority of children between the ages of 6 and 14 who are enrolled in rural schools in India cannot read at a level equivalent to Grade 2. Furthermore, poor performance in classrooms in South African schools was attributed to overcrowding as one of the leading possible causes, as stated by Ntsala, Ramabenyane, Koen and Look (2021).

In educational settings, the involvement and communication between teachers and parents play a significant role in enhancing learners' comprehension ability, and recognition of the importance of this partnership continues to be a significant issue, particularly in its impact on how learners perform, primarily in understanding what they grasp. Unfortunately, in recent times, schools have gradually become disconnected from the families and communities they serve (Warren & Hong, 2009).

Providing families with strategically focused home interventions to enhance learners' reading skills and add to home literacy environments is necessary. Working alongside families and maintaining an "open door" policy in the classroom is paramount, as it helps all families feel welcome and heard (Durack, 2022).

This study aims to examine how teacher–parent partnerships, understood through a curriculum-as-practice lens, shape learners' comprehension development within the broader ecological context of home and school. Hjetland, Brinchmann, Scherer and Melby-Lervåg (2017) make it clear that understanding how reading comprehension develops and what comes before it can help teachers and parents make informed decisions about what effective teaching should include to support strong reading skills.

While existing literature highlights the importance of parental involvement in learners' academic achievement and language development (Mapp & Kuttner, 2003; Ronfeldt, Farmer, McQueen & Grissom, 2015; Guy-Evans, 2023), most studies treat parental engagement as supplementary support rather than as a collaborative partnership embedded within curriculum practices. Research also tends to examine teacher or parent perspectives separately, with limited attention to how joint teacher–parent involvement functions as a curriculum-as-practice partnership to enhance learners' comprehension development. By addressing this research gap, the study aims to elucidate the dynamics of teacher–parent collaboration and its potential influence on learners' comprehension, an aspect that is not yet fully understood.

### **1.5.1 Main research question**

The main research question is how teacher-parent involvement impacts the comprehension ability of Grade 6 learners?

### **1.5.2 Sub-questions**

1.5.2.1 How do parents describe their role in supporting learning at home, enhancing learners' reading comprehension skills?

1.5.2.2 What communication methods do teachers and parents find most effective in supporting learners' comprehension?

1.5.2.3 What resources do teachers and parents use to support learners' comprehension?

## **1.6 AIM AND OBJECTIVES**

### **1.6.1 The aim of the study**

This study aims to examine how teacher–parent partnerships, understood through a curriculum-as-practice lens, shape learners' comprehension development within the broader ecological context of home and school.

### **1.6.2 The objectives of the study**

The objectives will be to:

1.6.2.1 Explore how teachers and parents describe their involvement in home environments and how they believe these interactions affect learners' comprehension.

1.6.2.2 Identify effective communication practices that highlight successful or unsuccessful strategies for teacher-parent involvement.

1.6.2.3 Evaluate how participants narrate the effectiveness of resources in teacher-parent involvement and their impact on learners' comprehension.

## 1.7 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The choice of methodology is crucial in ensuring that the research accurately captures the complexity of the phenomenon under investigation. As Hancock, Hess, and Choudhury (2018) note, methodology guides the selection of methods that provide meaningful insights into behavioural and social processes, enabling researchers to confirm findings, identify patterns, and ensure the rigour of their results (McLaughlin, Bush & Zeeman, 2016).

Given the focus of this study on the impact of collaboration and communication between teachers and parents on learners' reading comprehension, a qualitative research approach was deemed most appropriate. Qualitative methods enable a nuanced exploration of participants' values, experiences, and perceptions, thereby facilitating a rich understanding of how teacher–parent interactions influence comprehension (Smith & Smith, 2018).

This study was conducted in one strategically selected school, enabling a concentrated, in-depth investigation of teacher–parent partnerships within a specific contextual and linguistic environment. Participants were purposefully sampled to include teachers, parents and Grade 6 learners who actively engaged in the learners' educational experiences, with sample sizes chosen to ensure depth rather than breadth. Data were collected through the use of open-ended questionnaires, focus group interviews, and narrative analysis, allowing participants to articulate their experiences in their own words.

The study employed thematic analysis to systematically identify patterns, relationships, and insights within the data, providing a structured yet flexible framework for interpreting the complex dynamics of teacher–parent collaboration. While the specific procedures, coding strategies, and analytic steps are detailed in Chapter 4, this methodology foregrounds an approach that prioritises contextual understanding, participant voices, and the co-construction of knowledge, ensuring that findings are both meaningful and empirically grounded.

### **1.7.1 Exploratory research design**

A research design is a systematic plan to investigate a scientific problem (Indu & Vidhukumar, 2020). The research design outlines the steps and organisation of the inquiry, serving as a roadmap for the study. This study adopts an exploratory design.

Mbaka and Isiramen (2021) define exploratory research as the process of investigating events where little is known, and problems are not yet clearly defined.

Qualitative data will be used to verify the findings. This method takes into account factors such as time, place, and the individuals involved (Noble & Heale, 2019). By examining qualitative data (gathered through open-ended questionnaires, focus group interviews, and narrative analysis), the study aims to identify patterns and insights into the effectiveness of these collaborations.

The following sections will provide a brief explanation of the research paradigm, approach, and research type selected for this study.

#### **1.7.1.1 Pragmatic research paradigm**

Brierley (2017) argues that a paradigm represents the shared beliefs and agreements within a specific field. The study aims to examine how teacher–parent partnerships, understood through a curriculum-as-practice lens, shape learners’ comprehension development within the broader ecological context of home and school. The pragmatic paradigm emphasises the need for practical solutions that effectively address the research questions at hand. Pragmatism aligns with the flexible selection of research methods based on practical considerations, rather than adhering to rigid rules (Glogowska, 2015). Allemang, Sitter, and Dimitropoulos (2022) highlight the importance of employing suitable research methods to tackle current issues.

The study aspires to provide practical insights and shape a worldview (Kaushik & Walsh, 2019) that can lead to positive changes in education by fostering collaboration and communication between teachers and parents (Kaushik & Walsh, 2019). By adopting a pragmatic paradigm, the research aims to bridge the gap between school and home to uncover the dynamics of teacher–parent collaboration and how they may influence learners’ comprehension.

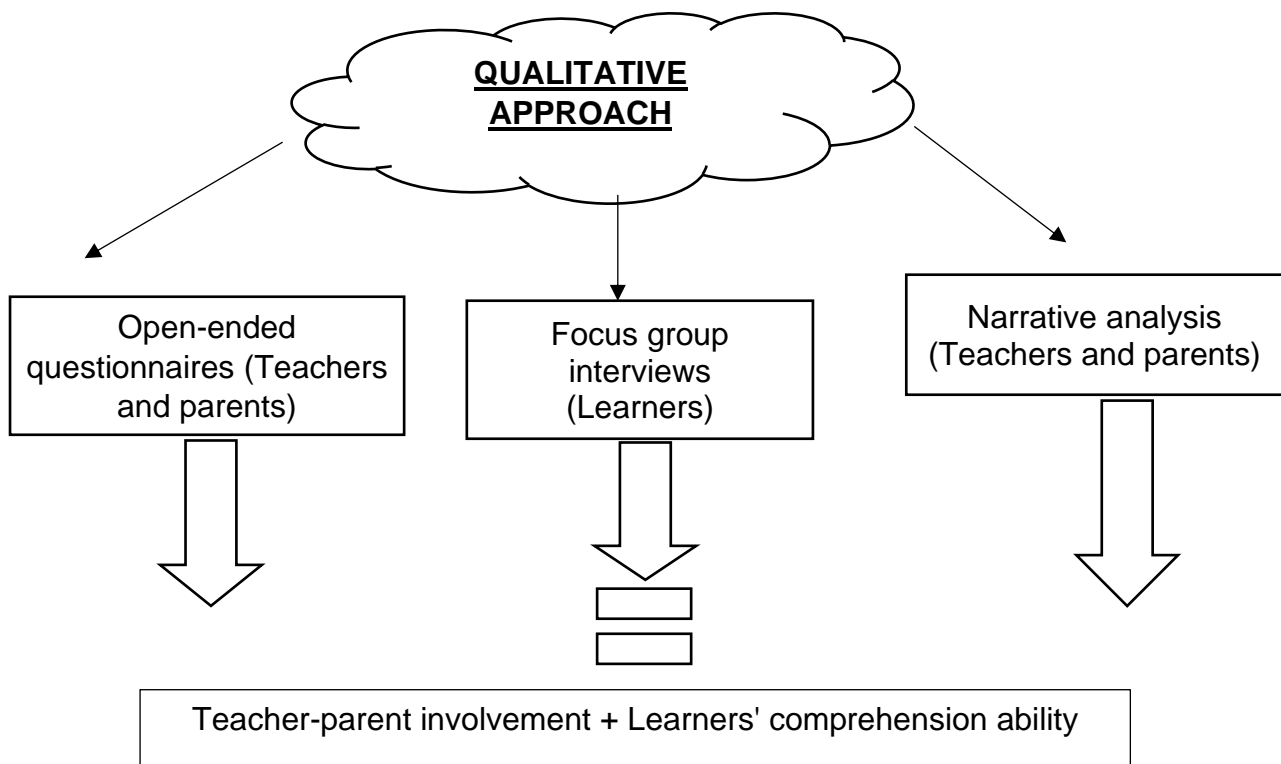
The freedom to utilise the pragmatic approach allows for integrating different ideas and discussions (Scott, 2016) in finding solutions to maintain optimal teacher-parent collaboration and communication.

### 1.7.1.2 Qualitative research approach

This study employs a qualitative approach to explore the impact of teacher-parent involvement and communication on comprehension skills. Qualitative research examines people's experiences and how they perceive and understand things. This method is particularly well-suited for studying education (Miller, Chan, & Farmer, 2018). Aspers and Corte (2021) define qualitative research as a continuous process that involves exploring essential details about the subject.

Open-ended questionnaires, focus group interviews and narrative analysis were applied in this study. Incorporating open-ended questionnaires, focus group interviews, and narrative analysis involves a qualitative research approach. This approach is suited for exploring participants' experiences, perceptions, and the meanings they attach to teacher-parent involvement and its impact on learners' comprehension.

Figure 1.2 illustrates the approach to comprehensively understanding how teacher-parent involvement affects learners' comprehension ability in Grade 6, employing a qualitative approach.



**Figure 1.2: Qualitative exploration of teacher–parent involvement and learner comprehension**

### 1.7.1.3 Research type: Case study

Case study research involves an intensive investigation focused on a particular individual, group, or phenomenon, aiming to derive broader implications from specific observations (Heale & Twycross, 2017). The research in this study employs a case study strategy with a qualitative approach to thoroughly examine teacher-parent involvement and communication dynamics on learner performance, assessing comprehension ability at a selected school in Gauteng.

In this context, the case study will provide a detailed understanding of the interactions within the teacher-parent relationship in the school and home setting. Data completeness and sufficiency were ensured by repeatedly using open-ended questionnaires, focus-group interviews, and narrative analysis with the selected sample of teachers and parents. Multiple rounds of open-ended questionnaires and narrative analysis were conducted with the same teachers and parents, comparing responses over time to identify any new themes regarding teacher-parent involvement and learner comprehension.

The provision of a comprehensive exploration of the factors influencing comprehension ability, thereby contributing to the broader understanding of effective educational partnerships between teachers and parents, will be the primary outcome of this doctoral study to ensure a holistic perspective within teacher-parent collaborations and communication and its effect on how learners grasp learning.

### **1.7.2 Research methods**

A research method is a clear and organised way to gather, collect, examine, and understand information to answer specific questions and reach research goals (Wilson, 2020). According to Donnelly, McGarr and O'Reilly (2014), research methods include teacher interviews, learner focus groups, video-recorded lessons, and learner self-assessments.

The following sub-sections deal with the selection of participants, data generation and data analysis.

### 1.7.2.1 Selection of participants

The choice of school and participants for this study involved carefully selecting a specific primary school in the Gauteng province. Selecting one specific school for this study in Gauteng served an essential purpose by focusing on a single school, which allowed for in-depth exploration of the details and complexities of how teachers and parents work together in a specific school, keeping the more profound analysis of factors such as school culture, teaching styles, and community dynamics in mind.

Further, selecting one school enhanced the workability and manageability of the research process. Close relationships were established with stakeholders, including Grade 6 teachers, parents, and learners, fostering trust and facilitating the generation of meaningful data. This intimate engagement with the school community promoted richer insights into the research topic.

The primary focus was on this school's Grade 6 teachers, parents, and learners. A deliberate selection process ensured representation across Grades 6, involving five qualified teachers, 15 parents, and 15 learners. Participants who would generate qualitative data were selected according to specific criteria and a rigorous selection process.

This diverse group of participants directly engaged in the educational partnership, providing comprehensive insights into teacher-parent involvement and communication dynamics, as well as their impact on learners' comprehension abilities.

### 1.7.2.2 Data generation

Through open-ended questionnaires, focus group interviews, and narrative analysis, rich and detailed data were gathered to explore the influence of teacher-parent involvement on comprehension. Bearman (2019) confirms that qualitative research aims to gain a deeper understanding of the human experience.

#### (i) Open-ended questionnaires (teachers and parents)

The questionnaire included open-ended questions designed to explore teachers' and parents' perceptions, experiences, and insights regarding their involvement in learners' education, specifically focusing on how teacher-parent involvement influences comprehension. Open-ended questions allow for flexibility in responses, gathering a wide range of personal perspectives (Bonner, Warren & Jiang, 2018).

According to Zhang, Ma, Firdaus and Xu (2022), open-ended questionnaires provide valuable data by capturing participants' unique thoughts, beliefs, and experiences. A key advantage of this method is that it ensures the research stays on track while providing the researcher with the freedom to explore emerging topics, thereby enhancing understanding of the research problem (Adeoye-Olatunde & Olenik, 2021). These questionnaires aimed to gather detailed information on teacher-parent involvement, communication, and their impact on learners' academic performance and comprehension.

(ii) Focus group interviews (learners)

Focus group interviews were conducted with Grade 6 learners to gain insights into their perspectives on teacher-parent collaboration, communication, and the perceived effects on their comprehension ability. This method allows for flexibility, as participants can share and expand on ideas, while the researcher maintains a focus on key topics such as communication, involvement, and comprehension (Huyer, Dikken, Sjoer, Hutter, Venema & Renden, 2024). Osborne and Grant-Smith (2021) highlight that focus groups are highly adaptable, allowing for both structured and open-ended discussions. In this study, three focus group interviews, each comprising five Grade 6 learners, were conducted to collect targeted data on how these learners experience and perceive teacher-parent involvement in their learning.

(iii) Narrative analysis (teachers and parents)

Narrative analysis was employed to explore the personal stories and experiences of teachers and parents, revealing how they construct meaning around their involvement and its impact on learners' comprehension abilities. In line with Smith and Monforte (2020), this approach engaged with "storied data," focusing on how participants narrated their experiences and the meanings embedded within their accounts by writing down how they experience certain themes.

Attention was paid to the content of the narratives within each story, in order to capture both explicit and implicit meanings. Following Josselson and Hammack (2021), the study went beyond simply presenting participants' words by interpreting, comparing, and synthesising the narratives to construct holistic understandings of teacher-parent collaboration. This process highlighted the dynamics of engagement, the challenges

experienced, and the ways in which these interactions influenced learners' comprehension.

By integrating thematic coding, the study demonstrates that narrative analysis was rigorously applied, providing a human-centred writing of participants' experiences. This approach ensured that the findings reflect analytical interpretation of stories.

#### (iv) Pilot study

A pilot study is a small-scale feasibility investigation designed to examine various aspects of a larger, more rigorous, or confirmatory research investigation (Pearson, Naylor, Ashe, Fernandez, Yoong & Wolfenden, 2020). This type of study helps researchers refine their research methods and identify potential challenges before committing to a more extensive study. Its primary aim is to assess the feasibility of the research design, methods, and data collection instruments (Aziz & Khan, 2020).

For this pilot study, I employed a convenience sampling method to select participants who were not part of the study but had the same characteristics. Familiarisation with the data were transcribed and read multiple times to gain a thorough understanding of the content. This step allowed the me to immerse in the data and recurring ideas, statements, and observations were highlighted and assigned preliminary codes. Similar codes were grouped together into broader categories to identify patterns across participants' feedback.

#### 1.7.2.3 Data analysis

In this study, I applied thematic analysis to identify patterns, recurring ideas, and significant themes within the collected data. Thematic analysis, as described by Braun and Clarke (2017), is a flexible qualitative method that focuses on systematically coding and organising data to uncover meaningful patterns. This approach revealed how teachers and parents collaborate and how these interactions influence the comprehension of Grade 6 learners. By identifying common themes and connections, the analysis offered deeper insights into how teacher-parent relationships support learners' comprehension skills.

The study utilised open-ended questionnaires, focus group interviews and narrative analysis to gather qualitative data, employing a method that starts with specific

observations commonly used in qualitative research (Kyngäs, 2020). This method enabled themes and patterns to emerge directly from the interview data, without relying on prior theoretical assumptions. Transcript analysis identified significant phrases and grouped similar ideas into themes, highlighting aspects of teacher-parent involvement and communication, as well as their impact on learners' comprehension performance.

## **1.8 MEASURES FOR TRUSTWORTHINESS**

Ahmed (2024) states that ensuring trustworthiness is crucial in establishing the credibility and reliability of qualitative findings. This includes elements such as credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability. Keeping thorough records and involving participants in verifying findings strengthens the study's trustworthiness.

### **1.8.1 Trustworthiness of qualitative data**

Qualitative research is a type of research that looks at real-world problems in depth. Unlike quantitative research, which focuses on numbers and treatments, qualitative research helps generate ideas and gain a deeper understanding of data. It collects information about people's experiences, thoughts, and behaviours. This type of research seeks to answer questions about how and why things occur, rather than merely counting or measuring them (Tenny, Brannan & Brannan, 2017).

Open-ended questionnaires and focus group interviews prioritised the narratives and experiences of the participants, while I, the researcher, maintained an objective stance. To be seen as trustworthy, qualitative researchers need to show that they have analysed data carefully and thoroughly. This involves recording, organising, and clearly explaining their analysis methods in sufficient detail so that readers can objectively assess the credibility of the process (Nowell, Norris, White & Moules, 2017). Therefore, the goal is to extract comprehensive insights, ensuring that information is trustworthy by using multiple sources or methods to confirm findings from questionnaires, interviews, and narrative analysis. The trustworthiness of the data ensures fairness and neutrality, allowing for clear conclusions to be drawn.

To ensure credibility, I asked questions that were aligned with the research objectives and effectively explored the main topics. Member checking is also a qualitative technique used to establish the tenet of credibility in trustworthiness. This involved

sharing preliminary findings with participants to validate and corroborate the accuracy of the data. Birt, Scott, Cavers, Campbell and Walter (2016) define member checking (also known as participant validation) as a method used to confirm the accuracy of research results. Researchers share their findings with participants to see if they match the participants' experiences. This technique is often included in lists of ways to validate research.

To ensure transferability, I ensured that the findings could be used in other similar situations. I have provided clear details about the research setting and the people involved. Stalmeijer, Brown and O'Brien (2024) shed light on transferability as an important quality for qualitative research, referring to the extent to which findings can be applied to other situations. This way, others can see how the findings might fit in similar schools or groups.

Dependability (also known as consistency) (Janis, 2022) was ensured by carefully documenting all research processes and decisions. I maintained detailed records of the data generation and analysis procedures to show that the findings were consistent with the data. Data will be stored securely in a safe format to preserve its integrity over time.

Regarding confirmability, I evaluated the data with an objective and neutral approach, avoiding personal bias in the interpretation. I also kept an audit trail, detailing the steps taken during data analysis, to show that the findings were based on participants' responses rather than my own opinions. This helped to maintain transparency throughout the study.

## **1.9 ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS**

In addition to understanding academic research discourse, recognising what makes research ethical is crucial for planning a research project. Researchers must always ensure that participants and/ or respondents are safe from harm and protected from unnecessary stress (Cacciattolo, 2015).

I strictly adhered to the ethical guidelines outlined in the protocols established by the University of South Africa (UNISA) throughout the study. Ethical clearance was obtained from the Research Ethics Committee in accordance with Unisa's Policy on Research Ethics (see Appendix A). Permission to conduct the study was also granted

by the principal of the participating school and the Gauteng Department of Education (Appendices K and L). Informed consent was obtained from all participants, including teachers, parents, and Grade 6 learners, with assent provided by the learners and consent signed by their parents or guardians. All participants were assured of confidentiality, anonymity, and the voluntary nature of their involvement, with the option to withdraw at any stage without penalty.

Participants were thoroughly informed about the nature of the study, its expectations, and their voluntary involvement. Consent letters were distributed, and data collection commenced only after receipt of their signed consent. Participants were explicitly informed of their right to withdraw from the study at any time. Moreover, privacy, confidentiality, and anonymity were rigorously maintained throughout the research, with pseudonyms used instead of real names. I ensured that informed consent was obtained for recording the interview sessions and upheld the participants' right to privacy and dignity. Overall, the study was conducted to minimise potential harm to participants at every stage of the research process.

I always adhered to the ethical considerations of UNISA. This encompassed all documentation and procedures, including the use of consent forms for participants, as an illustration of these considerations.

## **1.10 CHAPTER DIVISION**

### **Chapter One: Orientation**

This chapter addresses the introduction, background, applicability of this study, the problem statement, the aim, objectives, and the outline of the entire research. This chapter also explores teacher–parent involvement as a curriculum-as-practice partnership and its influence on grade 6 learners' comprehension development. It highlights the significance of this partnership for learner success, emphasising teamwork among teachers, parents, and learners during the Grade 6 educational stage, with a particular focus on comprehension.

## **Chapter Two: Teacher–parent involvement and learner comprehension: A Contextual Framework**

This chapter provides an overview of the study's context, both internationally and in South Africa. It reviews the current literature on teacher-parent collaboration and communication dynamics, exploring teacher–parent involvement as a curriculum-as-practice partnership and its influence on grade 6 learners' comprehension development. This establishes a foundation for understanding these relationships across different regions and educational settings.

## **Chapter Three: Teacher-parent involvement: Theoretical and conceptual frameworks**

Bronfenbrenner's Ecological Systems Theory (EST) is applied to understand the connections between Grade 6 teacher-parent collaboration and communication, and its impact on comprehension ability. This theory emphasises the interaction between various environmental layers, such as family and school, and their influence on a learner's comprehension. It comprises a conceptual framework based on an extensive review of the existing literature.

## **Chapter Four: Research design and methods in an educational setting: Grade 6**

This chapter offers a detailed account of the research methodology. The research design encompasses the research paradigm, approach, and research type. The research methods include procedures, tools, and techniques for collecting, gathering and analysing data. The discussion of trustworthiness and ethical considerations regarding the participation of human beings in the study forms part of this chapter.

## **Chapter Five: Data presentation, analysis and interpretation**

Qualitative data is analysed to identify patterns regarding teacher-parent collaboration and learner comprehension ability. Qualitative insights highlight the role of a supportive school-home partnership and communication in comprehensive skills.

## **Chapter Six: Summary, conclusions, and recommendations**

This chapter summarises the core findings, emphasising the value of teacher-parent involvement and communication, as well as the challenges that Grade 6 teachers and

parents face in developing comprehension ability. This chapter concludes with the provision of delimitations, limitations and concluding remarks.

### **1.11 CHAPTER SUMMARY**

This chapter served as an orientation to the whole study. The chapter introduces the research topic by providing a background to the study by focusing on the critical influence of teacher-parent collaboration and communication on comprehension ability in Grade 6. This chapter further highlights the importance of effective involvement and communication between teachers and parents (referring to previous studies), emphasising their role in supporting learners' comprehension skills. Additionally, it explores existing challenges and proposes ways to enhance educational practices through Epstein's Framework of Involvement, which focuses on the curriculum. The following chapter presents a literature review that situates the study within its contextual framework.

## CHAPTER 2: TEACHER-PARENT INVOLVEMENT AND LEARNER COMPREHENSION: A CONTEXTUAL FRAMEWORK

### 2.1 INTRODUCTION

*T*urkish teachers, according to Ünsal and Ağçam (2019), have identified several

benefits of Teacher-Parent Communication (TPC). It enhances learners' sense of worth and belonging at school, boosts their motivation and classroom performance, and supports their learning. I also find that TPC helps learners become more responsible, increases self-confidence, and reduces misbehaviour.

In the rapidly evolving landscape of education, the quality of teacher–parent involvement and communication has emerged as a decisive factor shaping learners' comprehension and academic development. Understanding this dynamic requires more than a description of practices; it demands a contextual review that situates teacher–parent engagement within the broader social, cultural, and curricular environment. Such a review is essential for identifying the conditions, patterns, and barriers that influence collaboration and, ultimately, learners' ability to process and retain knowledge.

This chapter provides a comprehensive contextual framework to examine how teacher–parent involvement affects the comprehension abilities of Grade 6 learners. It synthesises international and national perspectives, highlighting key trends, challenges, and strategies identified in scholarly literature. The review focuses on three interrelated concepts: (i) teacher–parent involvement, (ii) curriculum at practice, and (iii) comprehension ability.

By critically analysing these concepts and integrating relevant theoretical perspectives, this chapter establishes a foundation for understanding the ecological and relational dimensions of teacher–parent involvement, providing insight into how coordinated efforts across home and school contexts can enhance learners' comprehension skills. The contextual review thus positions the study within a rigorous

scholarly landscape, justifying the investigation and highlighting areas where this research can make a meaningful contribution.

## **2.2 INTERNATIONAL PERSPECTIVES ON TEACHER–PARENT PARTNERSHIPS AND COMPREHENSION**

### **2.2.1 Teacher-parent partnerships**

In Korea, teachers face various challenges in their relationships with parents, including fear of conflict, unexpected difficulties, parental distrust, and unreasonable demands (Bang, Jang & Jung, 2021). In Cyprus, a gap exists between the desire for more meaningful parental involvement in education and the actual low level of engagement (Hagage Baikovich & Yemini, 2023). Furthermore, the dynamics among parents, schools, and teachers in Qatar have undergone significant changes due to increased responsibilities, frequent curriculum changes, and the pervasive influence of the Internet and digital media on all stakeholders (Al-Hail, Al-Fagih & Koç, 2021). Boit (2020) emphasises the necessity of equipping future teachers with the essential skills to thrive when working with schools, the community, and particularly when engaging with parents, so that academic performance in comprehension ability can reach its ultimate peak.

In Indigenous West Papuan communities (a province in Indonesia home to the Indigenous West Papuan people), many teachers feel that most parents are not involved or interested in their children's education. These teachers believe these parents do not understand the importance of schooling and are not concerned about their children's academic progress. Teachers find it challenging to work with these Indigenous Papuan parents due to their lack of responsiveness and involvement. This sentiment arises from concerns about the poor academic performance of Papuan learners (Sianturi, Lee & Cumming, 2023).

However, recent studies highlight some downsides to parental involvement in Cyprus. For instance, Hagage Baikovich and Yemini (2023) found that teachers' rules apply to favour learners from higher socio-economic backgrounds, resulting in unequal treatment and evaluation by teachers. A study conducted by Forlin and Cooper (2013) at the Hong Kong Institute of Education gathered responses from 914 school staff members and 573 parents, revealing that many learners exhibited behavioural issues

related to engagement, motivation, cooperation, and opposition, which caused emotional stress for both parents and teachers.

Early childhood teachers in Finland have emphasised the importance of parental involvement in comprehensive learning (Hakyemez-Paul et al., 2020), whereas in China, there is an increasing trend of parents questioning teachers' authority, resulting in conflicts (Guo, Wu, & Liu, 2019). Teachers must consistently encourage family involvement; however, parents often participate only occasionally, even when encouraged (Willemse, Thompson, Van der Linde, & Mutton, 2018). Martin (2016) demonstrates that parental collaboration helps improve learners' academic performance, especially in Norway, where it is shown that parental collaboration enhances learners' academic performance. However, Sari and Ilyas (2021) find that some Swiss parents rely solely on schools for their children's education due to work commitments, which can create tension and conflicts in the parent-school partnership. In contrast, the United Arab Emirates (UAE) has recognised the importance of parental involvement in school improvement plans, as noted by Hourani, Stringer and Baker (2012), who emphasise that parents should be critical partners in this process. They believe that focusing on parental involvement is crucial for school improvement. However, Stroetinga, Leeman and Veugelers (2019) highlight that teachers struggle to work with parents when their beliefs or values differ. Paccaud et al. (2021) emphasise that collaboration between families and schools is crucial for effective education.

Sadly, involvement appears to be overlooked in most Polish schools (Rusnak, 2018). According to Kabir and Aktir (2014), parental involvement is relatively new to Bangladesh's School Management Team (SMT). However, efforts have been made to increase parents' participation in their children's education. Islam (2019), on the other hand, finds that parent-teacher meetings have a significantly positive effect on the academic performance of European learners, emphasising the need to create opportunities, such as meetings, to involve parents in academic matters.

Teacher-parent partnerships face challenges such as conflicts, distrust, and cultural differences in countries like Korea, Cyprus, and Qatar. While parental involvement improves learner performance in Finland, Norway, and the UAE, issues such as a lack of interest (in West Papuan communities) and authority conflicts (in China and Hong Kong) persist. Some regions, such as Poland and Bangladesh, have low parental

engagement, whereas studies in Europe highlight the benefits of parent-teacher meetings.

However, gaps include inconsistent parental involvement due to socio-economic and cultural factors, conflicting values between teachers and parents, limited teacher training on parent engagement, and a lack of structured opportunities for meaningful parental involvement.

### **2.2.2 Curriculum as practice**

It has been found that Korean teachers and parents hold different views and need a greater understanding of the behaviours required for effective involvement. To bridge this gap, both groups (teachers and parents) need more opportunities to communicate their perspectives and experiences openly and honestly. This initial step, as emphasised by Bang (2018), is vital for fostering a partnership between parents and teachers, enabling them to reduce misunderstandings. Although Arabic is the primary language in Dubai, the government requires all private schools to teach Arabic to non-native speakers from Grades 1 to 9 (Moghazy, 2020). On the other hand, in Oman, a country located on the southeastern coast of the Arabian Peninsula in the Middle East, the study by Al Rashdi (2015) shows that emojis are not just used to express emotions but serve a communication purpose (such as presenting images of what teachers and parents try to say).

Regarding communication platforms, Guo, Wu and Liu (2019) note that in China, modern technologies such as the Internet and WeChat have made communication between parents and teachers faster and more convenient. The use of digital media for parent-teacher communication is increasing. With the increasing use of technology, such as WhatsApp groups, these findings reveal interesting aspects of preferred meeting frequencies and attitudes towards communication among teachers and parents. Mayangsari and Aprianti (2017) observe that in Bandung, Indonesia, WhatsApp serves as a common means of direct communication between parents and teachers. Palviainen and Räisä's (2023) findings indicate that the connection between language choices and educational support is complicated and requires further research in future family language. Mobile app communication between children and their family members is integral to modern family interactions and language learning. Conversely, Kraft and Bolves (2022) discover that overall usage of mobile

communication applications (apps) remains low in America and experienced a decline when schools no longer received intensive support.

Serip Mohamad (2022) states that Malaysia's population is diverse in both ethnicity and language, making code-switching a common occurrence in daily conversations. This language-switching also reflects their bilingual or multilingual identity as Malaysians. Therefore, Conus and Fahrni (2017) suggest that schools and teachers should reconsider their role in routine communication.

Alharthi (2023) reveals that in Saudi Arabia, parents prefer to maintain their traditional roles as parents rather than take on the role of teachers. A study based on 30 interviews with teachers and parents in a Swedish compulsory school found that parental involvement and engagement in their children's academic life significantly impacted learners' comprehension (Widding, 2015). The issue of low academic performance among learners, as observed in the United States (US), is to foster a communicative relationship between teachers and parents (Ahmed, 2015). Yaqobi (2022) asserts that in the US, the Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) approach in classrooms can influence non-native English-speaking learners' communication skills and their willingness to speak, which in turn leads to poor comprehension abilities. Unfortunately, using code-switching to mitigate language challenges and ensure clear communication can lead to poor academic performance overall (Letzel et al., 2020).

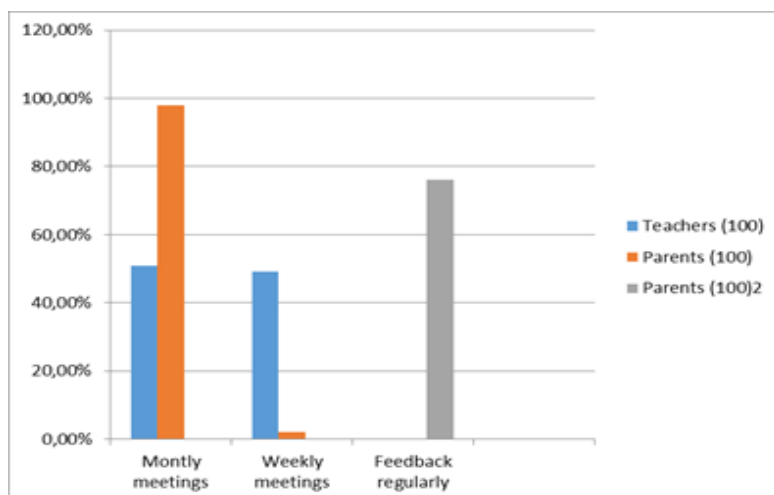
In challenging situations, teachers support parents and work together to find solutions rather than taking a strictly authoritative role. In the southern part of the Netherlands, Leenders, De Jong, Monfrance and Haelermans (2019) indicate that schools facing more significant challenges prioritise two-way communication the most. Teachers face difficulties involving parents in decision-making processes, but overall, teachers maintain a positive attitude towards parents, especially when discussing sensitive topics. Lantsoght et al. (2021) state that the worldwide COVID-19 pandemic further emphasised issues, such as parents having to adapt to working from home while simultaneously caring for their children's academic needs.

In China, Ma, Liu and Li (2022) discover a positive correlation between the quality of teacher-learner relationships and learners' academic performance. Additionally, when parents are highly involved during primary school, the negative impact of a poor

teacher-learner relationship on learners' performance is reduced. In Cyprus, the findings of Hagage and Yemini (2023) reveal a discrepancy between what teachers and parents want - greater parental involvement in schooling - and what actually occurs, which is less communication. In line with Lee's (2015) insights, these challenges are observed in parents, particularly in establishing respect for teachers, as observed in the US.

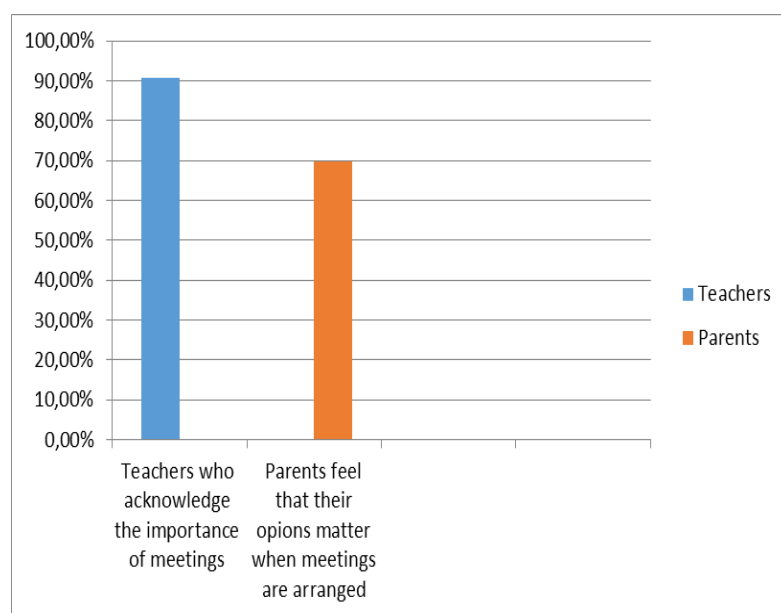
Syriopoulou-Delli and Polychronopoulou (2019) reveal that in Greece, most teachers (50.9%) suggest monthly school-arranged meetings for communication, while nearly half (49.1%) prefer weekly meetings. Almost all parents (98%) prefer monthly meetings. Around 90.6% of teachers consider these meetings crucial, and taking them seriously demonstrates to parents (69.6%) that their opinions on their children's progress matter. Approximately 76% of parents value teachers' feedback on their children.

Figures 2.1 and 2.2 reveal notable differences in teachers' and parents' preferences for meeting frequency, as well as parents' responsiveness to teachers' feedback. These patterns suggest that while teacher input is recognised as pivotal for learners' development, the effectiveness of engagement is mediated by parents' perceptions, availability, and willingness to participate. Analytically, the figures indicate that alignment—or misalignment—between teacher expectations and parental engagement strategies can significantly influence the quality of teacher–parent collaboration and, by extension, learners' comprehension and academic outcomes in the Greek context.



**Figure 2.1: Preferred meeting frequencies and feedback**

As evident from Figure 2.1, teachers exhibit a similar level of preference for both monthly and weekly meetings, underscoring the significance they attribute to meetings as an integral aspect of the education system, closely linked to communication and collaboration. Conversely, parents tend to favour monthly meetings over weekly ones. Figure 2.2 further highlights that parents perceive feedback as a form of communication.



**Figure 2.2: Meeting motivations: understanding the reasons**

Through cooperation between social media platforms, teachers, and parents, a safe educational environment that supports learners' comprehension ability should be communicated clearly.

### 2.2.3 Comprehension ability

Asad, Soomro, Shamsy and Churi (2021) assert that assessment (learner performance) is an essential component in the contemporary landscape of teaching and learning (as identified in Pakistan), which is a universally acknowledged fact. It serves as the guiding force for adopting new teaching methodologies, aids decision-making processes (which involve comprehension skills), and drives progress synonymous with learner performance. Assessment plays a central role in daily classroom settings, evaluating learners' academic performance and monitoring their progress. In the context of English as the LoLT, learning and assessment in Pakistan, particularly in Sindh, both learners and teachers face significant challenges, which include cognitive thinking.

Aziz, Susilowati, Masturin and Prasajo (2023) suggest that effective involvement between teachers and parents is crucial in shaping a learner's comprehension ability. Hornby and Blackwell (2018) identified barriers to parental involvement worldwide between home and school, which are often attributed to individual parenting styles, impacting learner performance and potentially leading to poor comprehensive learning.

## **2.3 REFLECTIONS ON INTERNATIONAL LITERATURE INFORMING THE SUB-QUESTIONS**

### **2.3.1 Teacher-parent partnerships: "How do parents describe their role in supporting learning at home to enhance learners' reading comprehension skills?"**

The sub-question reflects the challenges and importance of parental involvement highlighted across various countries. The literature reveals that, despite differences in context, common themes emerge regarding the role of parents in education.

For instance, in countries such as Korea and Cyprus, a gap exists between expectations and parental engagement, with teachers facing challenges due to conflict or a lack of meaningful involvement. In Qatar, evolving responsibilities, curriculum changes, and the influence of digital media have altered the dynamics between parents and teachers, creating new challenges for collaboration. Similarly, in West Papua, low parental engagement negatively affects learners' performance, as many parents are perceived to need an understanding of the importance of education.

On the other hand, positive aspects are evident in countries such as Finland and Norway, where early childhood teachers and primary school teachers emphasise the value of parental collaboration, which has been shown to boost academic outcomes. However, there are also issues; for example, in China, conflicts arise when parents challenge teachers' authority, and in Switzerland, work commitments hinder parental engagement, which in turn affects learner outcomes.

Parental involvement is a relatively new concept in places like Bangladesh, and efforts are being made to improve engagement. In contrast, in Poland, it remains neglected. Meanwhile, in Europe, studies show that regular parent-teacher meetings can significantly enhance learner performance. Across these diverse contexts, the

complexities of parent-teacher relationships are evident, with both positive and negative aspects influencing academic results. This sub-question explores how these global patterns and issues can provide insights into how parents perceive their role in supporting reading comprehension skills at home.

### **2.3.2 Curriculum as practice: “What resources do teachers and parents use to support learners’ comprehension?”**

The findings reveal several insights regarding the sub-question about the resources, teachers and parents use to support learners' comprehension. Digital communication tools play a significant role, with platforms like WeChat in China (Guo, Wu & Liu, 2019) and WhatsApp in Indonesia (Mayangsari & Aprianti, 2017) serving as widely used methods for direct communication. These tools provide a quick and convenient way to share information, updates, and feedback, reflecting a shift towards tech-based resources that facilitate regular communication and enhance access to learning materials. Despite the rise of digital platforms, traditional face-to-face meetings remain vital. In Greece, both teachers and parents value regular, structured meetings, with preferences for monthly or weekly sessions (Syriopoulou-Delli & Polychronopoulou, 2019). These interactions allow for deeper discussions on comprehension issues and personalised support, demonstrating the continued relevance of direct, in-person communication.

Language and communication practices also serve as crucial resources. Code-switching and language adaptation facilitate more straightforward communication in multilingual contexts, as seen in Malaysia (Serip Mohamad, 2022) and Saudi Arabia (Alharthi, 2023). In Oman, the use of emojis in communication between teachers and parents exemplifies an innovative approach to overcoming language barriers, demonstrating that visual aids can be effective in conveying ideas and facilitating clearer communication (Al Rashdi, 2015). Furthermore, ongoing parental involvement in educational activities, such as providing feedback on homework and engaging in discussions, has been shown to positively affect learners' comprehension. Studies in the US (Ahmed, 2015; Yaqobi, 2022) and Sweden (Widding, 2015) emphasise that active participation from parents helps them understand where their children need extra support, thus enhancing learning at home.

Two-way communication and collaboration are essential for effective support, with both teachers and parents needing to share their perspectives. In the Netherlands, and during global challenges like COVID-19, schools have focused on collaborative problem-solving, which underscores the importance of joint efforts to address learning difficulties (Leenders, De Jong, Monfrance & Haelermans, 2019; Lantsoght et al., 2021). Learners receive more consistent and targeted support when both parties work together to identify and resolve issues. Overall, a combination of digital tools, traditional meetings, adaptive communication strategies, regular parental engagement, and collaborative problem-solving emerges as key resources used by teachers and parents to enhance learners' comprehension, maintaining a strong connection between home and school.

### **2.3.3 Comprehension ability: “What communication methods do teachers and parents find most effective in supporting learners’ comprehension?”**

These findings align with the research sub-question and highlight the importance of assessment as a tool for guiding teaching practices and making informed decisions to improve learner performance, which is crucial for understanding how to support comprehension skills. As observed in Pakistan, assessment drives progress by helping to identify learners' needs. Still, it also brings challenges, especially when English is the LoLT, where cognitive difficulties can arise.

Moreover, studies by Aziz, Susilowati, Masturin and Prasojo (2023) emphasise that strong collaboration between teachers and parents plays a significant role in developing learners' comprehension abilities. However, as noted by Hornby and Blackwell (2018), global barriers to parental involvement suggest that challenges like individual parenting practices can lead to poor comprehension skills if not addressed effectively.

Thus, parental involvement plays a crucial role in supporting learners' reading comprehension; however, its effectiveness varies across different contexts. Studies from countries such as Korea, Cyprus, and West Papua reveal challenges including limited engagement, misunderstandings, and a lack of educational awareness among parents. In contrast, countries like Finland and Norway demonstrate that early and consistent collaboration between teachers and parents can significantly enhance academic outcomes. These global patterns underscore the importance of examining

how parents perceive their role in supporting comprehension at home, particularly in contexts such as in South Africa, where such partnerships are often underdeveloped or inconsistent.

Globally, both digital and traditional resources are used to support comprehension. Messaging platforms like WeChat and WhatsApp have become vital tools for teacher-parent communication, while regular face-to-face meetings remain essential for fostering more personal engagement. In multilingual settings, strategies such as code-switching and visual aids (e.g., emojis) help overcome language barriers. Research also shows that learners receive more targeted support when parents engage in activities like reviewing homework or discussing schoolwork. These findings suggest that a mix of accessible tools and collaborative strategies can enhance comprehension.

Effective communication between teachers and parents is key to improving learners' comprehension skills. Assessment practices, while helpful, can pose challenges in contexts if learners struggle with the language of instruction. Studies emphasise that strong collaboration—whether through digital platforms or in-person meetings—helps identify learning needs early and align support from both home and school. However, barriers such as parental work commitments or limited understanding of educational roles can hinder this process. Exploring which communication methods are viewed as most effective by both parties offers valuable insight into strengthening support for learners' comprehension.

## **2.4 A NATIONAL OVERVIEW OF TEACHER-PARENT INVOLVEMENT ON COMPREHENSION**

### **2.4.1 Teacher-Parent partnerships**

When parents are more involved, learners exhibit better social skills and fewer behavioural problems; however, this involvement does not predict changes in academic performance (Nokali, Bachman, Votruba-Drzal, 2010). Nokali, Bachman and Votruba-Drzal (2010) further explain that learners with highly involved parents demonstrate improved social functioning. A study (Adesokan, 2019) conducted in the Free State Province of South Africa examined the challenges of parenting, particularly for single mothers, in nurturing and supporting their children emotionally,

psychologically, and academically. The results show that how single mothers raise their children is linked to their children's academic performance.

There is a consensus that parents are invaluable partners in their children's education; however, engaging South African rural parents in education has remained challenging, according to Myende and Nhlumayo (2022). Furthermore, in schools in quintile 1, which are regarded as the poorest of the poor and are predominantly located in rural areas in South Africa, there is a consensus that parent-teacher partnerships in the education of their children remain challenging.

Learners face distinctive challenges and opportunities that significantly influence their educational experience; therefore, it is essential that outstanding instruction at the middle school level is grounded in a deep understanding of the cognitive, physical, emotional, social, and ethical needs of young adolescents (Ochanji et al., 2016). Unfortunately, negative attitudes towards education among most parents were reported as one of the most significant problems schools faced, and parents felt that learners often had to concentrate on household chores after school (Chileshe & Kubombela, 2012). Limited partnerships between teachers and parents, time constraints, curriculum challenges, and situational factors such as MT vs. FAL, arose in the Western Cape, according to Nieuwoudt (2022).

Both teachers and parents have stressed the importance of a partnership between the school and parents in supporting the success of curriculum development (Halimah & Margaretha, 2020). Providing chances for teachers and parents to build strong partnerships is important for their involvement (Halimah, Yuliatiningsih & Mirawati, 2023).

#### **2.4.2 Curriculum as practice**

Research shows that parental support and involvement greatly help children's learning and development and indicates that parental involvement and effective communication between home and school are linked to positive educational outcomes. McWayne, Hampton, Fantuzzo, Cohen and Sekino (2004) suggest that parents who actively promote learning at home (where reading activities are involved), have direct and regular contact with the school, experience fewer barriers and produce learners who demonstrate positive engagement with their teachers, peers and learning.

In the Northern Cape, South Africa, parental involvement positively influences learners' performance. Muroa and Harrison (2020) found that teaching is no longer the sole responsibility of teachers in the classroom. Timely feedback on assignments and assessments keeps parents informed and engaged, fostering a collaborative approach to addressing challenges and celebrating achievements.

Wolf's (2020) studies indicate that many teachers believe parents with low incomes are less interested or involved in their children's education, which negatively affects communication between home and school.

Ozmen, Akuzum, Zincirli and Selcuk (2016) argue that schools should adopt an open-door policy for parents and take the initiative to facilitate communication between teachers and parents, thereby enhancing academic performance. It is crucial to train teachers and families to improve their communication skills, which will support learners' academic progress. Conus and Fahrni (2019) concur with this finding, suggesting that teachers should actively communicate with parents instead of adopting a passive "no news, good news" approach where they expect parents to initiate conversations.

Enhancing trust is recognised by improving communication between home and school (Adams & Christenson, 2000). Stamatis and Chatzinikola (2021) found that teachers believe that effective communication with parents contributes to the overall functioning and efficiency of the school. Graham-Clay (2024) confirms that regular communication between home and school is crucial for parental involvement and learner performance. This includes common ways schools share information with parents, like newsletters, emails, texts and report cards.

Ellis (2017) identifies the use of technology, fostering open dialogue, and involving all stakeholders as crucial factors in enhancing regular communication between parents and teachers.

Yet, there is hesitancy among many parents and teachers to use these tools to improve communication between parents and teachers for educational purposes, as noted by Bordalba and Bochaca (2019), and how to address these strategies. Morris, Jespersen, Cosgrove, Ratliff, and Kerr (2020) highlight the crucial importance of how

upbringing shapes our lives, identifying tools (e.g., the effectiveness of communication in MT vs. LoLT) to support parents and enhance children's comprehensive growth. These uncertainties can make their role confusing; still, their strong dedication to teaching helps them handle these challenges (Graeme & Graeme, 2020).

The reviewed literature highlights that effective teacher-parent collaboration and communication are crucial factors influencing learners' comprehension and academic success, particularly in multilingual classrooms. While these studies from different literatures emphasise the positive impact of active parental engagement, open dialogue, and trust-building between home and school, in contrast, the literature also reveals ongoing challenges, such as limited parental confidence, socio-economic barriers, and inconsistent communication practices. These gaps highlight the need for effective strategies to strengthen teacher-parent partnerships. Therefore, this study aims to investigate the impact of teacher-parent involvement on learners' comprehension in Grade 6 and to propose actionable guidelines for enhancing collaboration and communication to achieve better learner outcomes.

### **2.4.3 Comprehension ability**

Reading is the fundamental and essential skill needed for everything else in life. It is a good predictor of academic achievement and an indicator of future academic reading. Reading should become a habit, starting at home when the child is an infant. Parents play an active role in instilling a love for reading in their children, laying the foundation for schools to build upon, as confirmed by Nieuwoudt (2022) in Western Cape schools.

Unfortunately, Bridgette (2020) notes that the lack of parental involvement is a significant obstacle in many primary schools in South Africa. Mathekga (2016) reported that primary schools with higher rates of parental involvement are more likely to be involved in school activities; therefore, effective information should be established. Teachers should provide accurate information about learners' progress (in this case, comprehensive), considering parents' MT vs LoLT.

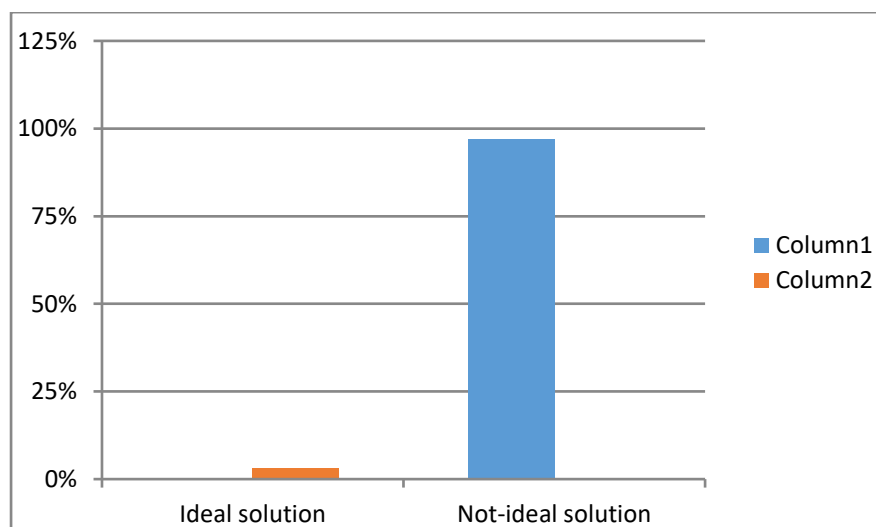
Ozmen, Akuzum, Zincirli and Selcuk (2016) identify several significant academic performance barriers commonly identified in the existing literature between teachers and parents. These barriers include money-related reasons. Issues such as parents' financial constraints matter in school activities where parents are involved in their

child’s academics, especially in terms of what they learn and what they grasp about this learning.

Although we all know, as confirmed by Hopkins (2021), the ideal solution is a highly qualified teacher in a small classroom, which eases the grasping aspect of learning, together with all the necessary resources.

Sadly, this is only a reality for about 3% of the South African population; the other 97% do not have the privilege of the ideal.

Figure 2.3 highlights the disparities in resource allocation and their direct implications for learner outcomes, demonstrating how unequal or ineffective distribution can hinder comprehension and engagement. This visual evidence underscores the critical role of strategic resourcing in supporting teaching practices and facilitating meaningful teacher–parent collaboration, suggesting that learners’ academic performance is closely linked to both material and instructional support.



**Figure 2.3: Optimal class size and resource allocation for effective learning in South Africa**

The lack of relevant teaching and learning materials (Verner, Kandjeo-Marenga, Abah & Mashebe, 2022), lack of motivation, teachers’ high workload, and teachers’ poor subject content knowledge constitute the major challenges. According to Fesi and Mncube (2021), the major findings in East London, South Africa, refer to the poor level of reading of Grade 4 learners, which affects the upcoming grades, such as Grade 6,

a decrease in teacher and learner motivation, overcrowded classrooms and inadequate training on reading strategies.

Rajabalee and Santally (2021) found that learners reported issues related to insufficient tutor support and technical difficulties, which negatively affected their comprehension ability across different groups. Implementing a structured system for sharing learner progress is crucial, although challenges faced by teachers and parents are acknowledged. Bridgette (2020) notes significant educational restructuring in South Africa, which empowers greater parental involvement in schools.

## **2.5 REFLECTIONS OF NATIONAL LITERATURE INFORMING THE SUB-QUESTIONS**

### **2.5.1 Teacher-parent partnerships: "How do parents describe their role in supporting learning at home to enhance learners' reading comprehension skills?"**

The reflections highlight several key themes. First, the studies emphasise that active parental involvement positively affects learners' social skills and emotional support, although it does not necessarily predict academic performance (Nokali, Bachman & Votruba-Drzal, 2010). This suggests that parents view their role as crucial in creating a supportive home environment that fosters learning. However, parents, especially single mothers, face significant challenges in nurturing their children's emotional, psychological, and academic needs, which may affect how they perceive their role and the effectiveness of their involvement in their children's education (Adesokan, 2019).

Engaging parents, particularly in rural South African contexts, remains a challenge, as factors such as negative attitudes toward education, prioritising household chores over academic support, and limited time due to socio-economic constraints hinder parental involvement (Myende & Nhlumayo, 2022; Chileshe, 2012). This indicates that parents may feel their role is limited or influenced by external circumstances.

Both parents and teachers recognise the value of a partnership in supporting learners, yet the lack of effective communication and collaboration can impede efforts to enhance reading comprehension skills (Halimah & Margaretha, 2020). While parents may see themselves as nurturers and supporters, their ability to actively enhance reading comprehension skills may be hampered by various barriers, leading them to

describe their role as one of encouragement and resource provision, albeit with uncertainty regarding their effectiveness.

### **2.5.2 Curriculum as practice: “What resources do teachers and parents use to support learners’ comprehension?”**

Wilke (2022) highlights that many learners in South African schools are taught in a second or third language, which can significantly hinder their academic progress due to low language skills and comprehension issues. This language barrier presents a substantial obstacle to education in the country. However, research demonstrates that parental support and involvement play a crucial role in enhancing children's learning and development. Research indicates that effective communication between home and school, combined with parental involvement, yields positive educational outcomes. McWayne et al. (2004) suggest that parents who actively engage in home learning activities, particularly reading, and maintain regular contact with the school encounter fewer barriers, fostering positive engagement among learners with teachers, peers, and the learning process.

Ozmen et al. (2016) advocate for an open-door policy in schools, encouraging proactive communication between teachers and parents to enhance academic performance. Training for both teachers and families is essential to improve communication skills, ultimately supporting learners' academic progress. This view is echoed by Conus and Fahrni (2019), who recommend that teachers take an active role in communicating with parents rather than relying on a passive "no news, good news" approach that places the onus on parents to initiate contact. Graham-Clay (2024) confirms that regular communication between home and school is crucial for fostering parental involvement and enhancing learner performance. This communication can take various forms, including newsletters, emails, texts, and report cards.

Ellis (2017) identifies technology use, open dialogue, and involvement of all stakeholders as essential for enhancing regular communication as a resource tool between parents and teachers. Despite this, Bordalba and Bochaca (2019) note that many parents and teachers hesitate to utilise these tools to improve communication.

### **2.5.3 Comprehension ability: “What communication methods do teachers and parents find most effective in supporting learners’ comprehension?”**

Comprehension ability is essential, as reading is a fundamental skill necessary for all areas of life. It is a strong predictor of academic achievement and a key indicator of future academic success. Developing a love for reading should start at home when the child is an infant, with parents playing an active role in fostering this habit, which lays the groundwork for schools to build upon (Nieuwoudt, 2022). However, several challenges hinder this process, including a lack of relevant teaching and learning materials (Verner, Kandjeo-Marenga, Abah & Mashebe, 2022), low motivation, teachers’ high workloads, and inadequate subject knowledge among teachers. Fesi and Mncube (2021) highlight that poor reading levels among Grade 4 learners in East London, South Africa, have an adverse impact on subsequent grades, including Grade 6. Other issues include decreased motivation among teachers and learners, overcrowded classrooms, and insufficient training in reading strategies.

Rajabalee and Santally (2021) find that learners faced challenges related to insufficient tutor support and technical difficulties, which negatively affected their comprehension abilities across different groups. While acknowledging the challenges faced by teachers and parents. Bridgette (2020) identifies a lack of parental involvement as a significant obstacle in many primary schools. Mathekga (2016) reports that primary schools with higher rates of parental involvement tend to engage more effectively in school activities, suggesting the need for better communication. Teachers must provide accurate information regarding learners’ progress, considering the language dynamics of parents’ MT versus the LoLT.

Hopkins and Kerry (2021) assert that the ideal solution would be a highly qualified teacher in a small classroom, teaching in the learners’ MT to facilitate understanding; this scenario is a reality for only about 3% of the South African population. Unfortunately, the remaining 97% cannot access such ideal educational conditions. Open lines of communication can help bridge the gap between home and school, allowing parents to better support their learners’ reading and learning needs.

## **2.6 CURRENT PERSPECTIVES ON TEACHER–PARENT INVOLVEMENT AND LEARNER COMPREHENSION**

As a Grade 6 teacher in the Grade 6 classroom, I have observed that the involvement and communication between teachers and parents have a profound influence on learner performance. I have noticed that many young learners in the first few years of school often fail to complete their homework because they lack the necessary help (i.e., they do not fully understand what is expected of them) and/or supervision at home. This highlights the importance of educational policies and rules in supporting teachers and parents working together to help learners read and comprehend what they are reading, thereby enabling them to complete tasks successfully and achieve academic performance.

Popovska, Popovski and Dimova Popovska's (2021) study seeks to explore the attitudes and perspectives of primary school teachers and parents regarding their involvement and communication strategies within school settings. Purnama and Asdlori (2023) have found that social media has altered how learners interact in both in-person and online platforms, creating new dynamics in social relationships. Parents need to be involved in their children's social media literacy education.

Syriopoulou-Delli, Cassimos and Polychronopoulou (2016) find that most teachers and parents consider involvement and communication between teachers and parents to be crucial. This finding suggests that out of a group of 165 teachers, 96.5% view involvement and communication as essential. In essence, fostering a strong partnership between teachers and parents empowers parents to reinforce learning at home, motivates learners to excel, and facilitates early intervention (referring to reading) when needed, ensuring a holistic approach to education that maximises learner potential.

Tshabalala (2013) highlights effective teachers and structured parental involvement that have led to the creation of parent-friendly schools, focusing on fostering effective home-school communication and encouraging innovative parent involvement. Effective communication channels, such as regular updates via email or online platforms, ensure parents stay informed about their child's academic progress and, therefore, can offer important support at home if needed. Mehrabian (2017) confirms that effective language communicates almost anything. This involvement not only

strengthens academic skills in comprehension ability but also enhances learner motivation and engagement. Mohamed and Zainal (2021) state that communication within a school's culture and environment helps improve learner performance by examining how teacher-parent communication affects academic development. However, inconsistent communication or a lack of involvement may hinder some efforts that could negatively affect learner performance due to the application of communication that may not occur in the parent's MT.

Keeping the main research question in mind: How teacher-parent involvement impacts Grade 6 learners' comprehension ability?

The following basic perceptions are as follows regarding the current situation.

### **2.6.1 Teacher-parent partnership**

In the current context, it is evident that developing a deeper understanding of involvement empowers teachers to engage more actively with parents. This underscores the crucial role of teacher-parent partnership and emphasises the dedication required from teachers to excel in this teamwork (Young, 2017).

A practical tool (Hibbard, 2016) for teachers and parents includes two types of resources: communication tools and reading aids. For teachers, the tools help with clear and effective communication with parents. For parents, the tools support reading and literacy development at home. Leenders, de Jong, Monfrance and Haelermans (2019) suggest that teachers should support parents as a partnership, rather than just being experts; thus, teachers and parents should ask the question, "How can we solve this together?"

Aderibigbe (2012) highlights various indirect factors, such as parents' income, the number of children in the family, gender, and parents' expectations, which influence parental involvement and contribute to additional disconnection in the educational landscape. Basson (2021) underscores and agrees with Aderibigbe (2012) that the critical role of school-parent collaboration and parental involvement in decision-making processes is fundamental for success. However, Basson (2021) is aware that these aspects indicate problems, as collaborative efforts can be complex for both teachers and parents due to socio-economic and expectation-related factors that influence parental engagement in academic activities.

In the current educational landscape, fostering meaningful partnerships between teachers and parents is essential for enhancing learners' comprehension. A deeper understanding of parental involvement empowers teachers to engage more intentionally with families, shifting from a model of authority to one of collaboration (Young, 2017). Practical tools, as highlighted by Hibbard (2016), offer a dual benefit: they aid teachers in maintaining clear communication and equip parents with strategies to support literacy at home. This aligns with Leenders et al. (2019), who advocate for a partnership approach where both teachers and parents ask, "How can we solve this together?"—emphasising shared responsibility rather than top-down instruction.

However, such collaboration does not come without challenges. Aderibigbe (2012) identifies several indirect factors—such as socio-economic status, family size, gender roles, and parental expectations—that can hinder active involvement. Basson (2021) echoes these concerns, recognising that while school-parent collaboration is vital for academic success, it is often complicated by external realities that shape parents' ability and willingness to participate. Therefore, I argue that to promote effective comprehension, teachers must adopt flexible and empathetic approaches that consider these contextual challenges, fostering inclusive partnerships rooted in mutual understanding and shared goals.

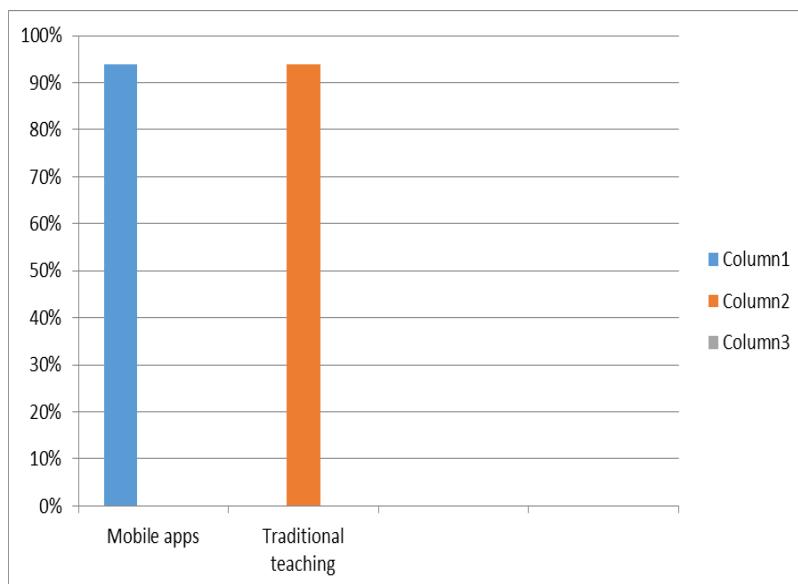
### **2.6.2 Curriculum as practice**

According to Kuusimäki, Uusitalo-Malmivaara and Tirr (2019), contemporary communication predominantly occurs electronically. It is worth noting that there is a growing trend in utilising digital media for parent-teacher communication. Abubakari (2020) discovers that teachers and parents in the Sagnerigu District of Ghana have a positive perception of parent-teacher communication, which focuses on learners' academic performance. However, one issue is that parents may fear negative consequences for voicing their concerns. Gilmore, Mann and Pennell (2023) also find that parents face challenges such as ineffective communication and a lack of trust, while teachers may view parents as excessively dependent and demanding.

Nevertheless, Bordalba and Bochaca (2019) highlight that many parents and teachers still disagree about leveraging such platforms to enhance two-way academic communication between them. The authors assert that establishing a partnership

between parents and teachers necessitates effective two-way communication, which can be facilitated through various media such as parent-teacher conferences, telephone calls, text messages, and emails. This type of communication encourages active engagement from parents, allowing them to collaborate with teachers in addressing their child's needs, especially on how they grasp what they read. Moreover, it enables both parents and teachers to exchange feedback and insights.

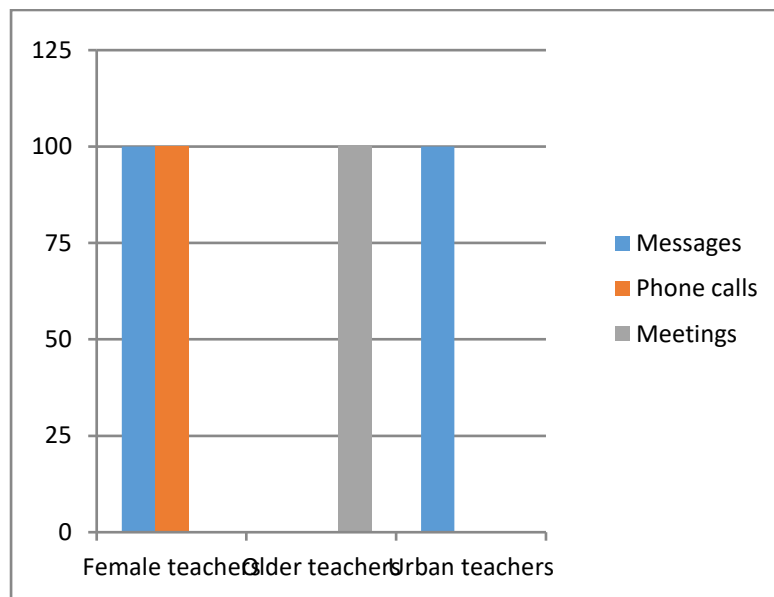
Bordalba and Bochaca (2019) state that the adoption of digital media for parent-teacher communication is rising. Yet, there remains hesitancy among both parents and teachers to use these platforms effectively for enhancing two-way communication; specifically, the beliefs of parents and teachers regarding the use of emails and online platforms to facilitate two-way communication. Figure 2.4 illustrates a rising adoption of mobile learning applications alongside traditional classroom methods, yet the data indicate that technological integration alone is insufficient to enhance learner comprehension. Analytically, this underscores the continuing centrality of teacher-parent communication, suggesting that without clear, consistent, and effective interaction between home and school, the potential benefits of mobile learning tools may be limited. The figure highlights that meaningful learning outcomes depend not only on instructional innovation but also on the coordination and engagement of key stakeholders in the learner's ecological system.



**Figure 2.4: Growing use of mobile learning alongside classroom teaching**

Schneider and Arnot (2018) find that communication between school and home reveals differences in how parents and teachers perceive parents' understanding of their children's education due to language barriers. However, achieving an effective relationship and communication between parents and teachers can be challenging, as noted by Loziak (2022).

Figure 2.5 shows the differences in communication preferences among teachers.



**Figure 2.5: Communication preferences among teachers**

In Figure 2.5, it is evident from the findings that female teachers often prefer messages and telephone calls, while older teachers prefer individual meetings. Moreover, urban teachers tend to prefer communication via messages. Despite these differences, understanding the factors influencing teacher-parent relationships and communication can provide valuable insights into fostering more effective communication platforms between teachers and parents.

These strong connections between teachers and parents result in high academic expectations, maintain communication about school activities, and help learners develop reading habits (Castro et al., 2015). With the emphasis on holistic education, there is a growing push for parents to take a more active role in communicating with teachers, aiming to promote the comprehensive development of learners (Levinthal, Kuusisto & Tirri, 2021). However, parents require strong communication with teachers and support from them. In the past, parents were often passive participants in school-related matters.

There is a need to enhance communication between teachers and parents to support learners' comprehension ability (Mathebula, 2017). The family is the primary social institution and plays a vital role in learners' education and learning (grasping) process (Sudiapermana, Muslikhah & Rokhman, 2020).

Effective involvement between teachers and parents depends on the various channels through which they exchange information and dialogue regarding learners' progress in comprehensive activities. The study by Abdullah, Poetri, Saputra and Al Haddar (2023) shows that good communication between parents at home and teachers at school can help children recognise their academic and non-academic abilities. Effective communication enables children to focus on learning and improve their achievements, particularly when both parents and teachers provide feedback and collaborate.

Exemplary instruction at the primary school level stems from a genuine understanding of young adolescents' cognitive, physical, emotional, social, and moral needs (Ochanji et al., 2016). Korkmaz (2007) highlights the importance of parents demonstrating love, respect, and care towards their children, assuming responsibility for their education and essential needs, maintaining effective communication with teachers, and avoiding excessive pressure.

Effective teacher-parent communication is central to supporting learners' comprehension, particularly in contexts where language barriers can hinder both instruction and parental involvement. As digital media becomes increasingly prominent in educational settings (Kuusimäki, Uusitalo-Malmivaara & Tirri, 2019), platforms such as email, messaging apps, and mobile learning tools offer new opportunities for two-way engagement. However, despite growing access, there remains significant hesitation from both teachers and parents in fully utilising these tools for meaningful, academic dialogue (Bordalba & Bochaca, 2019). While some studies (e.g., Abubakari, 2020; Castro et al., 2015) report positive perceptions and outcomes related to such communication, others highlight persistent challenges—such as language differences (Shim, 2013), trust issues (Gilmore, Mann & Pennell, 2023), and differing preferences based on age, gender, or location (Loziak, 2022).

The literature consistently suggests that strong, two-way communication between teachers and parents can support learner comprehension by fostering shared understanding, providing feedback, and building consistent academic expectations

(Mathebula, 2017; Abdullah et al., 2023). However, gaps remain in how these communication methods are adapted to diverse linguistic and socio-economic contexts—particularly where parents speak a different home language than the school’s medium of instruction (Schneider & Arnot, 2018). Furthermore, while technological tools are widely available, their usage is not always strategic or inclusive. Therefore, my argument is that although communication tools and channels are expanding, there is a need for more context-sensitive, trust-based approaches to communication that consider language, culture, and socio-economic differences. The gap lies in understanding *how* teachers and parents perceive and utilise these communication methods to support comprehension, as well as the barriers that prevent them from engaging more effectively. This study aims to explore these perspectives and contribute to the development of more responsive and collaborative communication models for enhancing learner outcomes.

### **2.6.3 Comprehension ability**

Froiland (2021) asserts that home-based parent involvement encompasses activities such as reading together, having books available at home, assisting with homework, and monitoring grades. It also covers what parents believe about their child’s readiness for school, having a growth mindset, their expectations, their relationship with the school, and supporting their child’s independence and connection, all of which help improve achievement.

Parental involvement is both a right and a responsibility for families. It is widely recognised that good cooperation between families and schools is essential for meeting high educational standards. In simple terms, parental involvement means parents actively participating in their children's social, emotional, and academic (comprehensive) growth. It also encompasses issues such as parents' expectations for their children's education, overseeing homework, and assisting them with school assignments (Castro, Expósito-Casas, López-Martín, Lizasoain, Navarro-Asencio & Gaviria, 2015).

Castro, Expósito-Casa, López-Martín, Lizasoain, Navarro-Asencio and Gaviria (2015) further confirm that the parental models most strongly associated with high achievement focus on general supervision of children's learning activities. This suggests that parental support positively shapes the next generation by creating a

supportive school and home environment, enhancing communication, and contributing to comprehensive learning and overall academic growth. Hill and Tyson (2009) highlight the finding that a consistent positive correlation exists between parental involvement and academic performance, excluding direct homework assistance.

Wilder (2014) supports Hill and Tyson (2009) by noting that the impact of parental involvement on academic outcomes is weakest when limited to homework assistance alone. Archer (2018) disagrees and certifies results that show average exam scores increased from 60.34% to 70.77% when learners were allowed to attempt their homework multiple times. This strong link suggests that allowing learners to try their homework multiple times helps them learn more effectively. Thus, equipping teachers with skills to engage parents and the community is vital for creating supportive learning environments that enhance learner performance, especially in what they grasp.

## **2.7 GAP IDENTIFICATION: TEACHER-PARENT INVOLVEMENT AND COMMUNICATION**

The landscape of teacher-parent involvement and communication in education reveals diverse challenges and disparities across various international and national contexts. Makiwane-Mazinyo and Pillay (2017) find that teachers face several difficulties, including learners struggling with reading and issues with teaching styles. Moreover, while there is widespread acknowledgement of the importance of parental involvement, varying communication preferences between teachers and parents pose significant barriers. In Chapter 2, sub-heading 2.6.2, there is a growing push for parents to take a more active role in communicating with teachers, aiming to promote the comprehensive development of learners (Levinthal, Kuusisto & Tirri, 2021).

Physical and cultural differences further complicate communication efforts in countries. In Cyprus, the findings at Chapter 2, sub-heading 2.2.2, Hagage and Yemini (2023) reveal a discrepancy between what teachers and parents want - greater parental involvement in schooling - and what actually occurs, which is less communication. In South Africa, despite supportive policies, financial constraints and low parental engagement levels in certain areas hinder effective parental involvement. Conversely, positive outcomes have been observed when parents actively support learning at home, demonstrating the potential for impactful collaboration.

Addressing these gaps requires prioritising effective communication channels, maximising digital platforms, supporting teachers, and understanding the factors influencing teacher-parent relationships to foster meaningful collaboration and improve educational performance. Due to the intense stress associated with their roles, teachers who lack support are more likely to experience professional burnout, leave their jobs at higher rates, and suffer negative effects on their well-being (Holzner & Gaunt, 2023). By bridging the gap between home and school, teachers can harness the collective efforts of teachers and parents to create a supportive environment for learners.

The following possible gaps regarding teacher-parent involvement and communication that may sprout out of this research are as follows:

### **2.7.1 The reality concerning teacher-parent partnership**

Some schools successfully engage parents in their children's education, while others face challenges due to language barriers, limited resources, cultural differences, or lack of support from home or school. Research confirms that positive educational outcomes are closely linked to effective communication between teachers and parents (Kaushik & Walsh, 2019).

### **2.7.2 Variations in communication preferences**

Parental involvement effectiveness is influenced by differing communication preferences between teachers and parents, which can limit engagement. While digital media offers opportunities for connection, parents and teachers often underutilise these tools, and the selective use of MT alongside LoLT affects how learners engage with comprehension tasks (Neokleous, 2017).

### **2.7.3 Need for effective comprehension ability strategies**

Effective strategies, such as regular updates on learner progress and parent-teacher meetings that consider the MT, help parents understand school activities and support learning at home. Schools that remain disconnected from families and communities struggle to create a comprehensive learning environment, limiting learners' academic development (Warren & Hong, 2009).

## **2.8 CHAPTER SUMMARY**

This chapter explores the critical role of TPC in enhancing learners' comprehension abilities, particularly in Grade 6 classrooms. It outlines how TPC positively affects learners' sense of belonging, motivation, responsibility, self-confidence, and behaviour. The chapter presents a contextual framework that analyses the interplay of teacher-parent involvement and effective communication, emphasising the need for collaboration in supporting learners' academic progress. It examines current trends, challenges, and the significance of fostering strong partnerships between teachers and parents to create a holistic educational environment. The chapter also discusses the influence of socioeconomic factors on parental engagement and highlights the importance of various communication tools and strategies in improving comprehension. Ultimately, it highlights the importance of ongoing, effective dialogue between teachers and parents to enhance learners' understanding.

The next chapter will focus on the theoretical and conceptual frameworks that underpin this study on teacher-parent involvement and its impact on the comprehension ability of Grade 6 learners. These frameworks provide the lens through which the study interprets the dynamics of collaboration, communication, and support between school and home. By outlining the key theories and concepts that underpin this research, the chapter will establish a solid foundation for understanding how parental engagement and teacher interaction influence learners' comprehension and overall academic development.

## CHAPTER 3: TEACHER-PARENT INVOLVEMENT: THEORETICAL AND CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORKS

### 3.1 INTRODUCTION



As mentioned in Chapter 1, sub-heading 1.3, for a study focused on the involvement and communication between teachers and parents and its impact on comprehension ability in Grade 6, it is pertinent to employ a theoretical framework and incorporate concepts from both educational and social theories and literature. Objectives, as mentioned in chapter 1, sub-heading 1.6.2, are to:

- Explore how teachers and parents describe their involvement in home environments and how they believe these interactions affect learners' comprehension.
- Identify effective communication practices that highlight successful or unsuccessful strategies for teacher-parent involvement.
- Evaluate how participants narrate the effectiveness of resources in teacher-parent involvement and their impact on learners' comprehension.

This chapter positions teacher–parent involvement within both theoretical and conceptual lenses to provide a rigorous foundation for understanding how collaborative engagement shapes learners' comprehension. By integrating Bronfenbrenner's Ecological Systems Theory (EST) with Epstein's model of parental involvement, the chapter demonstrates how multiple layers of the learner's environment interact to influence academic development. The frameworks guide the analysis of participant experiences, interpretation of data, and identification of strategies that strengthen curriculum-as-practice partnerships. Ultimately, this chapter establishes the conceptual and analytical tools that underpin the study, linking theory directly to practice and providing a coherent rationale for examining teacher–parent collaboration as a determinant of comprehension outcomes.

## **3.2 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK**

A theoretical framework provides an organised set of concepts to explain relationships among phenomena, offering a lens through which research is conducted (Salawu, Shamsuddin & Bolatitio, 2023). In this study, Bronfenbrenner's Ecological Systems Theory (EST) was adopted to examine the complex interactions between teachers, parents, and learners, and how this shape comprehension development. EST is particularly suited to this research because it accounts for the multi-layered environmental influences that affect learning, including home, school, and community contexts.

The microsystem considers the learner's immediate environment, such as interactions with teachers and parents, which directly impact comprehension. The mesosystem examines the connections between these settings, highlighting how teacher–parent collaboration mediates curriculum implementation and supports learning. The exosystem encompasses broader environmental factors—such as parental work schedules or limited school resources—that indirectly influence learner engagement and academic performance (Neal & Neal, 2013; Pulak, Szczotka & Szewczuk, 2016; Hermans, Klerkx & Roep, 2015). By applying EST, this study is able to frame teacher–parent involvement as an ecological, relational process, informing participant selection, guiding data interpretation, and providing a coherent lens for understanding how environmental interactions support or hinder Grade 6 learners' comprehension.

### **3.2.1 Immediate environment – home environment**

The first level refers to the immediate connections and environments with which a child interacts daily, especially the learner's home environment. This includes relationships with parents, siblings, classmates and teachers. How learners interact with these individuals and settings influences their growth and development. For instance, parents who support their children's learning and engage in educational activities can enhance their cognitive and linguistic abilities (Guy-Evans, 2023) – Chapter 1, sub-heading 1.3.

### **3.2.2 Connected setting - communication**

Secondly, the relationships between home and school environments. Effective involvement and communication between teachers and parents can strengthen these connections, thereby positively influencing learner performance on comprehension.

Studies highlight the positive impact of teachers initiating communication with parents, leading to active support for teachers (Ronfeldt, Farmer, McQueen & Grissom, 2015).

### **3.2.3 External influences – resources**

Mapp, Karen and Kuttner (2003) encourage the involvement of teachers and parents in the success of their learners (Chapter 1, sub-heading 1.1).

External environments that indirectly influence the child, for example, parents' work schedules, can impact their ability to engage in their children's education, therefore, addressing these realities, as specified in Chapter 1, sub-heading 1.2, such as resource constraints, poor infrastructure, and limited parental involvement in academic activities is crucial, especially in rural areas (Hannaway, et al., 2019).

In South Africa (Chapter 1, sub-heading 1.2), inadequate teacher training and economic inequalities reduce learner engagement and may influence how learners read and comprehend what they read (Abongdia, Foncha & Dakada, 2015; Hamunyela, 2008).

### **3.2.4 Ecological Systems Theory and the purpose of this study**

Citing Elliott and Davis (2020), the “Ecological Systems Theory” is sometimes referred to as the “Ecological framework for human development”. It is relevant for understanding the contexts in which teacher-parent involvement occurs and how these interactions affect cognitive ability, because, as documented by El Zaatari and Maalouf (2022), a sense of school belonging refers to how much learners feel personally accepted and respected, including being supported by their peers and teachers within the school community.

Bronfenbrenner’s theory examines how individuals develop within interconnected environments, from immediate interactions with family and teachers to broader influences. Epstein’s model categorises parental involvement into various roles where teachers and parents can discuss concerns and work together (at school and home) to find solutions vital for effective partnership (Sibanda, 2021) pointed out in Chapter 1, sub-heading 1.2.

This framework provides essential insights into the dynamics of teacher-parent involvement and its impact on comprehension ability outcomes.

Darling (2007) emphasises that EST recognises the positive role of individuals in their development and fosters a comprehensive understanding of human experiences. This framework provides a holistic perspective that aligns with the intention to examine the diverse connections between teacher-parent involvement and comprehension ability performance. The research highlights the crucial role of collaboration between teachers and parents in shaping learner performance (Decker & Majerczyk, 2000), as discussed in Chapter 1, subheading 1.2.

Based on Salac and Florida (2022), learners perform better academically when their parents actively engage in their education, focusing on their academic progress and behaviour at home and school, social life, parent-school relationships, parent-child MT communication, and financial support. Parents in Zambia also revealed (Chileshe & Kubombela, 2012) that parents are responsible for advising their children on discipline – Chapter 2, sub-heading 2.5.1. Building on Chapter 1, sub-heading 1.2, studies have highlighted the positive impact of teachers initiating communication with parents, leading to active support for learning (Ronfeldt et al., 2015). Considering both the MT and FAL, effective communication is essential for creating successful school learning environments (Majozi, 2014). However, challenges like teachers' unwillingness and poor communication channels still pose obstacles (Conus & Fahrni, 2019), such as challenges (mentioned in Chapter 1, sub-heading 1.2) where teacher reluctance and inadequate communication channels remain barriers. Ozmen, Akuzum, Zincirli and Selcuk (2016) argue that schools should adopt an open-door policy for parents – Chapter 2, sub-heading 2.4.3.

Furthermore, to improve comprehension ability, teachers' and parents' motivation, as well as positive reinforcement in learning activities, are necessary. Regrettably, Loudová, Havigerová and Haviger (2015) find that as children grow older, their parents tend to rate their education lower (Chapter 1, sub-heading 1.4.2.2). Parents should continue to provide support and create supportive home environments for their children's learning. However, Wilder (2014) maintains that the impact of parental involvement on academic outcomes is weakest when limited to homework assistance alone (Chapter 2, sub-heading 2.6.2).

### **3.2.5 Theoretical framework: Bronfenbrenner's Ecological Systems Theory**

For this study, the impact of teacher-parent involvement and communication partnership on learners' comprehension ability performance is crucial.

Bronfenbrenner's EST provides a powerful framework. I chose the EST theory because it offers a comprehensive framework for exploring the multifaceted interactions, with an emphasis on holistic education, where there is a growing push for parents to assume a more active role in involvement and communication with teachers. To promote the comprehensive performance of learners (Levinthal, Kuuisto, & Tirri, 2021) (Chapter 2, sub-heading 2.6.3), within the educational context of learners, Aderbigbe (2012) highlights various indirect factors, such as parents' income, number of children in the family, gender, and parents' expectations, which influence parental involvement and present additional disconnection in the educational landscape (Chapter 2, sub-heading 2.6.1). Sadly, as alluded to by Alharthi (2023) in Chapter 2, sub-heading 2.2.3, in Saudi Arabia, it was revealed that parents prefer to maintain their traditional roles as parents rather than take on the role of teachers as well. McLinden (2016) argued that exploring the different elements that impact involvement in an educational setting guarantees equal opportunities for every learner.

Bronfenbrenner's theory also understands the environments that affect learners. It evaluates how these interactions occur within different layers of the ecological system, which helps understand the complex dynamics that influence learner comprehension performance. Outstanding teaching at the primary school level stems from a genuine understanding of young adolescents' cognitive, physical, emotional, social, and moral needs (Ochanji, Chen, Daniels, Deringer, McDaniel, Stowell & Cambra-Adamson, 2016).

Korkmaz (2007) highlights the importance of parents (Chapter 2, sub-heading 2.6.3) demonstrating love, respect, and care towards their children, assuming responsibility for their education and essential needs, maintaining effective communication with teachers, and avoiding excessive pressure. Effective communication is crucial in promoting successful learning environments within schools (Majozi, 2014) - Chapter 1, sub-heading 1.2. Not only do parents need to comprehend their child, but Boit (2020) emphasises the necessity of equipping future teachers with the essential skills to thrive when working with schools, the community, and particularly when engaging

with parents, so that academic performance in comprehension ability can reach its ultimate peak mentioned in Chapter 2, sub-heading 2.2.1.

This framework provides a theoretical foundation explaining teacher-parent involvement and communication dynamics. According to Kuusimäki, Uusitalo-Malmivaara, and Tirr (2019), contemporary communication primarily occurs electronically (Chapter 2, Sub-heading 2.6.3). Furthermore, Purnama and Asdlori (2023) have found that social media has changed the way learners interact nowadays (Chapter 2, subheading 2.6). Al Rashdi (2015) demonstrates that emojis express emotions and also serve as a means of communication, helping to convey what teachers and parents are trying to express visually (Chapter 2, subheading 2.2.3).

### **3.2.6 Evaluation of the relevance of the Ecological Systems Theory**

This framework strengthens teacher-parent involvement and enhances learners' comprehension ability performance.

The EST theoretical framework enables researchers to develop effective plans that consider the environment. How teacher-parent involvement and communication see the learner in his/her holistic manner makes the study more useful for improving comprehension education for learners.

Unfortunately, using code-switching to address language barriers and improve communication ultimately results in poor academic performance (Letzel, Pozas & Schneider, 2020), as noted in Chapter 2, subheading 2.2.3.

This study aims to explore the dynamics of *teacher-parent involvement* and *communication*, specifically their impact on learners' comprehension abilities in Grade 6. By employing Bronfenbrenner's EST as a foundational theoretical framework, the research emphasises the significance of interactions within the home and school environments and how these interactions influence educational performance regarding comprehension ability.

### **3.2.7 Key aspects of teacher–parent involvement in learner comprehension**

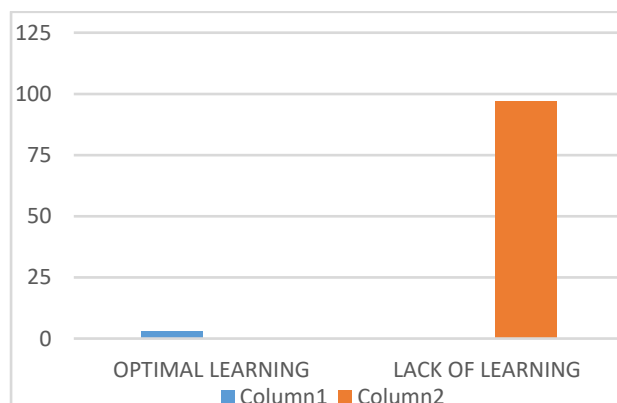
The microsystem emphasises the direct interactions among learners, teachers, and parents, who are crucial to understanding how collaborative efforts impact Grade 6 learners' comprehension abilities. At the microsystem level (immediate environments where interactions occur daily, such as home and school), the child's family plays a crucial role in shaping their educational experiences. The quality of teacher-parent involvement can significantly affect how children engage with their learning, not only at school but also in their own home environment. Research by Ali, Ullah, Shah, Ali, Khan, Shakoor, Begum and Ahmad (2020) indicates a positive link between academic performance and schools supporting parents at home in monitoring schoolwork and setting educational goals. This finding suggests that children whose parents are literate, prioritise education, and are actively engaged in academics tend to achieve higher grades, mainly when schools facilitate effective parenting practices and clear communication.

The mesosystem reflects the interconnectedness of school and home environments, emphasising how teacher-parent collaboration strengthens the support learners receive to improve their language comprehension. The mesosystem, which encompasses interactions and connections between different microsystems (e.g., teacher-parent involvement), highlights the importance of strengthening family practices to positively impact learner performance. Stanley and Kuo (2022) affirm that a strong partnership between families and schools enhances learners' academic development. Effective communication extends beyond direct interactions. Graham-Clay (2024) underscores that effective communication is essential for fostering this partnership. Regular interactions—through newsletters, emails, texts, and meetings—create a continuous dialogue between home and school, ensuring that parents are informed about their children's progress in comprehensive activities. This clear communication helps build a supportive environment. Establishing transparent communication channels about school programs and children's academic progress is vital. Emphasising interactive communication methods, such as phone calls and personal meetings, can significantly enhance parental involvement. This is particularly important for parents who may feel more comfortable discussing their children's learning while engaging. By fostering this dual-language communication, schools can ultimately benefit learners' comprehension abilities, bridging the gap between home

and school environments. Therefore, effective is crucial in promoting successful learning environments within schools (Majozi, 2014), as mentioned in Chapter 1, sub-heading 1.2.

The exosystem encompasses external factors—such as tools and aids that indirectly shape the degree of teacher-parent involvement and its impact on learners’ comprehension skills. The study acknowledges the exosystem (external environments that indirectly influence development, e.g., access to resources). As mentioned in chapter 2, sub-heading 2.2.1, a practical tool for teachers and parents to use includes two types of resources: communication tools and reading aids. The availability of these resources makes it easy for teachers and parents to enhance learners' comprehension abilities. For teachers, the tools facilitate clear and effective communication with parents, which is a clear benefit for learners’ comprehension. For parents, these tools support reading and literacy development at home (Hopkins & Kerry, 2021). The ideal situation for optimal learning is only accessible to 3% of the South African population (leaving 97% without the necessary resources); financial constraints, lack of resources, and overcrowded classrooms hinder academic progress, particularly in South Africa (Ozmen, Akuzum, Zincirli & Selcuk 2016; Verner, Kandjeo-Marenga, Abah & Mashebe, 2022.) (Chapter 2, sub-heading 2.4.2).

Figure 3.1 illustrates the key factors that hinder academic progress for 97% of learners in South Africa. Significant challenges include financial constraints, limited educational resources, and overcrowded classrooms, all of which contribute to the gap in access to quality education.

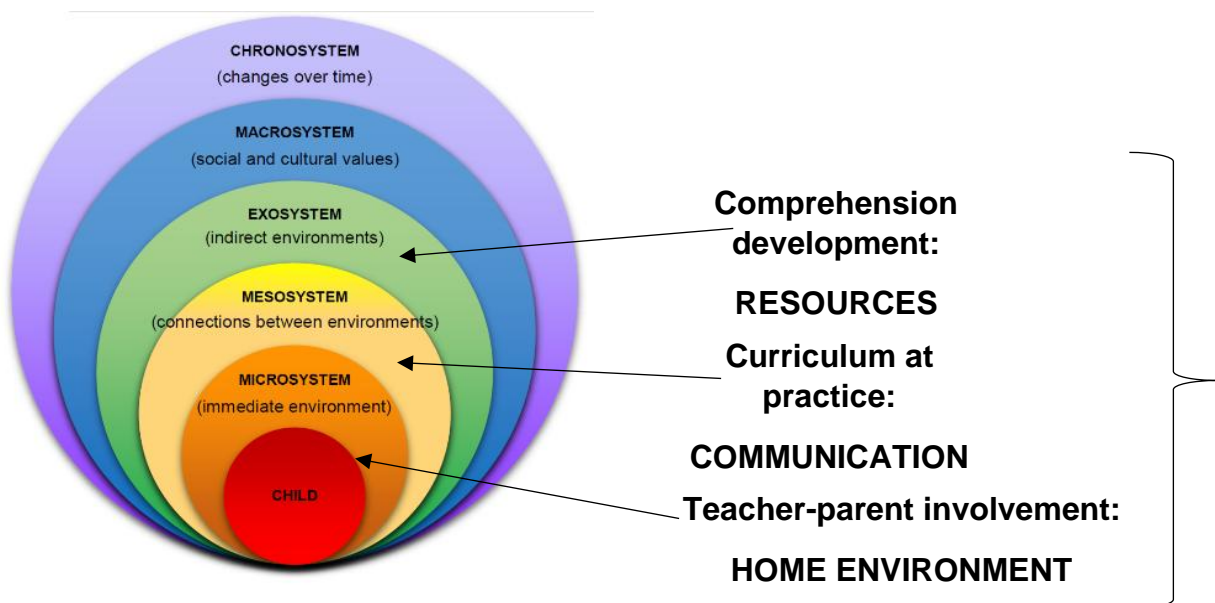


**Figure 3.1: Optimal vs poor learning environments in South Africa (Ozmen, Akuzum, Zincirli & Selcuk 2016; Verner, Kandjeo-Marenga, Abah & Mashebe, 2022)**

Figure 3.1 highlights the key factors hindering academic progress for 97% of learners in South Africa, including financial constraints, limited educational resources, and overcrowded classrooms. These challenges create significant barriers to quality education, leaving only 3% of learners with access to optimal learning conditions. By understanding these larger contexts, teachers and parents can create an inclusive and supportive environment that meets the needs of all learners, particularly in terms of comprehension ability.

This research will explore the relationships between teacher-parent involvement, communication, resources and learners' comprehension abilities, framed within the context of Bronfenbrenner's EST. By addressing the interactions within the microsystem, mesosystem and exosystem the study aims to highlight the critical role of involvement and communication in enhancing comprehension ability outcomes for Grade 6 learners.

Figure 3.2 illustrates how home-school partnerships enhance learners' comprehension ability through teacher-parent involvement, effective communication, and access to resources. This theory provides a reliable foundation for exploring strategies that promote active parental involvement and establish effective communication channels between teachers and parents to optimise learners' comprehension ability in Grade 6.



**Figure 3.2: Ecological systems theory layers and family involvement (Shelton, 2018).**

Figure 3.2 illustrates how home-school partnerships enhance learners' comprehension ability through teacher-parent involvement, effective communication, and shared resources. It highlights strategies for promoting active parental participation and establishing strong communication channels, thereby optimising the performance of Grade 6 learners.

### **3.2.8 Applying Bronfenbrenner's EST to teacher-parent involvement**

A key principle or theoretical foundation for this research is Bronfenbrenner's EST, with its focus on how learners develop within interconnected systems (microsystem, mesosystem and exosystem), which provides a strong conceptual framework for understanding the dynamics of teacher-parent involvement and its impact on learners' comprehension ability. In this context, the research could investigate how various interactions within these systems, especially between teachers and parents, influence a learner's academic development, particularly in comprehension skills. This systems-based approach enables a holistic view of the factors affecting learner outcomes, particularly in terms of comprehension ability.

### **3.2.9 Ecological systems and teacher-parent involvement**

Kim and Kim (2017) describe theoretical insights as the various ideas and perspectives that shape how researchers understand and relate to a specific field of study. In education, theoretical insights serve as foundational frameworks that guide our understanding of the complex dynamics within educational settings (Murphy & Costa, 2015). By applying these insights, this research examines how teacher-parent involvement influences the comprehension ability of Grade 6 learners and evaluates the impact of this involvement on reading comprehension skills and overall academic performance.

The insight derived from these ideas is that learners cannot develop comprehension skills in isolation but within a complex web of interactions across multiple systems. Teacher-parent involvement in both the microsystem and mesosystem is critical to enhancing learner outcomes. Through strong, ongoing communication between home and school, these key participants can create supportive learning environments. Bronfenbrenner's EST provides a broader lens for understanding where learning occurs, emphasising that a child's development is shaped by the network of relationships within their environment (Ryan, 2001). When teachers and parents are

supportive, learners are more likely to receive the care and encouragement needed to succeed academically. Furthermore, focusing on the well-being of parents and teachers fosters more stable and positive learning environments, which improve learners' academic success (Twum-Antwi, Jefferies & Ungar, 2020). Studies have shown that poor parental motivation and a lack of time among teachers and parents negatively impact academic performance (Letzel et al., 2020).

Bronfenbrenner's EST is particularly relevant to this study due to its layered framework that explores how different environmental contexts affect learners' development as shown at Figure 3.2 in detail.

According to Bronfenbrenner's bio-ecological theory (Iruka, DeKraai, Walther, Sheridan & Abdel-Monem, 2020), children's development is influenced by multiple systems, including family poverty within the microsystem, the quality of home-school communication in the mesosystem, and resource availability in the exosystem. Their study in rural communities highlights challenges such as varying levels of poverty and limited educational access, reinforcing the importance of addressing multiple environmental layers to achieve positive outcomes in comprehension ability.

The selection of Bronfenbrenner's EST for this research is due to its holistic approach in examining how different environmental contexts interact to shape learning outcomes. This aligns with the growing emphasis on parental involvement and communication in education. Effective communication methods, such as electronic platforms, can strengthen teacher-parent collaboration and positively impact learner achievement (Graham-Clay, 2024). By considering the combined influence of home, school, and external factors, this study aims to design strategies that strengthen teacher-parent partnerships and support learners' comprehension development.

### **3.2.10 Discussion and conclusion of the theoretical framework**

Using Bronfenbrenner's EST as a guiding framework, the findings will reveal detailed interactions between ecological factors and parental roles in influencing learner outcomes and how family dynamics, school-home involvement and communication contribute to the educational performance of Grade 6 learners in the classroom. Rosales (2023) confirms that learners showed clear signs of independent learning (comprehending their learning) and a positive attitude towards their eagerness to learn. However, factors such as family issues, school problems, and a lack of

resources can hinder performance. Overall, home-school involvement is valuable for encouraging independent learning by supporting the learner's progress regarding comprehension ability.

By contextualising the findings within EST, the spotlight is on the significance of parental involvement and effective communication strategies in enhancing comprehension ability performances for Grade 6 learners.

In this study, valuable perspectives for shaping educational practices aimed at promoting balance and learner performance across diverse educational contexts will be explored, and the findings will show whether Bronfenbrenner's EST predicted matches the actual data. These findings contribute to broader discussions in education by emphasising the role of ecological frameworks and parental engagement in fostering holistic learning environments, as McDonald (2021) states, holistic learning environments refer to a sense of completeness and balance.

### **3.2.11 Enhancing teacher–parent collaboration for learner comprehension**

The emphasis on assisting families with parenting skills and creating supportive home conditions (microsystem) – see Figure 3.5 (chapter 3) aligns with the theory's assertion that immediate environments significantly affect child development. Parents should continue to provide support and create supportive home environments for their children's learning. According to Lynch (2021), it is well established that home-school engagement can contribute to children's literacy development.

The focus on effective communication between school and home reinforces the theory's proposition that indirect environments also play a crucial role in child development. Effective communication channels is crucial in promoting successful learning environments within schools (Majozi, 2014), as mentioned in Chapter 1, sub-heading 1.2. This ensures continuous, clear, and supportive interactions between schools and families, which are vital for creating successful learning environments in schools. However, challenges such as teacher reluctance and inadequate communication channels still pose barriers (Conus & Fahrni, 2019) (Chapter 1, subheading 1.2).

Lastly, Darling (2007) emphasises that EST recognises the active role of the developing person and advocates for a holistic understanding of human experience, as discussed in Chapter 1, subheading 1.3.

The practical implications of these findings are profound for improving educational practices. Schools and teachers should prioritise building strong partnerships with families, emphasising the importance of parenting skills and creating supportive home learning environments, as well as maintaining clear communication between school and home and providing necessary resources. Woefully, in Cyprus, (Chapter 2, subheading 2.2.1), there is a gap between the desire for more meaningful parental involvement in education and the actual low level of engagement (Hagage Baikovich & Yemini, 2023). Carr, Hartnett, Brosnan and Sharry (2017) are solution-focused, arguing that parents should equip themselves to effectively support their children's academic efforts. In conclusion, this study underscores the significance of a comprehensive approach to child development and education, taking into account the intricate interplay of various environmental factors. By aligning educational practices with these insights, we can create more supportive and effective learning environments for all learners.

### **3.2.12 Understanding the educational dynamics**

Choosing EST as the framework for studying teacher-parent involvement and communication, with the necessary resources to enhance comprehension ability, offers several compelling reasons as follows. EST is a strong theoretical framework for this research because it provides a broad view of how different environmental factors, such as the home and school, influence learners' development and comprehension ability. Learners move through complex educational systems, where interactions shape their school experiences and performance (Kitchen, Hallett, Perez & Rivera, 2019). By focusing on multiple levels of interaction—such as the relationships between teachers, parents, learners, and their surroundings—EST helps explore how these involvements affect learners' comprehensive education. Its flexibility allows application in various educational settings, making it ideal for studying teacher-parent involvement.

Supported by numerous studies, EST provides a reliable framework for understanding how these interactions impact learners' growth and learning outcomes over time. In

educational research, EST helps study how home and school support affect learners' academic performance. However, research has shown that various stakeholder groups have different interpretations of "parental engagement" (Goodall & Montgomery, 2023). Each framework offers a distinct perspective on the studied problem and is essential in all types of educational research (Luft, Jeong, Idsardi, & Gardner, 2022).

In conclusion, Bronfenbrenner's EST offers a valuable lens for understanding educational research. EST guides us on how family dynamics and school support systems affect learners' academic performance and comprehension ability. By emphasising the interconnectedness of these environmental factors, EST encourages a holistic approach to learning and improving educational teaching, aiming to create supportive environments that enhance learning and development for all learners.

### **3.3 CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK**

The relationship between contextual, theoretical, and conceptual frameworks is that the conceptual framework provides the foundational structure for understanding the key variables and relationships that drive the research, specifically: *teacher-parent involvement as a curriculum-as-practice partnership and its influence on grade 6 learners' comprehension development*. As Antonenko (2015) describes, the conceptual framework is vital to any well-organised research study.

This framework aligns closely with the contextual framework, which explores the specific educational environment, including socio-economic challenges, cultural differences, and language barriers that may affect the dynamics between home and school (as discussed in Chapter 2). The contextual framework examines the specific educational setting, including socio-economic challenges, cultural differences, and language barriers that affect home-school interactions. Findings show that key factors contributing to underachievement can be grouped into a lack of a supportive and positive environment (Banerjee, 2016).

By using Bronfenbrenner's EST, this study can integrate both the conceptual and contextual frameworks by looking at how teacher-parent interactions (microsystem), communication between the home and school (mesosystem), and access to resources (exosystem) collectively shape learners' academic outcomes. These frameworks together inform how data is generated, analysed, and interpreted by

considering the interconnectedness of these systems and their specific influence on learner comprehension.

### **3.4. LITERATURE REVIEW OF INTERRELATED CONCEPTS**

Teacher-parent involvement is critical in enhancing learners' comprehension abilities, particularly in a Grade 6 context. Effective communication between teachers and parents is fundamental in fostering learners' reading comprehension skills. This section explores the literature review regarding the interconnectedness of teacher-parent involvement (the impact of parent-teacher involvement on household involvement), communication methods and comprehension ability (how parent-teacher collaboration supports scholastic growth and comprehension ability) through a triadic dialectic framework, antithesis and synthesis.

#### **3.4.1 The impact of parent-teacher involvement on household involvement**

The collaboration between parents and teachers is essential in fostering a conducive learning environment at home, ultimately enhancing learners' reading comprehension skills. However, the effectiveness of this partnership varies across contexts due to cultural, socio-economic, and systemic factors. According to Margerum and Robinson (2015), such collaboration requires effort, time, and mutual respect. Teachers contribute their expertise, resources, and guidance within the school setting, while parents provide a supportive learning environment at home, reinforcing the knowledge and skills learned at school.

##### **3.4.1.1 International perspectives of parent-teacher involvement**

Global research highlights the importance of strong teacher-parent collaboration in reinforcing household learning. For instance, early childhood teachers in Finland emphasise that parental involvement is crucial for comprehensive learning (Hakyemez-Paul et al., 2020). Similarly, Martin (2016) asserts that collaboration between parents and teachers in Norway enhances learners' academic performance, particularly in reading comprehension. Studies in the UAE (Hourani, Stringer & Baker, 2012) recognise parents as critical partners in school improvement plans, further solidifying their role in education.

Despite its acknowledged importance, parent-teacher involvement faces multiple challenges. In Korea, teachers face challenges including parental distrust, unexpected difficulties, and unreasonable demands, which make collaboration difficult (Bang, Jang

& Jung, 2021). In China, an increasing trend of parents questioning teachers' authority has led to conflicts (Guo, Wu & Liu, 2019). In Qatar, frequent curriculum changes and the pervasive influence of digital media have altered parent-teacher dynamics, sometimes straining relationships (Al-Hail, Al-Fagih & Koç, 2021). Furthermore, research in Switzerland (Sari & Ilyas, 2021) reveals that many parents rely solely on schools due to work commitments, creating tension between schools and families.

A comprehensive approach is needed to reduce these challenges and enhance the effectiveness of parent-teacher involvement. While Boit (2020) suggests equipping teachers with the skills to engage parents effectively, Willemse et al. (2018) indicate that parents do not always participate even when encouraged. Thus, structured communication strategies, professional development for teachers, and flexible parental involvement programs can improve household engagement in supporting learners' reading comprehension.

#### 3.4.1.2 National perspectives of parent-teacher involvement

In South Africa, parent-teacher involvement is considered essential for improving learners' comprehension ability. Pretorius and Mampuru (2007) confirm that learners with strong mother tongue literacy foundations transition more successfully to reading comprehension. Adesokan (2019) highlights the role of single mothers in supporting their children's academic performance, linking parental engagement to learners' success.

Despite its significance, parental involvement remains limited in rural and low-income areas of South Africa. Myende and Nhlumayo (2022) note that engaging parents in rural schools is particularly difficult. Similarly, Nieuwoudt (2022) identifies challenges such as time constraints, curriculum pressures, and situational factors (e.g., MT vs. FAL instruction) that hinder effective collaboration. Chileshe and Kubombela (2012) also report that many parents prioritise household chores over education, reducing their involvement in their children's learning.

Addressing these barriers requires tailored strategies to accommodate the diverse needs of parents. Providing flexible parent-teacher meeting schedules (Islam, 2019), leveraging digital communication tools (Makoe, 2020), and implementing community-based literacy programs can foster greater household involvement. Schools in quintile 1 in South Africa, regarded as the poorest of the poor, require targeted interventions

to facilitate meaningful collaboration between parents and teachers (Myende & Nhlumayo, 2022). Halimah and Margaretha (2020) emphasise the importance of structured opportunities that enable teachers and parents to establish strong partnerships, thereby ensuring sustained parental involvement in comprehension support.

The literature reviewed highlights the importance of parent-teacher collaboration in promoting family engagement and enhancing learners' reading comprehension. While international and national studies highlight both the benefits and challenges of parental engagement, the synthesis suggests that a structured, flexible, and inclusive approach is necessary to optimise parent-teacher partnerships. Schools can enhance household involvement by addressing cultural, economic, and logistical barriers, ultimately improving learners' comprehension abilities.

### **3.4.2 Teacher–parent communication and learners' comprehension**

In examining the impact of teacher-parent communication on learners' comprehension ability in Grade 6, allowance for a comprehensive discussion on the communication methods that teachers and parents find most effective in supporting learners' comprehension is crucial. Cazden (2017) highlights the importance of integrating learners' language skills with overall comprehension. Tackie-Ofosu et al. (2015) emphasise that MT education strengthens learners' cultural and familial ties, fostering better comprehension in the early stages of education. In many African contexts, however, implementing MT education poses challenges due to limited resources and a lack of research. Research by Thompson and Harrison (2014) identifies code-switching as a helpful strategy, enabling learners to bridge the gap between their MT and FAL. Similarly, Neokleous (2017) suggests that the selective use of MT in FAL instruction can support better comprehension without hindering proficiency in the additional language.

#### **3.4.2.1 International perspective of teacher-parent communication**

According to international research, communication between parents and teachers has profound implications for learners' comprehension, particularly when learners are navigating the complexities of learning a second language. Bang (2018) emphasises that effective communication is critical in reducing misunderstandings and fostering strong partnerships. For example, Korean teachers and parents often hold differing

perspectives on involvement, but these differences can be lowered by providing opportunities for open dialogue (Bang, 2018). Similarly, Guo, Wu and Liu (2019) demonstrate that digital communication platforms, such as WeChat in China, facilitate more efficient and convenient interactions between parents and teachers, thereby enhancing support for learners' academic progress.

However, there are some challenges with technology-based communication. Kraft and Bolves (2022) observe that, despite the widespread use of mobile communication applications, especially in the US, usage remains relatively low and declines when schools no longer provide consistent support. This decline may lead to reduced parental involvement, ultimately affecting learner comprehension. Moreover, Yaqobi's (2022) findings suggest that despite the effectiveness of communicative language teaching (CLT) can reduce learners' ability to fully comprehend the content, presenting an obstacle to academic achievement.

The synthesis reveals that while technological advancements offer significant advantages in communication, such tools alone are insufficient to bridge the gap between parents and teachers. A more holistic approach that combines traditional and modern communication methods, emphasising consistent and effective teacher-parent dialogue, is crucial. This aligns with the views of Moghazy (2020), who advocates for the active engagement of parents and teachers in supporting learners, especially in multilingual contexts where language barriers may hinder comprehension.

#### 3.4.2.2 National perspective of teacher-parent communication

On a national level, the situation in South Africa presents unique challenges related to language proficiency. Wilke (2022) highlights that many learners are educated in a second or third language, which prevents their comprehension abilities. Effective teacher-parent communication is crucial in overcoming this barrier, and McWayne et al. (2004) argue that parental involvement is directly correlated with improved learner engagement and academic performance. Furthermore, Muroa and Harrison (2020) reveal that effective communication fosters an environment where parents are actively involved in the academic process, contributing to improved learner outcomes.

Despite the potential benefits of strong teacher-parent relationships, significant obstacles exist. Ozmen et al. (2016) identify barriers such as financial constraints and

a lack of resources, which limit the extent to which parents can engage in their children's education. This is compounded by the fact that many teachers and parents are unsure how to communicate effectively, especially when dealing with learners' MT and LoLT. This confusion and hesitancy, as noted by Bordialba and Bochaca (2019), can inhibit the potential for productive communication.

These findings highlight the importance of overcoming these barriers through training for both teachers and parents, enabling them to engage in more meaningful communication. As suggested by Graham-Clay (2024), creating structured systems for providing regular updates on learner progress and utilising both digital and face-to-face communication platforms can help reduce these challenges. Additionally, as recommended by Ozmen et al. (2016), an open-door policy facilitates more active engagement and stronger teacher-parent partnerships, ultimately enhancing learners' comprehension abilities. Research reveals that parental involvement can significantly enhance learners' comprehension, especially when parents actively support reading habits and engage in meaningful discussions about academic progress (Nieuwoudt, 2022).

Research has highlighted that strong partnerships between teachers and parents can reduce misunderstandings, foster engagement, and improve academic performance. Various strategies, including face-to-face meetings, digital platforms, and structured communication policies, have proven effective in both international and South African contexts. However, the implementation of these strategies remains inconsistent.

Additionally, digital communication tools, such as WeChat in China, have facilitated more efficient teacher-parent engagement, yet their adoption in other regions remains low due to accessibility and training challenges.

Despite the potential of teacher-parent communication, several barriers persist. Financial constraints, resource limitations, and uncertainty about effective communication methods in South Africa hinder parental involvement. Moreover, while research acknowledges the benefits of communication tools, their long-term impact on learner comprehension and engagement in multilingual classrooms remains underexplored. The psychological effects of communication, including its impact on learner confidence and motivation, also warrant further investigation.

Future research should focus on sustainable strategies for communication in diverse classrooms. By addressing these gaps, teacher-parent collaboration can be optimised to support learners in achieving stronger comprehension skills.

### **3.4.3 Parent-teacher collaboration and learner growth**

It is essential to explore the resources that teachers and parents use to enhance learners' comprehension. The partnership between parents and teachers has a direct influence on learners' academic progress and comprehension ability, especially in a multilingual environment like South Africa, where English is often a second or third language (learners). Therefore, Naom and Sarah (2014) note that challenges often result in insufficient MT-based resources, hindering learners' overall academic growth. Aldridge (2015) underscores the direct relationship between parental involvement and academic success. When parents actively participate in their child's education, they create a learning atmosphere that supports the development of reading comprehension skills, both in and other subjects.

While Ahmad et al. (2024) highlight that behavioural challenges, when not addressed, can delay scholastic growth, while strong teacher-parent partnerships can overcome these barriers, Watson et al. (2021) stress the importance of teacher-led discussions and classroom activities in facilitating knowledge transfer across subjects, which ultimately supports comprehension and writing skills. Osabinyi (2023) emphasises (like Watson et al., 2021) the importance of collaboration between teachers and parents in creating a literacy-rich environment both at home and school.

#### **3.4.3.1 International perspective of parent-teacher collaboration**

The involvement of both parents and teachers in learners' academic lives is pivotal. According to Aziz, Susilowati, Masturin and Prasojo (2023), teacher-parent collaboration is essential for fostering learners' comprehension abilities. Resources like assessment tools, home reading materials, and interactive learning apps are frequently used to track progress and provide feedback. Asad et al. (2021) assert that assessment tools are crucial in monitoring learners' academic performance and comprehension. They also emphasise that effective assessment helps teachers identify learners' areas of difficulty and adjust their teaching strategies accordingly.

In Pakistan, for example, effective communication between teachers and parents is vital to support learner comprehension. Aziz et al. (2023) note that this partnership

enables parents to reinforce reading habits at home, which plays a significant role in building comprehension skills early on. Additionally, Rajabalee and Santally (2021) highlight that learners experience technical difficulties in accessing online resources or require additional tutor support that is not always available, further exacerbating comprehension challenges.

Furthermore, technology resources such as mobile apps and digital platforms are increasingly used to enhance communication between parents and teachers. Guo, Wu, and Liu (2019) highlight the role of technology in China, where platforms like WeChat facilitate real-time communication and updates on learner progress. These digital tools support the exchange of information and provide teachers and parents with resources to better understand the learner's needs.

However, barriers hinder the effectiveness of these resources. One significant barrier is the financial constraints of many parents, particularly in underprivileged areas. Ozmen et al. (2016) discuss how parents' financial limitations affect their ability to participate in school activities or provide additional resources, negatively impacting their children's academic performance.

#### 3.4.3.2 National perspective of parent-teacher collaboration

In South Africa, the challenge of limited access to teaching and learning materials further complicates matters. Verner, Kandjeo-Marenga, Abah and Mashebe (2022) highlight the scarcity of resources, such as books, technology, and learning aids, which hampers the effectiveness of teachers and learners, particularly in Grade 6 classrooms. Additionally, overcrowded classrooms and a high teacher workload negatively impact the quality of communication between parents and teachers. According to Fesi and Mncube (2021), the large class sizes in schools in East London resulted in insufficient one-on-one time between teachers and learners, thereby reducing the amount of personalised support that could be provided. This, in turn, affects how well teachers can communicate a learner's comprehension progress to parents.

Cultural and language differences also create misunderstandings in parent-teacher communication. Hornby and Blackwell (2018) argue that barriers to parental involvement, such as language differences or differing cultural expectations, can impact the collaboration between teachers and parents. In South Africa, where many

learners are taught in English but speak a different home language, parents may not fully understand the educational language or terminology used by teachers, leading to miscommunication. According to Nieuwoudt (2022), in the Western Cape, parents who actively engage in their child's reading development lay a strong foundation for comprehension skills, complementing the school's efforts. As a result, teachers can provide parents with appropriate resources to further strengthen their children's reading habits at home.

Furthermore, technology plays a role in overcoming these challenges, although access remains limited. In South Africa, platforms like WhatsApp provide an efficient means for sharing feedback and progress (Bridgette, 2020). To support learners' comprehension abilities effectively, a combination of resources and strategies must be employed, addressing both the challenges and opportunities identified above.

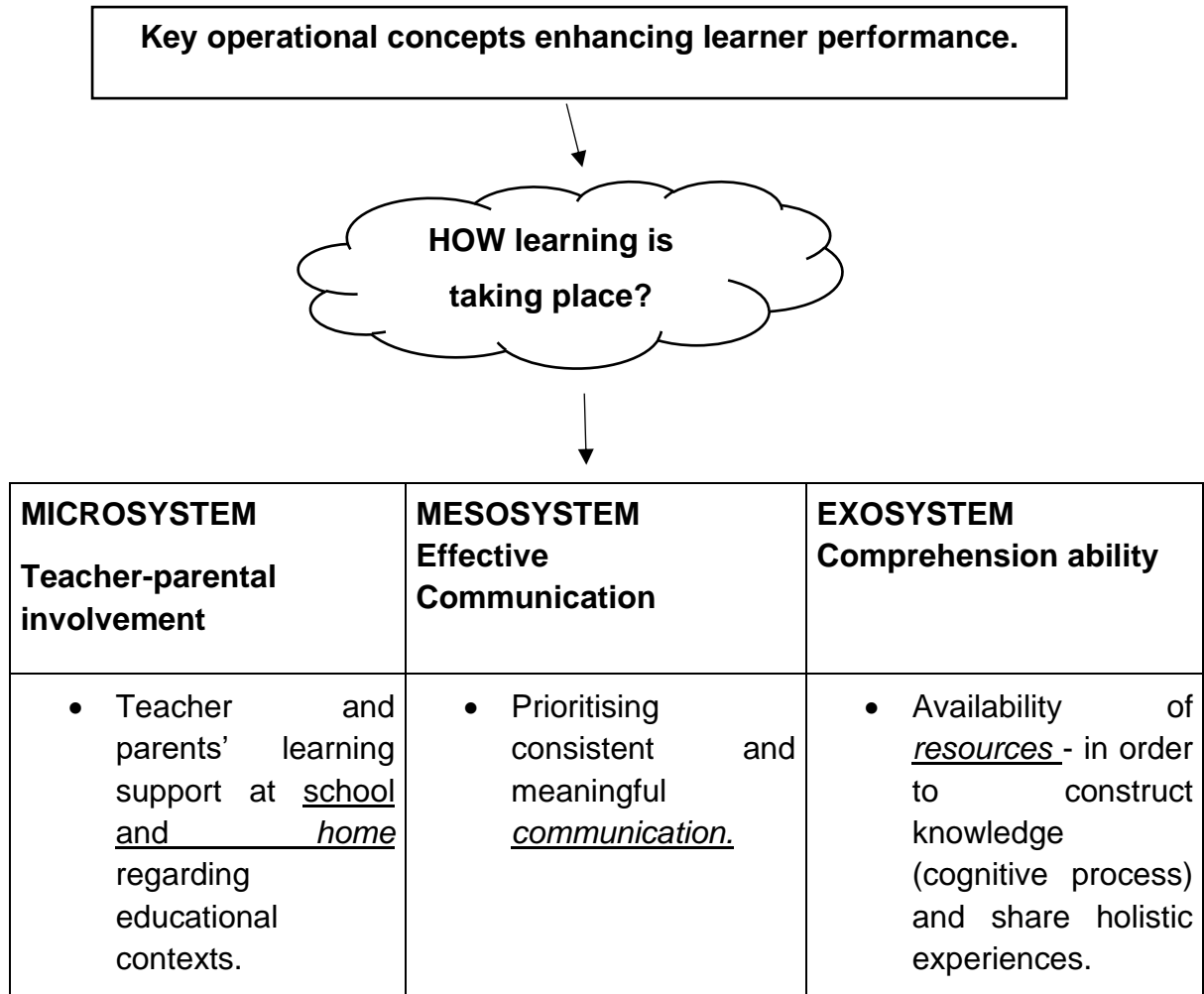
On the resource side, teachers can play a significant role in providing parents with relevant tools to support reading and comprehension development at home. For instance, home reading materials in the learner's MT can encourage comprehension development. Bridgette (2020) argues that providing materials in learners' MT can bridge the comprehension gap, especially in South Africa, where English is a second or third language for many learners.

Additionally, technology must be harnessed effectively to support teacher-parent communication and track learner progress. Interactive apps, as used in China and Pakistan, can allow parents to monitor their child's progress, provide feedback, and ensure continuous engagement in the learning process.

Lastly, professional development for teachers is crucial. They should be trained to use available resources effectively and to understand how to involve parents in meaningful ways. This may include workshops or training sessions that allow teachers to bridge the gap in parental involvement, addressing cultural and linguistic differences.

Effective parent-teacher collaboration involves utilising communication strategies, ensuring resource availability, and fostering parental engagement to support learners' comprehension abilities. Hammarström et al. (2014) emphasise the importance of defining central concepts in the context of research to ensure their proper application. This study, titled EXPLORING THE EFFECT OF TEACHER-PARENT INVOLVEMENT AS A CURRICULUM-AS-PRACTICE PARTNERSHIP AND ITS

INFLUENCE ON GADE 6 LEARNERS' COMPREHENSION DEVELOPMENT, focuses on collaboration and communication between teachers and parents, exploring their influence on enhancing learners' comprehension skills. Figure 3.3 outlines the key concepts integral to this study.



**Figure 3.3: Key concepts in teacher-parent involvement and learners' comprehension development**

The figure illustrates how learning occurs within Bronfenbrenner's Ecological Systems Theory framework, focusing on teacher-parent involvement and its impact on learners' comprehension ability. Effective communication between teachers and parents at school and home is emphasised at the microsystem level to provide learning support in educational contexts. The mesosystem highlights the interaction between the school and home environments, prioritising consistent and meaningful communication to bridge gaps in understanding. The exosystem focuses on the availability of resources that support the cognitive process of constructing knowledge and sharing

holistic experiences. The interconnectedness of these systems facilitates improved comprehension abilities for learners.

Use of Bronfenbrenner's EST highlights the different environmental influences on a learner's comprehension development. At the microsystem level, direct teacher-parent interactions are crucial in providing immediate support, where teachers offer targeted feedback, and parents reinforce learning at home. The mesosystem emphasises the connection between school and home environments, ensuring a continuous and cohesive approach to comprehension development through shared strategies and regular communication. The exosystem extends beyond the learner's immediate surroundings, incorporating access to libraries, tutoring, and language resources that further enhance comprehension ability. This layered perspective underscores the importance of a collaborative and resource-rich environment, where consistent engagement between teachers, parents, and external educational support fosters learners' language acquisition and comprehension skills in the Grade 6 classroom.

### **3.5 CHAPTER SUMMARY AND IMPLICATIONS FOR EMPIRICAL STUDY**

This chapter outlines the study investigation of the impact of teacher-parent involvement on Grade 6 learners' comprehension, utilising Bronfenbrenner's EST and Epstein's school-family-community model as the theoretical and conceptual frameworks. EST provides a comprehensive view of how different environmental layers—microsystem (home and school), mesosystem (communication between home and school), and exosystem (external factors such as resources and socio-economic conditions)—affect learner outcomes. This theory emphasises the interconnectedness of these systems in shaping learners' academic development.

The primary goal of this study is to investigate the significance of effective communication between teachers and parents in promoting learner comprehension. Parental involvement, influenced by socioeconomic status, expectations, and cultural factors, plays a significant role in academic performance. However, challenges such as financial constraints, poor infrastructure, and teacher reluctance can limit the potential of teacher-parent partnerships. Successful collaboration, which encompasses support beyond academics, fosters learners' socio-emotional growth and comprehension skills.

International and national perspectives reveal the varied role of teacher-parent involvement in supporting learners. Countries like Finland and Norway demonstrate that strong teacher-parent partnerships lead to increased learner achievement. At the same time, in South Africa, parental involvement is hindered by poverty, time constraints, and limited resources, particularly in rural and low-income areas. Digital tools like WhatsApp have helped bridge these gaps, improving communication and understanding.

Applying Bronfenbrenner's EST, the study explores how the microsystem (home-school interactions), mesosystem (effective communication in multilingual contexts), and exosystem (socio-economic factors and resource availability) influence comprehension. Resource shortages, particularly in underfunded schools in South Africa, hinder teacher-parent collaboration. However, digital tools and mobile apps have shown potential in facilitating communication and resource sharing, although access remains challenging for parents in low-income areas.

Thus, from the literature, there is a need for a holistic approach to teacher-parent collaboration, considering that environmental factors and their impact on learner comprehension are necessary. Strengthening communication, increasing resources, and addressing socio-economic and cultural barriers can enhance the academic success of Grade 6 learners. The literature in this chapter will be compared against empirical data obtained directly from study participants in Chapter 5 of this study. The next chapter addresses the research methodology pursued in this study.

# CHAPTER 4: RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODS IN AN EDUCATIONAL SETTING

## 4.1 INTRODUCTION

*R*esearch design and methods are crucial to any scientific inquiry, providing the

framework for collecting, analysing, and interpreting data. Dannels (2018) describes a research design as an essential plan that is the consistent element that brings the entire research project together. In exploring the effect of teacher-parent involvement on learners' comprehension ability in Grade 6, a well-structured research design ensures that the study is systematic, thorough, and able to answer the research questions effectively.

Qualitative methods have been used since the early days of social studies (Gerring, 2017). This study employs a qualitative method that provides more in-depth insights into the experiences and perceptions of teachers, parents, and learners, thereby enriching the data with personal narratives. Qualitative methods in language research offer deeper insights into creating, administering, and interpreting tests by exploring experiences and viewpoints that are often overlooked by quantitative methods (Rahman, 2016). As Braun, Clarke and Gray (2017) state, using a quantitative method can be referred to as a window into the worlds of social meaning for our participants. Lim (2024) emphasises the importance of trustworthiness in qualitative research, outlining methods to establish credibility, dependability, confirmability, and transferability.

The main research question is how teacher-parent involvement impacts the comprehension ability of Grade 6 learners?

To address this primary question, several sub-questions have been formulated:

- (i) How do parents describe their role in supporting learning at home to enhance learners' reading comprehension skills?
- (ii) What communication methods do teachers and parents find most effective in supporting learners' comprehension?

- (iii) What resources do teachers and parents use to support learners' comprehension?

Figure 4.1 provides an overview of the chapter that investigates the impact of teacher-parent involvement on the comprehension of Grade 6 learners.

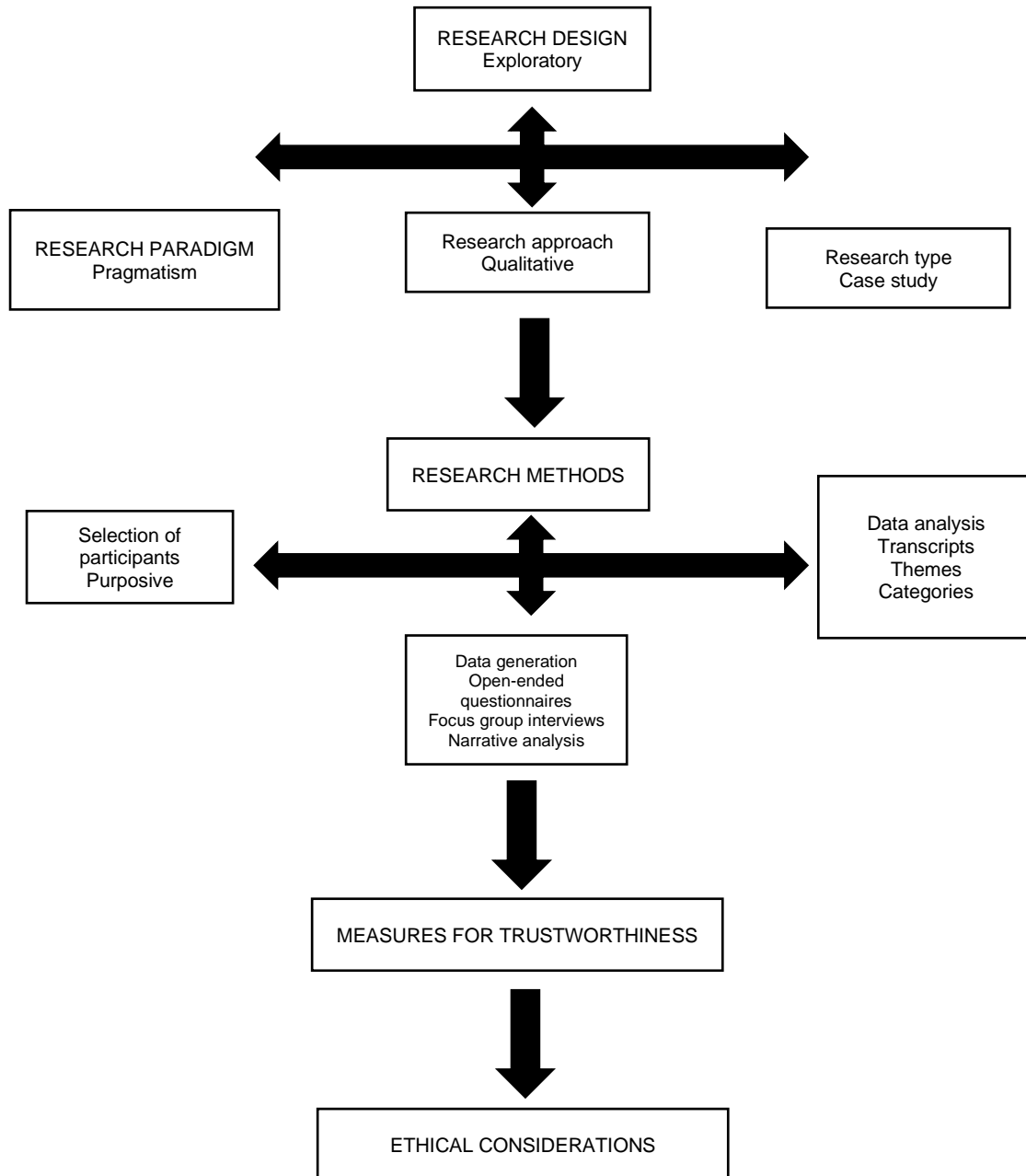


Figure 4.1: Overview of Chapter 4

## **4.2 RATIONALE FOR EMPIRICAL RESEARCH**

Empirical research forms the basis for using evidence in education, helping to find effective strategies that improve learner outcomes. Empirical studies explore research with varying levels of detail and different theoretical approaches (Rönnebeck, Bernholt & Ropohl, 2016).

The rationale for this study justified the need to collect first-hand data to explore the relationships and interactions in the research setting, ensuring that the findings are credible, relevant, and applicable. Next were several key reasons supporting the necessity of empirical research in this study, which include the following:

### **4.2.1 Evidence-based decision-making**

This study aimed to provide concrete evidence to guide teachers in creating more effective collaboration strategies by investigating the relationship between teacher-parent involvement and learner comprehension. The role of teachers and parents in boosting children's learning is greatly supported by achieving clear learning goals. Improving learner success relies on practical cooperation between teachers and parents in achieving these goals. (Abdullah, Poetri, Saputra & Al Haddar, 2023). The study generated actionable recommendations grounded in stakeholders' lived experiences by gathering data from teachers, parents, and learners.

### **4.2.2 Understanding complex interactions**

The dynamics between teachers, parents, and learners are complex and influenced by various factors, such as home environment, communication and resource availability. According to Nqoma (2024), the LoLT is considered an essential tool that drives classroom learning. When the language of teaching and learning is not the MT, it becomes a barrier to teaching and learning. This understanding is crucial for offering insights into how they affect comprehension abilities. The quality of education depends on the resources available. When resources are easily accessible, the school's education quality improves (Jonathan, Darma, Timotius, Sintalegawa & Munthe, 2023). Ultimately, this empirical research aimed to enhance learners' comprehension abilities.

### **4.2.3 Stakeholder engagement**

Empirical research involved the active participation of various stakeholders: teachers, parents, and learners. The findings of Guzman (2022) show that school performance is strong across all types of schools. However, despite high stakeholder involvement, challenges persisted.

### **4.2.4 Addressing real-world challenges**

Empirical research provides direct insights into the practical dynamics of teacher-parent involvement and its impact on Grade 6 learners' comprehension abilities. According to Mbatha's (2018) study, it adopted the principles of participatory action research as an approach and design to generate data.

### **4.2.5 Testing assumptions**

Empirical methods enable the validation or challenge of existing theories through the collection and analysis of actual data. Psychologists have studied the dynamics of small groups and teams for years. They have identified key factors that contribute to team success and effective teamwork, but challenges persist (Kozlowski & Chao, 2018).

## **4.3. RESEARCH DESIGN**

Regarding Chapter 1, sub-heading 1.7.1, a research design is a systematic plan for investigating a scientific problem (Indu & Vidhukumar, 2020). It outlines the steps and structure of the inquiry, acting as a roadmap for the study. This study employed an exploratory design. According to Mbaka and Isiramen (2021), exploratory research investigates and defines areas and problems that are vague or unclear. As mentioned in Chapter 1, sub-heading 1.7.1, the effects of teacher-parent involvement on learners' comprehension ability performance remain unclear.

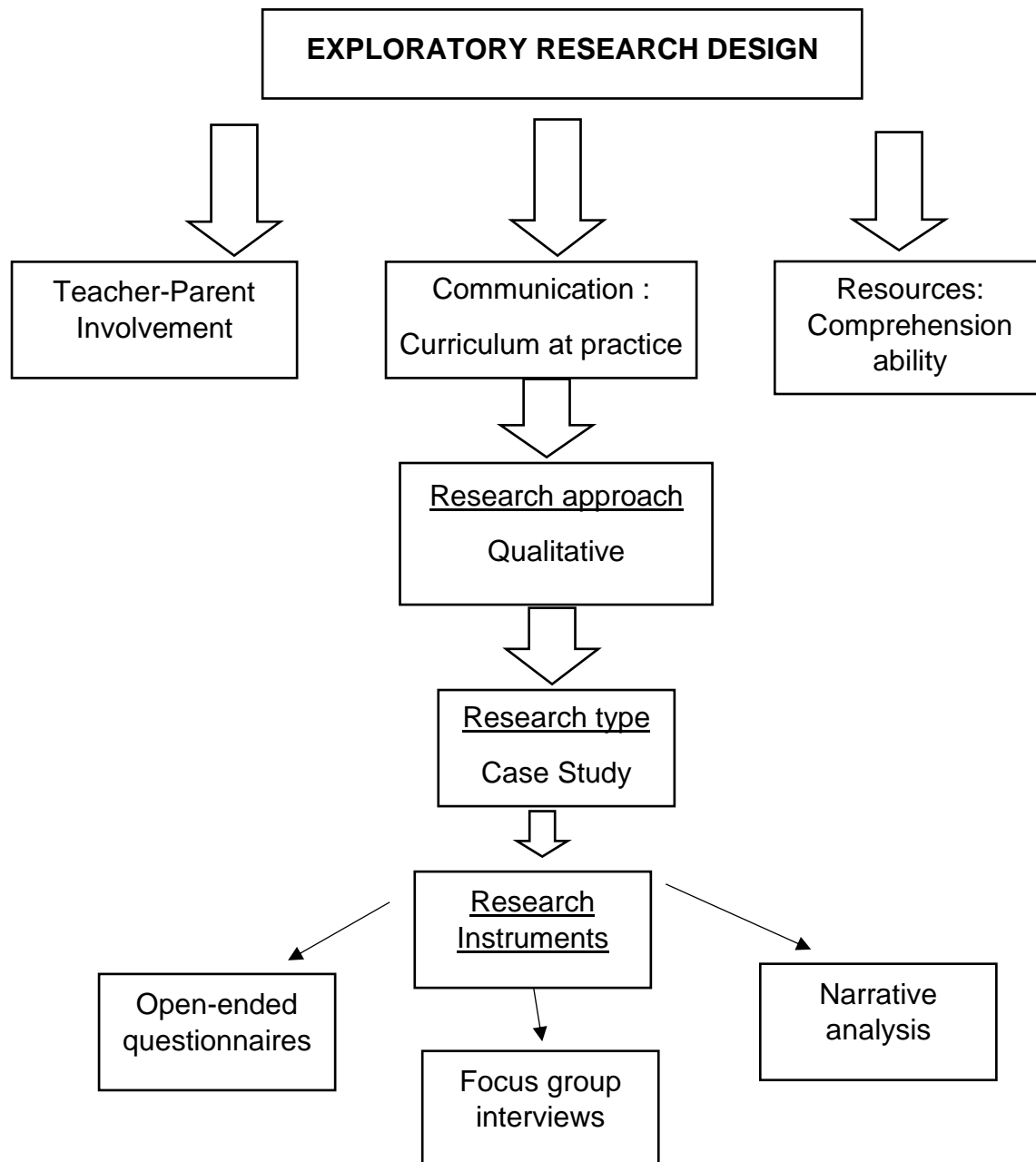
In this study, the data application included qualitative data to verify the findings. This method considers factors such as time, place, and the people involved (Noble & Heale, 2019), as outlined in Chapter 1, sub-heading 1.7.1. By analysing qualitative data (open-ended questionnaires, focus group interviews and narrative analysis), the study aimed to identify insights into the effectiveness of the involvement between teachers and parents.

An exploratory research design served as a vital framework for investigating the effects of teacher-parent involvement on learners' comprehension abilities in Grade 6. Mbaka and Isiramen (2021) mention in Chapter 1, sub-heading 1.7.1, that exploratory research explores events where little is known, and problems are not yet clearly defined.

While this study could have been designed in various other ways, the chosen research design was selected for its alignment with the study's objectives and research questions and ensures that data generation and analysis are practical, context-driven, and focused on understanding the real-world dynamics of teacher-parent involvement and its impact on Grade 6 learners' comprehension.

Research design refers to the overall strategy or plan that outlines how research questions will be answered. According to Creswell (2014), it includes decisions on how data will be collected, analysed, and interpreted while ensuring the study remains valid, reliable, and relevant to the research problem.

The schematic presentation of the research design and methods is presented in Figure 4.2.



**Figure 4.2: Research design and methods**

In the following sub-sections, I will discuss my research paradigm (Pragmatism), research approach (qualitative), and research type (case study), as well as research methods, guide this study's methodological choices and data generation. This comprehensive approach ensured that the research findings will be both practical and grounded in real-world contexts.

### **4.3.1 Research paradigm**

Pragmatism enabled the integration of various research approaches and methods, allowing the study to be flexible and context-driven, while focusing on practical improvements in teaching and learning.

In line with Dewey's principles (Chapter 3, sub-heading 3.4) of pragmatism, this paradigm highlighted the importance of addressing real-life situations through evidence-based actions. Pragmatism recognises that knowledge is shaped by experience, context, and shared understanding, making it particularly relevant to educational research. This paradigm supported the use of multiple data generation techniques and diverse sources to capture the complex interplay between teacher-parent collaboration and learner performance.

By employing a pragmatic paradigm, the study bridged the gap between theory and practice, aligning research design with the study's objectives. This ensures that the findings are theoretically sound and directly applicable to improving teacher-parent communication and fostering learner comprehension.

### **4.3.2 Research approach**

The chosen approach shaped how individuals perceive and interact with their surroundings and is often conducted in natural settings (everyday environments). Therefore, this study primarily employed qualitative methods, which have been used since the early days of social studies (Gerring, 2017), Chapter 4, sub-heading 4.1, to gather detailed information. Thus, the study employed a qualitative research approach to investigate the impact of teacher-parent involvement on learners' comprehension abilities in Grade 6.

Xiao, Tian and Xu (2023) uncover that teacher-learner interactions significantly enhance learners' classroom well-being and can strengthen the positive impact of these interactions. Furthermore, effective teacher-learner interactions met individual needs, created a safe environment, and engaged learners, which is essential in various educational settings. Conclusions from Oller, Engel and Rochera's (2021) research suggest that in personalised learning environments, the focus of academic activity must be shifted from making connections between learners' learning to the learning experiences that learners have at different times and in various contexts, helping them to build their learning pathways.

Furthermore, the qualitative research approach is a methodological approach used to explore and understand human experiences (capturing real-life situations — subheading 4.3.1) and behaviours through non-numerical data; it is valuable in fields such as education. The research aimed to gather in-depth insights from teachers, parents, and learners, focusing on their experiences, perceptions, and interactions. Bang (2018) notices that opportunities to communicate their perspectives and experiences openly and honestly are vital for fostering a partnership between parents and teachers (Chapter 2, sub-heading 2.2.3).

The study employed open-ended questionnaires, focus group interviews, and narrative analysis to capture detailed and nuanced perspectives, highlighting the dynamics of communication and collaboration between teachers and parents. This approach enables a flexible and adaptive process, facilitating the exploration of emerging themes and patterns that may inform future educational practices and strategies.

### **4.3.3 Research type**

In Chapter 1, sub-heading 1.7.1.3, case study research involves an intensive investigation focused on a particular individual, group, or phenomenon, aiming to draw broader conclusions from specific observations (Heale & Twycross, 2017). Exploratory case studies are conducted to investigate a phenomenon or issue that requires further understanding. Pathiranage, Jayatilake and Abeysekera (2020) reveal that a case study is a research type that investigates a situation in detail within its real-life context. For a doctoral study, a qualitative exploratory case study design can examine the strategies an entity, such as a school, employs to enhance its performance. Researchers can employ various qualitative methods, such as open-ended questionnaires, focus group interviews and narrative analysis.

This approach is valuable for exploring complex issues in real-life settings. Researchers should consider the case in its entirety and provide a holistic view.

## **4.4 RESEARCH METHODS**

Qualitative researchers face growing pressure to gather, analyse, and share their findings quickly (Vindrola-Padros & Johnson, 2020).

### **4.4.1 Selection of participants**

The research involved smaller, targeted sample sizes. The minimum sample size required usually depends on the research study's goals (Bujang & Adnan, 2016). This approach enables a detailed exploration of specific cases, providing a more comprehensive understanding of the interactions within each classroom and family. This holistic view helped provide a complete understanding of the factors that impact comprehension.

The selection of participants for this study was based on specific criteria designed to ensure a diverse range of perspectives, experiences, and backgrounds. The research aimed to comprehensively understand how teacher-parent involvement affects learners' comprehension abilities in Grade 6, involving teachers, parents, and learners. Next are the criteria and selection processes for each group of participants in this study:

#### **(i) Teachers**

The choice of qualified teachers teaching Grade 6 at the selected primary school in Gauteng was applied. The study seeks to gather insights from teachers with direct experience teaching Grade 6 learners. Different subject teachers were chosen to participate in the study to gain a comprehensive understanding of teacher-parent involvement. This approach allows the study to capture diverse teaching practices, communication styles, and subject-specific challenges that may influence learners' comprehension development, ensuring a richer and more representative set of data. It focussed on their approaches to a home environment, communication with parents and resources available to improve learner comprehension. The selection process involved inviting five Grade 6 teachers to participate in an open-ended questionnaire and narrative analysis (writing). These teachers were selected based on their roles in facilitating and observing the effects of teacher-parent involvement on learners' comprehension abilities.

## (ii) Parents

The study aimed to involve a diverse group of parents from Grade 6 at the selected school. Fifteen parents were chosen to participate in an open-ended questionnaire and narrative analysis. The criteria included variations in household settings, MT and overall academic achievement.

Five parents of high-performing learners: These parents were selected based on their children's strong academic performance, with a mix of different MTs to capture varied insights.

Five parents of average-performing learners: Parents of learners who showed average performance were selected with various MTs to offer a balanced view of parental involvement.

Five parents of learners, who were struggling academically, including those of learners facing academic challenges, were chosen to understand how teacher-parent interactions can support or hinder efforts to improve comprehension. This group also represented different MTs, reflecting diverse backgrounds.

## (iii) Learners

The study included a purposeful selection of 15 Grade 6 learners, representing different levels of academic performance, to participate in focus group interviews. The aim is to capture insights from learners regarding their experiences with teacher-parent involvement and its impact on their comprehension skills. Selection criteria included a variety of household settings, MT and academic performance.

Three focus group interviews, each with five learners, each representing different academic performance levels (high-performing, average, and struggling learners), ensured that diverse perspectives were considered. Group discussions focused on perceptions of learning and teacher-parent involvement rather than ranking or evaluating performance, which helps prevent reinforcing negative self-perceptions while still capturing diverse perspectives. Additionally, the groups included learners from various household settings and MTs, such as Afrikaans, English, and other languages, to capture a wide range of experiences and viewpoints.

Table 4.1 illustrates that participants for qualitative data generation selected according to the specified criteria and selection process.

**Table 4.1: Participant selection criteria- and selection process overview**

Teachers	Parents	Learners
<b>CRITERIA</b>		
Qualified teachers teaching Grade 6 at the selected primary school in Gauteng.	Grade 6 parents at the selected school.	Grade 6 learners at the selected school.
<b>SELECTION PROCESS</b>		
<p>Inviting five teachers from Grade 6 to participate in open-ended questionnaires and narrative analysis. A purposeful selection of 15 Grade 6 parents was made to participate in open-ended questionnaires and narrative analysis. These parents differed according to their MT as well. In this selected school, MT was either Afrikaans, English or any other South African language such as Sepedi.</p> <p>The selection included as following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Five parents of high-performing learners with a selection of different MT.</li> <li>• Five parents of average-performing learners with a selection of different MT.</li> <li>• Five parents of learners who are struggling academically.</li> <li>• A selection of different MT.</li> <li>• A purposeful selection of 15 Grade 6 learners who participated in focus group interviews, including different MT and academic performances.</li> </ul> <p>The selection included:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Five learners per focus group interview, representing different academic performance levels as well as various household settings and MT to ensure diverse perspectives.</li> </ul>		

#### **4.4.2 Data generation**

Data generation methods are essential tools that researchers use to gather information and insights for their studies. Paradis, O'Brien, Nimmon, Bandiera and Martimianakis (2016) note that data generation methods are crucial because they determine how information is collected. This section clarified the exploration of various methods for producing data, focusing on techniques that helped us understand the experiences and perspectives of participants.

Using various methods, researchers can capture a wide range of information, thereby ensuring a richer and more comprehensive understanding of the topic under study. This is achieved through open-ended questionnaires, focus group interviews, and narrative analysis (as mentioned in sub-heading 4.1), which gather detailed information. Therefore, the chosen methods play a crucial role in shaping the quality and depth of the research findings.

The data generation methods employed in the research study are discussed as pointed out by Paradis, O'Brien, Nimmon, Bandiera and Martimianakis (2016) in Chapter 4, sub-heading 4.4.2, how data was gathered (to address the research questions- sub-heading 4.1, related to teacher-parent involvement and its impact on learners' comprehension abilities in Grade 6.

The qualitative research approach is a valuable methodological framework for understanding the complexities of human experiences and social phenomena. Qualitative research offers rich insights by prioritising meaning, context, and subjective interpretation. In research on teacher-parent involvement and learners' comprehension abilities, employing a qualitative approach allowed for a deeper exploration of the experiences and perspectives of teachers, parents, and learners, ultimately contributing to a nuanced understanding of the dynamics at play in the educational context.

By selecting research methods that align with this theoretical framework, researchers can effectively explore and validate the interactions and influences outlined by EST, thereby contributing to a comprehensive understanding of the factors that affect learner performance. Qualitative research utilises various methods for data

generation, including open-ended questionnaires, focus group interviews, narrative analysis and a pilot study.

The involvement of teachers and parents in learners' comprehension ability was explored through a qualitative method, which included open-ended questionnaires, focus group interviews, narrative analysis, and a pilot study to understand the perceptions and experiences of teachers, parents, and learners.

Therefore, accurate and reliable data regarding *Teacher–parent involvement as a curriculum-as-practice partnership and its influence on grade 6 learners' comprehension development* will be made.

To effectively gather data for this exploratory study, a combination of methods was employed:

#### 4.4.2.1 Open-ended questionnaires

The first data collection instrument that was used in this study was an open-ended questionnaire. Conducting open-ended questionnaires with teachers and parents can provide valuable insights into their experiences and perceptions of involvement in the educational process. These open-ended questions (Çakır & Cengiz, 2016) are helpful in developing adults' thinking skills because they are encouraged to explain their thoughts, provide reasons, use judgment and reasoning and allow researchers to explore participants' thoughts and experiences in detail, enabling participants to share their perspectives freely (Baburajan, e Silva & Pereira, 2020). Open-ended questionnaires offer the significant advantage of bringing richer insights into a research study. Furthermore, these findings (unlike closed-ended ones) required learners to think and express their own answers, thereby reducing the likelihood of guessing the answer or copying from someone else (Abdolreza Gharehbagh, Mansourzadeh, Montazeri Khadem & Saeidi, 2022).

The questionnaire, as shown in Appendix B, consists of three sections. This open-ended questionnaire was designed to collect detailed insights from parents about their involvement in their child's reading comprehension development. It is divided into three sections: Household Settings, Communication, and Resources. Each section contains open-ended questions that encourage participants to share their experiences, strategies, and challenges in their own words. For example, questions such as: “*How do you define your role in supporting your child's learning at home?*”

or “*What suggestions do you have for improving communication between parents and teachers to support reading comprehension?*” are aimed at eliciting rich, descriptive responses that provide deeper understanding beyond simple “yes” or “no” answers.

The questionnaire was distributed in a print format to ensure accessibility to all parents and teachers. Participants received clear instructions on how to complete the questions and were given 7–10 days to respond at their own pace, allowing them time to reflect and provide thoughtful answers.

As I am both the researcher and a teacher at the school selected for the research, ethical considerations are crucial. Participants received a consent form that explained the purpose of the study and assured them of the confidentiality and anonymity of their responses. They were informed that participation was voluntary and that they might withdraw at any time without any negative consequences for themselves or their children.

#### 4.4.2.2 Focus group interviews

Organising discussions with Grade 6 learners facilitated the exploration of their views on how teacher-parent interactions affect their learning and comprehension. Bihu (2020) identifies an unstructured interview as a method that allows for a detailed professional conversation between a researcher and participant(s), bringing participants together to discuss specific topics or issues and providing insights.

As part of the data collection for this study, focus group interviews (Appendix D) were conducted with Grade 6 learners to gain insight into their experiences of teacher-parent involvement and its impact on their reading comprehension. A total of fifteen learners participated in the focus group interviews. They were purposefully selected to ensure a range of performance levels and were divided into three groups of five, with each group comprising a mix of learners performing at good, average, and poor levels. This approach allowed for a richer variety of perspectives and experiences to emerge within each discussion.

Each focus group session lasted approximately one hour and took place in a quiet, comfortable setting where learners were seated in a circle to encourage open and relaxed interaction. A brief introduction was provided, outlining the purpose of the interview and explaining that their responses would remain anonymous and

confidential. Learners were encouraged to speak honestly, as there were no right or wrong answers, and their input would contribute meaningfully to the research.

The interview discussions focused on three main areas: household support, communication, and available resources. Learners were asked to describe how their parents support them at home with reading, including examples of encouragement, shared activities, or routines that helped them improve their comprehension. They also reflected on how their parents communicate with them about schoolwork and how these conversations influence their understanding of lessons. Questions further explored how parents respond when children face challenges in reading, as well as how they interact with teachers to stay informed about their child's academic progress.

In addition, the learners shared what reading materials or learning tools they use at home, which they find most helpful, and to whom they turn when they need extra help.

This qualitative data provided valuable insights into the dynamics between home and school environments and how these relationships shape learners' comprehension abilities. The use of focus groups proved particularly effective, as it encouraged interaction, peer reflection, and thoughtful discussions around the support systems learners rely on during their learning journey.

#### 4.4.2.3 Narrative analysis

Looking at personal stories from teachers and parents to understand how these stakeholders create meaning and shape their personalities through the stories they tell in an essay format, using specific headings in order to stick to the topic of the research study. De Fina (2015) reveals that narrative research demonstrates that storytelling can both reflect and shape experiences; it illustrates how different groups utilise storytelling, including written biographies. This method examined stories or personal accounts to understand how individuals construct meaning and identity through narratives.

#### 4.4.2.4 Pilot study

The author In (2017) states that the pilot study is conducted on a smaller scale than the main study, serving as a preliminary test. Its purpose is to enhance the quality and efficiency of the main study by identifying potential areas for improvement.

In my study on teacher-parent involvement and its effect on learners' comprehension, data completeness and sufficiency were ensured by repeatedly using open-ended questionnaires, focus group interviews, and narrative analysis with a selected sample of teachers and parents who were not part of the initial research process. Multiple rounds of open-ended questionnaires and narrative analysis were conducted to compare findings over time. These documents were reviewed at different times and on various days to identify any new themes regarding teacher-parent involvement and learner comprehension.

First, I ensured that teachers and parents understood what was expected of them regarding the open-ended questionnaires and narrative analysis by checking in with a small group of these participants to gather feedback. Hazzi and Maldaon (2015) believe that a pilot study helps the researcher design a clear road map to follow. This helped me ensure that the questions were understandable and would gather meaningful insights into the dynamics of teacher-parent communication and its impact on learners' comprehension.

I observed the learners (different from those in the primary inquiry) during their focus group interviews and ensured that they comprehended what was asked. I rephrased and explained the concepts simply where necessary to ensure that my findings were based on the research I conducted.

Another essential part of the pilot study involved practising the process of obtaining consent and assent from parents and learners. I verified that the consent forms and assent procedures were clear, straightforward, and easily understood by participants. According to Viechtbauer, Smits, Kotz, Budé, Spigt, Serroyen and Crutzen (2015), if any issues arise during the pilot study, corrective actions can be taken before starting the full-scale research. By conducting this pilot study, I refined the methods and tools to be used in the primary research, ensuring that the study ran smoothly and provided reliable and valid findings.

The selection of a single school as the research site was deliberate, enabling an in-depth, contextualised exploration of teacher–parent involvement within a coherent ecological environment. Purposeful sampling of teachers and parents ensured that participants were directly involved in learners’ educational experiences, reflecting the proximal processes central to Bronfenbrenner’s Ecological Systems Theory. Including Grade 6 learners in the classroom context allowed for observation of the immediate effects of teacher–parent interactions on comprehension outcomes. This approach prioritises depth over breadth, capturing rich data that illuminate the dynamics of curriculum-as-practice partnerships. By situating the study within a specific, interactive environment, the research ensures that findings are contextually grounded.

#### **4.4.3 Data analysis**

In this section, I outline the data analysis procedures used in the study to evaluate the collected data on teacher-parent involvement and its impact on learners’ comprehension abilities in Grade 6.

Data analysis is the process of examining, organising, and interpreting collected data to identify patterns, relationships, and insights. It helps researchers draw meaningful conclusions and make informed decisions based on the information gathered, as Saharan, Kulhari, Jadhav, Pooja, Banerjee and Singh (2020) confirm that data analysis leads to advanced knowledge that addresses questions.

The purpose of this study is to interpret collected data through the theoretical lens of Bronfenbrenner’s EST and relevant literature. Ozaki, Olson, Johnston-Guerrero and Pizzolato (2020) note that the feedback participants receive from their experiences influences how they view themselves, leading to either positive or negative changes in self-perception. This suggested that participants’ relationship with their surroundings is more active and constantly changing. By aligning data interpretation with this framework, the study aimed to uncover insights into how various ecological factors influence teacher-parent roles and their impact on the comprehension abilities of Grade 6 learners.

To analyse the data, Bronfenbrenner’s EST guided the evaluation of how family, teachers and peers affect learner performance across dimensions like parenting, involvement, communication and the accessibility of resources. Gamage (2021) noted the diverse backgrounds (in this case, the expectations of primary involvement,

including teachers and parents, as well as the MT vs. FAL) and abilities and needs of learners (cognitive, in order to have the necessary resources).

All open-ended questionnaires, focus group interviews, and narrative analyses were transcribed to accurately capture the participants' responses. Akinyode and Khan (2018) clarify that an example of qualitative data is the transcriptions of interviews into narrative form to identify and develop basic themes. Transcriptions were done by hand and checked carefully to ensure that details in language and meaning were accurate.

#### 4.4.3.1 Procedural steps for data analysis

The data analysis followed a qualitative thematic analysis approach, which involved several key steps:

- Data organisation and preparation

All open-ended questionnaires, focus group interviews, and narrative responses were transcribed into written form. Akinyode and Khan (2018) emphasise that transcribing interviews into narrative text is essential for capturing the nuances in participants' perspectives. Transcriptions were done manually to ensure that tone, context, and meaning were preserved. Each transcript was reviewed and verified for accuracy before analysis began.

- Familiarisation with the data

I carefully read and re-read the transcribed data to gain a comprehensive understanding of the participants' experiences and viewpoints. Initial observations and key phrases were noted in the margins, allowing me to identify recurring words or ideas related to parental involvement, comprehension challenges, and the role of teachers.

- Identifying and developing themes

The identification of broader themes and sub-themes that reflected patterns in the data was applied. Themes were linked to the research questions, such as the impact of household settings, teacher-parent communication and access to resources to enhance learners' comprehension ability.

- **Theoretical interpretation**  
Once themes were established, they were interpreted through the lens of Bronfenbrenner's ecological systems—microsystem (parents, teachers, learners), mesosystem (parent-teacher collaboration), and exosystem (resources). This step ensured that the data analysis connected individual learner experiences to the larger ecological context influencing comprehension.
- **Validation of findings**  
The themes and interpretations were cross-checked with the original transcripts to confirm their accuracy and to ensure that they truly represented participants' voices.
- **Synthesising and reporting**  
Finally, the findings were synthesised into a coherent narrative, combining direct quotations from learners and parents with interpretive commentary. This ensured that the analysis not only reflected the data but also addressed the research objectives.

#### **4.5 ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS**

In conducting research, particularly involving human participants, it is crucial to address ethical considerations to ensure the integrity of the research process and the welfare of the participants. Ethics refers to the principles or moral values that form the basis of a code of conduct. Therefore, before conducting the research, I applied for ethical clearance from Unisa's College of Education Ethics Review Committee, as outlined in Unisa's Policy on Research Ethics. Ethical clearance was received with the reference number 6898 (see Appendix A).

Iphofen (2020) states that research ethics should focus on protecting participants by minimising harm and risks. Ethical issues encompass a range of concerns, including the treatment of participants, the integrity of the research methods, and the handling of data. Research ethics focus on preventing fraud and protecting participants (Sobočan, Bertotti & Strom-Gottfried, 2019). Participants must feel secure and valued, knowing their contributions are respected and protected.

##### **4.5.1 Informed consent**

Participants should be fully informed about the nature of the research, its purpose, and their role in it before agreeing to participate. This process ensured that consent is

given voluntarily and with an understanding of the study. As Manti and Licari (2018) confirm, informed consent is when a person willingly agrees to participate in a study after being fully informed about everything (the purpose as well as their role in the study) they need to know before agreeing to participate.

For the parental consent process (Appendix F), forms were sent home explaining the research purpose, the data collection methods (open-ended questionnaires, focus group interviews and narrative analysis), and the measures taken to ensure confidentiality. Parents were required to sign and return the consent forms before their children could take part.

For the learners' assent (Appendix G), I explained the study in simple, age-appropriate language, highlighting that learners' participation was voluntary and that they could skip any questions they felt uncomfortable answering. Learners were also reassured that the research would not affect their school marks.

#### **4.5.2 Confidentiality, privacy and anonymity**

Protecting the identity and privacy of participants is essential. Researchers must implement measures to ensure that personal information is kept confidential and that the data is protected to prevent the identification of individuals. Researchers (as mentioned by Pascale, Lineback, Bates & Beatty, 2022) depend on participants to share personal information, and it is standard practice to promise to keep their identities private. To enhance anonymity, pseudonyms were employed during the phases of data collection, analysis, and in the final presentation of this thesis, thereby ensured that participants' actual names and the name of the research site were not directly linked to the data. The true identities of the participants were known solely to me, and all interviews were recorded with the participants' informed consent.

#### **4.5.3 No harm or risk to participate**

Researchers are responsible for avoiding causing participants physical, emotional, or psychological harm. Educational researchers recognise that they have a moral obligation to avoid harming study participants. However, they may only sometimes be able to clearly explain what harm might look like or how to prevent it, especially when working with sensitive participants such as learners (Buchanan & Warwick, 2021).

#### **4.5.4 Avoiding dishonesty**

Researchers should be open and honest about the research objectives, processes, and potential risks. Participants should have a clear understanding of what their involvement entails. Academic fraud appears to be more common, or at least more noticeable and harms credibility (Ramos, Gonçalves & Gonçalves, 2020). Participants must be provided with all relevant information necessary to make an informed decision about their participation. This includes a description of the study's purpose, the involvement required for participation, and how the collected data will be used.

#### **4.6 CHAPTER SUMMARY**

This chapter discussed the research design and methods used to explore the impact of teacher-parent involvement on learners' comprehension abilities in Grade 6. It emphasised that a well-structured qualitative research approach is essential for gathering in-depth insights into the experiences and perceptions of teachers, parents, and learners. The study employed a qualitative approach. Research methods, including open-ended questionnaires, focus group interviews, and narrative analysis, captured detailed personal narratives that enrich the data. The main research question examined the impact of teacher-parent involvement on learners' comprehension, with sub-questions exploring the roles of parents, effective communication methods, and available resources.

The primary purpose of conducting empirical research was to gather real evidence that enables informed decision-making and understanding of the complex relationships among stakeholders involved. It highlighted the dynamic relationships between teachers, parents, and learners, as well as the significance of the language of teaching and learning in comprehension. The chapter outlined the exploratory research design as suitable for investigating these complex dynamics and emphasises the use of a case study type for a thorough contextual analysis. Ethical considerations, including informed consent, confidentiality, and minimising harm, are essential for ensuring the integrity of the research process and protecting the welfare of participants. Overall, the chapter established a solid foundation for the research, underscoring the importance of qualitative methods in understanding the factors that influence comprehension.

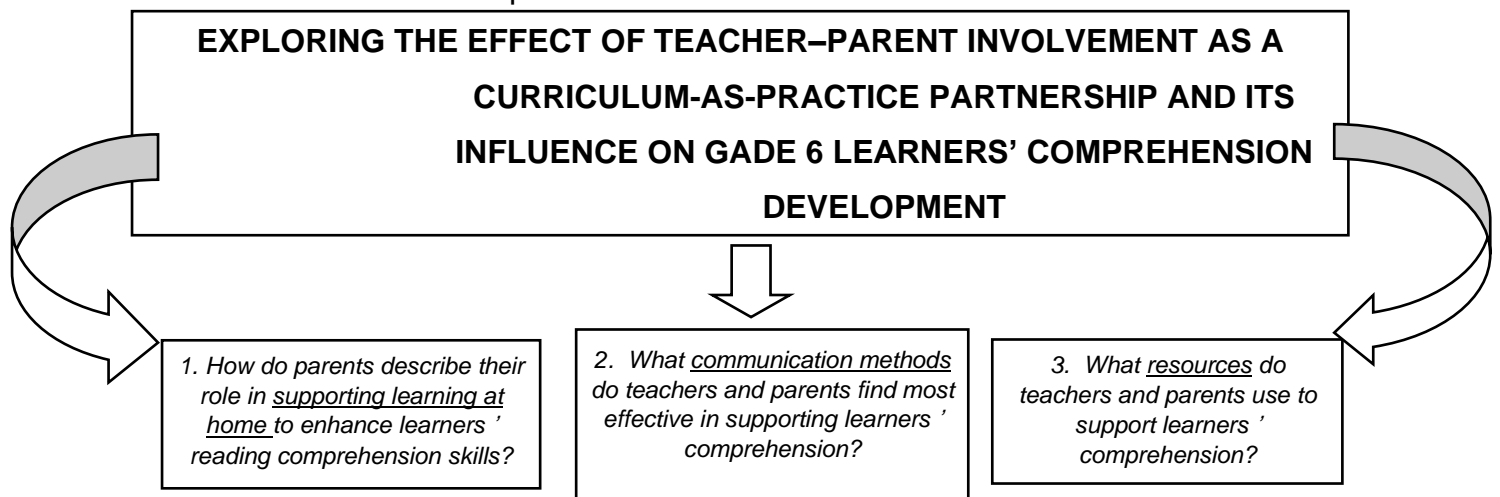
The next chapter focuses on analysing and interpreting the data collected during the study. The aim is to provide meaningful insights into how teacher-parent involvement and communication influence the comprehension abilities of Grade 6 learners. The data gathered through various methods outlined in this chapter will be systematically analysed to identify patterns, relationships, and key themes. This chapter also interpreted the findings related to the research questions and literature, providing evidence-based insights to address the study's objectives.

# CHAPTER 5: DATA PRESENTATION, ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

## 5.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter presents, analyses and interprets the findings from data gathered on teacher-parent involvement and its impact on learners' comprehension abilities within the context of Grade 6. In alignment with the study's focus, the data were analysed to explore the dynamics of teacher-parent involvement, communication, and resource availability, as well as their effectiveness in supporting comprehension skills. The findings regarding the main question and its sub-questions are outlined in this chapter.

Figure 5.1 illustrates the primary research question and its supporting sub-questions, guiding the study's findings. The main question focuses on engagement, communication and comprehension in Grade 6.



**Figure 5.1: Research questions that guide the study's findings**

Using Bronfenbrenner's EST as a guiding framework, the analysis investigates the multi-layered interactions among teachers, parents and learners, providing insights into the extent of parental engagement and its influence on learner outcomes. This chapter examines the differences in household environments between learners with actively involved parents and those with minimal parental engagement, with a focus

on their reading comprehension abilities. It also explores variations in comprehension in learning environments where MT languages differ, and the impact of resource availability.

## **5.2 RESEARCH PROCESS**

Jala's (2020) study concludes that reading comprehension significantly enhances learners' academic performance and problem-solving abilities. Effective comprehension skills are therefore essential for academic success, especially in diverse educational environments. In the context of South African schools, where many learners study in a language different from their MT, developing comprehension skills can pose significant challenges. Stoop (2017) finds that using one's MT is considered one of the best ways to think, learn, and interact effectively in various settings; this study explores the role of teacher-parent involvement in enhancing the comprehension abilities of Grade 6 learners.

This research utilised qualitative methods, as mentioned in Chapter 1, sub-heading 1.7.1, to verify the findings. This method considers factors such as time, place, and the people involved (Noble & Heale, 2019), including open-ended questionnaires, focus group interviews, and narrative analyses. These methods were used to gather in-depth and detailed insights into the dynamics of communication and collaboration between teachers and parents. This flexible and adaptive approach facilitates the exploration of emerging themes and patterns, which can contribute to shaping future educational practices and strategies (Chapter 2, sub-heading 2.2.3). A diverse group of participants were involved, including five Grade 6 teachers, 15 parents, and 15 learners from a selected primary school in Gauteng.

### **(i) Teachers**

All participating teachers are qualified teachers with children of their own, providing them with unique insights into the dynamics of teacher-parent involvement and its impact on learner comprehension.

### **(ii) Parents**

The 15 parents selected represent five individuals from each of three categories, based on their children's academic performance: high-performing, average, and struggling learners. This ensures a diverse range of perspectives, with representation from various MT languages and household settings.

### (iii) Learners

A purposeful selection of 15 Grade 6 learners participated in focus group interviews (three groups), each consisting of five learners from high-performing, average, and struggling backgrounds. This selection captures diverse experiences and viewpoints, including various MT's such as Afrikaans, English and Sepedi.

Ethical considerations, including a pilot study, pertain. The author, In (2017) states that a pilot study is conducted on a smaller scale than the main study, serving as a preliminary test, as pointed out in Chapter 4, sub-heading 4.4.3.4, obtaining consent and assent, ensuring the respectful participation of all involved, creating a conducive environment for honest and insightful data generation.

Looking back on my research for this study, I encountered both rewarding successes and notable challenges.

An aspect that worked well was the initial cooperation from teachers and parents. Many teachers were enthusiastic about the study, recognising its potential value in improving learner comprehension. Parents, particularly those who are already actively involved in their children's education, were eager to participate in discussions and engage. The open-ended questionnaires and narrative analysis provided rich data, revealing varying levels of parental involvement and their direct influence on learners' comprehension.

However, not everything went as planned. Additionally, some teachers were initially enthusiastic and eager to complete the open-ended questionnaire and participate in the narrative analysis. However, some became less interested, referring especially to the narrative analysis, because of the "essay format"; this was due to their workload.

Another unexpected hurdle was learners' reactions during focus group interviews. Some learners showed anxiety when discussing their parents' involvement, which influenced their responses. In a few cases, learners from households with minimal parental engagement seemed hesitant or reluctant to participate in discussions about their home environment. This required careful handling to ensure the ethical and sensitive generation of data.

Despite these challenges, the research yielded valuable insights. It became evident that consistent collaboration between teachers and parents was crucial in shaping

learners' comprehension skills. Where engagement was strong, learners exhibited confidence and improved understanding, whereas low parental involvement often correlated with weaker comprehension performance.

Nonetheless, the experience reinforced the significance of my research and provided a more precise direction for future recommendations.

### **5.3 DATA ANALYSIS**

This section includes recurring themes, patterns, and individual experiences that underscore the importance of teacher-parent collaboration and communication in learners' comprehension development. Qualitative content analysis includes traditional, guided methods for analysing data. These approaches provide descriptive insights and a deeper understanding of the studied aspect (Assarroudi, Heshmati Nabavi, Armat, Ebadi & Vaismoradi, 2018).

The focus is on systematically analysing and interpreting the data generation to answer the study's research questions. In data generation Neve, Hawkes, Brock and Spires (2021) outline this data method where the researcher gains insights into how people interact. Pangrazio and Selwyn (2019) further define data generation as the process of conducting research in the area of individuals' understandings of personal data, which often leads to richer, more detailed data because it involves direct interaction with participants.

The analysis involves categorising the interview responses into thematic areas relevant to these research objectives: household settings, communication and resources and how this affect learner comprehension.

By examining both biographical and qualitative data, this chapter interprets how factors such as family background, teacher-parent involvement, MT, and resource availability influence learners' comprehension abilities.

#### **5.3.1 Biographical data of participants**

The biographical data of participants includes a demographic breakdown of Grade 6 teachers, parents of Grade 6 learners, and the learners involved in the study. This data serves three primary purposes: the participants' backgrounds, which influence MT's effect on communication and the effect of resource support on comprehension.

Table 5.1 provides an overview of the key details of the study's stakeholder groups, including the selection criteria, number of participants, data generation methods, and the primary information gathered.

**Table 5.1: An overview of participants and data generation details**

<b>Participants</b>	<b>Selection criteria</b>	<b>Number of participants</b>	<b>Data generation method</b>	<b>Key information collected</b>
<b>CATEGORY 1 PARTICIPANTS: TEACHERS</b>				
<b>Teachers</b>	Qualified Grade at a primary school in Gauteng	5	Handing out personally open-ended questionnaires and conducting narrative analysis.	Teaching approaches related to the home environment. Parent communication with their child's teacher(s). Resource availability.
	<b>SUBJECT</b>	<b>QUALIFICATION</b>	<b>GENDER</b>	<b>TEACHING EXPERIENCE</b>
T1	Arts and Culture	BEd- degree	Female	11
T2	English	HOD-degree	Female	32
T3	Mathematics	BEd- Hons	Female	10
T4	Natural Sciences	BEd- degree	Male	10
T5	Afrikaans	HOD-Degree	Female	37
<b>CATEGORY 2 PARTICIPANTS: PARENTS</b>				

<b>Parents</b>	Parents of Grade 6 learners from diverse backgrounds	15	Handing out personally open-ended questionnaires and narrative analysis.	Household settings and socio-economic factors influencing involvement.
	Variety of MT Mixed levels of academic performance			Language and communication with teachers. Resource support
	<b>GENDER:</b> <b>Female (F)</b> <b>Male (M)</b>	<b>AGE</b>	<b>MT</b>	<b>Employment</b>
P1	F	40	English	Computer engineer
P2	F	42	Afrikaans	Accountant
P3	F	38	Sepedi	N/A
P4	F	46	Afrikaans	Business Management
P5	F	41	Afrikaans	N/A
P6	F	53	English	HR
P7	F	43	Afrikaans	Radiographer
P8	F	40	Sepedi	BSC
P9	F	43	Afrikaans	Bed. Hons
P10	F	36	Afrikaans	N/A
P11	F	39	Afrikaans	Accounting

P12	F	39	Afrikaans	Accountant
P13	F	45	Afrikaans	B-Com Informatics
P14	F	41	Sepedi	N/A
P15	F	42	Afrikaans	N/A

**CATEGORY 3 PARTICIPANTS: LEARNERS**

<b>Learners</b>	Grade 6 learners representing high, average, and struggling academic performance levels	15 (3 focus groups of 5 each)	Focus group interviews with Grade 6 learners	Learners' experiences with teacher-parent involvement.
	Diverse household settings MTs: Afrikaans, English and Sepedi)			Perceptions of communication support for comprehension skills.  Access to resource support
	<b>MT</b>	<b>AGE</b>	<b>GENDER</b>	<b>ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE %</b> OUTSTANDING (O) AVERAGE (A) POOR (P)

*F***OCUS GROUP 1**

L1	Bilingual: Afrikaans and English	11	MALE	94.9 <b>O</b>
L2	Afrikaans	11	FEMALE	91.0 <b>O</b>
L3	Sepedi and English as a second language	12	FEMALE	72.3 <b>A</b>
L4	Afrikaans	12	MALE	66.5 <b>A</b>
L5	Afrikaans	12	FEMALE	55.5 <b>P</b>
<i>F</i> <b>OCUS GROUP 2</b>				
L6	English	12	FEMALE	92.5 <b>O</b>
L7	Afrikaans	11	MALE	91.0 <b>O</b>
L8	Sepedi and English as a second language	11	FEMALE	74.8 <b>A</b>
L9	Afrikaans	12	FEMALE	63.4 <b>A</b>
L10	Afrikaans	12	MALE	50.9 <b>P</b>

## *F*OCUS GROUP 3

L11	Afrikaans	12	FEMALE	94.3 <b>O</b>
L12	Afrikaans	11	FEMALE	90.9 <b>O</b>
L13	Afrikaans	11	MALE	76.0 <b>A</b>
L14	Sepedi and English as a second language	11	MALE	65.3 <b>A</b>
L15	Afrikaans	12	FEMALE	57.0 <b>P</b>

Table 5.2 presents the biographical details of the participants below. This detailed profiling of participants provides a clearer picture of the various environments in which learners develop their comprehension skills.

**Table 5.2: Biographical profiles of participants**

<b>Teachers</b>	<b>Parents</b>	<b>Learners</b>
Qualifications and experience	Involvement in education.	Home Languages

<p>A profile of five qualified Grade 6 teachers involved in the study detailing their qualifications in teaching, years of experience in the classroom, and any professional development related to teaching.</p>	<p>Insights into parents' involvement in their children's education, including attendance at school meetings, communication with teachers, participation in homework activities and their support strategies for their children.</p>	<p>A detailed overview of the MT spoken by the learners, highlighting those from multilingual backgrounds. This aspect is crucial, as learners from homes where English is not the primary language may face additional challenges in comprehension.</p>
<p>Personal background:</p>	<p>MT proficiency</p>	<p>Academic performance</p>
<p>Information on teachers who are teaching Grade 6. This aspect can enhance understanding of their perspectives parent involvement and communication and comprehension in their subject, as they draw from their experiences in their subject regarding these.</p>	<p>An assessment of parents' proficiency in English compared to their MT, which may affect their communication with teachers and their ability to assist their children with learning.</p>	<p>A brief description of learners' prior academic performance, to identify any trends related to comprehension challenges.</p>
	<p>Socio-economic background</p>	<p>Socio-economic background</p>

	<p>Information about the socioeconomic status of the families, which may include indicators such as parental employment and access to educational resources. This context is vital for understanding how socio-economic factors can affect learners' engagement and performance.</p>	<p>Information about the socio-economic status of the learners' families, which may include indicators such as parental employment and access to educational resources. This context is vital for understanding how socio-economic factors can affect learners' engagement and performance.</p>
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### 5.3.2 FINDINGS

The data represent the core qualitative insights gathered from the open-ended questionnaires, focus group interviews and narrative analysis with teachers, parents, and learners.

#### 5.3.2.1 Open-ended questionnaires

The analysis of the qualitative data gathered through open-ended questionnaires was conducted with qualified Grade 6 teachers who have children of their own and their Grade 6 parents, focusing on their perspectives on teacher-parent involvement and its impact on learners' comprehension abilities in Grade 6. Chapter 1, sub-heading 1.7.1.2 Bonner, Warren and Jiang (2018) believe that an open-ended sentence gathers teachers' and parents' thoughts, beliefs, and experiences; therefore do open-ended questions allow participants to express their thoughts and experiences in their own words, providing rich insights into the dynamics of communication, support, and resource availability in diverse household settings.

The open-ended questions in the questionnaire (Refer to Appendix B and H – detailed verbatim quotes) aim to gather detailed findings from both Grade 6 qualified teachers (who are also parents) and parents of Grade 6 learners. Each question is linked to the following themes: (a) household settings, (b) communication, and (c) resources,

helping to explore how these factors affect learners' comprehension abilities. Findings from teachers and parents will be given separately.

(i) Category one participants: teachers

(a) Presentation of data: Parent-teacher involvement (household settings)

Questions 1-5: These questions explore the role of teachers as parents in supporting their children's learning at home. They inquire about specific strategies used to enhance reading comprehension, the nature of parent-child interactions related to reading, and the challenges encountered in this context. By inquiring about household settings and parental involvement, these questions aim to reveal the dynamics of the home environment and its influence on learners' comprehension skills.

1. How do you define your role in supporting your child's learning at home? Please provide specific examples.

T2 sees their role as a responsible parent, understanding that they are the primary figure in their child's education. They take an active role in guiding their child's learning at home, ensuring they stay on track. Similarly, T5 acts as a guide, motivator, and facilitator, encouraging reading in a supportive way. They create an environment where reading is enjoyable and engaging rather than a chore.

T1 believes in striking a balance between play and learning, integrating fun activities with educational content. This approach keeps the child interested while reinforcing important concepts.

T3 and T4 emphasise reading, but in slightly different ways. T3 sees themselves as readers, likely modelling good reading habits, while T4 focuses on instructional reading, actively teaching and guiding their child through texts.

2. What strategies do you use to help your child improve their reading comprehension skills? (e.g., shared reading, ask open-ended questions, reading aloud to them...)

Teachers use a variety of strategies to enhance reading comprehension skills. T1 and T4 both emphasise reading aloud, which helps learners develop fluency and understand text structure through listening. This approach enables learners to hear proper pronunciation and intonation, thereby reinforcing their comprehension.

T5 combines shared reading and open-ended questions, promoting active engagement and critical thinking. By discussing the text and encouraging learners to express their thoughts, this method deepens understanding and interpretation.

Meanwhile, T2 focuses on transcription, which supports reading comprehension by reinforcing word recognition and sentence structure through writing. T3, on the other hand, integrates sounds and pictures, helping learners make connections between auditory and visual cues, strengthening their ability to grasp words and meaning.

3. Can you describe any challenges you face when supporting your child's learning at home?

T1 emphasise managing time effectively. With multiple responsibilities, it can be difficult to allocate enough time for supporting my child's learning at home, while T2 experience occasional disagreements about reading tasks. While these arguments can be frustrating, they typically resolve when we find common ground and agree on a solution. On the other hand, T3 struggles to remain child-focused. Their attention span often drifts, making it hard to maintain consistent learning, especially with tasks that require longer periods of concentration.

T4 wrote: "Sometimes my child shows low interest in certain subjects, making it hard to engage them fully. It takes extra effort to make learning fun and relevant to their interests."

T5 endured a lack of motivation. Her child sometimes struggles to see the value in certain tasks, influencing their willingness to participate fully in learning activities.

## **A. OVERALL FINDINGS**

Positively, teachers (as parents) create engaging and supportive environments through fun, play integration, and passionate reading. Various strategies, such as reading aloud, shared reading, and focusing on details, help improve reading fluency, comprehension, and decoding. Daily book discussions and feedback play a significant role in enhancing comprehension skills. Additionally, fostering confidence and creating a relaxed atmosphere at home helps motivate learners to engage more deeply with the material. Conversely, challenges such as time management struggles, disagreements with children, focus issues, low interest in certain subjects, and a lack of motivation can hinder the learning process at home. Infrequent book discussions also limit opportunities for engagement and the development of comprehension.

(b) Presentation of data: Curriculum at practice (communication)

Questions 6-10: This section focuses on the communication methods between parents and teachers. It asks participants to describe their communication practices, effectiveness, and experiences with teachers that have been successful. These questions aim to reveal the quality and frequency of communication, which is essential for understanding how teacher-parent interactions support or hinder learners' reading comprehension. Insights into the feelings and suggestions regarding communication also help identify potential areas for improvement.

6. How do you communicate with your child's teacher about their progress and challenges in reading comprehension?

Parents communicate with their child's teacher about progress and challenges in reading comprehension through various methods. Commonly, scheduled meetings serve as a key communication tool, as mentioned by T1, T2, and T5. Additionally, T1 utilises emails and WhatsApp for regular updates, while T3 prefers face-to-face interactions with the teacher. T4 highlights the importance of parent evenings as a means of discussing learner progress. These diverse communication approaches indicate that parents value both formal and informal channels to stay informed and engaged in their child's reading development.

7. What methods of communication do you find most effective when working with teachers (e.g., email, phone calls, meetings)?

When working with teachers, various communication methods are found to be effective. Meetings are preferred for both T1 and T3, allowing for direct interaction and discussion. T2 and T5 highlight the effectiveness of WhatsApp, which provides quick and convenient messaging for efficient communication. Email is also a commonly used method, as noted by T4 and T5, offering a formal and structured way to share information. Additionally, T4 values face-to-face interactions, which enhance clarity and personal engagement. Overall, meetings, WhatsApp, and email emerge as teachers' most frequently used and effective communication methods.

8. How do you feel about the level of communication between you and your child's teacher regarding your child's reading skills?

As a parent and teacher, T5's level of communication between her and her child's teacher regarding her child's reading skills is strong and effective. She receives regular

feedback, which lets her stay informed about her child's progress and areas that need improvement. The teacher demonstrates a clear understanding of her child as an individual, recognising their strengths and learning gaps. This positive and open communication helps her actively support her child's reading development at home. Overall, she is satisfied with the collaboration, as it enables her to form a well-structured approach to addressing her child's needs.

Parents generally feel positive about the level of communication between themselves and their child's teacher regarding reading skills. They appreciate the regular and constructive feedback provided, which helps them stay informed about their child's progress. Many feel that the teacher knows their child well, recognising their strengths and areas for improvement. The overall sentiment is one of satisfaction, with parents valuing the open and supportive communication. This ongoing engagement allows them to better understand their child's reading development and provide the necessary support at home.

9. Can you provide an example of a successful communication experience with your child's teacher? What made it successful?

One successful communication experience T2 experienced was via email, which allowed the teacher time to think and respond thoughtfully. In another instance, a face-to-face meeting (T2) provided a more direct and personal interaction, while a phone call or meeting (T3) enabled a quick and efficient discussion. What made these interactions successful was the teacher's professionalism and thoroughness (T4) in addressing concerns. Additionally, their honesty, respect, and willingness to help find solutions (T5) fostered a positive and productive dialogue. The combination of clear communication, mutual respect, and a problem-solving approach contributed to a meaningful and effective exchange.

10. What suggestions do you have for improving communication between parents and teachers to support reading comprehension?

To enhance communication between parents and teachers in supporting reading comprehension, it is crucial to foster open and proactive dialogue. Parents should ask the right questions (T1) to gain insights into their child's progress and challenges, ensuring they are informed about specific areas of improvement. Meeting with the teacher in person (T2) fosters a stronger partnership, allowing for meaningful discussions about the child's reading development. Regular conversations (T3) about

the child's progress help maintain a shared understanding between parents and teachers. Additionally, tracking progress through charted results (T4) enables both parties to visualise improvements and identify areas needing further support. A structured reading support plan (T5) that aligns with reading levels, standards, and goals ensures a focused and strategic approach to literacy development. By implementing these strategies, parents and teachers can work collaboratively to enhance learners' reading comprehension effectively.

## **B. OVERALL FINDINGS**

Parents and teachers use various communication methods, including meetings, emails, WhatsApp, and phone calls, to stay engaged in learners' reading comprehension. Parents actively seek information by asking questions and participating in discussions, showing strong involvement in their child's academic development. They appreciate consistent feedback, which helps them stay informed about strengths and areas for improvement. Tracking progress through structured methods provides a clear understanding of a child's development. Effective communication is marked by teachers' professionalism, honesty, and willingness to provide solutions, fostering a collaborative and supportive environment. The findings indicate that effective communication between parents and teachers is crucial for supporting reading comprehension. A combination of structured and informal communication methods, such as meetings, emails, WhatsApp messages and feedback tracking, allows parents to stay engaged in their child's progress.

While most parents report a positive experience, challenges such as inconsistent communication preferences suggest areas for improvement. Variability in communication preferences may lead to inconsistencies, as some parents prefer face-to-face meetings while others prefer emails or WhatsApp messages. There may be occasional gaps in communication, making it harder for some parents to support their child's reading development.

A balanced approach that accommodates different communication styles and ensures consistent, structured feedback can further strengthen the collaboration between parents and teachers, ultimately enhancing learners' reading comprehension skills.

(c) Presentation of data: Comprehension ability (resources)

Questions 11-15: These questions address the resources available to parents and their collaboration with teachers in selecting appropriate reading materials and support tools. Participants were asked about the resources they use at home, the factors they consider when choosing reading materials, and any community resources they access to enhance their comprehension skills. This section emphasises the significance of resource availability and selection in creating a conducive learning environment and providing effective support for learners.

11. What resources do you use at home to support your child's reading comprehension (e.g., books, educational websites, apps...)?

To support a child's reading comprehension at home, the utilisation of a variety of resources is important. Most notably, books and educational apps are commonly used across multiple sources, such as T1, T2, T4, and T5. These resources provide interactive ways to engage with reading material. Additionally, T1, T3, and T5 suggest the use of dictionaries, which can help build vocabulary and improve comprehension. T1 and T4 also highlight the use of TV, which can provide visual and contextual support for reading. Finally, T3 emphasises purchasing books from the shop, ensuring access to various reading materials to further promote comprehension development.

12. How do you choose the reading materials for your child? What factors do you consider?

When choosing reading materials, several key factors should be taken into consideration that contribute to learners' engagement and comprehension. Age and interest level are crucial, as materials should align with the child's developmental stage and capture their attention (T1, T5). The level of difficulty of the material, paired with the child's interests, helps ensure the content is both challenging and enjoyable (T2). Visual elements such as images, colours, and overall design are also significant, especially for younger readers, as these features enhance engagement and understanding (T3). Additionally, including pictures and moral lessons in the material provides a visual appeal and helps impart values and deeper connections to the text (T4).

13. Are there any community resources (e.g., libraries, tutoring centres...) that you use to help enhance your child's comprehension skills? Please describe them.

Participants T2 and T5 specifically mentioned that they utilise the library, suggesting that access to books and a quiet study environment play a role in supporting their child's learning. One participant (T3) mentioned using shops, which could imply the purchase and use of educational materials such as workbooks or reading aids available in stores. However, participants T1 and T4 stated that they do not use any community resources for this purpose. This indicates a mixed reliance on external resources, with some parents seeking structured learning environments while others may rely on alternative methods or home-based learning.

14. How do you collaborate with teachers to select resources to support your child's learning?

Collaboration with teachers in selecting resources to support a child's learning involves ongoing meetings (T1), where teachers and parents can discuss the most effective tools and strategies. A key aspect of this process is to trust the system (T4), relying on the expertise of teachers and the structured approaches in place to guide resource selection. Additionally, utilising a book or an app (T5) is a practical way to enhance learning, ensuring that materials align with the child's needs and curriculum requirements.

15. In your opinion, what additional resources or support would be beneficial for both parents and teachers to enhance learners' reading comprehension?

To enhance learners' reading comprehension, libraries provide valuable resources, and parents can support their children by reading with them (T1). Tutoring centres offer targeted assistance, and teachers can guide parents on effective strategies (T2). Home-school reading kits and workshops equip parents with skills to support literacy development (T5).

### **C. OVERALL FINDINGS**

Several beneficial resources support learners' reading comprehension. Libraries provide access to books, fostering a reading culture, while tutoring centres offer targeted support, with teachers guiding parents on effective strategies. Home-school reading kits and workshops equip parents with the skills to enhance their children's literacy development; parents use books, educational apps, and dictionaries to build vocabulary and improve comprehension. Choosing reading materials based on age, interest, and visual appeal further strengthens engagement. Despite available

resources, some parents do not use community support, such as libraries or tutoring centres. Limited collaboration with teachers is evident, with only some parents engaging in meetings to discuss resources. Trusting the system may lead to a passive approach, reducing proactive efforts in selecting reading materials, and relying on television as a comprehension aid may not always be effective if not paired with guided learning.

(ii) Category two participants: parents

(a) Presentation of data: Parent-teacher involvement (household settings)

1. *How do you define your role in supporting your child's learning at home? Please provide specific examples.*

Parents play a crucial role in supporting their child's learning at home by providing encouragement, structure, and fostering independence. Many parents describe themselves as supporters and motivators, emphasising the importance of boosting their child's confidence. For example, P1, P2, and P3 see their role as offering support, encouragement, and motivation, helping their children feel confident in their abilities. P3 further highlights the importance of a loving environment in nurturing a positive attitude toward learning.

Some parents focus on creating a structured learning atmosphere to facilitate effective study habits. P7 and P13 emphasise the importance of planning and managing a learning schedule, ensuring that their child stays organised. P13 specifically mentions assisting with study summaries and asking questions to reinforce learning. Similarly, P12 describes their role as reminding their child about responsibilities and conducting checks to track progress.

Other parents highlight the importance of fostering independence. P1 and P11 stress the need for children to develop self-sufficiency, with P11 noting that assistance is provided primarily during exams. P5 adds that creating an environment where children can explore, experiment, and try different approaches helps them discover what learning methods work best for them.

During exam periods, parental support often intensifies. P8 describes this time as "crunch time," indicating the heightened focus on studying. P9 and P12 emphasise the importance of reminders and encouragement, ensuring that children stay on track

with their studies. P4, identifying as a guide, reinforces the idea that parents provide direction while allowing children to take responsibility for their learning.

2. What strategies do you use to help your child improve their reading comprehension skills? (e.g., shared reading, ask open-ended questions, reading aloud to them...)

Parents employ various strategies to enhance their children's reading comprehension skills, often incorporating interactive and engaging methods. One of the most common strategies mentioned is reading aloud, as highlighted by parents P4, P5, and P8. Reading aloud enables children to hear proper pronunciation, tone, and expression, which can enhance their understanding of texts. Similarly, P7 emphasises reading together while assisting with vocabulary, reinforcing both word recognition and comprehension.

Another prevalent approach is shared reading and discussion-based learning. P1 and P14 engage in shared reading activities, with P14 further incorporating discussions and comprehension-testing questions. These techniques promote active engagement with the text, encouraging children to think critically and process information more deeply. Additionally, P3 employs a unique method by pretending not to know how to pronounce words, prompting the child to utilise external resources, such as websites and dictionaries, to verify pronunciation, thereby boosting their confidence and comprehension skills.

For some children, a natural love for reading plays a significant role in their comprehension development. P2 describes how their child's reading journey began with one book, leading to a deep independent reading habit. Similarly, P9 notes that their child has an innate love for reading, which likely contributes to their comprehension skills without the need for additional structured strategies.

Parents also emphasise the importance of access to books and continuous encouragement. P11 prioritises buying books to ensure reading materials are always available, while P12 reminds and encourages their child to engage with books at home. These strategies foster a reading-friendly environment, making reading a habitual and enjoyable activity.

Additionally, some parents integrate creative and interactive methods to enhance comprehension. P1 employs role-play and "show and tell," which can make reading

more engaging and help children connect stories to real-life experiences. P1 also uses old test papers as a tool to reinforce comprehension skills.

3. Can you describe any challenges you face when supporting your child's learning at home?

Parents face various challenges when supporting their children's learning at home, with time constraints being one of the most common difficulties. Several parents (P4, P6, P11) expressed that balancing work, household responsibilities, and assisting their children with schoolwork is overwhelming. Single parents, like P5, particularly struggle with juggling schedules and often feel that the support they need is lacking. Fatigue further compounds the issue, making it difficult for parents to provide consistent academic assistance.

Another significant challenge is the difference in learning styles and attention spans among children. P8 noted that siblings have varying learning needs, which makes it difficult to apply the same approach to all. Similarly, P12 mentioned that boys tend to be more easily distracted, which adds another layer of difficulty in keeping them engaged. P15 also highlighted that their child does not enjoy reading, making it exhausting to maintain a positive approach while ensuring progress in spelling and pronunciation.

Parental confidence in teaching abilities also emerged as a challenge. P1 and P9 admitted that they are not trained teachers, which leads to insecurity when explaining concepts. P9 further noted that their explanations do not match the level of a trained teacher, potentially leading to confusion rather than clarity. Additionally, P3 pointed out that the high expectations placed on children, particularly regarding technology, create further challenges in supporting their learning effectively.

Exam preparation and independent study were also concerns for some parents. P2 expect child to prepare for exams on their own, which they do not enjoy. Similarly, P1 shared that during the forced stay-at-home period of the COVID-19 pandemic, their child refused to listen, further highlighting the struggle of maintaining parental authority in an academic setting.

4. How often do you engage with your child about the books they are reading? What does this interaction look like?

Parents' engagement with their children's reading habits varies significantly. Several parents (P1, P3, P6, and P9) reported engaging with their children daily about the books they are reading. These interactions often take the form of routine discussions, ensuring consistent conversations about reading material. Similarly, P2 mentioned bedtime as a key moment for engagement, integrating reading discussions into a daily routine.

Other parents indicated a less structured but still frequent involvement. P4 mentioned engaging "often," while P15 described their engagement as irregular. Some parents, such as P5 and P11, noted that their children take the initiative in discussing books. P5 explained that their child shares book recommendations with friends, which then leads to parental involvement through book purchases. In contrast, P11's child actively discusses their reading with them.

On the other hand, not all parents engage regularly. P10 acknowledged that their engagement is "not enough," indicating a desire for more interaction, while P8 stated that they do not engage at all. These responses highlight the varied levels of parental involvement, influenced by routine, the child's reading habits, and parental awareness of the child's literary interests.

5. In what ways do you think your involvement has influenced your child's reading comprehension skills?

Many parents emphasise the importance of discussions and explanations to help children understand difficult words. For example, P1 emphasises the value of conversations, while P15 stresses the importance of paying attention to new words and their meanings to expand vocabulary. Similarly, P6 ensures that their child comprehends what they read, reinforcing the importance of parental guidance in comprehension development.

Another common theme among parents is the encouragement of reading through access to books. P2 and P11 ensure that new books are available to maintain their child's reading interest, with P11 also incorporating motivation by promising new books if older ones are read. Additionally, P11 fosters a love for the library, further promoting engagement with reading materials. P4, who has a personal love for reading, believes this enthusiasm naturally transfers to their children, demonstrating how parental attitudes can influence children's reading habits.

Active participation and engagement also emerge as key factors in improving reading comprehension. P5 emphasises the role of practical examples and active involvement in reinforcing reading skills. P8 highlights encouragement and showing interest as ways to support a child's progress. P9 notes that involvement leads to faster and more accurate reading, while P10 observes improvements in reading achievement and confidence in speaking.

#### **D. OVERALL FINDINGS**

Parents provide crucial support, encouragement, and motivation to boost their child's confidence. Active involvement, such as explaining difficult words and offering practical examples, helps improve comprehension. Creating a structured learning environment, including planning study schedules and encouraging independent learning, enhances study habits. Encouraging self-sufficiency, especially during exams and letting children explore different learning methods promotes autonomy. Ensuring access to books and fostering a love for reading encourage continuous engagement. Frequent discussions and shared reading help children actively engage with texts, improving comprehension skills.

Balancing work, household responsibilities, and academic support can be overwhelming for parents. Differences in learning styles, attention spans, and lack of interest in reading make it challenging to maintain consistent engagement. Parents may lack confidence in their teaching abilities, leading to concerns about providing clear explanations. Some parents report struggles with preparing children for exams and managing independent study.

(b) Presentation of data: Curriculum at practice (communication)

6. How do you communicate with your child's teacher about their progress and challenges in reading comprehension?

In terms of communication with teachers about their child's progress in reading comprehension, parents demonstrate a variety of approaches. Some parents prioritise ongoing engagement despite their child's positive performance. For instance, P1 mentions that even though their child is doing well, there is always room for improvement, indicating a proactive approach to monitoring progress. Similarly, P4

prefers meetings and phone calls, suggesting a desire for direct, face-to-face communication.

Others adopt a more passive stance, feeling less urgency to engage unless necessary. Parents like P3 believe that their child's marks are satisfactory, so they do not see a need to communicate frequently. P5 shares a similar view, only reaching out when needed, typically through WhatsApp or scheduling an appointment.

A few parents, however, have never communicated with teachers about their child's progress. For example, P6 states they have never engaged in this type of communication, and P11 and P15 both indicate that communication is not applicable in their cases.

Technology plays a significant role in communication for some parents. P8 and P9 prefer using WhatsApp or their cell phones to stay in touch, highlighting the convenience of digital platforms for managing discussions about progress.

Finally, some parents rely on tangible academic indicators such as books, tests, and reports to assess their child's progress, as noted by P10, who uses these materials to understand their child's comprehension abilities.

7. What methods of communication do you find most effective when working with teachers (e.g., email, phone calls, meetings)?

When parents were asked about the most effective methods of communication with teachers, a common preference emerged for WhatsApp. Several parents (P1, P3, P6, P7, P9, P11, P12, P13, P14) highlighted WhatsApp as their preferred tool, citing its ease of use and the quick delivery of messages. This suggests that WhatsApp is considered a convenient and efficient platform for communication between parents and teachers.

In addition to WhatsApp, many parents also mentioned meetings and phone calls as effective means of communication. Parents P4 and P8 preferred both meetings and phone calls, while P15 emphasised meetings as a key communication tool. These responses indicate that face-to-face interactions and direct phone conversations are valued for their personal touch and opportunity for in-depth discussions.

Lastly, email was mentioned by a few parents (P1, P5, P10), although it appears to be a secondary option compared to more immediate methods, such as WhatsApp, phone

calls, and meetings. This suggests that while email remains a formal and necessary channel, it may not be as preferred due to its relatively slower response time than the instant communication options available.

8. How do you feel about the level of communication between you and your child's teacher regarding your child's reading skills?

The responses from parents regarding communication with their child's teacher about reading skills show a range of perspectives. Some parents expressed satisfaction and appreciation for the communication channels in place. Parents P1, P4, and P5 described their experiences as "good," with P1 adding that they are grateful, open, and willing to engage. P8 also shared a positive outlook, emphasising that the teacher is available and willing to communicate.

Other parents, such as P2, P6, P7, and P9, reported that they had not received any communication from the teacher regarding this matter. P2 specifically mentioned that they "never had the need," while P6 and P7 stated that they had received "none" or "no communication" on the subject. Similarly, P9 indicated that they had "none".

P11 indicated that they would appreciate more communication to foster a collaborative effort between teacher and parent, emphasising teamwork in supporting their child's reading skills. P10, although it has not required communication thus far, hinted at the potential for future interaction if necessary.

9. Can you provide an example of a successful communication experience with your child's teacher? What made it successful?

Parents highlighted various successful communication experiences with their child's teacher, emphasising the effectiveness of different methods. Several parents found teachers to be helpful and supportive in addressing their concerns. For instance, one parent appreciated a teacher's effort in ensuring their child was settling in well, which was evident through a phone call that provided a sense of security and care. This direct and personal approach helped establish a trusting relationship between the teacher and the parent.

Another key factor in successful communication was the teacher's willingness to provide additional support for learners struggling with concepts. One parent mentioned that the teacher provided extra worksheets to assist their child, demonstrating a

commitment to academic success beyond the classroom. This proactive approach reassured the parent that the teacher was invested in their child's learning progress.

Many parents also found digital communication, particularly WhatsApp, to be an effective tool for quick and convenient interactions with teachers. Multiple parents noted that teachers responded promptly via WhatsApp, making it easier to address concerns in real-time. This accessibility and responsiveness contributed to a positive communication experience, allowing for efficient problem-solving and ongoing engagement in the child's education.

10. What suggestions do you have for improving communication between parents and teachers to support reading comprehension?

To improve communication between parents and teachers in supporting reading comprehension, several key suggestions emerged from parental feedback. One common theme was the need for an open feedback loop between parents and teachers (P1). Parents emphasised that teachers should be the first to notice when learners struggle with reading concepts and proactively provide feedback (P4). Regular communication would ensure that difficulties are identified early, allowing parents to support their children effectively.

Another key suggestion was enhancing access to suitable reading materials. Parents recommended that teachers find books that capture learners' interests (P2) and ensure that prescribed books are aligned with the curriculum (P6). Additionally, teachers could support parents by providing links to useful reading materials (P5), making it easier for families to engage with appropriate texts at home.

Frequent updates and assessments were also highlighted as essential. Parents suggested that teachers provide weekly updates on learners' progress and reading activities (P8), helping parents stay informed about their child's development. Furthermore, more frequent comprehension tests (P12) were proposed to assess and track learners' understanding over time, ensuring that teachers and parents can identify areas needing improvement and provide targeted support.

## **E. OVERALL FINDINGS**

Many parents expressed satisfaction with the level of communication they have with teachers regarding their child's reading comprehension. Some parents (P1, P4, P5,

P8) appreciate the availability of teachers and their willingness to engage, with P1 highlighting gratitude and openness in their interactions. WhatsApp emerges as the preferred method of communication for a significant number of parents (P1, P3, P6, P7, P9, P11, P12, P13, P14), valued for its convenience and efficiency. Additionally, phone calls and meetings are also considered effective communication tools (P4, P8, P15), providing a more personal and direct means of discussion. Some parents (P10) rely on tangible academic indicators, such as books, tests, and reports, to monitor their child's progress.

Successful communication experiences include proactive teacher engagement, such as checking in on a child's well-being, providing extra worksheets, and responding promptly via WhatsApp. Parents appreciate when teachers take the initiative to address concerns and offer additional support outside of the classroom, reinforcing a collaborative approach to improving reading comprehension.

Despite positive experiences, some parents report little to no communication with teachers regarding reading comprehension (P2, P6, P7, P9). Reasons for this vary, with some parents stating they never had the need (P2), while others indicate that no communication has occurred at all (P6, P7, P9). Some parents (P11) feel that communication could be improved to foster a stronger collaborative effort between teachers and parents.

Additionally, a passive approach to communication is evident in certain cases. Some parents (P3, P5) only reach out when necessary, typically using WhatsApp or scheduling appointments, rather than maintaining ongoing dialogue. Others (P6, P11, P15) have never engaged in communication with teachers about their reading progress, suggesting a lack of initiative or a perceived unnecessary effort.

Another concern is the limited use of email for communication (P1, P5, P10). While email remains a formal option, it is not as widely used due to its slower response time compared to instant messaging and direct conversations. Parents also highlight a lack of regular feedback from teachers, with some suggesting that teachers should be the first to notice reading difficulties and communicate them to parents proactively (P4).

(c) Presentation of data: Comprehension ability (resources)

11. What resources do you use at home to support your child's reading comprehension (e.g., books, educational websites, apps...)?

Parents reported using a variety of resources at home to support their children's reading comprehension. The most commonly mentioned resource was books, with many parents (P1, P2, P4, P5, P6, P8, P12, P13, P15) highlighting their use of various reading books, library books, and gifted books. Some parents specifically mentioned magazines (P12) as an additional print resource.

In addition to books, some parents incorporated digital resources to enhance their children's reading skills. Educational websites were noted by a few parents (P8, P14), while others (P6) mentioned using Google apps as a supportive tool. A combination of both traditional and digital resources was evident in responses such as P6 and P8, who used both books and online platforms.

Beyond books and websites, other supportive resources included access to library services (P2, P15) and watching series (P15) as a way to engage with language in different formats.

These findings suggest that while books remain the primary resource for reading comprehension support, some parents integrate technology and multimedia as supplementary tools.

12. How do you choose the reading materials for your child? What factors do you consider?

Parents consider various factors when selecting reading materials for their children, with age appropriateness being a key concern. Several parents (P1, P5, P12, P13) emphasise that books should align with their child's age to ensure they are developmentally suitable and comprehensible. Additionally, some parents (P1, P5, P6, P12) highlight the importance of considering their child's interests to maintain engagement and enjoyment in reading.

Another common approach is allowing children to choose their own reading materials. Parents such as P2 and P14 believe that children should have autonomy in selecting books, as this fosters a love for reading and ensures that they are genuinely interested in the material. P14 further states that they trust their child's judgment when making these choices.

Some parents prefer a more guided selection process. P8 mentions personally choosing books for their child, while relying on book reviews to ensure the material is

age-appropriate. Meanwhile, P15 values books that are both uplifting and suitable for their child's reading level. Others, like P4, consider practicality, selecting books such as cookbooks that provide hands-on learning opportunities.

13. Are there any community resources (e.g., libraries, tutoring centres...) that you use to help enhance your child's comprehension skills? Please describe them.

Several parents reported utilising community resources to enhance their child's comprehension skills, with libraries being the most commonly mentioned resource. Parents P2, P8, P12, P14, and P15 specifically highlighted the use of libraries, either public or school-based, as valuable tools for supporting their child's reading and comprehension development. These libraries offer access to a diverse range of books and reading materials, helping to reinforce literacy skills beyond the classroom.

In addition to libraries, one parent (P6) mentioned using Bargain Books as a resource. This parent seeks alternative ways to provide reading materials, such as purchasing books from bookstores, to supplement their child's comprehension practice at home.

However, a significant number of parents (P1, P4, P5, and P13) indicated that they do not use any community resources to support their child's comprehension development.

14. How do you collaborate with teachers to select resources to support your child's learning?

Most parents reported having no experience in collaborating with teachers when selecting resources to support their child's learning. They indicated that they were not actively involved in this process and had not been approached by teachers for input.

One parent mentioned that resource selection typically comes from the teacher's side. Teachers should take the lead in choosing learning materials, with little to no direct involvement from parents.

15. In your opinion, what additional resources or support would be beneficial for both parents and teachers to enhance learners' reading comprehension?

To enhance learners' reading comprehension, parents suggest a variety of additional resources and support strategies. One common recommendation is integrating structured reading sessions into daily learning. Suggestions include implementing a

dedicated reading period (P4) and organising daily extra classes that focus specifically on reading (P2). Additionally, remedial classes were mentioned as a necessary support mechanism for struggling learners (P11).

Individualised support is another key theme. Parents highlight the importance of one-on-one reading sessions with teachers (P3), as this personalised attention can help address specific challenges learners face. Open and honest feedback from teachers, along with more practice papers, would also provide learners with targeted guidance and opportunities for improvement (P11).

Another area of focus is creating engaging reading environments. Parents propose forming reading clubs (P7) to foster a love for reading among learners. They also emphasise the role of teachers in modelling a passion for reading, as children are likely to follow their example (P9).

Access to diverse reading resources is crucial. Parents suggest providing more printed materials (P11) and using reading comprehension aids to support learners' understanding (P5). Additionally, digital resources such as online reading apps (P14) and combining reading with screen time (P1) could serve as modern tools to engage learners and enhance their comprehension skills.

Parents utilise a variety of resources at home to support their child's reading comprehension, with books being the most commonly mentioned tool (P1, P2, P4, P5, P6, P8, P12, P13, P15). Some parents also incorporate digital tools such as educational websites (P8, P14) and Google apps (P6), indicating a balanced use of traditional and modern learning aids. Other methods include using magazines (P12), utilising library services (P2, P15), and watching television series to engage with language (P15).

## **F. OVERALL FINDINGS**

When selecting reading materials, parents prioritise age appropriateness (P1, P5, P12, P13) and their child's interests (P1, P5, P6, P12), ensuring engagement and comprehension. Some parents (P2, P14) allow their children to choose their own books to encourage independence in reading, while others (P8, P15) take a guided approach, relying on book reviews and personal selection.

Community resources, such as libraries, are widely used by some parents (P2, P8, P12, P14, P15), providing access to a diverse range of reading materials. Additionally, parents suggest various strategies to enhance reading comprehension, including structured reading periods (P4), extra reading classes (P2), remedial support (P11), and one-on-one teacher sessions (P3). Parents also emphasised the need for engaging environments through reading clubs (P7) and teachers modelling a love for reading (P9).

Despite the availability of resources, some parents do not utilise community services such as libraries or tutoring centres to support reading comprehension (P1, P4, P5, P13). This suggests that access to or lack of awareness of such resources may be a barrier.

Additionally, collaboration between parents and teachers in selecting reading materials is minimal. Most parents report having no experience working with teachers in this area, with one parent indicating that resource selection is typically left to the teacher's discretion. This lack of involvement could limit opportunities for parents to contribute to their child's learning process.

Some parents also feel that there is inadequate communication between teachers and parents regarding reading comprehension. While some parents receive guidance on reading support, others reported that teachers are not proactive in providing recommendations or feedback.

#### 5.3.2.2 Focus group interviews

Focus groups in this context allow for rich, detailed insights into the experiences, perceptions, and attitudes of both teachers and parents regarding their roles in supporting learners' comprehension skills. As Bihu (2020) in Chapter 4, sub-heading 4.4.2.2 confirms, an unstructured (open-ended) interview is a method that allows for a detailed professional conversation between a researcher and participant(s), bringing participants together to discuss specific topics or issues and providing insights.

All interviews were transcribed verbatim (Appendix J is an example of a transcribed interview with Grade 6 learners in a focus group of five), paying attention to tone, emphasis, and any nonverbal cues. This step is crucial to maintain the data in its original form as accurately as possible. Open coding can then be utilised to identify

common themes, words, phrases, or ideas related to parent-teacher involvement, communication methods, and their impact on learners' comprehension abilities. Codes include themes like: (a) household settings, (b) communication, and (c) resources. Grouping of similar codes together to create categories that match the research goals.

(iii) Category three participants: learners

(a) Presentation of data: Parent-teacher involvement (household settings)

Questions 1-4: These questions focus on the role of the household environment in supporting a child's reading development. They explore how parents actively engage in the child's learning process at home, highlight the importance of parental involvement, and examine strategies used to enhance reading skills. Additionally, they assess how the home environment provides encouragement during challenges, fostering a positive attitude toward learning. Together, these questions provide insights into the household settings that influence a child's reading progress.

1. How do your parents help you with your reading at home? Can you share any specific examples?

Learners provided various insights into how their parents support their reading at home, revealing both active and passive forms of involvement. Some learners highlighted a strong reading culture within their households. For instance, in Focus Group 1, L2 mentioned that their parents ensure reading materials are age-appropriate and that everyone in the house enjoys learning, setting a positive example. L3 shared that their parents encourage library visits and use visual aids to support reading. Additionally, they provide extra books for school so that learners have something to read when they finish classwork early.

In contrast, learners in Focus Group 2 indicated that while their parents were actively involved in their reading during the early grades, this support has since diminished. They now take responsibility for their own reading, indicating a shift in parental involvement as children mature. This may indicate an expectation for greater independence in reading as learners advance in school.

Focus Group 3 presented a mix of experiences. Some learners shared that their parents help with spelling and vocabulary, integrating reading into daily activities like cooking time. Three out of five learners (60%) in this group mentioned that they read while their parents prepare meals, incorporating reading into a routine family setting.

However, one learner (L15) is significantly behind, reading at a Grade 3 level despite being in Grade 6. Their parents actively support them by starting with simple texts and gradually increasing the difficulty, recognising their academic struggles, and providing tailored reading assistance.

2. In your opinion, what do you think is the most important thing your parents do to help you learn? Why is it important?

In the focus group discussions, learners highlighted several key ways in which their parents play a crucial role in supporting their learning. A common theme that emerged was assistance with comprehension, vocabulary, and spelling. In Focus Group 1, L1 emphasised the importance of parental help in understanding comprehension passages, managing large amounts of work, grasping key concepts, and expanding vocabulary. This is particularly significant given that for 33% of the Grade 6 learners (5 out of 15), English is not their MT at home. As a result, vocabulary development is a crucial area where parental support is beneficial.

Similarly, in Focus Group 2, multiple learners (L5-10) pointed out that their parents assist them with spelling and vocabulary, while L9 specifically mentioned pronunciation as an area where they receive guidance. This indicates that many learners rely on their parents to reinforce language skills that are essential for their academic progress.

In Focus Group 3, another challenge emerged—L13-15 admitted that they feel too embarrassed to ask questions in class. Instead, they prefer to seek help from their parents at home, particularly when dealing with comprehension tasks. They struggle to understand questions, especially when required to give their own opinions. This suggests that parents provide a safe and comfortable environment where learners feel more confident in asking for clarification and improving their understanding of complex concepts.

3. Are there any fun activities or games your parents do with you that help you improve your reading skills? What do you like most about them?

In response to whether their parents engage in fun activities or games to help improve their reading skills, learners provided varied experiences. Some learners shared positive interactions with their parents that made reading enjoyable. In Focus Group 1, L3 mentioned playing hopscotch with words, where they read aloud the words as

they landed on them, making reading an active and engaging experience. L4 described a bookcase challenge, where every completed book is placed on the bookshelf, encouraging consistent reading and fostering a sense of accomplishment. Similarly, in Focus Group 2, L8 highlighted a reward system where stars are earned for finishing books, with a prize given after a set number of books. This system adds motivation and a tangible goal to reading.

However, not all learners reported positive reinforcement of reading at home. L6 (Focus Group 2) expressed that their parents prioritise their older siblings' reading needs, often neglecting younger children, as they assume the older children's schoolwork is more demanding. In Focus Group 3, L15 shared that he is addicted to PlayStation, which leads to low academic performance and no encouragement for reading at home is enforced. This highlights a lack of parental involvement in reading activities, which may contribute to weaker literacy development.

4. How do your parents encourage you when you are struggling with reading? Does that help you feel better about learning?

In the focus group discussions, learners shared various ways in which their parents support them when they struggle with reading. A key finding from Focus Group 1 is that language barriers contribute to reading difficulties for some learners. Forty percent of the group (L4 and L5) struggle because English is not their MT. To assist, L4's parent uses visual aids and syllables to help with concept understanding, making reading more accessible. L5's parent, on the other hand, takes a more structured approach by summarising reading materials and having the child read them aloud, identifying areas of difficulty. This method is used to save time, as the parent believes that learners have too many extracurricular activities after school.

In Focus Groups 2 and 3, most learners (67% or 10 out of 15) indicated that their parents are willing to assist with reading difficulties. However, rather than actively monitoring their children's progress, these parents expect them to take responsibility for seeking help when needed. This suggests a supportive but independent learning approach, where learners must self-identify struggles and approach their parents for guidance.

## **A. OVERALL FINDINGS**

In households where parents are actively involved, learners benefit from a strong reading culture. Some parents ensure that their children have access to age-appropriate reading materials (L2, Focus Group 1) and encourage a love for learning by setting a positive example. Others incorporate reading into daily routines, such as reading while cooking (Focus Group 3), making literacy a natural part of everyday life. Additionally, parents who take their children to libraries or provide extra books for school (L3, Focus Group 1) help foster a habit of continuous reading.

Engagement in interactive reading activities is another positive aspect. Fun games, such as hopscotch with words (L3, Focus Group 1), bookcase challenges (L4, Focus Group 1), and reward systems (L8, Focus Groups 2), make reading enjoyable while promoting consistent practice. Such approaches not only improve reading comprehension but also help learners stay motivated.

Some households provide structured reading support tailored to their child's needs. Parents assist with spelling, vocabulary, and comprehension (L1, Focus Group 1; L5-10, Focus Group 2), ensuring that learners grasp key concepts. More individualised approaches, such as using syllables and images (L4, Focus Group 1) or summarising reading material for children to read aloud (L5, Focus Group 1), help learners who struggle with reading. In cases where children are significantly behind, such as L15 in FG3, parents implement step-by-step reading strategies, starting with simple texts and gradually increasing the difficulty.

Other households promote independent learning, encouraging children to take responsibility for their reading progress. In Focus Groups 2 and 3, 67% of learners reported that their parents are willing to assist but expect them to seek help when needed. This approach fosters self-reliance and problem-solving skills, which are beneficial for academic growth.

In some households, parental involvement in reading has declined over time. Learners in Focus Group 2 shared that while their parents were more engaged during the early grades, they now must manage their own reading progress with minimal guidance. This shift may be premature for learners who still struggle with comprehension and require ongoing support.

An unequal distribution of support is also evident in some families. L6 (Focus Group 2) mentioned that their parents prioritise older siblings' schoolwork, assuming that younger children do not need as much attention. This can create gaps in reading development, leaving younger learners without the necessary support.

Some learners experience a lack of structured reading encouragement at home. L15 (Focus Group 3) reported struggling with PlayStation addiction, leading to low academic performance, with no parental intervention to reinforce reading habits. The absence of structured reading time or positive reinforcement can contribute to weaker literacy development, making it difficult for these learners to stay engaged.

(b) Presentation of data: Curriculum at practice (communication)

Questions 5-7: These questions focus on communication by exploring how learners interact with their parents about schoolwork, how parents assist in understanding lessons, and how they stay informed about their child's progress through direct conversations via WhatsApp with teachers or by asking the learner. The emphasis is on exchanging information between learners, parents, and teachers.

5. How do you usually talk to your parents about your schoolwork? Do you think these talks help you understand your lessons better?

Discussions about schoolwork between Grade 6 learners and their parents vary in frequency, setting, and depth. In Focus Group 1, learners commonly discuss their school day during shared moments such as dinner (L1) or while travelling in the car (L2-4). However, these conversations primarily centre around new content learned, if any, rather than a structured review of their schoolwork. This suggests that while communication occurs, it is often informal and dependent on whether the learner has something new to share.

Focus Group 2 reveals a more task-oriented approach, where learners (L5-10) mainly discuss school-related topics when they need help with homework or are preparing for tests. These discussions are not regular but occur as needed, indicating that parents play a supportive role rather than proactively engaging in their child's learning process.

Similarly, in Focus Group 3, some learners (L11, L14) also mention car rides as a common setting for discussing school, while others (L15) engage in conversations during dinner. However, a significant number of learners (L10, L12, L13) report that their parents focus primarily on their marks, tests, and homework rather than the

learning process itself. This suggests that while parents are engaged, their interest is often performance-driven rather than centred on deeper comprehension or learning discussions.

6. When your teacher gives you instructions, how do your parents help you understand them better at home?

In response to how parents help learners understand teacher instructions at home, findings from all three focus group interviews revealed varying experiences based on the teacher's approach and the learners' comfort levels in class. A significant portion of learners (46%) receive English instruction from Teacher 1, who is described as providing very clear instructions. These learners expressed that they feel comfortable asking questions in class when they do not understand, which minimises their need for parental assistance at home. They attribute this ease of understanding to a good and supportive relationship with their teacher, suggesting that a positive teacher-learner dynamic enhances comprehension and reduces reliance on external help.

Similarly, the learners taught by Teacher 2 (21%) indicated that instructions are short and clear, making them manageable to follow. They also reported having the confidence to ask questions in class, allowing them to clarify uncertainties before leaving school. This, again, reduces the necessity for parental intervention, as most misunderstandings are resolved during lessons.

However, learners in Teacher 3's class (33%) reported a different experience. While they acknowledged that instructions were generally good, they expressed discomfort in asking questions directly in class. Instead, they preferred seeking clarification from their friends before turning to their parents as a last resort. This suggests that while instruction may be effective, the level of approachability and comfort in teacher-learner interactions plays a crucial role in determining whether learners feel confident enough to seek immediate clarification.

Notably, Teachers 1 and 2, both female, appear to foster a learning environment where learners feel encouraged to ask questions and engage more openly, leading to better in-class comprehension. In contrast, while delivering effective instructions, the male teacher, Teacher 3, does not seem to inspire the same level of confidence in learners to seek help. This highlights the impact of teacher-learner relationships on

comprehension and the varying degrees to which parental support is required outside the classroom.

7. How do your parents find out how you are doing in school? Do they talk to your teacher or ask you about your grades?

Parents employ various methods to stay informed about their children's academic progress, with a strong reliance on tests, WhatsApp communication, and reviewing workbooks. All learners across the three focus groups (Focus Groups 1-3) reported that their parents regularly review their test results, which is a primary indicator of their performance. Additionally, WhatsApp has become a widely used tool, with 100% of learners stating that their parents stay updated through messages with their teachers. This reflects a shift towards digital communication, allowing for quick and convenient updates on academic progress.

Another common practice is the regular checking of working books, where all learners confirm their parents' review. This hands-on approach ensures parents can track their child's daily progress, homework completion, and teacher feedback. However, parent evenings appear to be less frequent in Grade 6, with only 21% of learners (L1, L5 and L8) mentioning them as a method of communication. While these meetings were more common in earlier grades, they are now attended only when necessary, likely because parents feel confident in other means of staying informed. Overall, parents rely on a combination of formal assessments, digital communication, and direct review of their child's schoolwork to monitor their academic progress.

## **B. OVERALL FINDINGS**

Effective communication among learners, parents, and teachers plays a crucial role in academic progress. A key strength is that most learners engage in conversations about their school day with their parents, whether informally during dinner or car rides (Focus Groups 1 & 3) or in a more structured manner when needing help with homework or test preparation (Focus Group 2). This interaction ensures that parents remain aware of their child's learning experiences, even if discussions are not always in-depth. Additionally, digital communication, particularly WhatsApp, has emerged as an effective tool for parents to stay updated on their child's progress, with all learners reporting that their parents use it to communicate with teachers. Furthermore, parents actively review working books and test results, providing them with tangible insights

into their child's academic performance. These practices indicate a strong parental interest in education and a willingness to monitor progress.

Another positive aspect is the supportive learning environment created by certain teachers. Learners who receive instruction from Teachers 1 and 2 expressed confidence in asking questions in class, which reduces their dependence on parental assistance at home. This highlights the importance of clear teacher instructions and the role of a positive teacher-learner relationship in fostering independent learning.

Despite these positive practices, certain limitations hinder effective communication. While school-related discussions take place at home, they are often informal and dependent on the learner having something new to share rather than being structured reviews of schoolwork. Many parents primarily focus on performance indicators, such as marks and test results, rather than engaging in deeper discussions about the learning process itself (Focus Group 3). This emphasis on results may limit learners' ability to reflect on their understanding of concepts rather than just their grades.

Another challenge is the inconsistency in teacher-learner interactions. While some learners feel comfortable asking questions in class, those in Teacher 3's class expressed hesitation in seeking clarification, often turning to friends or parents instead. This suggests that the level of approachability in teacher-learner relationships can affect whether learners seek immediate academic support. Additionally, while WhatsApp is a widely used communication tool, the decline in attendance at parent evenings (with only 21% of learners reporting them) suggests that direct parent-teacher discussions may be less frequent, potentially reducing opportunities for in-depth conversations about a child's progress.

(c) Presentation of data: Comprehension ability (resources)

Questions 8-10: These questions address the theme of resources by exploring the materials, tools, and people learners rely on to support their learning. They focus on the resources parents use to help with reading, the resources learners find most useful for learning, and the individuals who provide assistance when learners face difficulties in understanding lessons.

8. What books, tools, or resources do your parents use to help you with your reading? Which ones do you find most helpful?

Focus Group 1 highlights that auditory tools and videos, such as PowerPoint slides, are commonly used (L1). These multimedia resources seem to be helpful for learners who benefit from auditory and visual content (L2-4). In addition, Google apps are frequently mentioned as tools that support reading, offering various functionalities for both learning and organising content (L5).

Focus Group 2 provides an interesting observation, noting that only 21% of participants (2/5) utilise ChatGPT for guidance, suggesting that it is seen more as a supplementary tool rather than a primary resource for reading support.

In Focus Group 3, Google apps remain a prevalent resource (L6-10), but interestingly, ChatGPT is not mentioned as a go-to tool for reading. Learner L10, who has access to a laptop and Wi-Fi (powered by solar panels), demonstrates how reliable internet access supports their learning. Additionally, L12 uses a tablet, which can enhance mobile learning options.

It is also worth noting that many learners (L1-15) rely on their phones as a primary tool for accessing resources. However, only one learner (L15) is unable to access a printer, indicating that most learners have the necessary tools for both digital and physical learning materials.

9. What resources do you think help you the most when you're learning new things in school? Can you give some examples?

When it comes to learning new things in school, different learners have varying preferences for resources that help them the most. In Focus Group 1, learners L1, L2, L4, and L5 find that visual aids such as the visualizer and PowerPoint slides are particularly helpful in understanding new material. However, L3 stands out with a preference for the traditional blackboard, reflecting a more conventional learning style.

In Focus Group 2, learners have specific needs that affect their learning experience. L5 finds auditory instructions important and dislikes it when teachers move too quickly through content, as it makes it harder to follow. On the other hand, L6 expresses frustration with situations where discipline takes precedence over education, feeling that it wastes valuable learning time.

Focus Group 3 emphasises the importance of seating arrangements and humour in the classroom. L11 through L15 prefer sitting at the front of the class, especially in core subjects where they feel more engaged and can concentrate better. Additionally,

12 out of 15 learners (80%) agree that visual resources, such as slides, visualisers, and videos, are crucial for their learning, with humour being a necessary element to keep them interested.

10. Who do you turn to for help when you have trouble understanding something in your lessons, and what kind of support do they give you?

In terms of seeking help when learners encounter difficulties in their lessons, various support systems are highlighted across the focus groups. In Focus Group 1, it was noted that support is typically available at home, particularly for siblings who struggle academically the most. However, the level of support is often influenced by the parents' priorities. For instance, L4 parents are more inclined to prioritise sports activities, leaving less time for academic support, which is also a common challenge in other groups. Parents in Focus Groups 1, 2, and 3 emphasise the importance of using a diary as a tool for organisation and discipline, which reflects a desire to help learners manage their time effectively. However, despite these good intentions, a lack of time is a significant barrier, as many parents work late, and schoolwork often becomes a lower priority. This results in a lack of involvement in their children's academic progress, as indicated by learners in Focus Groups 1, 2, and 3 (L4, L5, L10, L13, L14, L15).

Additionally, while parents acknowledge the importance of academic support, they also value fostering independence in their children, believing it to be a key skill to develop from an early age. This view is shared across all focus groups, with learners in L1 (Focus Group 1), L6 (Focus Group 2), and L11 (Focus Group 3) reporting that parents feel that encouraging independence in their children is essential at this stage of their development.

Another important aspect discussed across the groups is the involvement of mothers versus fathers. According to the data, mothers are generally seen as more loving and involved, with 86% of learners reporting that their mothers take a more active role in their education. In contrast, only 14% of learners indicated that they prefer their fathers' involvement.

Lastly, sleep patterns are also a factor in academic performance. For instance, L15 in Focus Group 3 mentioned that he tends to stay up late, which results in being tired during school and having a limited attention span. This is consistent with the general

bedtime trend across the groups, where most learners go to bed between 20:00 and 21:00, suggesting that sleep deprivation could also affect their ability to engage in lessons effectively.

### **C. OVERALL FINDINGS**

Across all three focus groups, various resources were identified as significantly aiding learners in their reading and overall learning experience. A major positive finding is the use of multimedia resources such as PowerPoint slides, visualisers, and videos, which were found to be particularly beneficial in making content more accessible. In Focus Group 1, learners L1, L2, L4, and L5 specifically highlighted that these visual and auditory aids helped them grasp new concepts more easily. Similarly, Google apps emerged as a prevalent and useful tool across Focus Groups 1, 2, and 3. These apps support both learning and organising content, which proves essential for learners in managing their academic tasks effectively. Furthermore, phones were noted as the primary tool for accessing both digital and physical learning materials, with nearly all learners having access to necessary tools such as printers, which aid in combining digital and traditional methods of learning.

Focus Group 3 further supports this, showing that reliable internet access, particularly through devices such as laptops and tablets, provides learners with a flexible and comprehensive learning environment. For example, L10, who has access to a laptop and Wi-Fi, can use these resources effectively, indicating the importance of reliable technology in supporting learners' educational journeys. Auditory tools, such as videos and PowerPoint slides, resonate with individuals who learn best through a combination of visual and auditory means (L2-4), confirming the importance of multimodal learning resources.

While the availability of resources is largely seen as positive, some challenges were noted. Time constraints were a recurring issue, especially when it came to parental involvement in supporting learning. In Focus Group 1, parents' work schedules often leave them with little time to prioritise academic support for their children, resulting in inconsistent involvement in learners' academic progress. This is compounded by the fact that some parents, like those of L4 in Focus Group 1, prioritise sports over academics, further limiting the amount of academic support provided. In turn, this lack of time negatively affects learners' ability to get the help they need.

Moreover, while ChatGPT was mentioned in Focus Group 2 as a supplementary tool for guidance, it was used by only a small percentage of participants (21%), suggesting that it is not yet a widely relied-upon resource for reading support. This suggests that, while digital tools like ChatGPT can be beneficial, they are still viewed as secondary to more traditional forms of support, such as in-person assistance from parents and teachers.

### 5.3.2.3 Narrative analysis

In Chapter 1, sub-heading 1.7.1.2, Smith and Monforte (2020) describe narrative analysis as a method of engaging with storied data; thus, this approach allows for the exploration of how teachers and parents perceive and narrate their experiences in relation to language learning and comprehension.

Given that my study focuses on the interaction and communication between teachers and parents, narrative analysis can help interpret how these stakeholders describe their roles, challenges, and motivations. Using narrative analysis to interpret the data will enable me to capture and effectively convey the genuine experiences of teachers and parents. It will highlight the details of teacher-parent involvement and its impact on the comprehension of Grade 6 learners. This approach adds depth and context to my findings, showing the value of narrative insights in educational research.

By synthesising these insights, the data analysis and interpretation aim to generate a comprehensive understanding of how teacher-parent interactions influence learners' comprehension skills, shedding light on areas where enhanced collaboration can make a substantial difference.

The narrative analysis focused on different paragraphs (Refer to Appendix J):

(i) Paragraph 1: Parent-teacher involvement (household settings)  
Parents describe their role in supporting learning at home, including helping with homework, reading with their child, and creating study schedules. Effective strategies for enhancing reading comprehension, like using flashcards, discussing stories, or encouraging daily reading, are highlighted. Specific examples, like working on a project together or preparing for a test, illustrate the practical involvement of parents in their children's learning.

(ii) Paragraph 2: Curriculum at practice (communication)

Effective communication methods, such as emailing the teacher, attending parent-teacher meetings, or using WhatsApp groups, are discussed. Parents highlight the positive impact of these methods on understanding their child's learning process, such as gaining clarity on lessons or being able to ask questions easily. Successful communication experiences, such as receiving feedback that helps improve their child's performance, reinforce the importance of open dialogue.

(iii) Paragraph 3: Comprehension ability (resources)

Parents mention various resources they use to support comprehension, including reading apps, library books, and educational websites. These resources are considered beneficial, as they make learning enjoyable, provide extra practice, and help children grasp challenging concepts. Personal stories about how a specific app improved vocabulary or a book sparked interest in reading demonstrate the practical impact of these resources.

(iv) Paragraph 4: Additional comments

This section allows parents to share additional insights or suggestions on teacher-parent involvement and its effect on comprehension. These comments can provide a deeper understanding of how collaboration between teachers and parents can further support learning.

## **A. OVERALL FINDINGS**

(a) Household settings

The role of the household setting in supporting reading comprehension is crucial for both parents and teachers. Teachers often emphasise the importance of a conducive learning environment at home. T1 sees their role as the primary teacher at home, ensuring a balance between learning and play. This approach fosters a stress-free environment where children can learn without pressure, thereby making reading an enjoyable experience. Similarly, T2 focuses on creating an engaging atmosphere for reading, ensuring that reading becomes a fun, relaxed activity rather than a chore. T3 and T4 also highlight the significance of encouraging reading, but in different ways: T3 models good reading habits, while T4 plays an active instructional role by guiding children through texts.

Parents also approach household settings with similar dedication. P1, P2, and P3 emphasise the importance of fostering an encouraging and structured environment for their child's learning. For example, P1 motivates their child, helping build confidence in their academic abilities. P3 emphasises that a nurturing and loving atmosphere is crucial in fostering a positive attitude towards learning. On the other hand, parents such as P7 and P13 focus on creating structured learning schedules that help children develop good study habits, reinforcing learning with regular progress tracking and study summaries.

While the importance of a supportive environment is clear, both parents and teachers face challenges. T1, for instance, struggles with time management and balancing reading tasks with other activities. T3 and P6, meanwhile, encounter difficulties in maintaining the child's focus on reading, especially when the material does not pique the child's interest. P2 also reports challenges related to disagreements with children about certain reading tasks, showing that while the environment is critical, maintaining focus and engagement can be difficult.

#### (b) Communication

Effective communication between parents and teachers is a fundamental element in supporting reading comprehension. Teachers like T5 recognise the value of staying in close communication with parents to track learners' progress. For example, T5 appreciates the strong communication they share with the teacher, finding it beneficial in understanding their child's strengths and areas that need improvement. This feedback loop enables both parties to collaborate and provide targeted support at home.

Parents also express varying levels of engagement in communicating with teachers. While some parents like P1 and P4 are proactive, reaching out regularly to discuss their child's progress, others engage with teachers only when challenges arise. P3 and P5, for instance, communicate with teachers primarily when their child encounters difficulties, often reaching out when grades slip or when comprehension struggles become evident. Technology plays a significant role in facilitating communication, with several parents, such as P8, P9, and T2, preferring the convenience of WhatsApp for quick updates. It allows them to stay informed about their child's progress and intervene when necessary.

However, the communication process is not always perfect. Some parents, such as those of P6 and P11, feel that the communication from teachers is insufficient or lacks depth, especially when it comes to reading materials. T1 also acknowledges that interactions related to specific reading tasks and books are not frequent enough. This suggests that while communication is generally positive, more consistent and detailed exchanges about reading strategies, books, and comprehension techniques could further enhance the home-school partnership.

### (c) Resources

At home, both teachers and parents utilise various resources to bolster reading comprehension. Teachers often recommend resources, such as books, educational apps, and visual aids, to support their learners' learning. T1, T2, T4, and T5 all mention the importance of using books and apps to engage learners in reading. T3 emphasises purchasing a wide range of books to meet the diverse interests and comprehension levels of learners. T1 and T4 go further by incorporating visual aids, such as TV programs, which help children connect stories and concepts in a multi-sensory manner.

Parents also use a variety of resources to enhance their children's reading comprehension. P1, P2, and P4 emphasise the importance of providing a range of books at home. Many parents also integrate digital tools into their child's reading routines. P8 and P14 incorporate educational websites and apps into their learning strategies, while P6 combines physical books with online platforms, such as Google apps, to support comprehension. The ability to blend traditional resources with modern tools is a testament to the adaptability of parents in meeting their child's needs.

However, not all parents use digital resources. Some prefer traditional tools such as physical books and library visits. P15, for instance, values public libraries as they provide a wealth of diverse reading materials that support their child's literacy development. The selection of appropriate reading materials is a major consideration for parents, as P1, P5, and P12 emphasise the importance of age-appropriate and interest-driven choices to keep their children engaged in reading. Some parents even allow their children to select their own books, fostering autonomy and a genuine interest in reading.

Collaboration between parents and teachers extends beyond communication to include the selection and use of resources. Both parties can collaborate to identify suitable books, apps, and other resources that align with the child's academic needs and curriculum goals. T1 and T4, for example, value the opportunity to meet with teachers to discuss which resources might be most effective for their child. This collaborative effort ensures that the resources used are both engaging and appropriately challenging.

(d) Additional comments

Parents like P1 and P4 also suggest that teachers provide more frequent and proactive feedback about their child's progress. They believe that regular updates about reading achievements and difficulties will enable them to better support their child at home. Teachers could also offer lists of recommended reading materials, direct parents to relevant digital resources, or suggest library visits to further enrich their child's learning experience.

Parents and teachers play complementary roles in the collaborative journey of enhancing reading comprehension. Teachers guide children with structured approaches, while parents create supportive learning environments at home, ensuring that children are provided with the right resources. Effective communication between home and school remains a key component of this partnership, ensuring that progress is monitored, and challenges are addressed in a timely manner. By continuing to collaborate and explore innovative ways to enhance reading comprehension, parents and teachers can help learners succeed academically, fostering a lifelong love for reading that will benefit them throughout their educational journey.

### **5.3.3 Themes and categories**

In examining the relationship between parental involvement and learners' comprehension skills, it is essential to understand the multifaceted dimensions that contribute to this dynamic. Three primary themes—household settings, communication, and resources—emerge as critical areas of focus. Each theme encompasses specific categories that shed light on the various factors influencing parental engagement and the corresponding impact on educational outcomes.

In this study, themes were identified through a systematic and rigorous analysis of the open-ended questionnaires, focus group interviews and narrative analyses. The data were transcribed and thoroughly examined using Braun and Clarke's (2017) thematic analysis approach, as cited in Braun and Clarke (2017). This method was deemed appropriate for the study as it allows for a detailed and flexible interpretation of qualitative data, while remaining grounded in the lived experiences and perspectives of participants. Thematic analysis was particularly suitable for this research because it aligns with the objective of exploring the complex and multifaceted nature of teacher-parent involvement and its impact on learners' comprehension abilities in Grade 6 .

The following steps were undertaken during the analysis:

- Familiarisation with the data: I immersed myself in the data by reading and re-reading the transcriptions, documents, and field notes to gain a deep understanding of the content.
- Coding the data: Important ideas and recurring patterns were identified. Unnecessary information was removed, and similar codes were combined or adjusted for better clarity.
- Searching for themes: Related codes were grouped into potential themes that reflected key aspects of teacher-parent involvement and learner comprehension.
- Reviewing themes: I evaluated the coherence and accuracy of the themes in relation to the data set as a whole, ensuring that the themes reflected the participants' voices and the study's research questions.
- Defining and naming themes: Each theme was clearly defined and given a concise, meaningful name that encapsulated its core message.

The resulting themes and categories represent the most significant patterns emerging from the data, offering insight into how teacher-parent collaboration influences learners' comprehension development. Table 5.3 presents these themes and their corresponding categories.

5.3.3.1 The first theme: **Teacher-parent involvement:** household settings, includes categories such as:

(i) Learning environment

The atmosphere for learning fosters reading comprehension.

(ii) Structured approach and engagement in tasks

Implementing structured learning schedules for strong reading habits and study routines.

5.3.3.2 The second theme: **Curriculum at practice:** communication, examines:

(i) Effective communication channels

Various communication methods are used to stay informed and provide updates on a child's progress.

(ii) Proactive vs reactive engagement

Parent engagement with teachers.

(iii) Improved communication

Strategies for improvement.

5.3.3.3 Finally, the theme: **Comprehension ability:** resources encompasses categories such as:

(i) Physical and digital resources

Support reading comprehension and engage children in the learning process.

(ii) Age-appropriate and interest-driven materials

Choosing materials based on age, interest, and difficulty level.

(iii) Internal- and external resources:

Home-based tools and external resources, such as libraries for additional reading materials.

Together, these themes and categories provide a comprehensive framework for understanding how family dynamics and parental support affect language comprehension, paving the way for targeted interventions that can optimise educational outcomes as presented in Table 5.3.

**Table 5.3: Themes on family dynamics and language comprehension**

<b>THEMES</b>	TEACHER PARENT INVOLVEMENT	CURRICULUM AT PRACTICE	COMPREHENSION ABILITY
<b>THEMES/ CATEGORIES</b>	Household settings Learning environment	Communication  Effective communication channels	Resources  Physical and digital resources
	Structured approach and engagement in tasks	Proactive vs reactive engagement	Age-appropriate and interest-driven content
		Improved communication	Internal and external resources

#### **5.4 DATA INTERPRETATION**

This data interpretation, grounded in Bronfenbrenner’s EST and the literature review highlighting the influence of interconnected environmental factors on learner development, examines how household settings, communication practices, and resource availability shape learner outcomes. The insights gathered through open-ended questionnaires, focus group interviews, and narrative analysis with teachers, parents, and learners reveal how these elements interact across diverse socio-economic contexts. By interpreting data within the themes of household settings, communication, and resources, this analysis will clarify the complex relationship between home environments and academic support, as well as identify specific practices that enhance or hinder comprehension development in learners.

(i) Category one and two participants: teachers and parents

My analysis of teachers' and parents' open-ended questionnaires, along with narrative analysis, reveals key factors affecting reading comprehension in Grade 6 learners. The following interpretations reflect my perspective on these findings and their implications for improving literacy development. Interpretations will align with relating empirical findings to theory, literature, and professional experience.

#### **5.4.1 Empirical findings**

The empirical findings of this study strongly align with existing literature on the role of teacher-parent involvement in enhancing learners' comprehension ability in Grade 6. This research aims to identify strategies for improving comprehension through enhanced teacher-parent partnerships (Chapter 1, sub-heading 1.2), supported by data from this chapter, which includes findings from open-ended questionnaires, focus group interviews, and narrative analysis.

The findings highlight that effective teacher-parent collaboration leads to improved comprehension abilities among learners. According to Margerum and Robinson (2015) in Chapter 3, sub-heading 3.4.1, partnerships between teachers and parents require sustained effort but yield positive academic outcomes through mutual effort, time, and respect. This aligns with the study's data, which reveals that learners with consistent parental support in reading comprehension activities performed better than those without such involvement. Furthermore, Chapter 1, sub-heading 1.4.1.3 Seashore, Leithwood, Strom and Anderson (2010) emphasise that the provision of a stimulating environment around language, reading, and writing, as well as supporting the school's literacy agenda at home, both during the early years of schooling and later years, must be taken into consideration. The narrative accounts from parents and teachers in this study support this, as they describe how collaborative engagement fosters a deeper understanding of texts.

#### **5.4.2 Theoretical framework contributions and contradictions**

The precise words in Chapter 1, sub-heading 1.3, state that the EST, developed by Urie Bronfenbrenner (Shelton, 2018), emphasises the interconnectedness and the role the environment plays in the human development of various systems that influence an individual's progress.

The EST by Bronfenbrenner, illustrated in adapted Figure 3.4 in Chapter 3, subheading 3.2.7 (Shelton, 2018), provides a useful lens for examining the role of

teacher-parent involvement in Grade 6 comprehension. The theory emphasises the impact of multiple environmental layers, specifically the microsystem (home environment), mesosystem (communication), and exosystem (resources).

#### 5.4.2.1 Microsystem

Parental support, including guided reading and vocabulary reinforcement, has a positive impact on comprehension. According to Lynch (2021), in Chapter 3, sub-heading 3.2.12, it is well established that home-school engagement can contribute to children's literacy development.

#### 5.4.2.2 Mesosystem

Strong teacher-parent communication further enhances learning, aligning with EST's emphasis on the mesosystem. Effective communication goes beyond face-to-face interactions. According to Graham-Clay (2024), it plays a crucial role in strengthening the partnership between home and school. Consistent communication—via newsletters, emails, texts, and meetings—maintains an ongoing dialogue, keeping parents informed about their children's progress in various activities. This transparent exchange fosters a supportive environment for learners, as mentioned in Chapter 3, subheading 3.2.7. Furthermore, Chapter 1, sub-heading 1.3, declares that it is evident that teachers and parents can enhance their involvement by understanding how learners interact with their surroundings.

#### 5.4.2.3 Exosystem

Parents struggled with time constraints. In Chapter 3, sub-heading 3.2.9, the exosystem, which includes external factors in the exosystem (e.g., accessibility to resources that also includes time), affects the learner's comprehension development, which affects learner outcomes. Digital tools also proved beneficial, which supports Bronfenbrenner's confirmation that broader environmental influences shape learning. In Chapter 3, sub-heading 3.4.3.1, Guo, Wu and Liu (2019) highlight the role of technology in China, where platforms like WeChat facilitate real-time communication and updates on learner progress. These digital tools support the exchange of information and provide teachers and parents with resources to better understand the learners' needs.

Despite the importance of the microsystem, many parents struggle to engage due to work commitments. This contradicts EST's assumption, as presented in Ali, Ullah,

Shah, Ali, Khan, Shakoor, Begum and Ahmad's (2020) research in Chapter 3, sub-heading 3.2.7, which suggests that supporting parents at home in monitoring schoolwork and setting educational goals is beneficial. While EST effectively explains the environmental factors influencing comprehension, it does not fully account for socio-economic and linguistic challenges. Strengthening teacher-parent collaboration, improving school communication, and addressing systemic inequalities are crucial for enhancing learners' comprehension outcomes.

### **5.4.3 Theme 1: Household settings**

This theme considers the aspects of the home environment that shape a learner's access to academic support. It addresses factors such as family structure, parental involvement, and the educational background of household members, which collectively influence a child's learning experience and comprehension skills.

#### **5.4.3.1 Learning environment**

From my findings, I recognise that the learning environment plays a fundamental role in shaping reading comprehension. In Chapter 3, Figure 3.3 (Evaluating the relevance of EST—adapted from Darling, 2007) illustrates the concept of a supportive environment as a partnership between the teacher and the parent. Parents who are also teachers demonstrate the effectiveness of creating engaging and supportive spaces by integrating fun, play, and passionate reading. I see how strategies such as reading aloud, shared reading, and focusing on details have a positive influence on fluency and comprehension. The regularity of book discussions and constructive feedback significantly enhances literacy skills. However, I also acknowledge the challenge of time constraints, as balancing work, household responsibilities, and academic support can be overwhelming, potentially limiting the consistency of engagement.

#### **5.4.3.2 Structured approach and engagement in tasks**

I observed that a structured approach to learning significantly contributes to better reading comprehension outcomes. Parents who establish study schedules, encourage independent learning, and guide their children through vocabulary-building activities provide a solid foundation for literacy development. However, my findings also highlight that a lack of motivation and infrequent book discussions can hinder progress. Some parents struggle to support their children in preparing for exams and

fostering independent study habits, which suggests the need for additional guidance, resources, and strategies to empower parents in effectively assisting their children's learning. In Chapter 3, under sub-heading 3.2.11 (Rosales, 2023), independent learning is highlighted as a key factor that fosters an eagerness to learn.

#### **5.4.4 Theme 2: Communication**

In this theme, the focus is on the nature and quality of communication between teachers and parents, as well as within the household, particularly in the context of learners' language acquisition. This includes examining how consistent and effective communication between teachers and parents can create a supportive framework for learners, particularly as they navigate the complexities of learning in an FAL, while their MT may not always be the primary medium of instruction. In Chapter 1, under sub-heading 1.4.1.2, Neokleous (2017) highlights that learners prefer their MT as the medium of instruction, while in Chapter 2, under sub-heading 2.4.1, Nieuwoudt (2022) identifies a limited partnership due to a single example contrasting MT and FAL.

##### **5.4.4.1 Effective communication channel**

My research underscores the importance of communication between parents and teachers in supporting learners' reading comprehension. The widespread use of WhatsApp for quick and efficient interaction reflects the evolving nature of communication preferences. In Chapter 2, under sub-heading 2.2.2, Guo, Wu and Liu (2019) highlight that in China, modern technology facilitates faster and more convenient communication between teachers and parents. In contrast, Kraft and Bolves (2022) note that in the US, communication often relies on low-engagement apps. At the same time, phone calls and face-to-face meetings provide opportunities for more meaningful discussions. However, the variability in preferred communication methods sometimes results in inconsistencies, where some parents feel well-informed while others experience a lack of engagement. I see a need for a more standardised approach that accommodates different preferences while ensuring that all parents remain actively involved in their child's learning progress.

#### 5.4.4.2 Proactive vs reactive engagement

I noticed a distinct difference between proactive and reactive engagement regarding teacher-parent communication. Proactive teachers who check in on learners' progress, provide additional resources, and offer support foster trust and collaboration. However, my findings also show that some parents and teachers adopt a more passive approach, engaging only when necessary. In Chapter 3, under sub-heading 3.4.2.1, Yaqobi (2022) discusses communication methods, highlighting that code-switching presents an obstacle to academic performance. The lack of teacher-initiated communication regarding reading comprehension is concerning, as early identification of challenges is crucial for timely intervention. I believe that strengthening teachers' proactive communication efforts would lead to a more supportive and effective learning environment.

#### 5.4.4.3 Improved communication

Improving communication requires a structured and consistent feedback system, which I see as an essential step in bridging the gap between parents and teachers. My findings suggest that many parents would benefit from receiving regular updates on their child's reading progress, allowing concerns to be addressed promptly. Chapter 2, under sub-heading 2.2.2, a Greek study highlights the importance of parental involvement, with 90% of parents taking meetings seriously (Syripoulou-Delli & Polychronopoulou, 2019). Providing parents with access to appropriate reading materials and comprehension assessments could further strengthen collaboration and equip them with the tools necessary to support literacy development at home. An open feedback loop between teachers and parents would create a more cohesive learner support system.

#### **5.4.5 Theme 3: Resources**

This theme centres on the material and educational resources available to learners both at home and through school support. Educational resource access is presented as a practical tool for teachers and parents, categorised into two types: communication aids and reading aids (Chapter 2, under sub-heading 2.2.1). This includes access to books, the internet, study materials, and any additional tutoring (verbally) or academic

support. The availability and quality of these resources are crucial to understanding how they affect comprehension and overall language acquisition.

These themes will help structure your analysis and interpretation of the data, providing a comprehensive understanding of the various factors that influence learners' comprehension abilities.

#### 5.4.5.1 Physical and digital resources

The availability of physical and digital resources plays a significant role in reading comprehension, and my research highlights how parents leverage books, educational websites, and apps to support their children's literacy. While this demonstrates a balanced use of traditional and modern tools, I find it concerning that not all parents take advantage of community resources such as libraries and tutoring centres. Graham-Clay (2024) states in Chapter 3, sub-heading 3.2.10, that modern tools, such as electronic devices, are effective, which leads to effective communication. I believe that increasing awareness about available resources and making them more accessible could enhance learners' exposure to diverse reading materials and structured support.

#### 5.4.5.2 Age-appropriate and interest-driven content

My findings emphasise the importance of selecting reading materials that align with a child's age and interests to sustain engagement and comprehension. Parents who allow their children to choose their own books foster independence, while those who take a guided approach ensure that selections are suitable for skill development. Unfortunately (as stipulated in Chapter 3, sub-heading 3.2.7), selecting reading material is not an option for most, as only 3% of South Africans have access to it (Ozmen, Akuzum, Zincirli & Selcuk, 2016).

However, I noticed a gap in collaboration between teachers and parents when it comes to selecting reading materials. I believe that if teachers provided more recommendations and involved parents in the selection process, learners could benefit from a more personalised and enriching reading experience.

#### 5.4.5.3 Internal and external resources

I found that many parents actively use books, apps, and structured reading activities to enhance literacy, yet a gap in collaboration with teachers persists. This disconnect limits the full potential of reading support for learners. In contrast, a gap in teacher-

parent collaboration exists because both teachers and parents hesitate to use technology for communication, according to Borbalba and Bochaca (2019), Chapter 2, subheading 2.5.2.

My findings suggest that structured reading periods, individualised teacher support, and access to diverse resources could strengthen literacy development. Encouraging stronger partnerships between parents and teachers, as well as promoting community reading initiatives, would create a more cohesive and resourceful approach to improving reading comprehension. By fostering collaboration and ensuring access to a variety of resources, learners would receive more comprehensive and effective literacy support.

(ii) Category three participants: learners

Understanding the factors that shape learners' academic experiences is essential in assessing their engagement, comprehension, and overall development. Through focus group interviews with Grade 6 learners, I have gained insight into how different household environments, communication patterns, and available resources contribute to their learning journey.

## **5.5 EMERGING THEMES FROM DATA**

### **5.5.1 Theme 1: Household settings**

#### **5.5.1.1 Learning environment**

The findings reveal that a learner's home environment plays a crucial role in their reading development. In households where parents actively participate in literacy activities, children benefit from a culture of reading that fosters curiosity and academic engagement. According to Ali et al. (2020), the home environment should be positive, providing support by monitoring schoolwork and setting clear goals, as mentioned in Chapter 3, sub-heading 3.2.7. I interpret this as a reflection of the importance of parental modelling—when children see their parents engaged in reading, they are more likely to adopt similar habits. However, the disparity between different household environments suggests that some learners lack this foundational support, making it more challenging for them to develop an intrinsic motivation for reading. The presence or absence of a reading culture in the home has a significant impact on how learners perceive and approach literacy.

### 5.5.1.2 Structured approach and engagement in tasks

The focus group discussions highlight that some parents provide structured reading support tailored to their child's needs, while others adopt a more hands-off approach. This variation suggests that learners who receive direct guidance—such as help with spelling, vocabulary, and comprehension—have a stronger grasp of reading skills compared to those who are left to navigate challenges independently. Moghazy (2020) reflects in Chapter 3, sub-heading 3.2.7, that parent-teacher involvement is crucial for support, although barriers such as language might hinder comprehension. I interpret this to mean that structured parental involvement is a key determinant in literacy development. Chapter 2, sub-heading 2.2.3 – Aziz, Susilowati, Masturin and Prasojo (2023) agree that the involvement of both teachers and parents is crucial in shaping comprehension ability.

However, fostering independence is also valuable, and households that strike a balance between direct support and self-reliance create an ideal environment for learning. The lack of structured engagement in some households, coupled with distractions such as gaming, indicates that without consistent reinforcement, learners may struggle to develop sustainable reading habits.

## 5.5.2 Theme 2: Communication

### 5.5.2.1 Effective communication channels

Communication between learners, parents, and teachers is a foundational element of academic success. The findings indicate that most learners engage in discussions about their school day, but the depth and frequency of these conversations vary. Chapter 2, under sub-heading 2.2.2 and mentioned in Chapter 5, sub-heading 5.4.4.3, Greece's opinions on learners' progress highlight the importance of parental involvement, with 90% of parents taking meetings seriously (Syripoulou-Delli & Polychronopoulou, 2019). I interpret this as an indication that while communication exists, it is often informal and lacks structure. Digital communication tools, such as WhatsApp, have emerged as effective ways for parents to stay informed; however, they do not always replace the value of direct, meaningful conversations about learning. When discussions primarily revolve around grades rather than comprehension, there is a risk that learners will prioritise performance over understanding, which could limit their deeper engagement with reading material.

#### 5.5.2.2 Proactive vs reactive engagement

The findings reveal a contrast between proactive parental involvement, where parents take an active interest in their child's progress, and reactive engagement, where parents intervene only when issues arise. However, Syripoulou-Delli & Polychronopoulou (2019) disagree. According to their findings in Chapter 2, sub-heading 2.2.2, most parents (in Greece) prefer weekly meetings. I interpret this as a crucial distinction in shaping learner confidence and academic resilience. When parents and teachers foster an environment where asking questions is encouraged, learners feel more supported in addressing challenges. However, in cases where parental involvement has decreased over time, learners may struggle with self-guided learning, leading to gaps in comprehension. This suggests that while independence is important, ongoing guidance remains necessary for sustained academic growth.

#### 5.5.2.3 Improved communication

Despite positive communication practices, inconsistencies remain in teacher-learner interactions. Palviainen and Răișa (2023) find that today's families communicate via technology because it is a very common way of interaction these days (Chapter 2, sub-heading 2.2.2). Some learners hesitate to seek clarification from their teachers, which forces them to rely more on peers or parents. I interpret this as a reflection of the varying levels of teacher approachability and classroom culture. Learners who feel comfortable asking questions in class are more likely to develop problem-solving skills and academic confidence. The decline in attendance at parent-teacher meetings also suggests that digital communication, while convenient, may not be a sufficient replacement for in-depth discussions about a learner's academic progress. Encouraging structured parent-teacher engagement could bridge these gaps and strengthen overall communication effectiveness.

### **5.5.3 Theme 3: Resources**

#### 5.5.3.1 Physical and digital resources

The availability of both physical and digital learning resources plays a pivotal role in shaping a learner's reading experience. The findings indicate that multimedia tools such as PowerPoint slides, videos, and Google apps significantly aid comprehension. I interpret this as evidence that multimodal learning is highly effective for Grade 6 learners, particularly those who benefit from visual and auditory reinforcement.

However, while most learners have access to digital tools, not all use them effectively. The limited use of ChatGPT and other advanced digital resources suggests that there is still a reliance on traditional support systems. This indicates a need for greater integration of technology in literacy development to enhance independent learning.

#### 5.5.3.2 Age-appropriate and interest-driven content

The study reveals that learners engage more with reading materials that align with their interests. When parents provide books tailored to their child's reading level and preferences, learners develop a stronger affinity for reading. I interpret this as a demonstration of the importance of personalised learning resources. However, in households where reading materials are either too advanced or unappealing, learners may struggle with motivation. This suggests that parents and teachers should focus on curating reading materials that both challenge and captivate learners, ensuring that the content is both educational and enjoyable.

#### 5.5.3.3 Internal and external resources

Internally, learners rely on digital tools, such as PowerPoint slides, videos, and Google apps, to support their comprehension. Their ability to combine digital and physical resources, such as using phones to access materials and printers to create hard copies, shows a well-rounded learning approach. The use of multimodal resources caters to different learning styles, helping learners engage more effectively. However, despite the availability of AI tools like ChatGPT, only 21% of users utilise it, suggesting a lack of familiarity or guidance on its benefits.

Externally, parental involvement and access to technology play a crucial role. Learners with laptops and reliable internet access have a more flexible learning environment, enabling them to engage in independent study and research. However, time constraints limit parental support, with some parents prioritising sports over academics. This gap in involvement affects learners who rely on external guidance for comprehension.

To enhance learning, I believe both internal and external resources must work together. While digital tools foster independence, parental engagement and equitable access to technology remain essential for maximising learners' potential. Encouraging even minimal but consistent parental support could help bridge these gaps.

## **5.6 CONCLUDING REMARKS**

The findings from my research highlight the complex and multifaceted factors that influence Grade 6 learners' reading comprehension. Through an analysis of household settings, communication, and resources, it is evident that a learner's academic success is shaped by a combination of parental involvement, structured support systems, and access to appropriate learning materials.

The household settings play a critical role in fostering literacy, with engaged and supportive parents contributing to a culture of reading that enhances comprehension and fluency. However, disparities in parental involvement and structured engagement highlight the need for targeted interventions to support families in creating effective learning spaces at home. Additionally, effective communication between parents, teachers, and learners is a vital component of academic development. While digital tools facilitate quick exchanges, meaningful and consistent dialogue remains essential in ensuring that learners receive the guidance and encouragement necessary for sustained progress. The contrast between proactive and reactive engagement underscores the importance of early intervention in addressing literacy challenges before they become entrenched barriers to learning.

Moreover, the availability and use of both physical and digital resources have a significant influence on reading comprehension. While many learners benefit from access to books, educational apps, and multimedia tools, inconsistencies in their use reveal gaps in their effectiveness. Ensuring that learners have access to age-appropriate, interest-driven content, as well as structured teacher and parental support, is key to improving literacy outcomes. Strengthening collaboration between schools, families, and communities can bridge these gaps and create a more holistic support system for young readers.

## **5.7 CHAPTER SUMMARY**

This chapter, which presents and interprets the findings of my research, analyses how teacher-parent involvement influences learners' comprehension abilities in Grade 6, utilising data collected through open-ended questionnaires, focus group interviews, and narrative analysis. It explains how this data was interpreted and links it to the research objectives. These objectives include: (i) exploring how teachers and parents describe their involvement in home environments and how they believe these

interactions affect learners' comprehension, (ii) identifying effective communication practices that highlight successful or unsuccessful strategies for teacher-parent involvement, and (iii) evaluating how participants narrate the effectiveness of resources in teacher-parent involvement and their impact on learners' comprehension.

The next chapter will concisely summarise the scholarly and empirical research. The conclusions will be drawn from the data and provide insights into the impact of teacher-parent involvement on learners' comprehension. Finally, the recommendations section will offer suggestions for future practices based on these findings.

## **CHAPTER 6: SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

### **6.1 INTRODUCTION**

This chapter provides a comprehensive summary of the study, highlighting the aim (Chapter 1, sub-heading 1.6) to investigate how teacher-parent involvement influences learners' comprehension ability in Grade 6, and to assess the impact of this involvement on enhancing reading comprehension skills and overall academic performance. The study aimed to identify and recommend practical guidelines to strengthen teacher-parent partnerships and enhance learners' comprehension. In addressing Chapter 1, sub-heading 1.6.2.1, this study explores how teachers and parents describe their involvement in learners' home environments and how they believe these interactions influence learners' comprehension. It further examines the promotion of effective communication between teachers and parents, as discussed under sub-heading 1.6.1.2, by highlighting specific strategies that foster meaningful collaboration between teachers and parents. Additionally, the study considers sub-heading 1.6.1.3, which focuses on participants' perspectives regarding the effectiveness of resources used in teacher-parent involvement and their perceived impact on learners' comprehension abilities.

This chapter also outlines the limitations of the study, highlighting potential constraints that may have influenced the findings. By acknowledging these limitations, the study ensures transparency and provides a foundation for future research.

Lastly, the chapter provides potential areas for future research, emphasising the need for continued exploration of strategies that strengthen teacher-parent involvement in learning.

### **6.2 SUMMARY OF THE RESEARCH FINDINGS**

This study is situated within the South African education system, specifically focusing on Grade 6 learners' comprehension ability. The context is shaped by multilingual classroom environments, varying socioeconomic backgrounds, and disparities in parental education levels and involvement. Teacher-parent partnerships in these settings are often inconsistent, with barriers including language differences, limited digital access, and differing educational roles that hinder collaboration.

Therefore, this study draws on an EST theoretical framework, which emphasises the interaction between various environmental layers, underscoring the importance of involvement between teachers and parents, communication methods, and the accessibility of resources to improve comprehension ability.

As discussed in Chapter 2, sub-heading 2.6.2 and further supported by literature under sub-heading 2.2.2, research indicates that active parental involvement in the home environment, such as assisting with reading and participating in school-related activities, significantly enhances learners' academic performance (Castro et al., 2015; Ahmed, 2015). However, (Chapter 2, sub-heading 2.6.1) in many multilingual settings, including South Africa, this involvement is often limited by socio-economic factors, language barriers, and lack of resources (Aderibigbe, 2012; Basson, 2021).

As mentioned in Chapter 2, effective communication between teachers and parents is a key factor in building strong partnerships. Studies indicate in sub-heading 2.6.2 (Kuusimäki et al., 2019; Bordialba & Bochaca, 2019) a growing reliance on digital platforms like WhatsApp and emails, but these are not always used effectively due to digital literacy challenges or conflicting perceptions of their role in education. Unfortunately (Chapter 2, sub-heading 2.6.2), language differences between the home and school further complicate communication, often leaving parents uncertain about how to support their children (Shim, 2013; Schneider & Arnot, 2018).

Teacher attitudes also influence the success of partnerships. While some teachers (Chapter 2, sub-heading 2.6.1) view parents as essential collaborators (Leenders et al., 2019), others view them as overly dependent or difficult to manage, like Gilmore et al. (2023) in Chapter 2, 2.6.2. Despite these tensions, Chapter 2, sub-heading 2.6.2, demonstrates that clear, supportive, and culturally sensitive communication can improve learners' reading comprehension and academic development (Mathebula, 2017; Abdullah et al., 2023).

These findings underscore the importance of strengthening teacher-parent partnerships and developing practical strategies to bridge communication gaps and provide support. This study builds on this by exploring how these relationships affect the comprehension of Grade 6 learners, aiming to propose practical guidelines to strengthen teacher-parent partnerships and enhance learners' comprehension.

### **6.2.1 Key scholarly review findings**

The literature reviewed in Chapters 2 and 3 of this study provides a comprehensive understanding of the dynamics that shape teacher-parent involvement and its impact on learners' comprehension ability in Grade 6 contexts. These findings are discussed under three core areas: contextual, theoretical, and conceptual.

From a contextual perspective, several challenges hinder effective collaboration between teachers and parents. As outlined in Chapter 2, sub-heading 2.4.2, socio-economic barriers remain a dominant theme. Wolf (2020) reveals that many teachers perceive parents from low-income backgrounds as less involved or interested in their children's education. This perception affects the nature and quality of communication between the home and school, often leading to disengagement. Additionally, the contextual realities of rural education settings present unique challenges, as outlined in sub-heading 2.4.3. Myende and Nhlumayo (2022) observe that engaging rural parents remains a significant challenge due to limited access, poor infrastructure, and a lack of institutional support. Nieuwoudt (2022) expands on this by identifying time constraints, curriculum demands, and parents' competing household responsibilities as barriers to effective involvement. Chileshe and Kubombela (2012) also highlight that in many low-resource households, education is often deprioritised in favour of domestic duties. Language barriers further complicate this dynamic, particularly in multilingual contexts. As noted in sub-heading 2.6.2, Wilke (2022) emphasises that many learners are instructed in a second or third language, which hinders comprehension. Simultaneously, parents often struggle to understand English-based school communication, making meaningful engagement difficult in contexts.

The theoretical findings, as discussed in Chapter 3, provide a solid framework for interpreting these contextual realities. Epstein's framework of involvement (sub-heading 3.2.1) serves as a foundational model for understanding how schools and families can collaborate in diverse and meaningful ways. The framework outlines key areas, including parenting, communication, resources, and learning at home, each of which contributes to improved learner outcomes when implemented effectively. This theory supports the notion that involvement must be multi-dimensional and inclusive. Complementing this is Bronfenbrenner's EST (Chapter 3, sub-heading 3.2.2), which positions the learner at the centre of a network of interacting systems. The microsystem and mesosystem—specifically the interactions between the home and

school—are emphasised as critical influences on learner development. The theory underscores the importance of collaboration between parents and teachers in reinforcing learning and enhancing comprehension skills.

Building on these theoretical insights, the conceptual findings in Chapter 3 further emphasise the need for practical and contextually responsive strategies to support learner comprehension through teacher-parent involvement. Chapter 3, sub-heading 3.4.2.1 highlights the importance of communication, particularly in linguistically diverse settings. Moghazy (2020) notes that effective, multilingual communication is essential for meaningful engagement. When communication is inaccessible—due to language gaps—it not only limits parents' involvement but also affects the learner's ability to comprehend content delivered in English. Additionally, the literature draws a distinction between home-based and school-based involvement, as discussed in sub-heading 3.4.1.2. While many parents can provide valuable academic support at home, Sari and Ilyas (2021), in sub-heading 3.4.1, point out that in countries like Switzerland, work commitments often result in parents depending solely on schools, thereby creating tension in school-family relationships. Lastly, sub-heading 3.4.2.2 stresses the effectiveness and accessibility of resources used to promote involvement. When schools provide accessible resources such as workshops, multilingual notices, and flexible platforms for engagement, parents are more likely to participate actively in their children's education, which positively affects comprehension outcomes in contexts.

The conceptual framework implemented in this study is grounded in three key components derived from Bronfenbrenner's EST: the microsystem, mesosystem, and exosystem. The microsystem encompasses immediate settings such as the household and school environment, where direct teacher-parent involvement occurs. This includes both formal and informal engagements, such as parent-teacher meetings, messaging apps, and progress feedback. The mesosystem refers to the connections and communication between these settings, focusing on the exchange of information and the sharing of strategies to support learner comprehension. This includes both digital tools (e.g., SMS, WhatsApp) and in-person interactions. The exosystem encompasses broader external influences, including socio-economic conditions, school policy, and access to learning resources, which indirectly impact the level and quality of parental involvement.

Learner comprehension in this study is conceptualised as the cognitive ability of Grade 6 learners to understand, interpret, and apply language meaningfully—skills which are directly impacted by the quality of home-school interaction and the availability of learning resources. When these systems work in synergy, they create a conducive learning environment that strengthens language acquisition and comprehension development.

Emerging findings suggest that household settings, communication practices, and access to resources play a crucial role in shaping learners' reading and comprehension development. While both parental involvement and teacher support contribute positively, challenges such as time constraints, inconsistent communication, and limited resource utilisation continue to hinder optimal progress. Insights gathered from teachers, parents, and learners reveal the need for a balanced and responsive approach—one that prioritises effective communication strategies, fosters mutual respect, and ensures the equitable distribution and accessibility of learning resources. These findings not only reinforce the theoretical and conceptual frameworks adopted in the study but also provide practical guidance for enhancing learner outcomes through collaborative engagement.

### **6.2.2 Key empirical findings**

This section presents the core findings of the study, organised according to the three main themes that emerged from the previous chapter: household settings, communication, and resources. These themes reflect the interconnected factors influencing teacher-parent involvement and their impact on the comprehension abilities of Grade 6 learners in.

#### **6.2.2.1 Household settings**

As highlighted in Chapter 3, sub-heading 3.4.2, Wilke (2022) emphasises that many learners are taught in a second or third language, which negatively affects their comprehension abilities. This linguistic barrier is compounded by socioeconomic and contextual challenges. According to Chapter 2, sub-heading 2.4.2, Wolf (2020) found that many teachers perceive parents from low-income backgrounds as less involved or interested in their children's education, which contributes to poor communication between home and school. Further supporting this, Chapter 3, sub-heading 3.4.1.2 presents Myende and Nhlumayo's (2022) observation that parental engagement in rural schools is particularly challenging. Nieuwoudt (2022) attributes this to factors

such as time constraints, curriculum demands, and issues related to the use of MT versus FAL instruction. Additionally, Chileshe and Kubombela (2012) report that many parents, especially in under-resourced communities, prioritise household responsibilities over educational involvement, further limiting their participation in their children's learning process.

As mentioned in Chapter 5, sub-heading 5.3.2.1, Overall findings A, creating a supportive and relaxed atmosphere at home helps boost learners' confidence and encourages deeper engagement with the material. However, challenges such as time management difficulties, disagreements with children, concentration issues, low interest in certain subjects, and a lack of motivation can hinder the learning process.

Thus, teachers who are also parents recognise the positive influence of parental involvement on reading comprehension but acknowledge challenges such as time constraints and motivation. Parents provide structure and encouragement, yet some struggle with consistency due to busy schedules and self-doubt in their teaching abilities. Learners in supportive households benefit from interactive reading activities and structured guidance, whereas those in less engaged environments often feel unsupported, which can impact their comprehension skills. Balancing independence with structured parental support is essential to fostering.

#### 6.2.2.2 Communication

In Chapter 3, sub-heading 3.4.1.2, Nieuwoudt (2022) identifies challenges such as situational factors (e.g., MT vs. FAL instruction) that hinder effective communication and involvement. Although findings reveal a clear preference for informal communication methods, such as WhatsApp and text messaging, effective communication between parents and teachers is crucial in supporting reading comprehension. Sadly, Wolf's (2020) studies in Chapter 2, sub-heading 2.4.2, indicate that many teachers believe parents with low incomes are less interested or involved in their children's education, which negatively affects communication between home and school.

Teachers emphasise the importance of structured and informal communication methods, including meetings, emails, and WhatsApp messages, to keep parents engaged. While many parents value WhatsApp for its convenience, others report limited communication with teachers, either due to a lack of necessity or insufficient outreach. However, language barriers between learners' home languages and the

LoLT (English) hinder effective two-way communication. In Chapter 3, sub-heading 3.4.2, Wilke (2022) highlights that many learners are educated in a second or third language, which prevents their comprehension abilities.

Code-switching and other adaptive strategies are often used to bridge these gaps. Serip Mohamad (2022) in Chapter 2, sub-heading 2.2.2 declares that Malaysia's population is diverse in both ethnicity and language, so code-switching is common in daily conversations, although they are not always formally supported or encouraged within school systems.

Learners generally experience positive communication with both parents and teachers; however, the structure of discussions at home and the responsiveness of teachers significantly influence their confidence and engagement. Strengthening communication strategies, such as regular feedback loops and deeper academic discussions, can enhance comprehension support. Chapter 5, sub-heading 5.3.2.1, Overall findings B: parents appreciate consistent feedback, which helps them stay informed about strengths and areas for improvement.

#### 6.2.2.3 Resources

Both teachers and parents use a combination of traditional and digital resources to support comprehension.

Learners benefit from various reading aids, yet digital distractions and competing activities can hinder engagement if no parental guidance is provided. Encouraging collaboration between parents and teachers in selecting and utilising resources can improve reading development and comprehension skills.

Teachers highlight the diverse range of resources available for reading support, including books, apps, and community programs, though not all parents utilise them effectively. While printed books and face-to-face meetings remain valuable, mobile apps and messaging platforms are increasingly relied upon. Despite this, many parents are either unaware of or underutilise available learning resources due to a lack of training, digital literacy, confidence or time constraints. This highlights the need for more targeted support to empower parents in their role as co-teachers at home. Chapter 3, sub-heading 3.4.1. reveals that many parents in Switzerland (Sari & Ilyas, 2021) rely solely on schools due to work commitments, creating tension between schools and families.

Many parents actively select reading materials, incorporating both traditional books and digital tools, but some lack awareness or access to community resources. Chapter 5, sub-heading 5.3.2.1, Overall findings C, clearly shows that some parents do not use community support, such as libraries or tutoring centres. Limited collaboration with teachers is evident, with only some parents engaging in meetings to discuss resources.

### **6.3 RESEARCH CONCLUSIONS**

*The main research question, which addresses how teacher-parent involvement impacts Grade 6 learners' comprehension ability, is addressed through insights gained from the three sub-questions. These conclusions are based on the evidence gathered from participants and the analysis of the data.*

**6.3.1 Sub-question 1:** How do parents describe their role in supporting learning at home, enhancing learners' reading comprehension skills?

Parents describe their role in supporting learning at home as providing structure, encouragement, and access to resources to enhance their children's reading comprehension skills. Many parents actively engage by selecting age-appropriate books, using digital tools, and incorporating structured reading activities into daily routines. In Chapter 5, (iii) Learners Category no. a), learners clearly stated that their parents ensure reading material according to age-appropriateness and the importance of it is emphasised as mentioned in Chapter 5 at the narrative analysis no. c).

They also emphasise creating a positive learning environment by motivating their children, tracking progress, and reinforcing reading habits. However, some parents face challenges, such as time constraints, a lack of confidence in their teaching abilities, and difficulties in adapting to their child's learning needs. Additionally, while some parents communicate regularly with teachers for guidance, others have limited interactions, which can affect the consistency of support.

Parental involvement plays a crucial role in enhancing learners' reading comprehension, but its effectiveness depends on the level of engagement, the availability of resources, and effective communication with teachers. Parents generally view their role as supportive but often feel limited by various household challenges. While many are eager to help, factors such as time constraints, low literacy levels, and language differences between the home and the school make active involvement

difficult. As outlined in Chapter 3, sub-heading 3.4.1, Sari and Ilyas (2021) find that many parents in Switzerland depend entirely on schools for their children's education due to demanding work commitments. This reliance often leads to tension in the relationship between schools and families. Some parents assist by encouraging reading, checking homework, or motivating learners, but there is inconsistency in how support is provided. Chapter 1, sub-heading 1.2, Chow (2022) confirms regarding English language learning, parents often focus more on grammar and vocabulary and pay less attention to reading.

While many parents actively support their children, inconsistencies in time availability, teaching confidence, and collaboration with teachers create gaps in learning support. To maximise the impact, a structured approach that includes regular feedback from teachers, greater parental awareness of available resources, and strategies to balance independent and guided comprehensive learning is necessary. Strengthening teacher-parent partnerships and equipping parents with practical tools can further enhance reading comprehension development at home.

**6.3.2 Sub-question 2:** What communication methods do teachers and parents find most effective in supporting learners' comprehension?

The findings indicate that both teachers and parents consider a combination of structured and informal communication methods essential in supporting learners' reading comprehension. WhatsApp emerges as the most effective and preferred method due to its convenience, accessibility, and ability to facilitate quick updates. Informal digital communication platforms, especially WhatsApp, are the most widely used and preferred method of communication. These tools offer convenience and speed but are often used for basic information sharing rather than collaborative dialogue. Mayangsari and Aprianti (2017) in Chapter 2, sub-heading 2.2.2, observe that in Bandung, Indonesia, WhatsApp serves as a common direct communication medium between parents and teachers. In Chapter 5 (iii) Category 3, where learners were the participants, 100% of them agreed that their parents stay up to date and informed through WhatsApp. Meetings and phone calls are also valued, particularly for in-depth discussions about learners' progress and challenges. Emails offer a formal means of communication, while feedback-tracking systems facilitate the monitoring of academic development over time. However, inconsistencies in communication preferences and the frequency of teacher-parent interactions present challenges, with

some parents feeling that outreach from teachers is insufficient. Face-to-face meetings are valued for deeper engagement, but time constraints and scheduling conflicts often limit their frequency. Islam (2019), on the other hand finds that parent-teacher meetings have a significantly positive effect on the academic performance of European learners, emphasising the need to create opportunities, such as meetings, to involve parents in academic matters (Chapter 2, Subheading 2.2.1).

Language barriers also present significant challenges to effective communication between parents and teachers. As noted in Chapter 3, sub-heading 3.4.2.1, Moghazy (2020) advocates for the active engagement of both parents and teachers in supporting learners, particularly in multilingual contexts where such barriers can impede comprehension. This is especially evident in settings, where many parents struggle to understand school communication that is primarily delivered in English.

From these findings, I conclude that effective communication in supporting comprehension relies on a balanced and proactive approach. While digital tools like WhatsApp enhance accessibility, they should be supplemented with structured feedback mechanisms, regular meetings, and open discussions to ensure all parents remain informed and engaged. Strengthening teacher-parent collaboration through consistent, multi-channel communication can significantly improve learners' reading comprehension by fostering a supportive learning environment both at school and at home.

**6.3.3 Sub-question 3:** What resources do teachers and parents use to support learners' comprehension?

Teachers and parents utilise a variety of resources to support Grade 6 learners' reading comprehension. These resources include traditional materials, digital tools, and community-based programs.

Traditional resources such as physical books, printed worksheets, and reading comprehension exercises remain essential in both classroom and home settings. Printed books, homework tasks, and verbal explanations remain important.

These foundational resources help establish basic comprehension skills and are still widely used for structured reading practices. Digital tools have become increasingly popular for supporting comprehension (see Chapter 5, sub-heading 5.3.2.2, no. c), where it is stated that visual tools such as videos, PowerPoint slides and apps are

familiar and part of how learners study. Teachers and parents incorporate apps, e-books, educational websites, and multimedia resources, such as videos and PowerPoint slides. WhatsApp is commonly used for communication (as discussed in Chapter 6, sub-heading 6.3.2), allowing parents to receive real-time updates and guidance from teachers, further supporting learners' academic progress. Community resources, such as libraries, bookstores, and reading programs, offer additional opportunities for reading enrichment. However, not all parents take full advantage of these resources. Although resources are available, some parents (P1, P4, P5, P13) do not utilise community services such as libraries or tutoring centres to support reading comprehension. This indicates that access or awareness may be a limiting factor (Chapter 5, Category 2, parents at Overall findings F). Some families also use tutoring services to reinforce reading skills outside of school.

Parental strategies are also crucial in fostering comprehension. Parents engage in structured reading activities, including guided reading sessions, questioning techniques, and discussion-based learning. Many parents encourage independent reading by allowing children to select books based on their personal interests, fostering greater engagement.

The use of diverse resources positively influences learners' comprehension, but the effectiveness of these resources depends on access, consistency, and collaboration. While teachers and parents actively utilise a combination of digital and traditional tools, some gaps remain in resource awareness and engagement. Many parents do not fully utilise community resources, and inconsistent communication between parents and teachers can limit the level of support provided. Strengthening collaboration in the selection and use of comprehension resources, along with increasing awareness of community programs, can further enhance learners' reading development.

### **6.3.4 Conclusion: Teacher–parent involvement on learner comprehension**

The findings show that teacher-parent involvement plays a critical role in enhancing learners' reading comprehension. When communication is consistent and supportive, learners benefit from clearer expectations and better reinforcement at home. In Chapter 3, sub-heading 3.2.9, a child's development occurs within the network of relationships that comprise their environment (Ryan, 2001). When parents and teachers are supportive, children are more likely to get the care and encouragement they need to grow and succeed at home and school. Focusing on the well-being of parents and teachers creates more stable and supportive environments that help learners achieve academic success (Twum-Antwi, Jefferies & Ungar, 2020). However, the effectiveness of this partnership is often limited by socioeconomic challenges, language differences, and a lack of accessible resources.

In households where parents are actively involved, offering structure, motivation, and encouragement, children are more likely to feel supported and engaged in their learning. These parents often create an environment that prioritises reading and learning, thus fostering motivation and improvement in reading comprehension. Conversely, in households with minimal parental involvement, learners may lack the necessary guidance and structure. Focus Group 2 shared that while their parents were more engaged during the early grades, they now must manage their own reading progress with minimal guidance, which can lead to struggles in comprehension, especially when faced with challenges such as vocabulary development or complex texts.

In conclusion, teacher-parent involvement is a key factor in enhancing Grade 6 learners' reading comprehension abilities.. The combination of effective communication, access to appropriate resources, and structured parental support creates a comprehensive support system that helps learners succeed. While challenges such as time constraints, inconsistent communication, and underutilisation of resources exist, these can be addressed through improved collaboration between parents and teachers. By strengthening these areas of involvement, we can ensure that learners receive the necessary support to develop their comprehension skills and achieve academic success.

## **6.4 PROPOSED PRACTICAL GUIDELINES TO STRENGTHEN TEACHER-PARENT PARTNERSHIPS AND ENHANCEMENT OF LEARNERS COMPREHENSION**

### **6.4.1 Foster a consistent two-way communication**

- Maintaining consistent communication ensures that both teachers and parents remain informed and engaged in the learner's progress. Digital platforms, such as WhatsApp groups, email newsletters, or school apps, allow for instant updates, reminders, and the sharing of resources. On the other hand, face-to-face meetings, such as parent-teacher conferences or informal check-ins, provide opportunities for more in-depth, personal discussions that foster trust and strengthen relationships. Combining these methods allows for flexibility, ensuring that all parents, regardless of their schedules or preferences, can remain involved in their child's learning journey.
- A successful partnership between teachers and parents requires open communication that goes both ways. Teachers should not only provide updates on learners' performance but also create spaces where parents can share their observations, challenges, and suggestions. Collaborative discussions can lead to shared strategies that support learners both at home and in school. For example, teachers might suggest specific reading activities, while parents could share insights about their children's learning habits at home, resulting in a holistic approach to improving comprehension.
- Language barriers can hinder effective communication and parental involvement. To address this, schools and teachers can provide written notices, newsletters, or digital updates in multiple languages commonly spoken by parents in the community. Where translation is not possible, simplifying English communication by using clear, plain language and visual aids (such as infographics or pictograms) can help. Ensuring that all parents understand the messages being shared fosters inclusivity, prevents misunderstandings, and empowers parents to actively support their child's learning.

#### **6.4.2 Promote shared responsibility**

- A welcoming environment begins with building trust and showing respect for parents' perspectives and contributions. Teachers can achieve this by greeting parents warmly, listening actively, and valuing their opinions without judgment. When parents feel that their insights are appreciated, they are more likely to participate in discussions and share meaningful observations about their child's strengths and challenges. Creating this environment also involves being approachable, responding to parents' questions with patience, and offering reassurance that their involvement is vital to their child's success. Simple gestures, such as inviting parents to share feedback during meetings or celebrating their efforts, can make them feel like valued partners in the learning process.
- This mind-set emphasises collaboration rather than blame when challenges arise. Teachers and parents should approach difficulties—such as a learner's struggles with reading comprehension—as shared responsibilities. By asking “How can we solve this together?” both parties focus on finding solutions rather than dwelling on problems. For example, a teacher might suggest specific classroom strategies while inviting parents to share ideas on how to reinforce those strategies at home. This collaborative approach fosters stronger partnerships, ensures that both perspectives are considered, and results in more effective, learner-centred solutions.

#### **6.4.3 Train and empower parents**

- Parents often want to help their children improve their reading comprehension but may not know how to do so effectively. Teachers can bridge this gap by providing easy-to-follow strategies, such as shared reading (reading together and discussing the text), asking open-ended questions about stories, or encouraging learners to retell the main points in their own words. Demonstrating these techniques during parent meetings, sending home guidelines, or sharing short instructional videos can further equip parents with practical tools. These simple yet effective strategies not only build comprehension skills but also foster a love for reading at home.

- Continuous communication about a learner’s progress is essential for keeping parents informed and involved. Teachers can schedule regular updates—through meetings, emails, or progress reports—to share specific details about the learner’s strengths, challenges, and areas for improvement. This ongoing feedback allows parents to monitor their child’s development, celebrate progress, and address any issues early. It also gives parents an opportunity to ask questions and collaborate with teachers to find solutions or additional support strategies.

#### **6.4.4 Address socioeconomic and household constraints**

- Not all families have access to books, internet connectivity, or other educational materials. Teachers can adapt tasks to ensure that all learners and their parents can participate meaningfully, regardless of available resources. For example, instead of requiring printed worksheets or online tools, teachers can provide activities that use everyday household items, oral exercises, or simple paper-based tasks. This approach ensures inclusivity and reduces the pressure on families while still promoting comprehension skills.
- Storytelling is a powerful, cost-free method to develop comprehension skills. Teachers can encourage parents to share stories from their own lives, community traditions, or simple folktales with their children. These stories can then be discussed by asking the child to recall key details, explain the moral, or describe the characters. Additionally, parents can utilise free resources, such as library books, audio stories, or newspapers, to create comprehension activities. Such low-cost methods are effective because they make learning interactive and engaging while requiring minimal materials.

#### **6.4.5 Use inclusive and flexible resources**

- An effective approach to supporting learners’ comprehension involves blending traditional methods, such as printed books, written exercises, and face-to-face discussions, with modern digital tools like educational apps, e-books, or interactive videos. This combination caters to different learning styles and ensures flexibility for both parents and learners. For example, a parent could read a physical storybook with their child and then use a free reading app to

reinforce vocabulary or comprehension skills. By integrating both types of resources, teachers can create a well-rounded and accessible learning experience that accommodates families with varying preferences and resources.

## **6.5 RECOMMENDATIONS**

### **6.5.1 Department of Basic Education (DBE) – National Level**

At the national level, the Department of Basic Education (DBE) plays a crucial role in establishing policies and frameworks that support teacher-parent involvement in enhancing learners' comprehension skills.

#### **6.5.1.1 Recommendation 1**

The DBE should develop and implement national guidelines that promote the importance of teacher-parent collaboration, specifically focused on improving reading comprehension in . These guidelines outline best practices for communication between teachers and parents, including the use of digital platforms, feedback systems, and regular progress updates.

#### **6.5.1.2 Recommendation 2**

The DBE can offer targeted professional development programs for teachers, focusing on strategies to effectively engage parents, communicate learners' progress, and support them in selecting resources. This training should guide parents in utilising technological resources for reading support.

### **6.5.2 District level**

At the district level, district education decision-makers can help implement DBE guidelines and establish support systems to facilitate collaboration between teachers and parents.

#### **6.5.2.1 Recommendation 3**

District education offices should organise regular meetings for parents and teachers, focusing on reading comprehension. These meetings should be scheduled to accommodate parents' availability, ensure consistent engagement, and offer training

sessions for parents to better understand how to support their child's reading and comprehension at home.

#### 6.5.2.2 Recommendation 4

Resource centres should be established that offer both digital and physical resources, such as books, educational apps, and learning kits, to support reading comprehension.

#### 6.5.2.3 Recommendation 5

Districts can support schools in establishing and maintaining communication platforms, such as WhatsApp groups, emails, or newsletters, to facilitate continuous engagement between teachers and parents. These platforms should be used to provide feedback on learners' progress, share learning materials, and offer suggestions for home-based reading activities.

### **6.5.3 Community level**

At the community level, involvement from libraries and community leaders can enhance the overall support system for learners, parents, and teachers.

#### 6.5.3.1 Recommendation 6

Local libraries and community organisations, such as after-school programs, should collaborate with schools to offer reading programs or book clubs that encourage children to read in a social and interactive setting. These programs can help reinforce skills learned in school and offer additional resources to learners who may not have access to them at home.

#### 6.5.3.2 Recommendation 7

Organisations such as libraries and after-school programs can be encouraged to contribute to developing reading resources, such as donating books or funding community reading initiatives. This can increase the availability of resources and create more opportunities for learners to engage with reading outside the classroom.

#### 6.5.3.3 Recommendation 8

Communities can also foster peer-led reading groups, where older learners or adults mentor younger learners in reading and comprehension activities. These programs

not only support the learners but also create a sense of shared responsibility within the community for children's educational development.

## **6.6 POSSIBLE FUTURE RESEARCH**

This study explores the impact of teacher-parent involvement on learners' comprehension in Grade 6 English First Additional Language. While the findings provide valuable insights, several areas for further research could deepen understanding and improve educational practices.

### **6.6.1 Long-term impact of teacher-parent collaboration**

Research could focus on training programs for parents, examining whether workshops or educational resources help them better support their children's learning.

### **6.6.2 The role of technology in teacher-parent communication**

Digital platforms such as messaging apps or online learning tools could enhance collaboration and improve learner comprehension. Research on the understanding of digital and availability of technological devices challenge influence parental involvement and learner outcomes can be a study.

### **6.6.3 Teacher-parent collaboration and its impact on other subjects**

Research could assess whether teacher-parent collaboration affects other subjects in the same way. Additionally, cultural differences may play a significant role, making it essential to investigate how diverse backgrounds impact parental involvement and learner success.

### **6.6.4 Developing better assessment methods**

Finally, research could focus on developing more effective assessment methods to measure the impact of teacher-parent involvement on comprehension. This would provide clearer data on how it affects learning outcomes.

## **6.7 LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY**

While the recommendations are valuable to strengthen teacher-parent partnerships and enhance of learners' comprehension, there are several limitations that may affect their successful implementation:

### **6.7.1 Socioeconomic constraints**

Many parents face financial hardships and demanding work schedules, which limit their access to educational resources and reduce the time available to support learning at home.

### **6.7.2 Digital literacy gaps**

Some parents, particularly older individuals or those with limited formal education, may lack the skills or confidence to use digital platforms effectively, making technology-based communication overwhelming.

### **6.7.3 Limited teacher capacity**

Teachers, often overburdened and lacking proper training in parental engagement, may struggle to maintain consistent and meaningful communication with parents.

### **6.7.4 Differing expectations and roles**

Differences in beliefs about responsibility for learners' reading development can lead to misaligned expectations, causing misunderstandings, frustration, or disengagement between teachers and parents.

## **6.8 CONCLUDING REMARKS**

This study underscores the pivotal role of teacher–parent involvement in shaping Grade 6 learners' comprehension, situating these interactions within Bronfenbrenner's Ecological Systems Theory to highlight the multi-layered influence of home, school, and broader community contexts. By examining how teachers and parents collaborate, it demonstrates that effective partnerships, open communication, and shared responsibility create a supportive environment that enhances learners' comprehension, engagement, and academic performance. Yet, despite widespread recognition of its importance, several limitations constrain the full potential of these partnerships. Socioeconomic constraints limit parents' access to resources and time to support learning at home, while digital literacy gaps hinder engagement with technology-based communication. Limited teacher capacity, including high workloads

and insufficient training in parental engagement, affects the quality and consistency of communication, and differing expectations regarding roles and responsibilities can lead to misunderstandings or disengagement. Addressing these barriers requires deliberate strategies that empower parents, prioritise two-way communication, provide accessible and flexible resources, and align home–school expectations. By illuminating both the opportunities and constraints of teacher–parent collaboration, this research provides actionable insights for teachers, parents, and policymakers to strengthen curriculum-as-practice partnerships, foster coordinated efforts across ecological systems, and equip learners with the comprehension skills necessary for academic success and lifelong learning.

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doi:10.1016/j.heliyon.2020.e05413.

## APPENDIX A: ETHICAL CLEARANCE



College of Education \_ERC

Date: 26/08/2025

Dear: Mrs Rindi Carstens

**Decision: Ethics Approval from  
26/08/2025 to 26/08/2030**

NHREC Registration # : (if applicable)  
Ref #: 6898  
Name: Mrs Rindi Carstens  
Student #: 14800098  
Staff #:

**Researcher:** Mrs Rindi Carstens

197 Springbokstreet, Anmar Park compex nr. 1 Wierdapark

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**Supervisor:** Professor Elize du Plessis dplesec@unisa.ac.za

**Co-Supervisor:**

**Co-Researcher(s):**

**Email address:**

**EXPLORING THE EFFECT OF TEACHER-PARENT INVOLVEMENT AND ITS IMPACT  
ON  
LEARNERS' COMPREHENSION ABILITY IN GRADE 6, ENGLISH FIRST  
ADDITIONAL LANGUAGE**

**Qualification:** PHD Curriculum Studies

Thank you for the application for research ethics approval by the College of Education \_ERC for the above-mentioned research study. Ethics approval is granted for **five years**.

The **medium risk application** was **reviewed** by the College of Education \_ERC C in compliance with the Unisa Policy on Research Ethics and the Standard Operating Procedure on Research Ethics Risk Assessment.

The proposed research may now commence with the provisions that:

1. The researcher(s) will ensure that the research project adheres to the values and principles expressed in the UNISA Policy on Research Ethics.
2. Any adverse circumstance arising during the undertaking of the research study that may affect the ethical integrity of the study, including those involving research participants, third parties, or juristic persons, must be reported in writing to the College of Education \_ERC s without delay.
3. The researcher(s) will conduct the study according to the methods and procedures set out in the approved application.
4. Any changes that may affect study-related risks to research participants, juristic or third persons, must be reported in writing to the College of Education \_ERC , accompanied by a progress report.

5. The researcher will ensure that the research study complies with all applicable national legislation, professional codes of conduct, institutional guidelines, and scientific standards relevant to the specific field of study. Where applicable, adherence to the following South African legislation is essential: the Protection of Personal Information Act (No. 4 of 2013), the Children's Act (No. 38 of 2005), and the National Health Act (No. 61 of 2003)
6. Future use of this research data is permitted only in de-identified form and only for secondary research with objectives similar to those of the original study. Any secondary use involving identifiable human data will require additional ethics clearance.
7. No fieldwork activities may continue beyond the stated expiry date (28/08/2030). A completed Research Ethics Progress Report must be submitted as an application for renewal and is subject to approval by the Research Ethics Committee. A Close-Out Report must be submitted upon completion of the research study.
8. The with Section 7.2 of the Unisa Policy on Research Ethics (2024).College of Education \_ERC may require the submission of regular progress reports on an **annual** basis, in alignment

#### **Additional Conditions**

1. Disclosure of data to third parties is prohibited without explicit consent from the research participants and Unisa.
2. Research data must be stored in compliance with the university's research data management policy for a period of up to 15 years.
3. When publishing the results, the researcher must take appropriate precautions to safeguard the confidentiality and privacy of the research participants, juristic persons, third parties, and the university, in accordance with institutional policies and ethical standards.
4. Adherence to the National Statement on Ethical Research and Publication Practices, specifically Principle 7 on Social Awareness, must be ensured. This principle states: 'Researchers and institutions must be sensitive to the potential impact of their research on society, marginal groups, or individuals, and must consider these when weighing the benefits of the research against any harmful effects, with a view to minimising or avoiding the latter where possible.' The University of South Africa (Unisa) accepts no liability for any failure to comply with this principle.



Note

The reference number 6898 should be clearly indicated on all forms of communication with the intended research participants, as well as with the Committee.

Kind regards,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Justin August', written in a cursive style.

Prof Justin Oswin August  
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**APPENDIX B: OPEN-ENDED QUESTIONNAIRES**



**Open-ended questionnaire for Grade 6 qualified teachers (with children of their own) and parents of Grade 6 learners**

**Circle or highlight your ROLE:**

**ROLE: Teacher/ Parent**

**GENDER: M/ F**

**AGE: \_\_\_\_\_**

**QUALIFICATION: \_\_\_\_\_**

**MOTHER TONGUE LANGUAGE: \_\_\_\_\_**

**ANONYMOUS: Participant number**

**1/ 2/ 3/ 4/ 5/ 6/ 7/ 8/ 9/ 10/ 11/ 12/ 13/ 14/ 15**

**Title:** *Teacher–parent involvement as a curriculum-as-practice partnership and its influence on grade 6 learners’ comprehension development*

**Instructions:**

- Please answer the following questions in as much detail as possible.
- Your responses will help research understand the roles of teachers and parents in supporting learners’ reading comprehension skills.
- We encourage you to be honest in your answers, as your responses will remain anonymous and will only be used for research purposes.
- Feel free to use the examples given to help guide your answers.

**Section 1: Household settings**

**1. How** do you define your role in supporting your child's learning at home?

*Please provide specific examples.*

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**2. What strategies** do you use to help your child improve their reading comprehension skills? (e.g., *shared reading, ask open-ended questions, reading aloud to them...*)

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**3. Can you describe any challenges** you face when supporting your child's learning at home?

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**4. How often** do you engage with your child about the books they are reading? What does this interaction look like?

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**5. In what ways** do you think **your involvement** has influenced your child's reading comprehension skills?

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**Section 2: Communication**

**6. How** do you communicate with your child's teacher about their progress and challenges in reading comprehension?

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7. What **methods** of communication do you find most effective when working with teachers (e.g., *email, phone calls, meetings*)?

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8. **How do you feel** about the level of communication between you and your child's teacher regarding your child's reading skills?

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9. Can you provide an example of a **successful communication experience** with your child's teacher? What made it successful?

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10. What **suggestions** do you have for improving communication between parents and teachers to support reading comprehension?

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**Section 3: Resources**

**11.** What **resources** do you use at home to support your child's reading comprehension (*e.g., books, educational websites, apps...*)?

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**12.** How do you **choose** the reading materials for your child? What factors do you consider?

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**13.** Are there any **community resources** (*e.g., libraries, tutoring centres...*) that you use to help enhance your child's comprehension skills? Please describe them.

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**14.** How do you **collaborate with teachers** in selecting resources that can support your child's learning?

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**15.** In your opinion, what **additional resources** or support would be beneficial for both parents and teachers to enhance learners' reading comprehension?

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*Thank you for your participation! Your insights are invaluable to our research on teacher-parent involvement and its impact on learners' comprehension abilities.*

## APPENDIX C: FOCUS GROUP INTERVIEWS SCHEDULE

### Interview schedule for Grade 6 learners

September 2025

Teacher–parent involvement as a curriculum-as-practice partnership and its influence on grade 6 learners' comprehension development

#### Structure:

- **Total Groups:** 3 focus groups (5 learners per group)
- **Duration:** 1 hour per group
- **Location:** Researcher's classroom

Interview dates & times		
Focus Group	Date	Time
GROUP 1	1 September	14h00 – 15h00
GROUP 2	2 September	14h00 – 15h00
GROUP 3	3 September	14h00 – 15h00

**APPENDIX D: FOCUS GROUP INTERVIEWS**

*Focus group* interview questions for Grade 6 learners

**ANONYMOUS: Participant number: \_\_\_\_\_**

**FOCUS GROUP: 1 / 2 / 3**

**Title:** *Teacher–parent involvement as a curriculum-as-practice partnership and its influence on grade 6 learners’ comprehension development.*

### **Introduction**

- Brief introduction of the purpose of the interview.
- Assure learners of confidentiality and encourage open, honest responses.
- Explain the structure and expected duration.
- Place learners in a circle, each receiving a chocolate to thank them for their participation.

### **Instructions:**

- Please answer the following questions in as much detail as possible.
- Your responses will help research understand the roles of teachers and parents in supporting learners’ reading comprehension skills.
- We encourage you to be honest in your answers, as your responses will remain anonymous and will only be used for research purposes.

### **Section 1: Household settings**

1. How do your parents help you with your reading at home? Can you share any specific examples?
2. In your opinion, what do you think is the most important thing your parents do to help you learn? Why is it important?
3. Are there any fun activities or games your parents do with you that help you improve your reading skills? What do you like most about them?
4. How do your parents encourage you when you are struggling with reading? Does that help you feel better about learning?

## **Section 2: Communication**

5. How do you usually talk to your parents about your schoolwork? Do you think these talks help you understand your lessons better?
6. When your teacher gives you instructions, how do your parents help you understand them better at home?
7. How do your parents find out how you are doing in school? Do they talk to your teacher or ask you about your grades?

## **Section 3: Resources**

8. What books, tools, or resources do your parents use to help you with your reading? Which ones do you find most helpful?
9. What resources do you think help you the most when you're learning new things in school? Can you give some examples?
10. Who do you turn to for help when you have trouble understanding something in your lessons, and what kind of support do they give you?



## APPENDIX E: NARRATIVE ANALYSIS

### narrative analysis for qualified Grade 6 teachers and parents of Grade 6 learners

**Title:** *Teacher–parent involvement as a curriculum-as-practice partnership and its influence on grade 6 learners’ comprehension development*

**Participant Information:**

- **Role (highlight/ circle):** Teacher/ Parent
- **Date:(when I completed the narrative analysis):** \_\_\_\_\_

**Instructions:**

- Please answer the questions below by **writing your thoughts** in the space provided (there is a heading for each paragraph). If a question does not apply to you or you do not have a response, please write “N/A.”
- I encourage you to be honest in your answers, as your responses will remain anonymous and will only be used for research purposes.
- Feel free to use the examples given to help guide your answers.

PARAGRAPH 1: **Household settings**

X Describe your role in supporting learning at home.

*Example: “I help with homework,” “I read with my child,” “I create a study schedule.”*

X Which key strategies do you use to enhance reading comprehension?

*Example: “Using flashcards,” “Discussing the story,” “Encouraging daily reading.”*

- X Provide a specific experience that highlights your involvement.  
*Example: "We worked on a project together," "I helped him/her prepare for a test."*

PARAGRAPH 2: **Communication**

- X Which communication methods you find most effective?  
*Example: "Emailing the teacher," "Parent-teacher meetings," "WhatsApp group."*
- X What impact do these communication method(s) has on comprehension?  
*Example: "Helps me understand what my child is learning," "I can ask questions easily."*
- X Give an example of a successful communication experience you as a parent has experienced.  
*Example: "I received feedback that helped my child improve," "A meeting that clarified my child's needs."*

PARAGRAPH 3: **Resources**

- X Which resources do you use to support comprehension/ find effective?  
*Example: "Reading apps," "Library books," "Educational websites."*
- X Do these resources help your child, and how?  
*Example: "They make learning fun," "They provide extra practice," "They help him/her understand difficult concepts."*
- X Write a story/ incident about how a resource made a difference.  
*Example: "An app helped improve his/her vocabulary," "A specific book sparked his/her interest in reading."*







## APPENDIX F: CONSENT FORM



### Consent form for participation in research study

**Title:** *Teacher–parent involvement as a curriculum-as-practice partnership and its influence on grade 6 learners' comprehension development*

**Researcher:** *Rindi Carstens*

**Contact Information:** 084 040 4380/ rindicarstens@yahoo.com

**School:** Laerskool Rooihuiskraal

**Date:** \_\_\_\_\_

#### **Purpose of the Study:**

You are being invited to allow your child to participate in a research study aimed at understanding how teacher-parent involvement affects learners' comprehension skills in Grade 6. The study will include focus group interviews with five learners per group, scheduled in the afternoon after school.

#### **Potential benefits:**

Your child's participation may help improve teaching strategies and enhance educational resources for learners in the future.

#### **Risks:**

There are minimal risks involved in this study. However, should any concerns arise; you can withdraw your child from participation at any time without any penalty.

#### **Confidentiality:**

All information collected in this study will be kept confidential. Your child's name and any identifying details will be anonymous in any reports or publications.

**Voluntary participation:**

Your participation in this study is voluntary. You can choose not to participate or withdraw your consent at any time.

**Consent to participate:**

By signing below, you indicate that you have read the information provided above, understand the study, and agree to allow your child to participate in the research.

**Child's Name:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Parent's Name:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Parent's Signature:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Date:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Contact Information for Questions or Concerns:**

If you have any questions or concerns about this study, please contact me at 084 040 4380 or [rindicarstens@yahoo.com](mailto:rindicarstens@yahoo.com).

*Thank you for your support!*

## APPENDIX G: ASSENT FORM



### Assent form for participation in research study

**Title:** *Teacher–parent involvement as a curriculum-as-practice partnership and its influence on grade 6 learners’ comprehension development*

**Researcher:** *Rindi Carstens*

**School:** Laerskool Rooihuiskraal

**Date:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Dear Grade 6 learner,**

I would like you to be part of a research study. This study is about how the involvement of your parents and teachers helps you understand your learning better.

**Here is what you should know:**

- **What Is This Study About?**

We want to learn how working together with your parents and teachers can help you do better in school.

- **Your choice**

You don’t have to participate if you don’t want to. It is entirely your choice. If you decide to join, you can stop at any time, and it will not affect your relationship with your teachers or your school.

- **What will happen?**

If you agree to participate, you will take part in a focus group interview together with other four Grade 6 learners where you can share your thoughts and experiences about learning.

- **Confidentiality**

Anything you say will be kept private, and your name will not be used in any reports. If you want to be part of this study, please sign below to show that you agree.

**Child's name:** \_\_\_\_\_

**I agree to participate in this study. Tick the box below with a X.**

**I do not agree to participate in this study. Tick the box below with a X.**

**Child's Signature:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Date:** \_\_\_\_\_

*Thank you for being part of this study!*

## APPENDIX H: AN EXAMPLE OF AN OPEN-ENDED QUESTIONNAIRE



Open-ended questionnaire for Grade 6 qualified teachers and parents of

Grade 6 learners

Circle or highlight your **ROLE**:

**ROLE:** Teacher/ Parent

**GENDER:** M/ F

**AGE:** 41

**QUALIFICATION:** Certificate

**MOTHER TONGUE LANGUAGE:** Afrikaans

**ANONYMOUS:** Participant number

1/ 2/ 3/ 4/ 5/ 6/ 7/ 8/ 9/ 10/ 11/ 12/ 13/ 14/ 15

**Title:** *Teacher–parent involvement as a curriculum-as-practice partnership and its influence on grade 6 learners’ comprehension development*

### **Instructions:**

- Please answer the following questions in as much detail as possible.
- Your responses will help research understand the roles of teachers and parents in supporting learners’ reading comprehension skills.
- We encourage you to be honest in your answers, as your responses will remain anonymous and will only be used for research purposes.
- Feel free to use the examples given to help guide your answers.

## **Section 1: Household settings**

1. **How** do you define your role in supporting your child's learning at home?

*Please provide specific examples.*

*I try to create an environment where my children can explore, experiment and try new things, until they find what works for them. It is very important that the environment that you as a parent create for your children must be positive. If the bed, desk or even dining table works for them, it works for me.*

2. What **strategies** do you use to help your child improve their reading comprehension skills? (e.g., shared reading, ask open-ended questions, reading aloud to them...)

*I ask them to read aloud to me. When I do this, I can see and hear where they are struggling for eg. pronunciation or vocabulary and then we can address this problem before it is too late.*

3. Can you describe any **challenges** you face when supporting your child's learning at home?

*The biggest challenge for me is being a single mom, thus juggling both children' hectic schedule, as well as my own; the assistance that I provide to them regarding schoolwork that leads to neglecting, because of the factor: TIME!*

4. **How often** do you engage with your child about the books they are reading? What does this interaction look like?

*Usually they will see a book a friend is reading and then we will go and look to find the book. I check the epilogue of the book and decide if it is relevant and age-appropriated for my child.*

5. In what **ways** do you think **your involvement** has influenced your child's reading comprehension skills?

*I can only assist in trying to set an example for the love of reading, by reading in my free time as well. What they see, they do! I encourage them to read books that interest them in order to read more.*

## **Section 2: Communication**

6. **How** do you communicate with your child's teacher about their progress and challenges in reading comprehension?

*I have honestly never done this before.*

7. What **methods** of communication do you find most effective when working with teachers (e.g., *email, phone calls, meetings*)?

*I usually use and prefer WhatsApp. It is quick, convenient and easy to access.*

8. **How do you feel** about the level of communication between you and your child's teacher regarding your child's reading skills?

*I receive communication regarding my children's' academic performance by attending parent evenings (if I feel that it is necessary) or communicate via WhatsApp with the teacher. My experience regarding the WhatsApp updates are quick responses from the teachers and it saves a lot of time then to go to a parent evening.*

9. Can you provide an example of a **successful communication experience** with your child's teacher? What made it successful?

*I did communicate a problem regarding a subject and the teacher sent me extra worksheets to do with my child in order to help her practice and improve her marks.*

*Another positive response was that my child is new this year at this selected primary school, and for a Grade-leader to contact me personally to find out if my child is adapting, is communication that is considered as "the extra mile; we need more of this!"*

10. What **suggestions** do you have for improving communication between parents and teachers to support reading comprehension?

*I feel it starts with the teacher. The teacher is in a job to teach my child, identify the struggle (s) and for this reason; a teacher should reach out to me first in order to inform me what weakness (es) my child experience. From this onwards, the teacher and I can work together as a team to help my child with the specific problem (s).*

### **Section 3: Resources**

11. What **resources** do you use at home to support your child's reading comprehension (e.g., books, educational websites, apps...)?

*I not a fan of websites and apps. My children read books and magazines. I believe this keep me in control of what they read and have access to.*

12. How do you **choose** the reading materials for your child? What factors do you consider?

*They choose what triggers their interests and what their friends are reading. I will first approve the book (s) and then allow them to read.*

13. Are there any **community resources** (e.g., libraries, tutoring centres...) that you use to help enhance your child's comprehension skills? Please describe them.

*They visit the library regularly at school and I take them to books stores.*

14. How do you **collaborate with teachers** in selecting resources that can support your child's learning?

*N/A*

15. In your opinion, what **additional resources** or support would be beneficial for both parents and teachers to enhance learners' reading comprehension?

*Teachers should pick up the problem and address it by providing suggestions how I as a parent can assist my child regarding the problem; I am not a teacher and therefore do I trust the teacher's expertise.*

*Thank you for your participation! Your insights are invaluable to our research on teacher-parent involvement and its impact on learners' comprehension abilities.*

## APPENDIX I: AN EXAMPLE OF A FOCUS GROUP INTERVIEW

### *Focus group* interview questions for Grade 6 learners

ANONYMOUS: Participant number: N/A

FOCUS GROUP: 1 / 2 / 3

**Title:** *Teacher–parent involvement as a curriculum-as-practice partnership and its influence on grade 6 learners’ comprehension development*

#### **Introduction**

- Brief introduction of the purpose of the interview.
- Assure learners of confidentiality and encourage open, honest responses.
- Explain the structure and expected duration.
- Place learners in a circle, each receiving a chocolate to thank them for their participation.

#### **Instructions:**

- Please answer the following questions in as much detail as possible.
- Your responses will help research understand the roles of teachers and parents in supporting learners’ reading comprehension skills.
- We encourage you to be honest in your answers, as your responses will remain anonymous and will only be used for research purposes.

#### **Section 1: Household settings**

1. How do your parents help you with your reading at home? Can you share any specific examples?
2. In your opinion, what do you think is the most important thing your parents do to help you learn? Why is it important?

3. Are there any fun activities or games your parents do with you that help you improve your reading skills? What do you like most about them?

4. How do your parents encourage you when you are struggling with reading? Does that help you feel better about learning?

### **Section 2: Communication**

5. How do you usually talk to your parents about your schoolwork? Do you think these talks help you understand your lessons better?

6. When your teacher gives you instructions, how do your parents help you understand them better at home?

7. How do your parents find out how you are doing in school? Do they talk to your teacher or ask you about your grades?

### **Section 3: Resources**

8. What books, tools, or resources do your parents use to help you with your reading? Which ones do you find most helpful?

9. What resources do you think help you the most when you're learning new things in school? Can you give some examples?

10. Who do you turn to for help when you have trouble understanding something in your lessons, and what kind of support do they give you?

Transcribed notes from the researcher for each focus group separately.

FOCUS GROUP: 1 / 2 / 3

1. At home, parents play an important role in helping with the improvement regarding reading skills. Many learners find that reading with their parents makes a big difference in their spelling, vocabulary, and overall understanding of texts. Some parents start by reading simple books with their children and gradually move to ones that are more difficult. L 10 shared: "My mom helps me by starting with easy books, and when I get better, we read harder ones together." This systematic approach builds confidence and makes reading more enjoyable.

Reading can also happen in everyday situations, like in the kitchen while cooking. Some parents ask them to read while they are busy preparing for dinner, which helps with new words and pronunciation. As L2 explained: "When we cook, I read the recipe out loud, and my mom helps me with big words." This makes learning fun and practical, while strengthening reading skills in a natural way. By being involved in their reading, parents create a supportive environment that encourages growth and a love for books.

2. L9 uttered that her parents help her learn by explaining difficult concepts in a way that makes sense. "When I don't understand something, they take time to break it down for me." This helps because, as one Grade 6 learner said: "Sometimes the work is just too much, and I don't know where to start!" Parents also help to memorize facts by asking questions and testing before a test.

Another important way parents support is by helping with vocabulary. Since some words are new and tricky, they explain their meanings or help them use in sentences. L8 explained (keeping in mind that this learners' MT is Sepedi), "Big words can be confusing, but when my parents help me, I remember them better." By doing this, they make sure the learner understands the work and do not just try to remember a mass of work without meaning. Their support makes learning easier!

3. L6 admitted that they often play a fun game called McDonald's Flashcards, where they quickly read words on flashcards and try to say them as fast as possible, while driving. It helps with reading faster and recognize words more easily. L7 mentioned that since his parents are mostly focused on math and don't have much time at home to help with reading. He said, "Even though math is my parents' main concern, these activities help me enjoy reading and improve my skills in a fun way! I get most of my practice at after-care."

Another thing that makes reading fun is the reward system. Every time L8 improve or read a tricky word correctly, she gets points or small prizes. "It makes reading exciting, and I try harder because I want to win!"

4. Many learners struggle with reading, but supportive parents can make a big difference. In my recent study, 2 out of 5 (40%) learners found reading difficult, whether it was understanding concepts, pronouncing syllables aloud, or summarizing. Some learners use creative methods to improve, such as drawing pictures to help them understand the text better.

L9 shared, "When I struggle with reading, my mom helps me by making summaries for me. It makes the work easier to understand." Another learner (L8) said, "My parents encourage me to sound out the syllables aloud, and that helps me read better." This is small but meaningful actions that not only help learners improve but also make them feel more positive about learning.

5. Many Grade 6 learners talk to their parents about schoolwork in different ways. Some children discuss their tests-marks with their parents, but they only find it helpful if they do not understand something. As L6 said, "If I already know the work, talking about my test doesn't really help me, but if I don't understand, then my parents can explain it to me." This shows that discussing tests is useful only when extra help is needed.

When it comes to homework, the learners say that their parents are involved, but not always in the way, they expect. "I ask my mom and dad for help, but they don't give me the answers – they just tell me to think about it!" as L7 said. This means that parents guide their children instead of doing the work for them, helping them learn in the process. Overall, these discussions can sometimes

improve understanding, but it depends on whether the child truly needs support.

6. At school, teachers give us instructions, but L7 sometimes find it hard to understand. This learner relies on his parents at home to help him make sense of what to do. Most learners prefer short and clear instructions, because it makes it easier to follow along. "When my teacher explains it short and clear, I comprehend the concepts easily!" said L6.

Even though teachers encourage questions, only 2 out of 5 (40%) learners feel comfortable asking in class. Instead, they often turn to their friends for help first. However, when they still do not understand, parents become the last resort. "I ask my friends first, but if I'm really stuck, I wait until I get home and ask my mom." Another learner explained that while teachers give instructions, parents play a big role in helping children truly understand their work.

7. Parents often find out how their children are doing in school in different ways. One way is by looking at their books and tests. If a learner brings home a test with a grade on it, parents can see how well they did. Some parents also ask their children directly about their grades. L6 said, "My mom always checks my test papers and asks me if I understood the questions. This helps parents know if their child needs extra help in certain subjects.

Another way parents stay informed is through parental evenings, but only when necessary. Parents experience that teachers call them if there is a concern about a child's progress. However, some parents don't wait for a meeting—they ask their child's teacher for feedback. L6 replied on this, "My mom always wants to know where I can improve, even if I get good marks. WhatsApp is her way-to-go!"

For top academic learners, parents often focus on areas for improvement rather than just celebrating success. This helps learners stay motivated and keep working hard.

8. Many of the learners use different tools and resources at home to help with their reading. Some of the most common ones are laptops, phones, tablets, and Wi-Fi. These devices help them access online books, educational websites, and reading apps. L7 said, "I like using my tablet because I

can read e-books and listen to audiobooks when I need help with tricky words." L9 shared, "My parents use their phone to find stories for me to read, and sometimes we watch videos that explain the book."

Not everyone has the same resources, but most learners find their parents' help very useful. Some learners also have solar panels, which help keep their devices charged, even when there is no electricity. However, L10 mentioned, "I don't have a printer, so I can't always print worksheets, but I read on my laptop instead."

Overall, technology and supportive parents play a big role in making reading easier and more fun for us.

9. When learning new things in school, different resources can help make lessons more interesting and easier to understand. Many learners find that videos are the most effective because they show moving pictures, real-life examples, and explanations. L8 said, "I love watching videos in class because they make learning fun and I can actually see how things work!" Visual resources like a visualizer, PowerPoint presentations, and the blackboard also help because they provide clear images and diagrams. These tools make it easier to follow along and remember key information.

Although videos and visuals are important, some learners also benefit from auditory learning, such as listening to teachers explain concepts.

However, making learning fun is just as important! "When my teacher uses jokes or makes us play learning games, I remember things so much better!" L2 said in a humoristic way. A good mix of these resources—especially videos, visual aids, and humour, keeps lessons exciting and helps learners stay engaged.

10. L6 believes when she has trouble understanding something in her lessons, she tries to figure it out on her own first. "If I still struggle, I ask my parents for help. Most of the time, my mom helps me because she is more patient and explains things in a way that makes sense. My dad helps too, but he sometimes gets impatient when I don't understand quickly." As L7 put it, "My mom will sit with me until I get it, but my dad just says, you should know this already!"

L8 usually does her homework before any extramural activities because schoolwork comes first.

Technology is also a big part of how they learn—whether it's using Google for research or watching a video to understand something better. Most of them finish their homework before 20h00 and 21h00. Those who stay up late, especially after 22h00 playing PlayStation, often struggle the next day. L10 admitted, "When I play too late, I feel so tired in class, and my marks drop."

*Thank the learners for participating.  
Remind them of the importance of their insights and how they will help improve teaching and learning.*

## APPENDIX J: AN EXAMPLE OF A NARRATIVE ANALYSIS



### narrative analysis for qualified Grade 6 teachers and parents of Grade 6 learners

**Title:** *Teacher–parent involvement as a curriculum-as-practice partnership and its influence on grade 6 learners’ comprehension development.*

**Participant Information:**

- **Role (highlight/ circle):** Teacher/ Parent
- **Date:(when I completed the narrative analysis):** 4 September 2025

**Instructions:**

- Please answer the questions below by **writing your thoughts** in the space provided (there is a heading for each paragraph). If a question does not apply to you or you do not have a response, please write “N/A.”
- I encourage you to be honest in your answers, as your responses will remain anonymous and will only be used for research purposes.
- Feel free to use the examples given to help guide your answers.

PARAGRAPH 1: Household settings

X \_\_\_\_\_ Describe your role in supporting learning at home.

*Example: “I help with homework,” “I read with my child,” “I create a study schedule.”*

X Which key strategies do you use to enhance reading comprehension?

*Example: “Using flashcards,” “Discussing the story,” “Encouraging daily reading.”*

X Provide a specific experience that highlights your involvement.

*Example: “We worked on a project together,” “I helped him/her prepare for a test.”*

PARAGRAPH 2: **Communication**

X \_\_\_\_\_ Which communication methods you find most effective?

*Example: "Emailing the teacher," "Parent-teacher meetings," "WhatsApp group."*

X \_\_\_\_\_ What impact do these communication method(s) has on comprehension?

*Example: "Helps me understand what my child is learning," "I can ask questions easily."*

X \_\_\_\_\_ Give an example of a successful communication experience you as a parent has experienced.

*Example: "I received feedback that helped my child improve," "A meeting that clarified my child's needs."*

PARAGRAPH 3: **Resources**

X \_\_\_\_\_ Which resources do you use to support comprehension/ find effective?

*Example: "Reading apps," "Library books," "Educational websites."*

X \_\_\_\_\_ Do these resources help your child, and how?

*Example: "They make learning fun," "They provide extra practice," "They help him/her understand difficult concepts."*

X \_\_\_\_\_ Write a story/ incident about how a resource made a difference.

*Example: "An app helped improve his/her vocabulary," "A specific book sparked his/her interest in reading."*

PARAGRAPH 4: **Additional comments**

X \_\_\_\_\_ Can you think of any other insights/ suggestions on teacher-parent involvement and its impact on comprehension?

*By participating in this narrative analysis, you agree to share your experiences for research purposes ONLY. Thank you for your contribution!*

PARAGRAPH 1: Household Settings

*In our home, I take an active role in supporting my child's learning. I help with homework when needed and create a study schedule, especially during exam time, to keep things organized. For example, during exam preparation, I will sit down with my child and outline exactly what she should study and when. This approach ensures she stays on track and does not feel overwhelmed. When she is at aftercare, most of her homework is done, but if she does not finish, she completes it at home*

*independently. If she ever struggles, she will ask for help, and if I am unsure, I will reach out to a friend's parent for guidance. WhatsApp communication plays a vital role in keeping me informed about her progress and the material she is working on. I receive practice tests and updates directly from her teacher, making it much easier to assist her and ensure she is prepared.*

#### PARAGRAPH 2: Communication

*I find WhatsApp to be the most effective method of communication with the teacher. The response time is much quicker compared to email, and it allows me to stay updated with what is happening in the classroom. This helps me understand what my child is learning and gives me the chance to ask questions or clarify any doubts. For instance, I once reached out to the teacher about a math concept my child was struggling with and the teacher sent me a detailed explanation along with practice problems. This direct communication helped my child understand the topic better and boosted her confidence.*

#### PARAGRAPH 3: Resources

*To support comprehension, we primarily use YouTube videos for extra learning. These videos are great because they break down complex concepts systematically and use visuals, which makes learning more engaging and easier to understand. The ability to pause and rewind the videos allows my child to learn at her own pace. For example, when she was having trouble with word pronunciation, a YouTube video explaining the topic visually helped her grasp the concept quickly; it made learning fun and less stressful, which is a big plus.*

#### PARAGRAPH 4: Additional Comments

*One suggestion I have for improving teacher-parent involvement is for teachers to offer more targeted support when they notice a child struggling in a particular subject. If a child is falling behind, it would be helpful if the teacher could provide extra practice worksheets along with the memorandum, so that parents can work with their child to reinforce what's been taught.*

## APPENDIX K: PERMISSION LETTER FROM THE SCHOOL



LAERSKOO L ROOIHUISKRAAL

**Permission letter for research at Laerskool Rooihuiskraal**

Laerskool Rooihuiskraal  
C/o Panorama- & Maraboe Street  
Centurion, Rooihuiskraal  
18 December 2024

Mrs. Rindi Carstens  
197 Springbokstreet  
Centurion, Wierdapark  
0157

Dear Mrs. Rindi Carstens

I hope this letter finds you well. I have received your request to conduct your research study titled ***EXPLORING THE EFFECT OF TEACHER-PARENT INVOLVEMENT AND ITS IMPACT ON LEARNERS' COMPREHENSION ABILITY IN GRADE 6, ENGLISH FIRST ADDITIONAL LANGUAGE*** at Laerskool Rooihuiskraal. After careful consideration, I am pleased to grant you permission to carry out your research at our school.

We appreciate your dedication to adhering to ethical guidelines and your commitment to ensuring minimal disruption to our school's regular activities.

Please note that while you conduct your research at Laerskool Rooihuiskraal, it is crucial to prioritize the safety and well-being of our learners, staff, and the overall learning environment.

To ensure a smooth and successful research experience, I encourage you to collaborate closely with our administration, teachers, and learners. Please make the necessary arrangements to coordinate your activities and ensure minimal interference with ongoing classes and other school operations.

Furthermore, I would appreciate receiving regular updates on the progress of your research. This will enable me to stay informed and address any concerns that may arise during the course of your study.

Thank you for choosing Laerskool Rooihuiskraal as the site for your research study. We appreciate your dedication to advancing knowledge and your commitment to maintaining the highest standards of professionalism and ethical conduct. Should you require any assistance or have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Yours sincerely,

Mrs. Carien Fölscher  
Principal: Laerskool Rooihuiskraal



KENNIS VISIE TRJTS

**APPENDIX L: APPROVAL LETTER FROM THE GAUTENG DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION (GDE)**



**GAUTENG PROVINCE**

Department: Education

REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

8/4/4/1/2

**GDE RESEARCH APPROVAL LETTER**

Date:	2 June 2025
Validity of Research Approval:	08 February 2025– 30 September 2025 2025/128
Name of Researcher:	Carstens R
Address of Researcher:	197 Springbok Street Anmar Park Complex 1
Telephone Number:	084 0404380
Email address:	rindicarstens@yahoo.com
	Exploring the effect of teacher-parent involvement and its

8/4/4/1/2

**GDE RESEARCH APPROVAL LETTER**

Date:	2 June 2025
Validity of Research Approval:	08 February 2025– 30 September 2025 2025/128
Name of Researcher:	Carstens R
Address of Researcher:	197 Springbok Street Anmar Park Complex 1
Telephone Number:	084 0404380
Email address:	rindicarstens@yahoo.com
Research Topic:	Exploring the effect of teacher-parent involvement and its impact on learners' comprehension ability in Grade 6, First Additional Language
Name of University:	UNISA
Type of qualification	PhD
Number and type of schools:	1 Primary School
District/s/HO	Tshwane South

**Re: Approval in Respect of Request to Conduct Research**

This letter serves to indicate that approval is hereby granted to the above-mentioned researcher to proceed with research in respect of the study indicated above. The onus rests with the researcher to negotiate appropriate and relevant time schedules with the school/s and/or offices involved to conduct the research. A separate copy of this letter must be presented to both the School (both Principal and SGB) and the District/Head Office Senior Manager confirming that permission has been granted for the research to be conducted.

The following conditions apply to GDE research. The researcher may proceed with the above study subject to the conditions listed below being met. Approval may be withdrawn should any of the conditions listed below be flouted:



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*Making education a societal priority*

**Office of the Director: Education Research and Knowledge Management**7<sup>th</sup> Floor, 17 Simmonds Street, Johannesburg, 2001

Tel: (011) 355 0488

Email: Faith.Tshabalala@gauteng.gov.za

Website: www.education.gpg.gov.za

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1. Letter that would indicate that the said researcher/s has/have been granted permission from the Gauteng Department of Education to conduct the research study.
2. The District/Head Office Senior Manager/s must be approached separately, and in writing, for permission to involve District/Head Office Officials in the project.
3. **Because of the relaxation of COVID 19 regulations researchers can collect data online, telephonically, physically access schools or may make arrangements for Zoom with the school Principal. Requests for such arrangements should be submitted to the GDE Education Research and Knowledge Management directorate.**
4. **The Researchers are advised to wear a mask at all times, Social distance at all times, Provide a vaccination certificate or negative COVID-19 test, not older than 72 hours, and Sanitise frequently.**
5. A copy of this letter must be forwarded to the school principal and the chairperson of the School Governing Body (SGB) that would indicate that the researcher/s have been granted permission from the Gauteng Department of Education to conduct the research study.
6. A letter / document that outline the purpose of the research and the anticipated outcomes of such research must be made available to the principals, SGBs and District/Head Office Senior Managers of the schools and districts/offices concerned, respectively.
7. The Researcher will make every effort obtain the goodwill and co-operation of all the GDE officials, principals, and chairpersons of the SGBs, teachers and learners involved. Persons who offer their co-operation will not receive additional remuneration from the Department while those that opt not to participate will not be penalised in any way.
8. Research may only be conducted after school hours so that the normal school programme is not interrupted. The Principal (if at a school) and/or Director (if at a district/head office) must be consulted about an appropriate time when the researcher/s may carry out their research at the sites that they manage.
9. Research may only commence from the second week of February and must be concluded before the beginning of the last quarter of the academic year. If incomplete, an amended Research Approval letter may be requested to conduct research in the following year.
10. Items 6 and 7 will not apply to any research effort being undertaken on behalf of the GDE. Such research will have been commissioned and be paid for by the Gauteng Department of Education.
11. It is the researcher's responsibility to obtain written parental consent of all learners that are expected to participate in the study.
12. The researcher is responsible for supplying and utilising his/her own research resources, such as stationery, photocopies, transport, faxes and telephones and should not depend on the goodwill of the institutions and/or the offices visited for supplying such resources.
13. The names of the GDE officials, schools, principals, parents, teachers and learners that participate in the study may not appear in the research report without the written consent of each of these individuals and/or organisations.
14. On completion of the study the researcher/s must supply the Director: Knowledge Management & Research with one Hard Cover bound and an electronic copy of the research.
15. The researcher may be expected to provide short presentations on the purpose, findings and recommendations of his/her research to both GDE officials and the schools concerned.
16. Should the researcher have been involved with research at a school and/or a district/head office level, the Director concerned must also be supplied with a brief summary of the purpose, findings and recommendations of the research study.

The Gauteng Department of Education wishes you well in this important undertaking and looks forward to examining the findings of your research study.

Kind regards



Mr. David Bapela  
CES: Education Research and Knowledge Management

DATE: 03/06/2025

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*Making education a societal priority*

**Office of the Director: Education Research and Knowledge Management**

7<sup>th</sup> Floor, 17 Simmonds Street, Johannesburg, 2001

Tel: (011) 355 0488

Email: Faith.Tshabalala@gauteng.gov.za

Website: www.education.gpg.gov.za

## APPENDIX M: PROOF OF LANGUAGE EDITING

FROM THE DESK OF

# EDITING & CRITICAL READING SERVICES

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Friday, March 20, 26

139 Harte Avenue  
Willows 0841

### To whom it may concern

This is to confirm that I have edited the following PhD thesis: **EXPLORING THE EFFECT OF TEACHER-PARENT INVOLVEMENT AND ITS IMPACT ON LEARNERS' COMPREHENSION ABILITY IN GRADE 6, ENGLISH FIRST ADDITIONAL LANGUAGE** by **R Carstens** for language use. The page layout of the document remains the responsibility of the author.



Eleanor M Lemmer (Professor Emeritus, UNISA) D Ed (Comparative Education),  
UNISA

South African ID 510711 0118 088

### CONTACT

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139 HARTE STREET WILLOWS 0841 MOBILE (084) 7004676  
LEMMEEM@ICLOUD.COM

