

SOMALI PARENTS' INVOLVEMENT IN THEIR CHILDREN'S EDUCATION: AN EXPLORATION OF PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT AND FAMILY-SCHOOL RELATIONSHIPS

A THESIS SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULFILMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS OF THE
UNIVERSITY OF GREENWICH FOR THE DEGREE OF DOCTORATE IN EDUCATION.

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23RD JULY 2015

DECLARATION

I certify that this work has not been accepted in substance for any degree, and is not being submitted concurrently for any degree other than Doctorate in Education at the University of Greenwich. I also declare that this work is the result of my own investigations, except where otherwise identified by references, and that I have not plagiarised the work of others.

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

My thanks go to all those who participated in this research, the Somali parents and their children without whose help this research would have not been possible. Thank you to my supervisors, Dr. Gordon Ade-Ojo, Dr. Hatice Choli and Bill Goddard, whose constructive feedback and generous comments guided me throughout the research.

To my family, my wife and children, who, through their support, patience and love reassured me and encouraged me throughout the research.

To my two generous research volunteers, who assisted with transcriptions, translations and questionnaire administration

Finally, to my EdD teaching team and fellow doctoral candidates, whose constructive discussions and patience in listening to my never-ending stories about my research allowed me develop and refine my ideas in a way that would have not otherwise have been possible.

ABSTRACT

This study explores how Somali parents are involved in the education of their children. Further, it examines how they conceptualise parental involvement and the relationship between home and school. The study took place at two afterschool centres in East and South East of London. A constructivist paradigm was adopted, and two theoretical frameworks were drawn upon: Coleman's Social capital theory (1988) and Hoover-Dempsey & Sandler's Parent Role Construction for Involvement Theory (1995, 1997). The study employed two sequential data collection methods. In the first phase, a questionnaire was administered. The questionnaire, based upon Epstein's (1995,2010) parental involvement typology and its six types of parental involvement behaviours, was administered to 150 parents to establish whether the six types of parental involvement behaviours conceptualised in the model resonated with the nature and type of Somali parents' involvement in their children's education. In the second phase, fifteen parents and five pupils were interviewed to further explore types of involvement in this group, and their construct of the notion of parental involvement and home-school relationships. The children included in the study were aged between 11 and 16 years and attended various London secondary schools. Findings reveal that Epstein's (1995, 2010) parental involvement model and its six types of involvement behaviours fail to accurately represent the types and nature of involvement of Somali parents in their children's education: Only two of the six types of involvement outlined by Epstein were consistent with the manner in which Somali parents engage with their children's education. Analysis of interview data indicated that the Somali parents overwhelmingly involve themselves in their children's education and that the nature of their involvement fall under three categories: home-based, school-based, and community-based. Parents also conceptualise the notion of parental involvement and home-school relationships in three ways: providing home education, providing parenting, and liaising with the school. The study concludes that, contrary to the current literature, which indicates a lack of Somali parental involvement in their children's education, Somali parents, according to this study do overwhelmingly involve themselves in their children's education. The study also concludes that the current parental involvement models capture neither the nature of their involvement, nor their desire to be involved, a case in point is the Epstein's (1995, 2010) model. In light of these findings, an alternative parental involvement model is presented. It is argued that this model accurately measures parental involvement behaviours in the group under study, and is proposed as one of three original contributions to knowledge made by this study. The new

understanding of Somali parental involvement behaviours contributed to by the findings of this study may help schools and teachers devise effective parental involvement programmes to better engage with Somali families and their children.

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Chapter1: Introduction

1.1. Background to Parental involvement

There is considerable evidence that parental involvement is of benefit to children: it improves academic achievement (Bryant, Peisner-Feinberg & Miller-Johnson, 2000; Lunenburg & Ornstein, 2000, Hara & Burke, 1998; Henderson & Berla, 1994; Henderson & Mapp, 2002; Fehrman, Keith & Reimers, 1987; Reynolds, 1989; Comer, 1988), student discipline (Epstein, 1991) and enhances social competence (Henderson, 1987; Reynolds, Weissberg, & Kaspro, 1992). The existing literature lacks a unified definition and conceptualisation of parental involvement (Baker & Soden, 1997; Jeynes, 2005; Lewis & Forman, 2002; Lopez & Stoelting, 210). For example, parental involvement has been defined as the dedication of resources by a parent to a child in a given domain (Grolnick & Slowiaczek, 1994), and as parents' interactions with schools and with their children to promote academic success (Hill & Taylor, 2004).

Parental involvement has been conceptualised as home-school partnership and as parental participation in school activities (Lloyd-Smith & Baron, 2010; Baker & Stevenson, 1986); as parents being present at school, communicating with teachers or helping at home with homework (Deslandes et al., 1997; Epstein, 1991); as parents acting as supporters/learners of school (Vincent, 1996); or as a variety of activities that allow parents to participate in the educational process at home or in school (Chavkin & Williams, 1985).

A number of parental involvement models exist. These have been directly informed by the various definitions and conceptualisations of parental involvement. Each model proposes different criteria by which to represent the behaviours of parents engaging in their children's education. Six main different parental involvement models are discussed in the literature. Some of the models emphasise the behaviour of parents in particular locations, such as schools and homes; others consider the way parents become involved through educational activities with their children (Bauch, 1994). The most recent model includes an extended view of home, school and community (ibid).

Parental involvement models fall under two main categories: parent-teacher partnership and parent empowerment (Christianakis, 2011). The former advocates a partnership amongst

schools, parents and the home environment that supports children as students (Ferrara & Ferrara, 2005); the latter seeks to 'minimize asymmetrical power employed by schools and anticipate misunderstandings between home and school while building on the children's home cultures' (Christianakis, 2011, p.161).

Just as multiple definitions and conceptualisations of parental involvement exist, so do multiple theoretical frameworks within which these are researched (Baker & Soden, 1998). Four theoretical frameworks prevalent in the parental involvement literature are discussed in this study: Social capital Theory (Colman, 1988), Cultural Capital Theory (Bourdieu, 1973), Funds of Knowledge Theory (Velez-Ibanez & Greenberg, 1992), and Role Construction Theory (Hoover-Dempsey & Sandler, 1995 & Hoover-Dempsey & Sandler, 1997).

Evidence for the positive influence of parental involvement may have contributed to the development of a number of parental involvement policies, which aim to raise academic standards (Coldwell, et al., 2003). Since the 1980s, a number of policies have been developed in the UK to improve relationships between family and schools, and to encourage parental involvement. For example, the 1980 Education Act, 1988 Education Reform Act, 1998 School Standards and Framework Act, 2002 Education Act and 1997 White Papers such as 1997 Excellence in Schools, 2001 Schools Achieving Success, 2005, Higher Standards, Better Schools for All. Initially, these policies focused on the rights of parents to choose schools and have access to school information (Reynolds, 2006), for example the 1980 Education Act (see parental preferences and information as to schools and admission arrangements) and 1988 Education Reform Act (see governors giving parents information about the school's curriculum).

During the late 1990s, policy began to focus more on the roles and responsibilities of parents in their children's education, for example, the White Paper, Excellence in Schools (1997), the School Standards and Framework Act (1998), and White Paper Schools achieving success (2001).

Although parental involvement has a positive impact on children's school attainments, there are barriers to the efficacy of this involvement met by working class parents (Vincent, 2001 & Vincent & Martin, 2000). The literature localises some of these barriers as parental, for example, a lack of parental education and material resources (Pena, 2000; Harris et al., 2009; Brown, 1989), the fear and anxiety parents face when dealing with schools and teachers

(Menahem & Halasz, 2000), and the negative school experiences of parents themselves (Power & Clark, 2001).

Other barriers to effective parental involvement are located at the school and teacher level, for example inflexible parent-teacher meeting times (Lopez, 2001), the availability of teachers to meet parents (Moles, 1993), and teacher perceptions of minority parents (Kim, 2009).

1.2. Relevance of the Study

Whilst there is a strong consensus that parental involvement influences the educational attainment of students (McBride & Lin, 1996; Muller, 1998; Peressini, 1998; Bauch & Goldring, 1995; Bronstein et al., 1994; Crouter et al., 1999), the concept remains poorly defined (Theodorou, 2007). A multiplicity of constructs (Sui-Chu & Williams, 1996) has led to inconsistency in the empirical literature about which components of parental involvement behaviour should be considered when researching the impact of parental involvement on children's attainment (Theodorou, 2007).

Despite evidence on the positive impact of parental involvement, an emerging body of research challenges the efficacy of traditional, school-based parental involvement programmes as applied to ethnically diverse groups (Carvalho, 2001; Gottlob, 2009).

The efficacy of traditional parental involvement programmes may also be questioned when used with the group under study, as there are few existing studies on the educational attainments of Somali children as related to parental involvement (see Ali & Jones, 2000; Demie et al., 2008, Rasmussen, 2010, Hersi, 2005; Strand, 2010) and barriers to effective home-school relations, which are traditionally located with parents (see Nderu, 2005; Ibrahim et al., 2009; Koch, 2007; Warsame, 2010; Jones & Allebone, 1998; Alitolppa-Niitaamo, 2002; Humpage, 2009). The literature fails to identify which types of parental involvement models are suitable for Somali children and their families (cf. Koch, 2007).

In the current study, the focus is on how Somali parents of secondary school-aged pupils in a UK school context are involved in their children's education. These parents' conceptualisation of the notion of parental involvement will be examined. Epstein's (1995,2010) parental involvement typology will also be applied to this group in order to

examine whether its six types of parental behaviours capture the nature and type of involvement of Somali parents in their children's education.

Epstein's (1995, 2010) parental involvement typology consists of six types of involvement behaviours. The typology suggests that parental behaviours categorised according to these six types of involvement contribute to child attainment (see section: 2.4.6 Epstein typology)

This study contributes towards identifying a parental involvement model that takes account of the nature, and the type of parental involvement behaviours specific to Somali parents. The identification of suitable parental involvement for Somalis will be useful as this will bridge the cultural gap (Humpage, 2009) between schools and Somali families, and will assist schools and policy-makers in designing effective parental involvement programmes that address the need of Somali families of secondary aged children in the UK's secondary school context.

1.3. The Purpose of the Study

This study aims a) to characterise how Somali parents are involved in their children's education, b) to examine how Somali parents conceptualise the notion of parental involvement and home-school relationships and c) to test how Epstein's (1995, 2010) parental involvement typology and its six types of involvement apply to Somali parents, in order to explore whether this model resonates with this population group.

The study has approached these research aims by:

- Investigating how Somali parents conceptualise parental involvement and family-school relationships
- Identifying factors that shape how the parents understand school and family roles
- Mapping out how Somali parents involve themselves in their children's education
- Establishing the level of involvement of Somali parents in their children's education
- Identifying challenges faced by Somali parents in their attempt to become involved in their children's education.
- Testing the six types of parental involvement behaviours conceptualised in Epstein's (1995, 2010) parental involvement typology.

1.4. Research site

Research was conducted at two after-school centres in East and South East London. The centres provide homework and exam revision support for Somali-heritage pupils attending local schools in London. The centres were chosen based on location (they are in areas with large Somali populations); diversity (pupils from a variety of London boroughs attend the centres); age group (pupils at Key Stages 3 and 4, between the ages of 11 and 16 years and studying towards GCSE, attend these centres); and their regular cultural events which are attended by Somali parents from all over the UK.

These after-school centres were also chosen as research sites over other potential sites such as mosques and Somali cafeterias, where Somali parents meet in numbers, because these sites were deemed not neutral venues: not all Somali parents attend mosques and socialise in cafeterias.

These centres will be referred to as Centre 1 and Centre 2, to maintain anonymity.

Participants in the study included Somali parents and their children at Key Stages 3 and 4, attending London schools.

1.5. The Somali Community in Britain

Somali people have been immigrating to Britain since the late seventeenth century, and working as dockyard workers and seafarers (Harrison, 2004). The connection between Somalia and Britain began when Somali men from the north of Somalia (now 'Somaliland') were recruited in Aden by the British shipping industry, which was associated with the British Royal Navy vessels operating at Perim Island (Portcities, 2009). These first Somali immigrants were economic migrants, and worked mainly in the dockyards of cities such as Cardiff, Liverpool and London (The Economist, 2013).

In 1980, a large number of Somalis began arriving in Britain from Somaliland — not to work in the dockyards, but as refugees. In 1990, civil strife in South Somalia was the catalyst for an influx of immigration to the UK (Kahin, 1997). According to The Economist (2013), the number of refugees arriving in Britain from Somalia peaked in 1999, reaching 7,495 (i.e. 11% of all refugees immigrated to Britain in this year). Despite increasing migration of Somalis to Britain, their exact population in the UK is not known (Demie et al., 2007). According to Harrison (2004), the 2001 census recorded 43,532 people registered as born in Somalia and living in Britain, mainly in cities such as London, Cardiff, Liverpool and

Birmingham. The most recent census, conducted in 2011, identified 101,370 people in England and Wales as being born in Somalia (The Economist, 2013).

Somalis may be classified as ‘ethnically homogenous’ (Adfam, 2006, p. 8) and clannish. There are five major Somali clans: Darod, Hawiye, Dir, Rahanweyn and Isaaq (Ibid). British Somalis are among the poorest and least-employed, compared to refugees from other countries; more than 80% of Somali-speaking pupils qualify for free school meals (The Economist, 2013), compared to 35% of pupils from white working class backgrounds (Wigmore, 2015). In this study, Coleman’s theory of social capital (1988) is utilised as a theoretical framework by which to understand family capital, such as parents’ social capital financial capitals and human capital and their roles when involving themselves in their children’s education.

1.5.1. The educational attainments of Somali Children in UK Schools

Research indicates that Somali children consistently underachieve relative to White British students and other ethnic and language minority groups in the UK (Strand, 2010; Demie, et al., 2006; Rutter, 2006, Von Ahn, et al, 2010). In 2005, 29% of Somali students achieved 5+ A*-C grades in their GCSEs, compared with the Bangladeshi average of 55 % (DfE, 2006). In 2007, the number of Somali students achieving 5+A*-C, including in English and mathematics, was 24%, compared with 41% of Bangladeshi students (Strand, 2010). Data from a survey of 26 London local authorities in 2007 suggest an achievement rate of 42%, 5+ A*-C for Somali pupils, which is significantly lower than the national average of 62 % (Demie et al., 2008). During 2010 and 2011, this percentage dropped to 33%, compared with 59% of Bangladeshi pupils and 78% of Nigerian heritage pupils (The Economist, 2013).

Similar to the UK context, the educational underachievement of pupils of Somali heritage is of concern in various countries, including the US, Finland and New Zealand (Nderu, 2005; Alitolppa-Niitaamo, 2002, 2004; Ibrahim et al., 2009; Koch, 2007; Humpage, 2009; Warsame, 2009). A number of factors have been found to be responsible for this low attainment, including language barrier, lack of parental support, lack of understanding of the education system, residual trauma from the Somali civil war, and lack of financial and cultural capital (Demie et al., 2008; Alitolppa-Niitaamo, 2002; Ibrahim et al., 2009; Robillos, 2001; Birman et al., 2001).

Research places the responsibility for this low achievement firmly on the Somali family, problematising family variables such as cultural background, language, social and cultural

capital, and the education level of parents, when diverting blame from schools and teachers (cf Jones & Allebone, 1998).

1.6. Research Questions

The following research questions were used to guide the study:

1. How do Somali parents conceptualise parental involvement and school-family relationships?
2. How do Somali parents construct their role in their children's education?
3. To what extent and in which ways are Somali parents involved in their children's education?
4. How does such involvement, or lack thereof, affect children's educational attainment?
5. What challenges do Somali parents face in attempting to become involved in their children's education?

1.7. Overview of the Methodology

A qualitative research approach was adopted, to enable the researcher to 'better understand human behaviour and experience and the processes by which people construct meaning and to describe what those meanings are' (Bogdan & Biklen, 1998 p. 38). To enhance validity and reliability of the research, Yardley's (2000) four characteristics of good qualitative research were adopted.

A constructivist paradigm was adopted in this study. 'Constructivism assumes that people, including researchers, construct their own reality, in which they participate' (Charmaz, 2006 p.187). Such realities reflect an individual's experiences of the world (Braun & Clarke 2006). Relativist ontology and a transactional, subjectivist epistemological positions were adopted as they are consistent with the constructivist paradigm, and allow philosophical questions such as the nature of reality and what constitutes legitimate knowledge to be addressed.

Two sequential data collection techniques were used. In the first phase of data collection, a questionnaire (see Appendix 7) was designed specifically for this study, based upon Epstein's parental involvement typology (1995, 2010). Epstein's typology conceptualises six types of parental involvement behaviours parents practice when involving themselves in their

children's education (1995, 2010). The typology was developed in the US and is widely cited in the contemporary parental involvement literature (Desforges & Abouchaar, 2003; Bower & Griffin, 2011). The questionnaire was distributed to 150 Somali parents of secondary school children aged between 11 and 16 years at two centres in London. The questionnaire was used for two purposes. First, to test whether the six types of parental involvement conceptualised by Epstein (1995, 2010) conform to Somali parental involvement behaviours. Second, to use the findings of the questionnaire to design a semi-structured interview schedule to further explore how Somali parents are involved in their children's education as well as conceptualise the notion of parental involvement.

The second phase of data collection consisted of two semi-structured interviews (one for parents and another for pupils) in which 15 parents and five pupils were interviewed. Parents were asked ten questions; pupils were asked 15. The interviews were carried out in two stages. First, one-to-one interviews were conducted with parents. Second, one group interview was conducted with pupils.

Two different types of data analysis strategies were used to analyse the questionnaire data and interview data. Deductive Qualitative Analysis (DQA) was used to analyse the former because it was the best fit for the questionnaire design, since the design of the questionnaire was based on a prior theory (i.e. Epstein's work). Inductive Thematic Analysis (ITA) was used to analyse the interview; this type of analysis is considered a better fit with interview data, which are predominantly descriptive (Braun & Clarke, 2006). MAXQDA qualitative data analysis software was used to identify patterns and emerging themes in the interview responses.

Two distinct theoretical frameworks were used in this study: Coleman's Social Capital Theory (1988) was used to examine factors such as family income and parental education, and their impact on parental involvement; Hoover-Dempsey & Sandler's Parental Role Construction Theory (1995, 1997) was used to study how Somali parents construct their role in their children's education;

Ethical issues, such as transparency and honesty with regard to the research design and data collection methods, as well as issues of anonymity, privacy and confidentiality, were recognised by adhering to the guidelines of the British Education Research Association (BERA, 2011). All questionnaire and interview data were stored on a password-protected computer hard drive; no data traceable to participants were disclosed in the research report

and research participants were made aware of their right to withdraw at any stage of the questionnaire and interview process if they wished, without questions asked.

1.8. Key Definitions

The following terms have been used in this study and may require further explanation;

- **Somali parents:** Somali-heritage parents who are primarily responsible for their children's educational needs
- **Parental involvement:** is assumed in this study as any activities related to the educational needs of children, engaged in by parents at home or outside the home
- **After-school clubs:** community-run centres, which provide support to pupils of Somali heritage and their families in key curriculum areas such mathematics, English and science
- **Key Stages 3 and 4:** Blocks of years organised as into age groups (between 11 and 16 years) around the National Curriculum in England, Wales and Northern Ireland (gov.uk, 2015)

1.9. Structure of the Thesis

The thesis consists of six chapters, structured in the following way.

CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

This chapter outlines the background and explains the relevance and purpose of the study. It introduces the research questions. It provides a brief account of the participants, as well as an overview of the research methodology.

CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW

Chapter 2 discusses the existing literature. Academic and non-academic studies of parental involvement and family-school relations are reviewed. The chapter offers a succinct but in-depth review of the current parental involvement literature, in order to contextualise the study. Seven relevant themes are discussed: conceptualisation of parental involvement, multidimensional operationalisation of parental involvement, theoretical approaches underpinning the conceptualisation of parental involvement, the impact of parental

involvement on children's achievement, barriers to parental involvement in ethnic minority groups, parental involvement as policy and existing literature on the educational experience of the group under study.

CHAPTER 3: METHODOLOGY

This chapter presents the research methodology. The theoretical framework, study rationale, and ontological and epistemological positions adopted in the study, and the ethical implications thereof, are discussed. These include issues such as access to participants, confidentiality, anonymity, validity, reliability and informed consent.

CHAPTER 4: DATA ANALYSIS AND FINDINGS

Chapter 4 presents the findings from the two phases of data collection. Questionnaire findings are presented in the context of Epstein's framework (1995, 2010). Descriptive responses from participants are analysed in order to ascertain whether this typology accurately represents how the Somali parents in this study involve themselves in their children's education. The interview data is organised according to themes that emerged during inductive thematic analysis, and are supported by translated verbatim responses from the research participants.

CHAPTER 5: DISCUSSION

In this chapter, the findings are discussed in relation to, first, research questions and second Epstein's (1995, 2010) six types of parental involvement typology. Findings are also discussed in relation to Social Capital Theory (Colman, 1988) and Parental Role Construction Theory (Hoover-Dempsey & Sandler, 1995, 1997). Finally, the findings are discussed in the context of the existing parental involvement literature.

CHAPTER 6: CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

In this chapter the aims and objectives of the study are revisited, and the research questions, literature and the research methodology are recounted. The findings of the study are summarised in relation to the research questions, theoretical perspectives and the existing literature on parental involvement.

Limitations of the study and opportunities for future research are outlined. Finally, three aspects of original contributions to knowledge were presented in this chapter: a) an original

understanding of how Somali parents are involved in their children's education as well as how they conceptualise the notion of home-school connections; b) empirical testing of Epstein's (1995, 2010) six types of parental involvement behaviour with Somali parents of school children aged between 11 and 16 years in the UK's secondary school context in London; and c) the presentation of an alternative and original parental involvement model that fully captures the nature and types of involvement of Somali parents similar to the participants of this study. Recommendations for policy and practice were made in light of the findings of this study.

1.10. Chapter summary

Chapter 1 has introduced the study. The background, purpose, relevance and rationale have been presented and the research questions introduced. The overarching theoretical frameworks have been described. An overview of the methodology, including participants, research locations, and methods of data collection and analysis has been given, as well as the research paradigm, including the ontological and epistemological positions adopted. The chapter includes some key definitions of terms used in the research that required further definitions. Finally, the chapter presented the structure of the thesis outlining what each of the six chapters consists of.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

This chapter reviews theoretical and empirical studies from both the academic and non-academic literature on parental involvement and family-school relations. The multidimensional nature of parental involvement, and the theoretical frameworks underpinning research into this topic are analysed. Consideration is given to the strengths and weaknesses of different theories, and how these impact on the current study. The relationship between type of parental involvement and the academic achievements of pupils is examined. Barriers to parental involvement in ethnic and language minority groups are examined.

2.1. Literature Review Search Method

Literature on parental involvement and family-school relationships was retrieved through these databases: ERIC, SwetsWise, Academic Research Complete, Academic Research Premier, ProQuest and Google Scholar. The following keywords were used: parental involvement, family-school engagement, child achievements, parental behaviour, barriers to school attainments and teacher-parent relationships. Supplementary keywords included: Somali parents, ethnic minority groups and education, refugee and education, and schooling refugee children.

Seven key themes emerged in the literature review: (a) conceptualisation of parental involvement, (b) multi-dimensional operationalisation of parental involvement (c) theoretical framing of parental involvement, (d) impact of parental involvement on children's academic attainments, (e) parental involvement policies, (f) barriers to parental involvement among ethnic and language minority groups, and (g) the educational experiences of Somali children

Each of these themes are reviewed separately and then reconciled, to form a framework for understanding the existing literature on parental involvement and family-school relationships in the population group sample.

2.2. Conceptualisation of Parental Involvement

The influence of parental involvement on children's academic achievements has been well researched (Bryant, Peisner-Feinberg, Miller-Johnson, 2000; Lunenburg & Ornstein, 2000; Henderson & Berla, 1994; Henderson & Mapp, 2002; Fehrmann, Keith, & Reimers, 1987; Reynolds, 1989; Olmsted 1991; Reynolds 1989; Reynolds 1992). However, the literature fails to provide a precise definition or conceptualisation of the term (Baker & Soden, 1997;

Jeynes, 2005; Lewis & Forman, 2002; Lopez & Stoelting, 2010). As a result, parental involvement has been conceptualised in diverse ways, for example, as home-school partnership, and parental participation in school activities (Lloyd-Smith & Baron, 2010; Stevenson & Baker, 1986). It may be understood as presence at school, communicating with teachers, helping at home with homework (Deslandes et al., 1997; Epstein, 1991), or as a variety of activities that allow parents to participate in the educational process at home or in school (Chavkin & Williams, 1985). Other definitions focus on the dedication of resources by parents to children in given domains (Grolnick & Slowiaczek, 1994), or on the manner in which parents interact with schools and with their children to facilitate their academic success (Hill & Tylor, 2004).

The majority of these definitions conceptualise parental involvement to some extent as the physical presence of parents at school-based functions and/or as the partnership between parents and teachers (see for example Epstein, 1991). Other views e.g. (Abdul-Adil & Farmer, 2006; Hoover-Dempsey et al., 2001; Lopez, 2001) conceptualise parental involvement as the attitudes, behaviours, parenting style or activities of parents, which occur in or outside the school setting, and which influence the academic and behavioural success of children.

Emerging from these constructs of parental involvement are two broad categories: parent-teacher partnership and parent empowerment (Christianakis, 2011). The former category advocates partnership between schools, parents and the home environment, in order to support children as students (Ferrara & Ferrara, 2005). While the latter seeks to 'minimize asymmetrical power employed by schools and anticipate misunderstandings between home and school while building on the children's home cultures' (Christianakis, 2011 p. 161).

Parental involvement programmes based on empowerment have positive outcomes for ethnic minority and working class communities, as they utilise resources indigenous to the families and communities (Abdul-Adil & Farmer, 2006). Moll et al., (1992) describe the empowerment model as 'funds of knowledge for teaching' (p.134). They examined ways in which the household and community resources of working class Mexican-American families may be capitalised upon to improve classroom practices. Contrary to the 'prevailing and accepted perceptions of working class families as somehow disorganised socially and deficient intellectually', the study revealed households that had 'ample cultural and cognitive resources with potential utility for classroom instruction' (Moll et al., 1992, p. 134).

Having discussed about the positive influence that parental involvement has on children's academic achievement, as well as the diverging and at time conflicting conceptualisation of the notion, below are summary of the main six parental involvement models from the partnership category, which is the dominant construct in the literature (Bauch, 1994):

2.2.1. Gordon's Systems Approach

A widely used model of parent involvement, Gordon's systems approach centres on the three institutions involved: families, schools and communities (Gordon 1970). Each of these institutions perform activities, which may influence the roles, relationships and the time commitments of family members (Gordon, 1970). Gordon (1970) describes two impact models, the school impact model and community impact model. The school impact model contains activities that should render school to become more responsive to parents and family members, an example of a school impact model would be parent advisory committees and parent/teacher collaboration projects. The community impact model provides the 'ultimate transactional view' (ibid p. 5) of parental involvement, since community brings about change in both individuals and institutions when they interact.

2.2.2. The Systems Development Corporation parental involvement categories

The Systems Development Corporation (SDC), a research firm based in California, conducted a large study on US government-funded school projects with parental involvement components in 1978, with the aim of examining how parents are involved in their children's education (Bauch, 1994). The SDC found that parental involvement activities fell into six categories, including home-school relations, home-based instructions, school support, instructions at school, parent education, and advisory groups.

2.2.3. Berger's Role Categories

Berger (1991) identifies six roles that parents play in their children's schooling: parents as teachers of their own children, parents as spectators, parents as employed resources, parents as temporary volunteers, parents as volunteer resources, and parents as policy makers. This model focuses on what parents might do at home, at school, and in other institutions. It also describes activities used in 'traditional school' (Bauch, 1994, p. 55).

2.2.4. Chavkin and Williams' parental involvement model

Chavkin and Williams (1993) carried a study in which they have asked 2, 967 parents to rank their preferred roles in their children's education, according to the following six activities: paid school staff, audience, decision makers, programme supporter, advocate, and home tutor. The roles audience, home tutor and programme supporter were ranked highest, irrespective of parents' ethnicity. However, the study failed to characterise the socio-economic status of those who ranked these roles as preferred activities in their children's education. Knowledge of the socio-economic status of these groups would be useful, since these roles may be affected by how much time parents have available (audience), their personal efficacy (home tutor), and their knowledge of the school system (programme supporter) (C.f. Hoover-Dempsey et al., 1995)

2.2.5. The Jones Levels of parental involvement

Jones (1989) defined parental involvement as occurring on four levels. Unlike the preceding model, the levels here are not considered hierarchal and value is not assigned to one over another (Bauch, 1994):

Level 1: Traditional - includes Parent-Teacher Association (PTA) attendance and volunteer fund-raising

Level 2: The school uses informational newsletters or other means for communicating with parents about students, budget, curriculum and other school activities.

Level 3: Involvement at school - ranging from paid employees and volunteers to advisory group membership.

Level 4: Discussions - direct participation by the parents in hiring teachers, curriculum, budget, and etcetera.

Jones' involvement levels tend to be activities that are associated with schools, rather than at home or in the community. If all parental involvement activities occur at the school level, this 'implies lack of partnership' between parents and school personnel (Bauch, 1994, p. 57).

2.2.6. The Epstein Typology

Epstein (1995, 2010) and colleagues at Johns Hopkins University developed a typology for parental involvement. It consists of six types of involvement. Most contemporary research on parental involvement in the US uses Epstein's typology (Desforges & Abouchar, 2003; Bower & Griffin, 2011). In her typology, Epstein describes overlapping spheres of influence amongst schools, families and communities (see Figure 1). She advocates a partnership relationship, where schools and homes replicate each other in their environment, this means schools adopt pupils' home environment and homes adopt schools' environment, in order to support each other in partnership (Epstein, 1995). However, its theory covertly assumes that the family culture is inherently deficient, as it advocates school cultures (Carvalho, 2001). The below diagram depicts the Epstein's overlapping spheres of influence model, followed by its underpinning six types of parental involvement behaviours.



Figure 1: Epstein's Overlapping Spheres of Influence

The six types of involvement proposed by Epstein (1995, 2010) are summarised below:

| Type of Involvement | Definition |
|-----------------------------|--|
| Type 1: Parenting | Providing housing, health, nutrition, safety; parenting skills in parent-child interactions; home conditions to support study; information to help schools know children |

| | |
|--|---|
| Type 2: Communicating | School-home/home-school communication |
| Type 3: Volunteering | In-school help in classrooms/events |
| Type 4: Teaching at Home | Help with homework, help with educational choices/options |
| Type 5: Decision Making | Membership of PTA/governors |
| Type 6: Collaborating with the community | Community-schools- families working together |

Table 1: Epstein's six types of involvement (Described in Desforges & Abouchaar, 2003).

Epstein's model encompasses traditional definitions of parental involvement while also recognising the role of parents in the home, including supporting educational efforts and providing homes in which educational activities are enhanced (Bower & Griffin, 2011).

This model employs a combination of traditional school-based and home-based parental involvement. Research indicates that the model shows positive correlation between the activities therein and students' achievement (Barnard, 2004; Ingram, Wolfe, & Lieberman, 2007; Lopez & Donovan, 2009).

Criticisms of the model are that 'a common element in Epstein's construct is the importance of school culture and not the importance of the family's cultural assets' (Gottlob, 2009, p. 12); and that it measures teacher- and school-initiated involvement behaviours, rather than family-initiated involvement behaviours (Kohl et al., 2000). Further, it has been argued that the model's propensity to promote, home-like schools and school-like homes (Epstein, 1995, 2010) will

'automatically benefit those families who are already cognizant of academic culture and naturally perform the role expected by schools, while creating an automatic disadvantage for families unfamiliar with school culture...and [are] unfit to meet its expectations' (Carvalho, 2001, p. 46).

The model does not take into account of differences in race and ethnicity; it adopts a general approach to all parents (Abdul-Adil & Farmer 2006; Garcia-Coll et al., 1996; Tillman, 2009).

Epstein's model is also limited in that it covertly assumes deficits in the family culture and advocates school culture (Carvalho, 2001).

Despite these limitations, Epstein's typology provides an established theoretical framework for studies in parental involvement. It is used in the current study to construct a questionnaire, with the purpose of testing whether the six types of parental involvement behaviours in the model resonate with the nature and types of Somali parents' involvement in their children's education. The decision to test Epstein's typology of parental involvement with Somali parents with children in the UK's secondary school context was based on two key factors: its dominance in the parental involvement literature, which provides comparative data, and the fact that most home-school relationship programmes in the UK's school context indirectly draw on the model and its six types of involvement behaviours. Testing this model with the population of this research will allow a deeper understanding of the nature and types of Somali parental involvement as well as how Somali parents conceptualise the notion of the home-school relationship.

2.3. Multidimensional operationalisation of Parental Involvement in the literature

Although, parental involvement is a multidimensional construct (Sui-Chu & Williams, 1996), it tends to be regarded as one-dimensional (Crozier 1999). The existing literature on parental involvement reflects this paradox. Three dimensions of parental involvement behaviours and attitudes are operationalised in the literature: high expectation as parental involvement (Yamamoto & Holloway, 2010; Marjoribanks, 1988; Parsons, Adler, & Kaczala, 1982; Thompson, Alexander, & Entwisle, 1988), parental involvement by participating in school activities (Epstein, 1995, 2010; Dearing et al., 2006; Sui-Chu and Willms, 1996; Dunning 1995; Stevenson & Baker, 1987), parental involvement through home activities (Sammons et al., 2007; Steinberg et al., 1992; Hoover-Dempsey & Sandler 1995; Yap & Enoki, 1995; Peng & Wright, 1994; Gonzales & Blanco, 1991; Steinberg, Lamborn, Dornbusch, & Darling, 1992; Fehrman et al, 1987; Paik, 2000; Feinstein & Symos, 1999). Each is separately reviewed below.

2.3.1. Parental Involvement by High Expectation

Research into parental expectations and their effect on children's academic achievement suggests that students whose parents have high expectations attain higher grades, perform better on standardised tests, and remain in school longer than do those whose parents have lower expectations (Davis-Kean, 2005; Pearce 2006; Vartanian et al., 2007).

Although the 'level of parental expectations varies among racial/ethnic groups, the previous academic performance of students is not however considered as influential in determining the level of parental expectations in racial/ethnic minority parents, in other words, parents may still have either low or high expectations regardless of the academic performance of their children. (Yamamoto & Holloway, 2010, p. 189).

Parental expectations and their effects on children's academic attainment are not well researched in ethnic minority groups. This is because, 'for the most part scholarly inquiry on parental expectations has focused on European American, middle-class samples and theoretical formulations have typically not attempted to account for the context of race and ethnicity' (Yamamoto & Holloway, 2010, p. 190). The lack of a sound theoretical framework for measuring the effect of parental expectation on children's attainment in ethnic minority groups has led to inconsistent findings in this area (Okagaki & Frensch, 1998).

A review by Yamamoto and Holloway (2010) found four process 'through which parental expectations influence students' academic trajectories' (p. 207): increasing students' motivation, instilling higher competency beliefs in students, stimulating greater parental involvement, and increasing teachers' expectations of students. The authors suggest that these 'process do not occur in the same way or to the same degree in all racial and ethnic groups', mainly because there may be communication difficulties between child and parent among some ethnic minority groups, owing to immigration status and other issues. (ibid p.207). This 'diminish [es] the motivational effect of high parental expectations' (Yamamoto & Holloway, 2010, p. 207).

Whilst the relationship between parental expectations and children's educational attainments is widely agreed upon in the literature, factors that predict and play a role in the formation of parental expectations are not. Predictors such as culture, race and ethnicity, parental education and child-parent relationships are seen as potentially influential factors in the extent to which parents form expectations about children's educational attainments.

2.3.2. Parental Involvement as participating school activities

Participating in school activities is an involvement traditionally preferred by middle class parents as they have 'the time to take an active part in school affairs and the resources to supplement school budgets' (Dunning, 1995, p. 19). Parental involvement in school activities may have a positive influence on children's learning and cognitive growth (Dearing et al., 2006). However, other studies have found that parental participation in school-related activities, such as volunteering, attending parent-teacher conferences, and fundraising, have less impact on students' academic achievement than other parental activities (Stevenson & Baker, 1987; Sui-Chu and Willms, 1996).

Parents are usually involved at school through a number of activities, such as volunteering for class-room assistance, fundraising and decision-making by becoming a member of the Parents Teacher Association (PTA) or a school governor (Epstein 1995, 2010; Stevenson & Baker, 1987). While this type of involvement may be preferable for middle class parents, Crozier and Davies (2007) found that ethnic minority and white working class parents 'had little or no contact with schools' and did not see 'the need to visit schools' to participate in school-related activities (p. 302)

The lack of participation by ethnic minority and white working class families in school-related activities is intensively discussed in the literature. Discussions revolve mainly around asymmetrical power relations between parents and schools (Carvalho, 2001), the low socio-economic and cultural capital of these groups (Hill & Tylor, 2004), and the 'cultural differences regarding parent and teacher roles' (Theodorou, 2007, p. 95). It may be argued that parental involvement, as operationalised through participation in school activities, is firmly located in the existing literature within a partnership model, which is based on the 'involvement practices of middle class parents' (Christianakis, 2011, p. 160).

2.3.3. Parental Involvement through home activities

Parental involvement activities at home occur in a number of forms, for example: homework support and supervision (Steinberg et al., 1992), discussing school progress and educational activities (Hoover-Dempsey & Sandler, 1995; Yap & Enoki, 1995; Peng & Wright, 1994), assistance with homework (Gonzales & Blanco, 1991), and reducing time spent watching television (Fehrmann et al., 1987; Paik, 2000). Parental involvement in school-related activities at home is generally considered as beneficial to children's academic attainment (Feinstein & Symos, 1999; Sammons et al., 2007), and to relate significantly to positive child

outcome (Fan & Chen, 2001; Sui-Chu and Willms, 1996). It is also considered an extension of the culture of the school, to the home (Carvalho, 2001). This sometimes blurs the boundary between homes and schools, and may have negative consequences for single parents and for socially disadvantaged families, as they may not be able to fulfil the expectation of the school culture (Crozier & Reay, 2005). In the context of Somalis, the negative consequences associated with the failure to meet school expectations is specifically problematic in single mother-led households, this is so as indicated earlier, Somali fathers are more educated than the Somali mothers, hence households led by single mothers who are usually not educated, meeting school expectation, which often requires certain level of education becomes problematic.

Such cultural differences between schools and socially disadvantaged families are rooted in 'social class, ethnicity and race' and as a result of this 'children's class and cultural background bears little resemblance to that of their teachers (Reay, 2005, p. 189)

Unclear boundaries between homes and schools have the potential to create resistance and tension between the two environments, as shown by Kirkpatrick (2000), who argues that the resistance of parents to extend the culture of school to their home, results in power tussle with parents and teachers occupying each side of the boundary. In an extension of this theme, Carvalho (2001) argues that the tension between schools and homes can only effectively be addressed when schools truly become an extension of homes by advocating 'the cultural continuation between homes and schools' (p. 5)

Among the activities parents involve themselves at home with their children, homework support and supervision are reported as the main ones (Keith et al., 1986). The support and supervision of homework at home demand personal efficacy, material resources and cultural and social capital. However, as Vincent and Martin (2000) and Vincent (2001) argue, resource materials and cultural and social capital differ vastly amongst parents. There is a tacit suggestion that in order for parents to involve themselves in their children's education they need to do more school-like activities in the home, regardless of personal efficacy and level of material resources (Auerbach 1989; Chavkin, & Gonzalez, 1995.).

2.4. Theoretical approaches underpinning the conceptualisation of parental involvement

As discussed, parental involvement is a multidimensional construct that has been inconsistently defined in the literature (Theodorou, 2007), this led to the development of multiple theoretical frameworks (Baker & Soden, 1998).

A review of four relevant theoretical approaches is presented in this study: Colman's Social Capital Theory (1988), Bourdieu's Cultural Capital Theory (1973), Funds of Knowledge Theory (Velez-Ibanez & Greenberg, 1992) and Hoover-Dempsey & Sandler's Role Construction Theory (1995, 1997).

2.4.1. Coleman's Social capital theory (1988).

Various studies on parental involvement in education draw upon Coleman's theory of social capital (Tam & Chan, 2010).

In this study, Coleman's theory of social capital (1988) has been drawn upon as one of two theoretical frameworks, with Hoover-Dempsey & Sandler, being the second one (see sections 2.4.5 and 3.4).

Coleman introduces social capital as two broad intellectual streams of conceptualisation of social actions: one characterises the work of most sociologists, who view 'the actor as socialised and action as governed by social norms, rules and obligations' (Coleman, 1988, p.95); while the other characterises the work of most economists, who view 'the actor as having goals independently arrived at ... and wholly self-interested' (Coleman, 1988, p.95)

Coleman also examines what he terms as three different forms of social capital: *obligations and expectations*, *information channels*, and *social norms*. He describes obligations and expectations as forms of investment in other people, creating an expectation from the investor and an obligation on the part of the person who receives the investment to reciprocate the favour at a future stage. Information channels refer to the ability to gain useful information from social relations, which provides a basis for a desired action. Useful information may be acquired free of charge by someone who has invested in social relations, whereas this information would

otherwise have cost time, or at least required attention to acquire, and is a useful form of social capital.

Finally, norms encourage good behaviour in the society and sanctions address undesired behaviours, such as crimes etc. According to Coleman, maintaining good social norms, such as working hard and valuing education etc. and rejecting anti-social behaviours such as crimes, are seen as important forms of social capital, which build social bonds and allows the mutual exchanges of interests and benefits among group members who invested in it.

Coleman introduces the concept of *social structure*, which he argues is ‘important in facilitating some forms of social capital’ (p.105), he also posits that this is the concept of ‘closed and open social networks’. In a closed social network, norms are implemented to limit or negate external negatives while simultaneously encouraging positive ones; whereas in an open social network, such norms are not implemented as they do exist, hence external negatives are not limited or prevented.

To contextualise these social network concepts, Coleman uses the example of a closed social network where the parents of two children who go to the same school are friends and both sets of parents have invested in their social connection. This allows the parents to impose and reinforce norms and measures on their respective children, which he calls ‘intergenerational closure’ (p.106), and which benefit both sets of children. In contrast, in an open social network parents do not invest in a common social connection, which results in parents imposing their own measures on their respective children. This results in a breakdown of intergenerational closure, as the enforcement of norms is not implemented by the parents.

After the analysis and description of different forms of social capital, Coleman’s ideas move to the role of social capital in creating human capital in children (i.e. school achievement), and the linking role that social capital plays in connecting other family capitals, such as financial/physical and human capitals. However, his ideas mainly concentrate on the availability of social capital within a given family unit, such as the time and effort spent by parents with children on intellectual matters, and the social capital found outside the family,

for example in the community, investing in intergenerational social networks, and information exchange, etc. In doing so, Coleman uses empirical data to examine the effect of the lack of social capital available to high school sophomores who drop out of school before they graduate.

The conclusion that Coleman draws from his analysis is that the social capital found both inside and outside families, is very important in the creation of children's human capital in the form of school achievement. Without utilising these social capitals, other capitals found within a given family unit, such as financial physical and human capitals, will not on their own be enough to create the children's human capital, i.e. help with school achievement.

A discussion of this study's findings in relation to Coleman's social capital theory is presented in Chapter 5 (see Section 5.2). However, the following sections explore Bourdieu's cultural theory (1973) alongside his broader forms of capital theory framework (1986), which encompasses social and economic factors. These sections also discuss the reasons why Bourdieu's commonly drawn-upon theory of cultural capital, along with his wider forms of capital and his interrelated concepts (habitus and field) in education, were not favoured as a theoretical framework by the researcher of this study.

2.4.2. Bourdieu's Cultural Capital theory

The concept of cultural capital is 'related to the class-based socialisation of culturally relevant skills, abilities and tastes, preferences, or norms that act as a form of currency' (Winkle-Wagner, 2010, p. 5). Lamont and Lareau (1988) also defined the concept as 'institutionalised, i.e. widely shared, high status cultural signals.... used for social and cultural exclusion' (p.156). There are three different types of cultural capital: *embodied cultural capital*, which is one's own sense of cultural beliefs, traditions, norms and manners based on one's social class; *objectified cultural capital*, which is materials or objects that one possesses, such as painting, writings etc.; and *institutionalised cultural capital*, which is the knowledge one acquires regarding particular norms or values within given institutions, such as schools, and is mainly represented in the form of qualifications and credentials, which gives the holder symbolic power or prestige (Bourdieu, 1986).

Although widely used as a vehicle to explore numerous topics related to inequalities in education, the concept of cultural capital does not enjoy a universal definition in the English-speaking world, due to the multiple conceptualisations of the concept by researchers who have used it in their studies (Lareau & Weininger, 2003). Winkle-Wagner (2010) provided an extensive review of the research that has defined the concept of cultural capital in different ways and found that it was most adapted in educational research. Brief descriptions of three different conceptualisations of cultural capital (i.e. Highbrow, Contextualised, and Bourdieuan framework) are presented below.

Highbrow cultural capital

According to the review by Winkle-Wagner (2010), this definition conceptualises cultural capital as the ‘property of those in the dominant, high-status, or elite group in society’ (p. 29). This is cited as the predominant conceptualisation of cultural capital, particularly in education research. Some of the leading advocates of this conceptualisation are DiMaggio (1982), Robinson and Garnier (1985) and Lamont, Kaufman, and Moody (2000).

Contextually-valued cultural capital

Under the contextually-valued definition, cultural capital has been conceptualised as knowledge or competence of a culture that is valued within a particular social setting. Those who conceptualise cultural capital as contextually-valued, arguing that everyone could have cultural capital, but it may or may not be valued in a particular social context. Some of the leading advocates of this conceptualisation are Anderson (2005), Aries and Seider (2005), Astin and Oseguera (2004) and Goldstein (2003).

Bourdieuian framework of cultural capital

This type of cultural capital conceptualisation uses the concept as part of Bourdieu’s wider theoretical framework by including concepts such as *habitus*, *social capital*, and *field*. This conceptualisation has been mainly used ‘in educational research investigating such topics as family involvement in schooling or college enrolment’ (Winkle-Wagner, 2010, p. 49).

According to the review, researchers who conceptualise cultural capital as a Bourdieuan framework either use the concept along with *social capital* or in connection with the notions of *habitus* and *field*.

The concept of cultural capital, whatever way it is conceptualised, is closely connected with two other concepts, *field* and *habitus*. These concepts and how they relate to cultural capital theory are described below.

Field

The concept of *field* is important in order for cultural capital theory to function, because the field is where cultural competence, or knowledge of particular tastes, are created and given (Winkle-Wagner, 2010). Bourdieu argued that the field, or the space, determines the validity of properties internalised as dispositions/norms and objectified as economic or cultural goods that are available for exchange (Bourdieu, 1979 a/1984).

According to Bourdieu (1979a), a field, or the space where cultural competence, norms and tests are created and exchanged, comes in different tangible forms and are class-based. ‘Each field is semi-autonomous, characterised by its own determinate agents (for example, students, novelists and scientists etc.)’ (Postone et al., 1993, p. 5). This means that no field has the same rules or requirement as another or values the cultural capital presented for exchange as the same, thus, ‘one’s cultural capital might be very useful in one field and essentially meaningless in another’ (Winkle-Wagner, 2010, p.8).

The key point one needs to take away from Bourdieu’s notion of *field* is that a field is a space where social interactions take place and where particularly valued norms, dispositions, knowledge and skills are created and exchanged. Finally, there are multiple fields, each with its own rules depending on the class-based socialisation of its participants.

In the context of this study, Bourdieu’s notion of *field* can be conceptualised as schools and after-school centres attended by Somali children, as each space has its own rules and values

the specific knowledge and skills (i.e. cultural capital) which Somali children bring with them when they interact in these fields or spaces.

Habitus

The other closely related concept of cultural capital is *habitus*, which is a range of 'dispositions and norms that shape individuals in a given society' (Navarro, 2006, p.17) and only 'exists in, through and because of the practices of actors and their interaction with each other and with the rest of their environment' (Jenkins, 1992, p. 75).

According to Bourdieu (1979 a/1984), *habitus* is intrinsically linked to field and is the number of dispositions one internalises as part of the total cultural capital intended to be used and exchanged in a field where social interactions occur.

The understanding one can draw from the combination of the three concepts, i.e. *cultural capital*, *field* and *habitus*, is that they possess three way relations; *habitus* is the total sum of a person's embodied/internalised cultural capital, and *field* is the space for which these embodied elements of one's cultural capital are exchanged for reward, since they are valued cultural capital for that particular social class.

It is also critical to know that the interplay between *habitus*, which is the embodied of one's cultural capital, and *field*, which is the space where the social interaction of the *embodied*, the *objectified* and the *institutionalised* cultural capital of a given social class take place, is what forms Bourdieu's key idea of *social reproduction* within a dominant group in any society. In Bourdieu's world view, social reproduction of the dominant group is a key contributor to social inequality. In a similar work entitled '*Reproduction in education, society and culture*' (2000) Bourdieu and his colleague Passeron crystallise Bourdieu's argument concerning social reproduction in the context of cultural capital and pedagogic communication via the following direct quote

.... 'the specific productivity of all pedagogic work other than the pedagogic work accomplished by the family is a function of the distance between the habitus it tends to inculcate (in this context, scholarly mastery of scholarly language) and the habitus inculcated by all previous forms pedagogic work and, ultimately, by the family (i.e. in this case practical mastery of the mother tongue)' (p. 72).

Bourdieu and Passeron are emphasising the distance between the two habitus of school and family, in other words, the closer they are the more productive the pedagogical communication between teachers and pupils, similarly, the larger the distance between the habitus of the school (the embodied cultural capital) and the pupils attending the school, the less productive the pedagogical communication between the two. In short, school culture and family culture need to be closer and to share common habitus in order to achieve effective teaching.

Bourdieu's forms of capital (encompassing: social and economic capital)

The other remaining key forms of Bourdieu's capital are social and economic capital, and these are briefly described in the following sections.

Bourdieu's social capital

Bourdieu is not the only eminent scholar who has used the concept of social capital extensively in their research, with others including Coleman (*Social capital in the creation of human capital, 1988*) and Putnam (*Bowling Alone: America's Declining Social Capital, 1995*) who employed the notion of social capital as an analytical tool in their research.

Bourdieu defines social capital as the resources that come from one's social connections and relationships, whether with individual, groups or institutions (Bourdieu, 1979 a/ 1984). This definition implies two things; first, the relationships between groups or individuals who are socially connected possess obligations between them to exchange and share resources; and second, these individuals or groups have a similar social background and therefore each individual's contribution (symbolic or material, i.e. cultural capital, or economic capital respectively) to the collectively owned capital is relevant and valued in the field/space in which they are exchanged (Bourdieu, 1986)

In Bourdieu's (1986) conceptualisation, social capital can go hand-in-hand or work together with cultural capital, for example one's cultural capital (whether embodied, objectified or institutionalised) determines the type of social connections one engages in, in order to gain social capital; therefore, one's social capital is the output of one's cultural capital contribution to the collectively-owned capital of the group (Winkle-Wagner, 2010). The size of the social

capital one possesses depends upon the size of the network that they are connected to and the volume of the capital (economic, cultural etc.) of each of its members (Bourdieu, 1986).

While these social connections are beneficial to the groups or individuals engaging in them, Bourdieu uses it to explain ‘the cold reality of social inequality’ (Gauntlett, 2011, p.2). In short, Bourdieu’s view of social capital is a powerful tool used by those at the top of social hierarchies as an ‘exclusionary device’ Gauntlett, 2011, p.3) to maintain their social position.

To summarise the notion of social capital as conceptualised by Bourdieu (1986), social capital is the resources available to groups or individuals through social connections of a more or less institutionalised nature. The volume or the quality of resources that one can call upon depends on the size of the individual members of the network’s own capital, be it economic, cultural, etc. Finally, Bourdieu’s conceptualisation of social capital is that it does not exist in a vacuum, but rather it depends on interactions with other forms of capital (such as economic and cultural).

Bourdieu’s economic capital

Economic capital sits at the heart of the interplay between Bourdieu’s forms of capital, because ‘.....economic capital is the most efficient form of capital and..... can be easily and efficiently converted into symbolic (that is social and cultural) capital’ (Postone et al., 1993, p. 5).

According to Bourdieu (1986), the conversion, i.e. deriving cultural and social capital from economic capital, requires great efforts in order to make these forms of capital valuable and effective in the field in which they will be used. As an example, if a person has a sufficient economic capital then they may be able to immediately have access to some goods and services. However, in order to convert economic capital into other forms of capital (i.e. cultural and social capital) they will be required to invest in social obligations and networks, as well as to develop cultural capital valued and recognisable in the field in question, and this takes time and great effort.

Although economic capital is a significantly determining factor in creating other capitals, notwithstanding the effort and time demanded by the conversion, ‘it must be symbolically mediated’ (Postone et al., 1993, p. 5), which means that symbolic capitals, such as cultural and

social, help mask the economic ‘domination of the dominant class’ (ibid), by providing legitimisation in the form of social hierarchy.

To conclude, it should be understood that while conversion from economic capital to symbolic capital (such as culture and social capital) takes time and effort, economic capital is at the heart of all other capitals (Bourdieu, 1986).

Justifications for not using Bourdieu’s Cultural Capital

One of the aims of this study was to establish the level of involvement of Somali parents in their children’s education, by mapping how Somali parents involve themselves in their children’s education and identifying factors that shape how these parents understand the roles of school and family.

Bourdieu’s theory of cultural capital was disfavoured as a theoretical framework to analyse the nature and type of Somali parents’ involvement in their children’s education in this study and instead Coleman’s social capital theory (1988) was chosen. This is due to a number of limitations to Bourdieu’s cultural capital theory in the context of this study, which are discussed below.

Lack of consistent definition and conceptualisation of Cultural capital in literature

Cultural capital has been operationalised in multiple ways and lacks a universal definition of the concept. For example, cultural capital has been operationalised as cultural knowledge or competence linked to *highbrow elite status* (DiMaggio, 1982). This type of definition will not fit with the participants of this study, as they do not have cultural knowledge or competences linked with a highbrow status within the dominant culture in the UK, by virtue of their race, ethnicity and social background.

The second main operationalisation of cultural capital in the literature is that cultural capital is the knowledge, competence and skills of a culture that are valued within a particular social setting (*contextualised cultural capital*). While this conceptualisation acknowledges that everyone can have cultural capital, their cultural capital may or may not be valued within a particular social context (Anderson, 2005; Aries and Seider, 2005; Astin and Oseguera, 2004; Goldstein, 2003). Similar to the highbrow-linked conceptualisation of cultural capital, this definition does not offer a suitable analytical tool to study the nature and type of involvement of Somali parents in their children’s education because their existing knowledge, skills and

competence may or may not be valued by schools or when liaising with school personnel, hence it is less effective as a way of understanding how parents are involved in their children's education.

The third and final conceptualisation of cultural capital in the literature is *non-dominant* or '*otherised cultural capital*' (p.24), which has been recently reported in the literature (Carter, 2003; Nasir and Saxe, 2000; Olneck, 2000; Yosso, 2005) as an attempt to make the notion of cultural capital more applicable to marginalised and often culturally devalued populations. While this operationalisation of the concept of cultural capital fits well with the participants of the current study, as it recognises cultures other than the dominant as cultural capital, there is one major short-coming with this conceptualisation, which is that it is not the dominant definition of cultural capital in the literature, since it is remotely disconnected from Bourdieu's primary interest in studying the dominant forms of cultural capital (Winkle-Wagner, 2010), hence major scholars of the theory may not see it as a legitimate conceptualisation of the concept.

Cultural capital as an analytical tool gives less consideration to race

Bourdieu's primary interest in cultural capital theory and the majority of his wider forms of capital is to use them as an analytical tool to highlight the attempts by those at the top of the social hierarchy to maintain their position and to exclude others, hence Bourdieu's view of the perpetuation of social inequality (Gauntlett, 2011). The researcher of this study argues that by heavily concentrating on the importance of knowledge and skills of the dominant group as an analytical tool to study the factors that contribute to or perpetuates social inequality, it neglects the role of race and ethnicity. Indeed, there is little reference to these variables in the framework of Bourdieu's cultural capital. In the current study, race and ethnicity factors are just as important as social and class background, hence the concept is again unfit for use in the current study as a theoretical base.

Cultural capital becomes less effective when not used as part of Bourdieu's wider forms of capital and related concepts.

Cultural capital, while it has been extensively used on its own as a theoretical tool, is nevertheless heavily interconnected and dependent on the other wider theoretical forms of

Bourdieu's capital (such as economic and social), as well as other related concepts, such as field and habitus. The researcher of this study argues that not employing cultural capital alongside Bourdieu's other forms of capital makes the theory a less effective analytical tool. Similarly, if cultural capital is deployed alongside the other forms of capital and related concepts of Bourdieu, it would be rather misleading to claim the exclusive use of the theory as a theoretical framework and to truly measure its potency as an analytical tool.

Owing to the above factors, Bourdieu's cultural capital is deemed not appropriate as a theoretical framework for the current study through which to study the nature and type of Somali parents' involvement in their children's education.

Choice of Coleman's social capital over Bourdieu's cultural capital as the theoretical framework

In contrast, Coleman's theory of social capital (1988), which describes three distinctive forms of capital (obligations & expectations, information channels and social norms & effective sanctions) is utilised as one of the theoretical frameworks in this current study based on the usefulness of its three forms as presented below.

Obligations and Expectations: a means to understand the relationship between Somali parents, their children and the wider Somali community

The first form of Coleman's social capital (1988), *expectations and obligations*, provides useful analytical tools for analysing the relationship between Somali parents, their children and the wider Somali community. This analysis is important for two reasons: first, it allows an understanding of the role of parents (*obligations*) in their children's education and what they do in order to fulfil their obligations; and second, it aids in understanding Somali parents' social relationships with the wider Somali community (*expectations of reciprocity*), where, for example, parents may be investing in social relations with other Somali parents in order to mutually reciprocate their social contacts, and what this social connection means for how they are involved in their children's education.

Information channels: a means to understand how Somali parents utilise information to help their children attain in their education

The second form of Coleman's social capital (1988), *information channels*, also offers a useful tool for analysing the nature of parents' communication with the schools their children attend (parental evening, attendances, behaviour, progression and intervention), as well as their communication with other Somali parents and how the presence or lack of these communications may impact upon children's school achievement.

Social norms and effective sanctions: a means to understand how Somali parents use social control to combat undesired behaviour and instil hard work in their children to help them achieve

The third form of Coleman's social capital (1988) *social norms and effective sanctions*, offers an important tool to analyse how parents use Somali cultural norms inside or outside the family to support their children's intellectual development, together with its use in combatting against undesired outcomes, such as school dropout and anti-social behaviours. This form of social capital is found both inside and outside the family and helps in understanding how Somali parents are involved in their children's education.

For these reasons, Coleman's theory of social capital (1988) offers better analytical tools, which suit the current study, and hence it is favoured over Bourdieu's theory of cultural capital.

2.4.3. Funds of knowledge theory

The concept of funds of knowledge was first introduced by the anthropologists Velez-Ibanez and Greenberg (1992) as part of their analysis of Mexican working class families in the US. Their aim was to determine how the economically marginalised above groups 'mediate the uncertainty of their socio-economic disadvantages' (Rios-Aguilar et al., 2011, p. 165).

Educational research uses funds of knowledge as a theoretical framework for two reasons. First, it is used to document the wealth of knowledge found in low-income households and in underrepresented students and families (Basu and Barton, 2007; González, Moll and Amanti, 2005). Second, it is used to challenge the assumptions found in the deficit model, which characterises families and their culture as lacking the useful skills to succeed in education (Olmedo, 1997).

Funds of knowledge maybe used to help us understand how families utilise their indigenous knowledge to aid their children's education. However, as Rios-Aguilar et al. (2011) argue, there are several limitations inherent in this theory: (a) an overemphasis on the recognition of funds of knowledge that may or may not exist in given family or community, (b) the use of a single methodological approach, and (c) dependence on adult household practices as the primary unit of analysis or the owner of funds of knowledge.

Funds of knowledge theory advocates that schools explore the resources in families and communities and use these to help students achieve. This theory adopts socio-cultural perspective and is an overtly anti-deficit model (cf. Velez-Ibanez & Greenberg, 1992).

2.4.5. Hoover-Dempsey & Sandler Parent Role Construction for Involvement Theory

Parent role construction theory is defined as parent's beliefs about what they are supposed to do in relation to their children's education as well as the patterns of parental behaviours that flow from those beliefs (Hoover-Dempsey & Sandler, 1995, 1997; Walker et al., 2005). The theory conceptualises parental involvement based on three major role construction orientations: (a) parent-focused, reflecting beliefs and behaviours of parents that suggest they are primarily responsible for the children's school success, (b) school-focused, reflecting beliefs and behaviours of parents that suggest the school is primarily responsible for the children's school success, and (c) partnership-focused, which reflects beliefs and behaviours that suggest both parents and schools are responsible for the child's school success (Hoover-Dempsey & Jones, 1997).

The role construction orientations have implications for how parents involve themselves in their children's education as well as what they do when they are involved (Hoover-Dempsey & Sandler, 1995, 1997). For example, if parents construct their role as being primarily responsible for the success of their children's education, their involvement becomes personal. However, if parents' roles are conceptualised in terms of it being entirely someone else's responsibility to support their children in succeeding at school, then parents may become disengaged with their children's education (Ibid, 1995, 1997).

The role construction theory is located in Hoover-Dempsey & Sandler (1995, 1997)'s model of the parental involvement process. Hoover-Dempsey and Sandler's model of parental

involvement consists of the following five levels followed by brief description of what each level entails;

Level one: Parental involvement decision: Parents' decision to become involved is influenced by three factors, first parents' construction of the parental role, second, parents' sense of efficacy for helping their children succeed in school and finally general opportunities and demands for parental involvement presented by either schools or children.

Level two: Parents' choice of involvement forms: this level of involvement is influenced by factors such as specific domain of parents' skills & knowledge, specific invitations and demands for involvement from children and teachers and finally mix of demands on total time and energy from other family and employment demands.

Level three: Mechanisms through which parent involvement influences child/student outcomes. This level of involvement is about ways in which parents' involvement influences the educational outcome of children, for example parents can influence the outcome of their children's education by being a good role model to their children, by reinforcement and providing educational instructions.

Level four: Tempering/ Mediating Variable. This level consists of the following two mediating variables for involvement; parent's use of developmentally appropriate involvement strategies and the fit/equilibrium of parents' involvement actions and school expectation.

Level five: child/student outcomes, this level is influenced by two factors, skills and knowledge of parents and efficacy for doing well in school.

Role construction theory has been used in the literature to conceptualise parental involvement from the psychological perspective of the parent, taking account of their beliefs, attitudes and behaviours towards their children's education (Grolnick et al., 1997).

2.5. The impact of parental involvement on children's academic achievements

'The idea that parental involvement has a positive influence on student's academic achievement is so intuitively appealing that society in general and educators in particular have considered it as an important ingredient for the remedy of educational problems' (Fan & Chen, 2001, p.2).

There are two structural problems inherent in measuring how parental involvement influences children's academic achievements: the large degree of variation in the way parental involvement is operationalised, for example, academic aspirations (Gorard, et al, 2012) and the academic self-concept students have of themselves (Fan & Chen, 2001), and inconsistent definitions of academic achievement, for example, Grade Point Average (GPA) and standardised tests of specific academic areas, such as mathematics and English (Merttens & Newland, 1996; Topping, 1996);

The following questions were used to guide this section of the literature review: (a) how strong is empirical evidence for the impact of parental involvement on children's academic achievements? (b) Do certain dimensions of parental involvement correlate more positively with academic achievement in children than others? (c) Which methodologies have been used in previous studies, which present these results? (d) Does the relationship between parental involvement and academic achievement persist across racial groups?

Although various studies indicate a positive relationship between parental involvement and academic achievement in students (McBride & Lin, 1996; Muller, 1998; Peressini, 1998; Bauch & Goldring, 1995; Bronstein et al, 1994; Crouter et al, 1999), limitations remain including small samples, unclear definitions of parental involvement, ill-defined measures of academic achievement, and a focus on specific populations, which reduces their generalisability and their ability to contribute to 'firm conclusions about what aspects of parental involvement have the greatest impact' on children's academic attainments (Jeynes, 2003, p. 205).

Studies agree that parental involvement behaviours have a positive impact on student's academic achievement (Jeynes, 2003; Hill & Tyson, 2009; Wilder, 2014). Some studies attempt to deconstruct the definition of parental involvement, in order to distinguish the components most strongly related to students' academic achievements.

For example, Fan & Chen (2001) and Hill & Tyson (2009) carried out some meta-analyses of studies on the impact of parental involvement, in order to determine which types of parental involvement are related to student's achievements. The two meta-analyses consisted of 25 and 50 studies. Most were quantitative in nature. The findings indicated that some dimensions of parental involvement were positively related to students' academic achievements, whereas other behaviours were unrelated.

Parents' aspirations and expectations for their children's educational achievements, and parental involvement, consisting of discussions on school matters between parents and their children, were found to have the strongest relationship with academic achievement.

The involvement types, home supervision and homework, were only weakly related to academic achievement. The findings are, however, inconsistent, and caution is needed in making reference to any causal relationship. Home supervision and homework support are only two of the home-based parental activities; a growing body of literature supports the suggestion that a home environment conducive to learning, with intellectually engaging materials, enhances academic achievement (Feinstein & Symos, 1999; Sammons et al., 2007; Reynolds & Gill, 1994; Desforges & Abouchar, 2003). Further, the activities through which parents are involved depend on their behaviours, attitudes and beliefs about their children's education (Hoover-Dempsey & Sandler, 1995, 1997). Negative correlations amongst home supervision, homework help and achievement in the literature may 'reflect parents' appropriate response to children who are not performing well, rather than demonstrating that parental home supervision and homework help undermine achievement' (Hill & Tyson, 2009, p. 15).

The literature gives the impression that the relationship between parental involvement and academic achievement is consistent across different ethnic and racial groups. For example, the meta-analytic study by Jeynes (2003) suggests that parental involvement affects minority children equally. A meta-analysis of nine qualitative studies presented similar findings: regardless of race or ethnicity, parental involvement contributes to academic achievement (Wilder, 2014).

This body of literature is beset by two challenges. First, a comprehensive definition of parental involvement is elusive. Its multi-dimensionality means that taking account only of certain dimensions will of necessity limit the validity and generalisability of the findings. Second, there are multiple ways to measure academic achievement, including but not limited

to school leaving certificates, such as General Certificate of Secondary Education (GCSE), A levels, or subject-specific achievement e.g. mathematics and English scores, and teacher and class assessments.

The relationship between parental involvement and academic achievement may be mediated by socio-economic status, with previous research suggesting a positive correlation between these factors (Balli, 1996; Bracy, 1996). Fan & Chen (2001) state that 'if SES does indeed influence parental involvement, then it is very likely that the observed relationships between parental involvement and students' academic achievement in the literature also reflects, to some degree, the relationship between SES and students' academic achievement' (p. 18).

2.6. Parental involvement as policy

Since the 1980s, a plethora of policies have been developed in the domain of family-school relationships and parental involvement, for example, (the 1980 Education Act, 1988 Education Reform Act, 1998 School Standards and Framework Act, 2002 Education Act) and 1997 White Papers, such as (1997 Excellence in Schools, 2001 Schools Achieving Success, 2005, Higher Standards, Better Schools for All). The conservative government which was in power in late 80s, focused on the rights of parents to choose the schools their children attended, to have access to information about school curricula and to their children's achievements, hence 'emphasising the role of parents as consumers' (Reynolds, 2006, p. 3). This neo-liberal view of schools and education as a market and of parents and pupils as consumers emphasised the choices and rights of parents over an educational partnership between families and schools (Hallgarten, 2000), creating distance between them (Macbeth, 1993). When the labour party came to power in 1997, emphasis shifted to the responsibilities of parents as well as to their assuming a more active role, as opposed to being passive consumers (see 1997 White Paper, 1997; Excellence in Schools, School Standards and Framework Act 1998; White Paper Schools achieving success, 2001).

The demonstration of the extant literature about the positive influence that the involvement of parents has on the academic attainment of their children, possibly prompted the development of measures of parental involvement with the aim of raising school standards (Coldwell et al., 2003). However, 'evidence on the effectiveness of programmes designed to facilitate parental

involvement by policy makers is less convincing and less comprehensive' (Reynolds, 2006, p. 2).

It would be useful to illustrate the development of parental involvement policy and practice measures employed in the UK within the context of Epstein's conceptual framework (1995, 2010), as each of Epstein's six parental involvement types represents a behaviour, which 'highlights the focus of the current Government and its predecessor on increasing communication... and flow of information between parents and schools' (Reynolds, 2006, p.2). Below is the development of various policies within the context of Epstein's conceptual framework.

2.6.1. Parenting

Epstein (1995, 2010) conceptualises parenting as the provision of housing, healthy nutrition, safety and general parenting skills, as well as parent-child interaction. A host of policies exist in this category. The government has instituted a number of policies to support parents, including 'the expansion of nursery places and the creation of the early years and childcare development partnerships, afterschool and breakfast clubs for the children of working parents' (Reynolds, 2006, p. 3). Other government-funded initiatives are designed and implemented by the voluntary sector, in support of parents and children from disadvantaged backgrounds. These initiatives include Sure Start, the Children's Fund, the Parenting Fund, and the Family Support Grant. These support mainly the early year's foundation stages of children and their families, and help parents develop skills to foster development and learning in their children.

Most such initiatives uphold the rights of parents to receive support from the state for childcare. Some policies blur the boundaries and responsibilities of parents and state. Henricson (2003) points out that there is a need to 'clarify parents' rights to support from the state and the demarcation that exists between parental and state responsibility for the welfare of children, including reference to issues relating to poverty, health, education and social service provision' (p. 10).

2.6.2. Communicating

Communication is the second involvement type (Epstein, 1995, 2010), and refers to communication between the home and the school. Policy to create regular, meaningful communication between homes and schools were instituted by the 1980 Education Act and the 1988 Educational Reform Act., which support the rights of parents (Reynolds, 2006).

The 1997 White Paper, entitled Excellence in Schools, supported the right of parents to obtain information from schools by requiring schools to consult with parents as part of the inspection process, to provide general information about the national curriculum, as well as about the child's progress as related to the national curriculum on a yearly basis; and the production of annual reports identifying the school ethos and how government intends successfully to implement this. Communication policies have been criticised. The issue of access to information by all parents came under scrutiny by the Ofsted report (2011), which suggested schools develop a communication mechanism which works for parents. To address this criticism, certain government policies have developed websites with links to school profiles, using Information Communication Technology (ICT) to enhance home school links, in order to facilitate the parents' access to information (cf. Somekh et al., 2003; Goodall & Vorhous, 2011).

2.6.3. Volunteering

Volunteering as a parent includes in-school activities, such as helping in classrooms, on parent evenings, and on field trips; as well as participating as a member of an audience (Epstein, 1995, 2010; Goodall & Vorhous, 2011). Volunteering is not at the forefront of most policies (Reynolds, 2006). However, a number of studies demonstrate that parents volunteering may exert a positive influence on their children's educational and behavioural attainment (Epstein, 1995, 2010; Coldwell et al., 2003)

2.6.4. Teaching at Home

This category includes assisting with homework, assisting with educational choices, and providing a home environment conducive to learning (Epstein, 1995, 2010). These activities are discussed under home-school agreement policy, which delineates a school's responsibilities towards its students, the responsibilities of parents, and what the school expects of its students. Schools are legally required to obtain signed consent to the home-school agreement from both parents and children (Sections 110 and 111 of the School Standards and Framework Act 1998). Failure to attain such agreement, however, is not penalised. The Department for Education (DfE, -00131-20132013) provides statutory guidance for governing bodies and local authorities on home-school agreements. Schools are, however, free to choose the content and the wording of those agreements (DfE, -00131-2013). This lack of enforcement and design the contents of the agreement lead to inconsistent practice in schools.

2.6.5. Decision-Making

Parents can contribute towards decision-making mainly through Parent Teacher Association (PTA) and school governing body committee membership. The main policy on how parents should be involved in decision-making, is concerned with school governing bodies, which include statutory responsibilities on a range of matters: staffing, curriculum and budgeting, amongst others (Munn, 1998).

The 2014 School Governors' Handbook, published by the DfE (DFE-00005-2014), stipulates three core strategic functions of the school governing body: ensuring clarity of vision, ethos and strategy direction; holding the head teacher accountable for the educational performance of the school and its pupils and the performance management of staff; and overseeing the financial performance of the school and ensuring effective utilisation of its resources.

According to Reynolds (2005), policy development in this area was first developed by the conservative government in the 1980s, who made 'the first move to increasing the power of parents in decision-making, by introducing the right to vote to remove schools from Local Education Authority (LEA) control, the requirement that two parent-governors be elected to the governing body' (p. 4).

2.6.6. Collaborating with the community

Collaborating with community is conceptualised in terms of contributions made by the community to schools, and the partnership between school and community (Epstein, 1995, 2010). One of the main policies associated with this category is Education Action Zone, instituted in 1998; this is a partnership between local statutory, community and business organisations, the aim of which was to 'raise educational standards in schools in disadvantaged areas' (Reynolds, 2006, p. 4). The Education Act of 2002 invested schools with the power to provide community services in partnership with local providers, such as after-school classes and a range of other curriculum activities.

Thus, whilst a considerable number of policies on parental involvement exist, it is difficult to evaluate their effect on parental involvement, particularly for ethnic and language minority groups, as is the case in the current study.

2.7. Barriers to parental involvement among ethnic minority groups

Barriers to effective parental involvement in ethnic minority families have been identified. They include parent and family-related barriers, such as parents' level of education, available material resources and employment status (Pena, 2000; Harris et al., 2009; Brown, 1989); parents' fears and anxiety in dealing with teachers (Menahem & Halasz, 2000); negative past experience with school settings (Power & Clark, 2001); lack of confidence with teachers (Duncan, 2003), parents' beliefs about and perception of invitations for parental involvement (Hornby & Lafaele, 2011; Lareau, 1987; Lynch & Stein, 1987); and parents' role construction (Hoover-Dempsey & Sandler 1995, 1997). School- and teacher-related barriers were also identified: parent-teacher conference times (Lopez, 2001), teachers' availability to meet parents (Moles, 1993), and teachers' perception of minority parents (Kim, 2009). Following is a more detailed review of these barriers.

2.7.1. Parent and Family-related barriers

There are three key parent- and family-related barriers: (a) Parents' beliefs about parental involvement; (b) Perceptions of invitations for parental involvement; and (c) Parent's current life context (Hornby & Lafaele, 2011).

Parents' beliefs about parental involvement

The way parents construct their role in their children's education may either help or hinder the effectiveness of their involvement (Hoover-Dempsey & Sandler, 1995, 1997). Parents who believe their role involves getting their children to school, so that the school may educate them, are not actively involved in their children's learning. This type of role construction is prevalent among ethnic minorities as well as low-income families (Hoover-Dempsey & Sandler, 1997). Parents of high-achieving students from low-income and minority group families are involved in their children's education at home and liaise with schools (Clark, 1983). Research also indicates that parents' beliefs about parental involvement are influenced by factors such as level of education and personal efficacy (Eccles & Harold, 1993).

Parents' perceptions of invitation for involvement

Another key barrier to involvement may come in the form of parents' perceptions: whether they perceive that their involvement is welcomed and valued by their children and their teachers. If parents feel their involvement is valued, they will likely become involved

(Hoover-Dempsey & Sandler, 1997). It is therefore important that schools create an environment that is perceived to invite and value parents' contribution (Epstein, 1995, 2010).

Parents' current life context

Some aspects of parents' current life context may act as barriers to effective parental involvement (Hornby & Lafaele, 2011). For example, their level of education may influence their views on whether they have sufficient knowledge and skill to assist their children with their education (Green et al., 2007). Level of income and type of job may also be barriers to parental involvement; implications of these factors include travel costs, childcare and time off work (Catsambis, 2001). Another crucial factor is the age of the child (Hornby & Lafaele, 2011). It is widely acknowledged in the literature that, as children grow older and move from primary to secondary school, and as the curriculum becomes more complex (Crozier, 1999), levels of parental involvement decrease (Eccles & Harold, 1993).

2.7.2. School- and Teacher-related barriers

In addition to parent- and family-related barriers, the following school barriers prevent minority parents from participating adequately in their children's education: (a) Teachers' perception of the efficacy of minority parents, (b) Teachers' perception of the abilities of minority parents, (c) Diversity of parental involvement programs, and (d) School friendliness and positive communication (Kim, 2009). Each is discussed in greater detail below.

2.7.3. Teachers' perception of the efficacy of minority parents

Teachers and schools have traditionally relied on middle class parents to take an active role in their children's school life (Ascher, 1988), creating a feeling of discomfort amongst minority and working class families who become involved with schools (Kim, 2009). Their suggestions and advocacy on their children's behalf may not only be dismissed, but ignored (Lareau & Horvat, 1999), and are sometimes regarded as unnecessary interventions (Shannon, 1996).

As a result, minority parents may feel their participation to be unwelcome (Pena, 2000) as well as undervalued (Smrekar & Cohen-Vogel, 2001). Teachers' perceptions about the efficacy of the contribution of minority parents may be related to their own background and beliefs about the abilities and knowledge of such parents and their capacity effectively to contribute to their children's education (McLaughlin & Shields, 1987).

If teachers perceive minority parents to be deficient in their ability to effectively contribute to their children's education, these parents may withdraw from school involvement, which can create the false appearance that they do not care about their children's education (cf. Christie, 2005).

2.7.4. Teachers' perception concerning the capacity of minority parents

Research suggests that because teachers may perceive minority parents to be less able, they may not encourage minority parents to become involved in their children's education (Kim, 2009). Their perceptions may be due to these parents having fewer resources (DeMoss & Vaughn, 2000; Grolnick et al., 1997) and speaking English as a second language (Garcia & Donato, 1991; Huss-Keeler, 1997). Low expectations from teachers lead parents to believe that schools do not welcome them, which may create attitudinal barriers to involvement (Leitch & Tangri, 1988).

When teachers actively encourage the involvement of minority parents in their children's education, parents become more involved and view schools more positively (Epstein, 1995, 2010). Likewise, when teachers suggest that parents help their children with particular subjects, parents believe that their contribution is valued and henceforth involve themselves more in their children's education (Daniel-White, 2002; Drummond & Stipek, 2004).

2.7.5. Diversity of parental involvement programmes

Parental involvement is multi-dimensional. As a result, parental involvement programs are diverse, and the definition of parental involvement is usually quite specific, according to specific schools (Crozier, 1999). This is 'because parent involvement is most often evaluated from the schools' vantage point, parents whose activities do not look like traditionally accepted behaviours associated with parent involvement or are not visible in the school are often classified as minimally involved parents in the schools' eyes' (Jackson & Remillard, 2005, p. 54). When schools define the only accepted form of parental involvement as 'participation at a school site activity only', there may be 'limited choices for parents to participate' in their children's education, resulting in 'fewer opportunities for minority parents to assume meaningful roles' (Kim, 2009, p. 89).

2.7.6. School friendliness and positive communication

The openness of school premises and the attitude of teachers and staff to minority parents play an important role in their taking an active role in their children's education (Scribner et al., 1999). Positive, varied methods of communication in liaising with parents make a crucial contribution to effective parental involvement: Crozier & Daves (2007) found that schools use mainly formal communication methods, such as letters, newsletters, the Home-School Agreement and the student's own homework planners. They argue that these have made for poor communication between schools and parents with English as a second language. However, also research found that when schools seek parents' perspectives whilst devising home-school agreement, Home-School agreement becomes useful communication tool (Sykes, 2001)

2.8. Existing literature on the educational experiences of Somalis

While the educational experiences of minority ethnic groups have been well-researched, studies on the educational experiences of Somali families are scarce. For example, there are handful such as Ali & Jones, 2000; Demie et al., 2008; Rasmussen, 2010; Ibrahim et al., 2009; Koch, 2007; Hersi, 2005; Nderu, 2005; Alitolppa-Niitaamo, 2002, 2004; Warsame, 2010; Humpage, 2009. Little has been written on the educational experiences of Somalis (Kapteijns & Arman, 2004). This is partly because Somalis are relatively new to the UK, when compared with other established ethnic minority groups in both the US and UK (cf. Jones & Allebone, 1998).

Studies conducted in a UK school context focused mainly on explaining the academic attainment of Somali children and factors that may help or hinder their achievement. Findings suggest that Somali children consistently under-achieve relative to White British students and other ethnic and language minority groups in the UK school context (Strand, 2010; Demie, et al., 2006; Rutter, 2004). In 2005, 29% of Somali students achieved 5+ A*-C grades in their GCSEs, compared with a Bangladeshi average of 55 % (DfE, 2006). In 2007, the number of Somali students achieving 5+A*-C, including in English and mathematics, was 24%, compared with 41% of Bangladeshi students (Strand, 2010). Data from a survey of twenty-six London local authorities in 2007 suggest an achievement rate of 42%, 5+ A*-C for Somali heritage students, while the national average was 62 % (Demie et al., 2008). In addition to research in the UK context, the educational under-achievement of pupils of Somali heritage is of concern in number of countries, including the US, Finland and New

Zealand, Nderu, 2005; Alitolppa-Niitaamo, 2002, 2004; Ibrahim et al., 2009; Koch, 2007; Humpage, 2009; Warsame, 2009.

A number of factors are identified as contributing to the low attainment of Somali pupils: (a) language barriers, (b) lack of parental support, (c) lack of understanding of the education system, (d) lingering trauma from the Somali civil war, (e) lack of financial and cultural capital, Demie et al., 2008; Alitolppa-Niitaamo, 2002, 2004; Ibrahim et al., 2009; Robillos, 2001; Birman et al., 2001.

These studies locate responsibility for the low achievement of Somali pupils firmly within Somali families, problematising family variables such as cultural background, language, social and cultural capital, and education level of parents, and shift the blame from schools and teachers (cf Jones & Allebone, 1998). A number of studies focus on home-school relations Nderu, 2005; Ibrahim et al., 2009; Koch, 2007; Warsame, 2010; Jones & Allebone, 1998. The findings are reviewed under the following three themes, which emerged from the research: (a) the parent-school interface, (b) links between learning at home and learning at school, and (c) the impact of Somali culture and historical experiences on parental involvement.

2.8.1. Parent-School interface

Ibrahim et al. (2009) examined methods used by New Zealand schools to communicate with Somali parents, to investigate whether their current methods enhanced school-family collaboration. Findings suggested that communication methods were 'far from effective in building constructive partnerships between schools and parents' (p. 19). Some of the methods schools use to communicate with parents included parent-teacher meetings, school reports, school notices, telephone calls, emails and face-to-face meetings with teachers or other school staff, the researchers argue that these were ill-suited because of the low English proficiency of Somali parents. Further, the study identified four barriers to effective home-school collaboration between Somali parents and schools: (a) parent-centred barriers, (b) child-centred barriers, (c) school-centred barriers, and (d) community-centred barriers. Parent-centred barriers include parents' low proficiency in English, and their financial and cultural capital, which can impede communication between schools and parents. Lack of cultural capital may result in an inability to relate to the schools' culture.

Child-centred barriers manifest mainly between parents and their children, largely because the 'language and cultural gap between parents and children widens as the child learns

English faster and integrates quicker in the host culture than their parents' especially when children are born in the host country. A barrier to parent-child communication ultimately 'undermines family cohesion (Ibrahim et al., 2009, p. 26), leading parents to internalise 'misconceptions about the education system in New Zealand and believing that programmes in schools were in direct conflict with Somali culture and Islamic values' (Ibrahim et al., 2009, p. 24).

The last two types of barriers identified in this research were located in schools and the wider Somali community, providing findings to supplement previous studies on family-centred barriers, see Pena, 2000; Harris et al., 2009; Brown, 1989; Menahem & Halasz, 2000; Power & Clark, 2001; Duncan, 2003; Hornby & Lafaele, 2011; Lareau, 1987; Lynch & Stein, 1987; Hoover-Dempsey & Sandler 1995, 1997.

School-centred barriers relate to 'the school and teachers' common adherence to ethnocentric deficit models regarding refugees' (Ibrahim et al., 2009, p. 27). Community-centred barriers exist because of 'limited social capital in the Somali community', which is a 'critical resource for refugees as it allows the community to support its members with their interpretation and transport needs' (Ibid, 2009 p. 27).

The study concludes that in order to realise the benefits of parent-school collaboration in meeting the needs of the Somali community, 'there needs to be greater awareness of these barriers on the part of school teachers, principals and government policy makers' (Ibrahim et al., 2009 p. 28).

A similar study conducted in Finland on the interface between Somali homes and Finish schools (Warsame, 2009) concluded the need for 'intercultural teacher education' (p. 17) for teachers who interact with Somali parents and their children. Warsame (2009) suggests this may be achieved through constant dialogue between the home and the school.

2.8.2. Difference between learning at home and at school for Somali children

Jones and Allebone (1998) examined how Somali children in the UK learn numeracy at home and at school. Their findings suggested that children learn better at home, as Somali parents and older siblings play active roles in helping younger children's learning. However, parents with young children were found to face challenges in helping their children if they did not have older siblings with better English. The research also drew attention to the methodological issues involved in conducting research with Somali families, for example,

locating sample population groups and making contact with Somali homes is complicated due to gender and cultural issues, and may explain why less has been written about the educational experiences of Somalis, as reported in the previous sections.

In summary, the educational experience of Somali children and their parents have not been widely researched. This in part is due to the relatively new immigration of Somali communities to Europe and North America. Existing studies on Somalis identified a number of barriers to effective home-school engagement but failed to suggest an effective intervention for Somali-heritage pupils and their families (Koch, 2007).

A number of unanswered questions remain. How can schools better engage with Somali-heritage families and their children whilst recognising their educational needs in the context of their culture and historical experiences? How might Somalis benefit from culturally diverse and inclusive parental involvement programmes? How do Somali parents involve themselves in their children's education and what can schools do to support this? Finding answers to these questions will inform our understanding of how schools can best support Somali-heritage students and their families in their educational needs, whilst taking account of their cultural and historical experiences.

2.9. Chapter Summary

This chapter reviewed the theoretical and empirical research on parental involvement and the relationships between families and schools. Five key themes emerged: (a) the conceptualisation of parental involvement, that is, how parental involvement is constructed, defined and operationalised in the wider literature; (b) theories underpinning the parental involvement literature, including how the theories have guided both qualitative and quantitative research on the subject; (c) parental involvement policies, which looked at the current policy of parental involvement in UK context; (d) the impact of parental involvement on children's academic attainment; and (e) barriers to effective parental involvement in minority ethnic and language groups. Each of these themes was reviewed and gaps in the literature were noted. Parental involvement is currently framed as a resource tool to improve the educational attainment of students and to address educational inequalities in difficult-to-reach groups (Carvalho, 2001).

While some types of parental involvement contribute more than others (Fan & Chen, 2001; Hill & Tyson, 2009), parental involvement is generally beneficial to students' education attainments and experiences (Disgorges & Abouchaar, 2003). Parental involvement nevertheless has no universal definition (Bakker & Denessen, 2007) and has been operationalised in multiple ways (Baker & Soden, 1997; Jeynes, 2005; Lewis & Forman, 2002; Lopez & Stoelting, 210).

Although sociological literature (eg Reay, 2004, Lareau, 1987, Lareau, and Horvat, 1999, Carvalho, 2001, etc.) take a more critical view of home school relations which focus on the asymmetrical power relations between teachers and many parents, this is not the case of the entire literature on home-school relations, much of which is very descriptive of the relationship rather than critically analytical

Theories that undergird the majority of the studies in the literature conceptualise parental involvement from a sociological and psychological perspective (see Colman's Social capital theory, 1988; Bourdieu's Cultural capital theory, 1973; Epstein's Overlapping spheres of influence, 1995 2010; Hoover-Dempsey & Sandler's Role construction theory, 1995,1997). Parental involvement has also been operationalised from a sociocultural perspective, for example, Velez-Ibanez and Greenberg's Funds of Knowledge Theory (1992)

At least six main parental involvement typologies exist in the literature (Bauch, 1994). These are grouped under two different models: the partnership model and the empowerment model (Christianakis, 2011). The partnership model promotes home-school partnership, is favoured by middle class parents and informs mainly the traditional parental involvement programmes (Ferrara & Ferrara, 2005). The empowerment model challenges the partnership model by pointing out that it creates 'asymmetrical power-relations' between schools and ethnic and working class families, who may struggle to fully engage with traditional parental involvement programmes; rather, it promotes the empowerment of the home culture of a group (Christianakis, 2011, p. 161). In my view the review demonstrated that parental involvement as a policy in the UK has largely been ineffective, despite a plethora of government legislation on home-school relations put into action by consecutive governments since the 1980s (see Section 2.8). This is because parental involvement policies are currently operationalised in an overarching policy called the Home-School Agreement, which is part of the 1998 School Standards and Framework Act.

Schools are obliged to introduce this overarching policy document, which stipulates the roles and responsibilities of parents, schools and pupils. However, although parents and pupils are required to sign the agreement, this cannot be enforced and no one may be prosecuted for failure to sign the agreement (Reynolds, 2006). There is also conflicting research on the efficacy of this agreement. Some authors report that the agreement has been conformed to by 75% of parents and pupils (Coldwell et al., 2003), while others report that parents remain unaware of the existence and objectives of the agreement (William et al., 2002).

While the educational experiences of ethnic minority groups have been well-researched, few studies on the educational experiences of Somali families exist (see Section 2.10). This is due to the relatively new arrival of Somalis in the UK, compared with other established ethnic minority groups in both the US and UK (cf. Jones & Allebone, 1998; Kapteijns & Arman, 2004). The few existing studies fail to draw adequate conclusions about the types of parental involvement programmes that may work for Somali heritage children and their families (cf. Koch, 2007), and a number of unanswered questions remain in the literature (see Section 2.10).

Parental involvement has the potential to improve the academic achievement of students by creating mutually beneficial home-school relationships. In order to create effective parental involvement programmes for ethnic minority groups such as the group under study, the

dominant conceptualisation of parental involvement, which makes assumptions about parents' class and cultural background, needs careful scrutinisation, examination and problematisation.

It is worth acknowledging that much of the literature cited in Chapter Two is US-based, including Epstein's work (1995, 2010), which was tested for goodness-of-fit with the participants of this study. Owing to the differences in educational practices and policies between the US and the UK, literature based on the US experience may not entirely account for the practices of English secondary school settings, or the different involvement behaviours of parents in UK-based schools.

There are two reasons why this current study drew on more US-based literature, the first being that US-based studies on parental involvement tend to look at the subject of parental involvement from multiple conceptualisations, through which the current study can be researched. Good examples of these conceptualisations include the 'parent-teacher partnership' construct of parental involvement and the 'parent empowerment' perspective of parental involvement (Christianakis, 2011). The former advocates partnership between schools, parents and the home environment, in order to support children as students (Ferrara & Ferrara, 2005), while the latter seeks to 'minimise asymmetrical power employed by schools and anticipate misunderstandings between home and school while building on the children's home cultures' (Christianakis, 2011 p. 161).

The second reason is that contemporary research on parental involvement in the US mainly utilise Epstein's model (1995, 2010) (Desforges & Abouchaar, 2003; Bower & Griffin, 2011). As one of the aims of this study was to test the goodness-of-fit with the nature of Somali parental involvement, and with how Somali parents are involved in their children's education, the US-based literature appears to have recommended itself, as it allowed the researcher to review and compare multiple studies which tested the Epstein model before adopting it as an appropriate testing model.

Finally, it is also worth noting that although the review of the literature focuses more on US-based studies, there are a number of important UK-based studies that have also been used in this research.

The following is a brief description outlining the research aims of a number of related studies by prominent UK-based scholars and researchers, which have been drawn upon during this study.

These UK-based studies are considered relevant for two main reasons. First, some of them have studied Somali ethnic groups in the UK, while others have focused on participants with similar socio economic experiences to the current study's participants. This provided with the current researcher a background understanding of what is currently known about the Somali children's educational experiences and similar groups in the UK context.

Second, unlike their US-based counterpart, they have not employed Epstein's framework of parental involvement. This also offered the current researcher the opportunity to explore different and useful conceptualisation of parental involvement in the UK educational settings. In essence, they offer a ready pool of ideas and resources for comparative analysis.

Vincent's (1996, 2001) 'Parents and teachers' relationships', examined the relationship that may develop between teachers and parents based on four possible parental roles and 'social and parental agency'. The author qualitatively explored the relationship between social class and parental agency in schools, for example the different roles that parents adopt in dealing with their children's schools, based on whether the parents are middle or working class.

Vincent and Martin (2000) in 'School-based parents' group – a politics of voice and representation?' investigated whether discussion-based parents' forums in secondary schools can be used to encourage more vibrant and interactive public discussions about schools and education.

In 'Review of best practice in parental engagement', Goodall and Vorhaus (2011) performed an extensive review of studies on interventions aimed at supporting and improving parental engagement in the education of children aged 5-19 in the UK context.

Desforges and Abouchar (2003) in 'The Impact of Parental Involvement, Parental Support and Family Education on Pupil Achievements and Adjustment' explored why and how parents become involved in supporting their children, the impact that such support has, and the particular characteristics of parental support that have the greatest effects.

In 'Raising achievement of Somali pupils', Demie, Lewis and McLean (2008) investigated the experiences of Somali heritage pupils in London schools: in particular, their attainment compared with other ethnic minorities.

Demie and McLean (2007) identified a number of good practices that can contribute to the educational success of African heritage pupils in British schools, in 'Raising the achievement of African heritage pupils: a case study of good practice in British schools'. The good practices identified included: inspirational leadership, high expectations for all students, diversity in the school workforce, and an inclusive curriculum that meets the needs of African students.

Crozier and Reay (2005) collated important research on parents' and carers' involvement in the education of their children in 'Activating participation'. The contributors stressed the importance of dialogue and action between teachers and parents, so that parents can actively share in making the right decisions about their children's educational experience. Their book further explored the challenges that this presents for both teachers and parents in achieving such partnerships.

In 'Hard to reach parents or hard to reach schools?', Crozier and Davies (2007) undertook a qualitative study of Bangladeshi and Pakistani heritage families and schools in the north-east of England. They considered parents' views of home-school relations, their own roles in relation to education, and the students' perspectives on this, together with teachers' views of whether parents were 'hard to reach' or whether it is the schools themselves that inhibit accessibility for certain parents.

Rasmussen's (2009) 'Education for Somali students in London: challenges and strategies' is a literature review on Somali communities in London, both from academic journals and reports from boroughs. The aim of this was to explore the challenges faced by Somali pupils and what measures school authorities and the Somali community have taken to try to ensure effective education for Somali children.

Reay (2004) mapped out different conceptions of cultural capital across the field of educational research in 'Education and cultural capital: the implications of changing trends in education policies'. She argues that the growth of policy initiatives that accentuate the role of parents in schooling have highlighted the myriad workings of cultural capital in relation to education.

Finally, Von Ahn et al. (2010) in 'Languages, ethnicity and education in London' attempted to identify which linguistic minorities are at a 'disadvantage' in education in England and to identify where they are located, paying particular attention to areas outside of London,

Chapter 3: Methodology and Research Design

This chapter presents the research methodology as well as the ontological and epistemological positions adopted in the research.

Ethical issues inherent to the chosen research design and methodology are discussed, including issues such as access to participants, confidentiality, anonymity, validity, reliability and informed consent.

3.1. Research Design

This research uses a mixed method approach, and has employed two sequential data collection techniques. According to Cohen et al. (2011), mixed method research recognises and works with the notion that the ‘world is not exclusively quantitative or qualitative’ and it is ‘not an either/or world, but a mixed world, even though the researcher may find the research has predominant disposition to or requirement for numbers and qualitative data’ (p.22).

A qualitative approach is defined as a ‘research strategy that usually emphasises words rather than quantification in the collection and analysis of data’ (Brayman, 2008a, p.366). This type of approach is used to ‘better understand human behaviour and experience and the processes by which people construct meaning and to describe what those meanings are’ (Bogdan and Biklen, 1998 p.38). In contrast, a quantitative approach is defined as ‘explaining phenomena by collecting numerical data that are analysed using mathematically based methods’ (Aliaga and Gunderson, 2000, pp.3-15).

Conducting mixed method research entails ‘collecting, analysing and interpreting quantitative and qualitative data in a single study’ (Leech & Onwuegbuzie, 2009, p.265). Teddlie and Tashakkori (2009) suggest that one of the main designs that mixed methods research can adopt is a ‘sequential mixed design’ (p.26), where qualitative or quantitative approaches run sequentially one after another.

In the current study, the first phase of data collection involved a specially designed questionnaire, distributed to 150 Somali parents at two centres in London. The questionnaire had two purposes. First, the group was investigated quantitatively in terms of which of the six types of parental involvement they conformed to, as conceptualised by Epstein (1995, 2010). Second, these findings were used to design a semi-structured interview schedule, in order

further to qualitatively explore the extent and nature of the involvement of Somali parents in their children's education, and how they construct the concepts of parental involvement and family-school connection. Finally, both sets of findings were synthesised in order to answer the research questions.

Findings will be discussed in relation to the existing literature on parental involvement, Epstein's (1995, 2010) typology, the two theoretical frameworks used by the study (Coleman's Social Capital Theory (1988); Hoover-Dempsey & Sandler's Parent Role Construction for Involvement Theory (1995, 1997)) and to the research questions.

3.2. Research Paradigm and Assumptions

A research paradigm is the set of beliefs guiding a researcher's worldview (Denzin and Lincoln 2000) and the 'set of logically related assumptions, concepts, or propositions that orient thinking research' (Bogdan and Biklen 1998 p. 22). A research paradigm directs the choice of literature review strategy and methodology (Mackenzie and Knipe 2006).

The current research adopts a constructivist paradigm, sometimes referred to as naturalistic inquiry (Lincoln and Guba 1985). Constructivism assumes that people, including researchers, construct their own reality, in which they participate (Charmaz 2006). Such realities reflect an individual's experiences of the world (Braun and Clarke 2006). Constructivists view knowledge and truth as constructed rather than discovered by the mind (Schwandt 2003); this is contrary to the positivists' perspective about knowledge and truth, which holds the view that 'reality exists out there and is independently driven by natural laws' (Guba and Lincoln 1994 p. 109).

In this study, a constructivist paradigm was thought the best to investigate the involvement of Somali parents in their children's education from the perspective of the parents, how they construct this notion of parental involvement, and the relationship between schools and Somali homes.

3.3 Ontological and Epistemological Positioning

Ontology and epistemology constitute the philosophical study of the nature of knowledge and what constitutes legitimate knowledge, respectively (Gray 2009). Constructivists abide by a relativist ontology, which means realities are 'apprehend-able in the form of multiple

intangible mental constructions and are local and specific in nature' (Guba and Lincoln 1994 p. 110). Constructivism also subscribes to transactional and subjectivist epistemology, which means the 'investigator and the object of investigation' are assumed to be interactively linked, and that research findings are therefore 'value mediated' (p. 110)

Ontological and epistemological assumptions made in this study are, therefore, that reality is multiple and constructed. In order to discover these realities, the relationship between the researcher and what can be known must be transactional and subjective, hence it was decided to utilise relativist ontology and transactional and subjectivist epistemology in this research to study the nature of involvement of Somali parents in their children's education and how they construct this notion of parental involvement and home-school relationship.

3.4. Theoretical Framework for the Study

This study draws on two theoretical frameworks: Coleman's Social Capital Theory (1988) and Hoover-Dempsey & Sandler Parent Role Construction for Involvement Theory (1995, 1997).

Coleman (1988) defines social capital theory 'by its functions' and argues that:

'It is not a single entity but a variety of different entities, with two elements in common: they all consist of some aspect of social structures, and they facilitate certain actions of actors- whether persons or corporate actors- within the structure.' (p. S98)

Coleman's social capital theory was utilised in this study to understand the nature and the type of Somali parents' involvement in their children's education.

Parental Role Construction Theory focuses on how parents construct their educational roles, based on beliefs, attitudes and behaviours towards children's education (Grolnick et al. 1997). There are three main role construction orientations in this theory, reflecting the beliefs and behaviours of parents: parent-focused orientation suggests that parents are primarily responsible for children's school success; school-focused that schools are responsible; and partnership-focused suggests joint responsibility of both parents and schools (Hoover-Dempsey et al, 2001). This framework was included to study how Somali parents construct their responsibilities regarding their children's school work and how this influences their involvement or lack of it.

3.5. Research Questions

The following research questions were used to guide the study;

1. How do Somali parents conceptualise parental involvement and school-family relationships?
2. How do Somali parents construct their roles in their children's education?
3. To what extent and in which ways are Somali parents involved in their children's education?
4. How does such involvement, or lack thereof, affect children's educational attainment?
5. What challenges do Somali parents face when attempting to become involved in their children's education?

3.6. Research Sites and Participants

Research was conducted at two after-school centres in East and South East London. The centres provide homework and exam revision support, mainly to Somali-heritage pupils who attend local schools in London. The centres were chosen based on: location in areas with a large Somali population; attendees hailing from a variety of London boroughs; their focus on providing support to students at Key Stage 3 and 4 (between the ages of 11 and 16 years, and studying towards GCSE); their holding of regular cultural events attended by Somali parents from all over the UK.

To maintain the anonymity of these centres, they shall be referred to in this study only as Centre 1 and Centre 2. As this study explores how and in which ways Somali parents are involved in their children's education, as well as their conceptualisation of parental involvement and school-family connection, participants are Somali parents and their children at Key Stage 3 and 4, who attend London schools.

3.7. Permission to Access Research Participants & Recruitment

Process

The Somali community has been labelled as impenetrable by the media (Benedictus 2005; Slack and Gill 2007) and as a hard-to-reach group in the research context (Jones, and Allebone, 1998)). Because of these issues, a strategy to recruit participants was thus devised. The researcher, Somali himself, identified two main after-school centres in London, and telephoned to request a meeting with the heads of the centres. The aims and objectives of the

study were explained, any questions about the study were answered in full, and access was granted on the condition that both the parents and their children would have to agree to take part in the research (see Appendix 1).

Shenton and Hayter (2004) suggest that in order to gain access to research sites, researchers must use a host of access strategies, one of which is gaining endorsement from an authority, to satisfy the concerns of any gatekeepers – in this case, the managers of the centres. A letter of ethical approval from the university's research ethics committee was presented to the centres (see Appendix 2). Managers were assured that no identifiable details of the centres would be published or shared without their consent. Once permission was granted, parents were approached about participating.

Shenton and Hayter (2004) suggest four tactics for gaining access to participants after gaining permission from gatekeepers of an organisation: 'prolonged engagement, chameleon approach, use of incentive, and emphasis on the value of personal contribution' (pp. 228-29). The first requires researchers to spend considerable amounts of time with participants, to establish trust. This was not feasible in the current study. The second is used mainly in ethnographic research (Ibid p. 228-29). Ethnographic research requires immersion in the environment of the research subjects, so that they become accustomed to the appearance and behaviours of the researchers and maintain their own as close to naturally as before (Glesne and Peshkin 1992). The current study is not ethnographic in nature, making such a technique inappropriate. Use of incentive introduces conflict of interest and the potential for unreliable data, and thus was also disfavoured.

Emphasising the value of personal contributions was used to recruit participants: the potential of the research to contribute meaningfully to knowledge was emphasised (Glesne and Peshkin 1992). An appeal was made to the conscience of parents towards their children's education and home-school relationships and how this study may potentially help them understand more about their roles.

3.8. The Relationship of the Researcher to Research Participants

The epistemological stance of this study maintains that the relationship between researcher and participants is transactional and subjective; researcher and participants are assumed to be interactively linked, thus findings are constructed as the research proceeds (Guba and Lincoln 1994).

The researcher of the current study is of Somali heritage and is employed as a further education college teacher, but has no affiliation with the research population at these two centres, and had not met any of the participants prior to commencement of the study.

Somalis are divided into five major clans: Hawiye, Darod, Dir, Rahanweyn and Isaaq (Adfam, 2006). Although all Somalis share a common language and are mainly followers of the Sunni branch of Islam (Herrington, 2011), there are subtle cultural and dialectal variations which can reveal regional and possibly clan affiliation. A good example of this would be a person from the Bay region in south-west Somalia, who would sound different when speaking in Somali from a person from Hargaysa in the north of Somalia. A person from the Bay region would speak a Somali dialect called Maay (Ethnologue, 2016), whereas a person from Hargaysa would speak Somali with a northern accent. These differences can even potentially pinpoint the clan association of a person.

Being familiar with the customs, language and ever-changing power dynamics of these major clans and the loyalty that Somalis attach to their clans, the researcher adopted a strategy of maintaining a friendly relationship with the research participants during the data collection period, but resisted becoming their friend.

Karnieli-Miller et al. (2009, p.3) defines friendly relationship with participants as ‘having a welcoming and non-threatening environment’ in which research participants are ‘willing to share personal experiences and believes’

To maintain friendly relationship with the research participants, the researcher avoided conversations with the participants that might lead to political or clan discussions, or might have resulted in the establishment of personal friendships. By doing so, it was possible to avoid any identification of the researcher’s clan and regional affiliation, with the associated risk of making some participants react positively or negatively towards the researcher due to his perceived clan and regional affiliation. It was also possible to address any potential conflict of interest or bias towards the data of some of the participants on the part of the researcher which might be informed by the participants’ clan and regional affiliation.

By adopting a friendly but objective relationship (i.e. not becoming a personal friend) with the research participants, the researcher was able to collect the research data in a way that gave all the participants the confidence to take part in the study (Lincoln & Guba, 1985), as there was no indication of any form of partisanship on the part of the researcher. The element

of neutrality that is projected by the researcher enhanced a relationship of trust between participants and the researcher.

3.9. Description of the Sample

The population sample of parents and pupils was drawn from the two centres based on Criterion Sampling: searching for cases or individuals who meet specific research criteria (Given 2008). Parents were eligible if their child was aged between 11 and 16 years and if they had parental/guardianship responsibility over the child, if their child had attended primary school in the UK, this criterion excludes parents who may have raised children during their primary education age in a country other than the UK, and where parental involvement practices might have been different to that of the UK. This inclusion criterion is particularly important, as it considers UK-based parental involvement practices. This enables generalisations to be made concerning the participants' nature of involvement in their children's education to that of the wider population of Somali parents in other parts of the UK whose children have received a similar length of schooling the UK starting from primary to secondary.

Although an extended family structure is still the norm in the Somali community in the UK, a decision was made only to include primary caregivers. This was due to the study's aim to investigate the perspective of parents who are directly responsible for their children's education, which is not always the case with an extended family member caregiver.

Parents were from either two-parent or single-parent households. Most were single mothers. Rutter (2006) suggests that between 20 and 70% of Somali households in the UK are headed by single mothers, and that this is due to 'men being killed in Somalia, families being split up as a result of working in the Gulf States and of divorce' (p. 4).

In addition to the parent sample, a cohort of five pupils took part in the interview phase of the study, to further explore parental involvement from their perspective. Pupils were eligible if they had a parent who completed both the questionnaire and interview.

3.9.1. Sampling Method in Phase One: Questionnaire

Before questionnaires were distributed, a sample of parents selected based on pre-determined eligibility criteria were invited to attend research information workshops at the centres. At the end of each session, research information sheets were distributed (see Appendix 3). These

included a consent form, translated in Somali (see Section 3.15). These workshops were therefore used as a ‘sampling frame’, from which the study sample was drawn (Gray, 2009 p. 148).

129 parents participated in the first phase of the study, 74 from Centre 1 and 55 from Centre 2. No additional selection criteria were required; the selected parents all satisfied initial inclusion criteria (see section 3.10.).

This sample may not be generalisable to the population of all Somali parents with school-aged children in the UK as a whole. However, it meets the characteristics of Somali parents with the same age group of children living in London, where 90% of the UK Somali population lives (Harris 2004). The sample group meets the characteristics of Somali parents with the same age group of children in London in two main ways; first, the majority of parents who took part in the study were single mothers, this is a common phenomenon among Somalis in the UK. Rutter (2006) suggests that between 20 and 70% of Somali households in the UK are headed by single mothers, and that this is due to their ‘men being killed in Somalia, families being split up as a result of working in the Gulf States and of divorce’ (p. 4). Second, all the participants in the study came to the UK as refugees after the Somali civil strife in early 1990s. This has been a common migration route for the majority of Somalis to the UK. (Kahin 1997, The Economist, 2013).

3.9.2. Sampling Method in Phase Two: Interview

3.9.2.1. Parent Sample

129 questionnaires were completed and returned in Phase One. These were organised according to three educational categories: university graduate, high school graduate, and elementary or no formal education. By categorising parents according to their educational qualifications, it would be possible to examine whether their level of education influences the nature of their involvement in their children’s education (Ermisch and Pronzato 2010; Dubow et al. 2009).

50 parents (40 mothers, 10 fathers) were purposively selected from the returned questionnaires. Thereafter, all parents who conformed to this non-probability quota were contacted to attend a follow-up interview. 15 (ten mothers, five fathers) of the 50, which represented all three educational criteria, subsequently agreed to be interviewed (in Phase Two).

3.9.2.2. Pupil Sample

At the end of their interviews, parents were asked for permission to approach their children for an interview (see Appendix 4). Six parents gave written permission. After meeting with the pupils and explaining the nature of research (see Appendix 5), five (three boys, two girls) gave written consent (see Appendix 6) and one declined to take part in the interview. This sample was also based on non-probability sampling.

3.10. Data Collection Methods

Two data collection methods were used in two sequential phases. The first phase involved a specially designed questionnaire based on Epstein's (1995, 2010) parental involvement typology. Findings were used to design the semi-structured interview schedule - the tool for data collection in Phase Two.

3.10.1. Piloting

Gray (2009 p. 359) suggests that 'piloting is vital to any research instrument particularly questionnaires as they reduce incidences of none response to the questionnaire' (p. 359). Piloting also helps identify 'redundancies, eliminate ambiguities, clarity, layout and appearance of questions' (Cohen et al. 2011 p. 118).

Questionnaires for the current study were piloted with six Somali parents who shared similar characteristics with the ultimate study population. This allowed a test of the effectiveness of the questionnaire items in eliciting the desired information, as well as the linguistic clarity of the items (Gillham, 2000).

Some important feedback included translation errors, overlapping questions, and ambiguity. Alterations were made before the final questionnaires were circulated to the participants.

The interview schedule was piloted with two Somali parents. Feedback suggested that some questions be reworded and that some prompts be introduced for the first four questions of the interview schedule.

3.10.2. Data Collection: Phase One: Questionnaires

In Phase One, a specially designed questionnaire was distributed to 150 Somali parents who satisfied inclusion criteria. 129 returned completed questionnaires. The questionnaire design was based upon Epstein's (1995, 2010) typology, with the intention of testing the framework in the current research population (see Appendix 7).

The use of questionnaire offered 'comparatively convenient and inexpensive way of collecting large data from wider population' (Kumar, 2011 p. 148). The questions were designed to collect both quantitative and qualitative data from participants.

Since participants were bilingual, questionnaires were translated into Somali, whilst retaining the English text, providing flexibility for parents who may have been more comfortable in one or other of the languages.

Questionnaires were distributed to parents when they were at the centres where their children attended after-school classes. This proved the best way to administer the questionnaires, as parents were a 'captive audience assembled in one place' (Kumar 2011 p. 147). Parents were asked to either complete the questionnaire at the centre with the help of two volunteers or to take it home and drop the completed questionnaire in return boxes provided at the centres. The questions on the questionnaire were written in an accessible style: 'it is important that the questions are clear and easy to understand...as there is no one to explain the questions to respondents' (Ibid p. 145).

3.10.3. Data Collection: Phase Two: Interviews

Two semi-structured interview schedules were used in the second phase of data collection. Fifteen parents and 5 pupils were interviewed. Parents were asked fifteen questions (see Appendix 8); pupils were asked 14 (see Appendix 9).

Semi-structured interviews were a good way to further explore 'feelings, ideas, described experiences, opinions, views, attitudes...that have a breadth and depth' (Davies 2007 p. 152). Further, semi-structured interviews 'allow for probing of views and opinions where it is desirable for respondents to expand on their answers' (Gray 2009 p. 373).

All interviews were audio taped with the consent of participants. Audio tapes are useful as 'talking diaries that capture an entire conversation' (McNiff et al. 1996 p. 326). Interviews were carried out in two stages. First, one-to-one interviews were conducted with the parents. Second, one group interview was conducted with the five pupils. Group interviews are useful with children, as they encourage interaction among participants, which yields richer data than the often simple responses otherwise given to an interviewer's question (Cohen et al. 2011). Group interviews might also 'be less intimidating for [children] than individual interviews' (Grieg and Taylor 1999 p. 132).

All the interviews took place at the centres and interviewees chose which language the interview would be conducted in. All the interviewees (parents and pupils) were asked all the questions on their respected interview schedules in a semi-structured manner, i.e. not necessarily starting from the first question and finishing with the final question, but asking questions based on the answers to preceding questions. This allowed the researcher to gather responses for all the questions, and also to compare each group's answers for similarities and inconsistencies. The interviews were transcribed in their original language, and then translated into English if originally conducted in Somali.

3.11. Data Analysis:

According to Cohen et al. (2011), analysing qualitative data 'involves organising, accounting for and explaining the data' (p. 537), but there is no 'one single or correct way to analyse and present qualitative data' (Ibid p. 537). Two types of data analysis were used in this study.

Deductive qualitative analysis (DQA) was used to analyse questionnaire data (quantitative), while inductive thematic analysis was used to analyse interviews data (qualitative).

3.11.1. Deductive Qualitative Analysis (DQA)

DQA was used to analyse questionnaire data because it was the best fit for the questionnaire design; based on Epstein's work, this was theory driven and included codes derived from a priori theory, in this case the codes were the six types of involvement behaviours conceptualised in the Epstein's model (see Appendix, 10).

The basic premise of DQA is that 'researchers have [prior] theories they think will help them to focus on their research questions' and these theories involve preconceptions about research (Gilgun 2005 p. 2). DQA is used to 'test, refine reformulate, refute and replace theoretical models qualitatively' and helps 'ensure that researchers do not force preconceptions onto their findings' (Ibid p. 44), DQA was therefore used in this study to test the Epstein's model with the research population's conceptualisation and nature of their involvement in their children's education.

3.11.1.1. Analysis for Questionnaire Data

The questionnaire consisted of 17 items. The majority of these items were open-ended, 'inviting honest and personal responses from the participants' (Cohen et al. 2011 p. 392).

The first step in DQA is familiarising oneself with and combing through participant responses: reading and re-reading answers, and checking for incomplete responses, errors and overlaps. A unique coding process based on the six types of involvement was then initiated (see Appendix 10), allowing for categorisation of responses under the six types of involvement. By categorising responses according to types of involvement, it was possible to identify negative cases, i.e. responses that do not fit with the framework (Gilgun 2005).

These codes were further analysed and integrated to provide a base for the design of the interview schedules, and to explore the nature and types of involvement of Somali parents in their children's education as well as how they conceptualise the notion of the home-school relationship.

Since the questionnaire questions were both in English and Somali, the majority of the returned questionnaires were completed in Somali and then translated into English by two research volunteers. Two Somali volunteers were used to carry out the translations of both the questionnaires and the interview data to prevent potential bias on the part of the researcher. One female and one male volunteer were chosen, to respect the religious and cultural practices of the research participants, where gender segregation is the norm.

Findings from questionnaire analysis were integrated with the overarching themes emerging from the interviews in order to answer the research questions.

3.11.2. Inductive Thematic Analysis for Interview Data

Inductive thematic analysis was considered a better fit for analysing interview data, since these are predominantly descriptive (Braun and Clarke 2006).

Inductive thematic analysis is defined as a 'method for identifying, analysing, and reporting patterns/themes within data' (Ibid p. 6). Themes capture 'something important about the data in relation to the research question and represents some level of patterned response or meaning within the data set' (Ibid p. 10)

The researcher wanted to explore potential themes emerging from the data beyond the preselected questionnaire analysis codes, hence moving 'beyond counting explicit words or phrases' and concentrating on 'identifying and describing both implicit and explicit' concepts and responses (Guest et al. 2012 p. 10).

3.11.2.1. Data analysis process for Interview Data

Interview data analysis was guided by Braun and Clarke's (2006) six thematic phases' guide, as outlined in Table 2

| Phase | Description of the phases |
|------------------------------------|--|
| 1. Familiarising with Data | Transcribing audio data, which in this study was in Somali, reading and re-reading the transcripts in Somali and then translating into English, then taking notes of initial ideas. Checking errors, incompleteness and overlapping responses among audio, Somali and English translations |
| 2. Generating Initial Codes | Coding relevant ideas in the data in a systematic way. Pairing ideas together so that emerging themes can be observed. |
| 3. Searching for themes | Collating coded ideas into potential themes and gathering them together |

| | |
|--------------------------------------|--|
| 4. Reviewing themes | Identifying main themes that emerged from the transcripts and reviewing them to check the viability of selected themes |
| 5. Defining and naming themes | Defining the themes that were selected in the preceding phase (4). Redefining themes to finalise them for analysis. |
| 6. Producing the report | Integrating selected themes into the research report. This involves telling a story about the data, the themes that emerged, and what they mean for the studies questions. |

Table 2: Braun and Clarks' (2006) six thematic phases guide

3.11.2.2. Analysis for Interview Data

All interviews were audiotaped, transcribed in the original language, and translated into English if necessary. Transcribed data was read twice before listening to the audio tape, and then twice again whilst listening to the audiotape. Finally, where necessary English and Somali translations were compared to check errors and misinterpretations.

After establishing a solid understanding of the interview data, the contents of the participant's responses were re-examined to identify the main themes that had emerged from the responses. The following paragraphs summarise the steps taken to achieve this.

The descriptive responses were carefully examined in order fully to understand the explicit as well as the implicit meaning communicated. Meanings were then paired with unique codes, so that emerging themes could be observed (see Appendix 11) for unique codes of each of the emerged themes.

Collected ideas were collated to form meaningful themes and sub-themes representing participant responses (see Appendix 11). These themes were collated to form overarching/main themes, which formed the basis for the final analysis and discussion of interview data.

Identified themes were further reviewed to examine whether they still resonated with the participant responses.

After naming and defining the overarching/main themes, the researcher revisited the transcripts and classified the responses under the different themes. This stage prepared the data for the final analysis and write-up. The process of identifying responses from the interview transcripts was aided by the use of the qualitative data analysis software, MAXQDA. This was used to identify patterns and emerging themes in the interview responses, so that responses could be assigned to different themes.

Having identified responses falling under the main themes, integrating themes and responses were integrated. Verbatim responses are included in the presentation and discussion of themes, in order to lend lucidity to the qualitative story being told.

3.12. Validity and Reliability

Validity and reliability are essential to research. However, 'one of the differences between quantitative and qualitative research is in the use of and importance given to the concepts of validity and reliability' (Kumar 2011 p. 184). For example, Cohen et al. (2011 p. 180) suggest that since

Validity and reliability have different meanings in quantitative and qualitative research, it is important not only to indicate these clearly, but for the researchers to demonstrate fidelity to the approach in which they are working and to abide by the principles of validity and reliability they require

This study adopts Yardley's (2000) four characteristics of good qualitative research to assess the validity and reliability of this research, as seen in Table 3.

| Criteria | Example |
|----------------------------------|---|
| 1. Sensitivity to Context | Theoretical; relevant literature, Empirical data. Socio-cultural settings , Participants perspectives and ethical issues |
| 2. Commitment and Rigour | In-depth engagement with the topic, methodological competence and skills. Thorough data collection and depth and breadth of analysis. |

| | |
|--------------------------------------|---|
| 3. Transparency and Coherence | Clarity and power of description/argument. Transparency methods and data representation. Fit between theory and method and finally reflexivity |
| 4. Impact and Importance | Theoretical (enriching and understanding), Socio-cultural, practical (for community, policy makers) |

Table 3: Yardley’s (2000) four characteristics of good qualitative research to assess the validity and reliability of this research

Below is a summary of how the validity and reliability of this study were assessed by using Yardley’s (2000) four criteria.

3.12.1. Sensitivity to context

In terms of sensitivity to context, two elements were employed to demonstrate validity in this study: a thorough theoretical and relevant literature review, and sensitivity to the socio-cultural setting of the participants. Many months were spent reviewing and studying the existing theory and relevant literature. Existing theories are culturally and socially incompatible with this population group. The empirical literature also lacks adequate conclusions about the types of parental involvement programmes that may benefit children of Somali heritage and their families (see chapter 2 literature review). An awareness of the cultural and ethical sensitivity of this group was maintained throughout the study. All ethical guidelines (see Section 3.14. Ethical considerations), regarding anonymity, confidentiality and consent, were adhered to.

3.12.2. Commitment to Rigour

Yardley (2000) states that these criteria 'are straightforward as they correspond to the usual expectations for thoroughness in data collection, analysis and reporting in any kind of research' (p. 221), the idea of commitment also 'encompasses prolonged engagement with the topic, the development of competence and skill in the methods used, and immersion in the relevant' (Ibid).

Reliability in this study was demonstrated by a commitment to the topic under study, and by first being a researcher and second a member of the community. Reliability was enhanced by using rigorous data collection techniques. Rigour refers to resulting completeness of data

collection and analysis (Ibid). In Phase One, the questionnaire was piloted and re-drafted twice before final circulation. Questionnaire design was based on a widely-cited parental involvement typology (see section 2.4.6). The subsequent construction of the interview schedules was also based on the findings of the questionnaire (*see* section 3.11.3)

The use of DQA and inductive thematic analysis enhanced the validity and reliability of the study.

3.12.3. Transparency and Coherency

The transparency and coherency criterion was achieved through clear and well-structured write-ups of the research report as well as by the use of thematic analysis, which allowed descriptive responses to be placed under themes, while using verbatim responses to describe the themes to 'keep the feel of the responses' (Kumar 2005 p. 241).

3.12.4. Impact and Importance

The 'decisive criteria by which any piece of research can be judged are its impact and utility' (Yardley 2000 p. 223). This study contributes to our understanding of how Somali parents conceptualise the notion of parental involvement, as well as how they involve themselves in their children's education. This understanding will enable researchers, practitioners and policy makers to design parental involvement programmes of benefit to children of Somali heritage and their families.

3.13. Ethical Considerations

Each research undertaking is 'an event *sui generis*, and the conduct of the researcher cannot be forced into a procrustean system of ethics' (Cohen et al. 2011 p. 76).

The argument against the application of universal ethics or a uniform system of ethics to every research study, without consideration of variation amongst research, has been thoroughly discussed (Simons and Usher' (2000) situated ethics). The central argument of situated ethics is that ethical principles should be guided by the type of research to which they are being applied and the context in which that research is situated (Ibid, 2000). This study is qualitative, and is situated within the context of educational research, and explores the nature and types of parental involvement of an ethnic and language minority group in the school context of the UK.

There are two ethical issues inherent to this study. First, issues revolving around the transparency and honesty of the study's approach and design of data collection methods, as well as the study's aims and objectives. Second, issues of anonymity, privacy and confidentiality in the context of the cultural norms and social practices of the participants.

3.13.1. Transparency and Honesty

This study adhered to guidelines advised by BERA (2011) in terms of honesty, transparency and anonymity for participants.

Parents and their children who participated were clearly informed that the questionnaires and interview data would be used for research purposes only, and that any participant who no longer wished to take part was free to opt out at any stage of the study.

Additionally, ethical approval was gained from the university's research ethics committee prior to data collection (see Appendix 2).

Ethical clearance was granted on submission of a comprehensive research proposal detailing key components of the study, including a blank copy of questionnaires and interview schedules, the research information sheet and consent forms.

3.13.2. Privacy, Anonymity and Confidentiality

Participant privacy was safeguarded via four steps (Cohen et al., 2011 p. 90). First, specific religious, cultural and gender norms of the participants were respected. For example, during the data collection phase, all female participants were interviewed in the presence of other female participants or centre managers. This allowed the creation of a conducive environment, respecting religious and Somali cultural norms governing gender interaction. Second, participants had the right to withdraw at any stage. Third, participants were given the option not to answer any questions in the interview or in the questionnaire which they felt may jeopardise their privacy or anonymity.

To ensure anonymity, no identifiable personal data were collected that may uniquely identify participants (Frankfort-Nachmias and Nachmias 1992). Confidentiality was ensured by storing data on a password-protected computer hard disk, and by not disclosing any traceable data about participants in the research report.

3.13.3. Informed Consent

In every discipline, it is 'considered unethical to collect information without the knowledge of participants and their expressed willingness and informed consent' (Kumar 2011 p. 244).

Cohen et al (2011) states that 'the principle of informed consent arises from the subject's right to freedom and self-determination...informed consent thus protects and respects the right of self-determination' (p. 77).

Informed consents were gained from participants and gatekeepers by two methods in the current study. Gatekeepers were approached, told about the nature of the research, and asked for permission to access the research sites (see Appendix 1). In their permission letters, the two gatekeepers clearly explained that the researcher would have to seek further consent from the Somali parents and their children to take part in the research. Research information sheets with attached consent forms were prepared and circulated to parents (see Appendix 12) and pupils (see Appendix 6). Parents who consented to take part in the research signed the research consent forms. Parents who had not yet made a decision were given time to think and make informed decisions in their own time. Those who consented to take part in the first phase of the data collection were given the option of participating in the interview phase as well. In addition to parents, children under the age of eighteen were interviewed after gaining their informed consent as well as their parents' permission, as advised by Cohen et al. 2011 p. 79). Different consent forms were used to seek permission from children in order to explain the research objectives 'in a comprehensive fashion' (Fine and Sandstrom 1988 p. 27).

3.14. Chapter Summary

Chapter Three has presented the research design and methodology employed in this study.

A qualitative approach has been adopted. The research adhered to the constructivist paradigm and draws on two theoretical frameworks, Social capital Theory and Parental Role Construction Theory. The ontological and epistemological positions adopted in this study are relativism and subjectivism, respectively.

Two sequential data collection methods were employed over two distinct phases. In Phase One, a theory-based questionnaire was used to collect data from 129 parents from Centres 1 and 2 in London. Analysis of questionnaire data informed the design of the semi-structure interview schedules for 15 parents and five pupils, in Phase Two.

Questionnaires and interview data were analysed using Deductive Qualitative Analysis and Inductive Thematic Analysis, respectively. MAXQDA, a qualitative data analysis software program, was used as assistant in defining and naming themes. The validity and reliability of the research was assessed using Yardley's (2000) four characteristics of good qualitative research.

Finally, ethical issues involving access to participants, confidentiality, anonymity, and informed consent, were addressed.

Chapter 4 Data Analysis and Findings

In Chapter Four the findings of the analysed data from the two data collection phases are presented. First, findings emerging from the analysis of questionnaire data are presented according to Epstein's (1995, 2010) typology. Second, findings emerging from the interviews are presented, these are organised under themes that emerged during inductive thematic analysis of the interview data, and are supported by translated verbatim responses from participants. To maintain anonymity, pseudonyms are used. Pupils are identified numerically, both to protect anonymity and to avoid confusion, since Somali parents and children commonly share names.

4.1. Questionnaires Findings

4.1.1. Demographics

A specially designed questionnaire based on Epstein's (1995, 2010) typology was distributed to 150 Somali parents at two after school centres in London between October and December 2013. A return rate of 86 per cent (N = 129) was achieved. All returned questionnaires were fully completed. Of the 129 parents who returned questionnaires, 116 were mothers and 13 were fathers. Of the 116 mothers, two had university-level educations, 39 high-school level educations, and the remaining 75 had elementary school educations or no formal education. Of the 13 fathers, five had university-level educations and eight high-school level educations (see Appendix 13).

4.1.2. Questionnaire findings

Findings are presented in the context of Epstein's (1995, 2010) framework of parental involvement. According to Epstein, parental involvement conforms to six types of activity, including parenting, communicating, volunteering, teaching at home, decision-making, and collaborating with the community. These six types are elaborated on in Section 2.6. In Chapter 2, and in Section 3.4.2. In Chapter 3).

4.1.2.1. Parenting

According to Epstein (1995, 2010), the parenting subtype entails establishing a home environment that supports children as students, and providing housing, health, nutrition and safety for children.

Questions under this section of the questionnaire included:

1. Do you involve yourself in your child's education?
2. What does parenting in your child's education mean to you?
3. How do you describe the level of your parental involvement in your child's education?
4. What is your main parenting role in your child's education?
5. What would you say is your single most important parental role in your child's education?

The descriptive summary of responses is presented below. All (N = 129) of the Somali parents who completed a questionnaire said they involve themselves in their children's education. When parents were asked what parenting as conceptualised in Epstein's (1995, 2010) framework meant to them, 123 of them described parenting in terms of roles such as 'feeding, cleaning, school runs, buying educational material for their children, advising, helping with homework, providing a home, teaching them a home language and Islamic values, sending children to after school clubs'. However, six parents described parenting activities such as 'liaising with schools, attending school events, volunteering in class rooms and becoming a school governor'.

Parents described themselves as their children's first teachers. Further, they said that as parents their first parental role is to attend to the physiological needs of their children, i.e. providing food, shelter and safety for their children.

When parents were asked about the level of their involvement in their children's education, 112 of them said they were highly involved in their children's education, 101 of the 112 respondents who described their involvement as high were mothers. 13 described their involvement as medium, and four said they had low or no involvement with their children's education.

When parents were asked about their main roles in their children's education, 109 of them said this involved advising their children on their education and helping them with their homework, 13 said buying educational materials, and seven said teaching their children a home language and Islamic values.

All parents described their role as being overwhelmingly supportive of their children as students of both formal (schools) and informal education (Quranic education).

4.1.2.2. Communicating between Home and School

Epstein (1995, 2010) defines the communication role as creating a two-way communication channel between school and home.

Parents were asked the following three questions regarding their communication with school:

1. How often do you communicate with the school your child attends?
2. What type of communication methods do you use to communicate with school?
3. How would you describe the relationship between you and the school?

When parents were asked how often they communicate with the school, the majority of participants (N = 104) described their communications as irregular and on demand or 'need-based'. For example, communication occurs when parents or schools want to find out information about children. However, 19 parents reported that they have regular two-way communications with the school. Six parents said they have no meaningful communication with the school.

97 parents indicated that schools do not communicate with them in a timely manner. For example, parents report 'last minute' communication regarding their children's behaviour and/or curriculum concerns.

When parents were asked what kind of system they use to communicate with schools, 123 reported using at least one of the following methods: text messages, emails, letters sent home, parent evening meetings, face-to-face. However, 106 of the 123 parents who reported using the above type of communication said they preferred face-to-face meetings with teachers than any other communication method.

The bar chart in figure 2 depicts preferred methods of home-school communication.

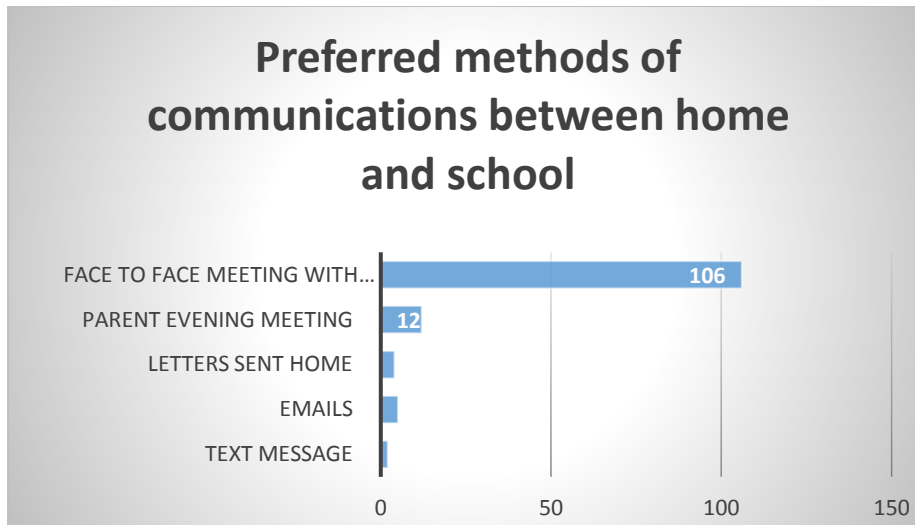


Figure 2 Preferred methods of home-school communication

86 parents reported that some of the communication methods used by schools to communicate with homes, such as emails, newsletters, an E-portal and text messages, are unsuitable and beyond their skills set.

When parents were asked about home-school relationships, the majority (90 per cent; N = 116) said they have a good relationship with schools. Approximately 5 per cent (N = 7) reported a distant relationship with schools, and 5 per cent (N = 6) reported no relationship.

4.1.2.3. Volunteering to support school and students

Epstein (1995, 2010) defines volunteering at school as the recruitment of parents to help the school and the students.

This section of the questionnaire comprised four questions:

1. Have you ever done any volunteering at the school your child attends? If not, what stops you from volunteering?
2. Do you want to volunteer your time at school?
3. Do you think volunteering at school would support your child's educational attainments?
4. Does your child's school encourage you to volunteer?

When asked whether parents had volunteered at schools their children attend, four of the 129 parents reported having volunteered at the schools as a classroom assistant. However, the

majority of parents (N = 125) had not volunteered at school. 54 of them described volunteering as something that would only help the school, rather than their children.

71 of respondents said, however, that they wanted to volunteer at school in some capacity. They cited the following as barriers: (a) work commitments, (b) language barriers (c) cultural and religious differences, and (d) schools' low expectation of parents. Language barriers and schools' low expectation of Somali parents were cited as the two biggest barriers. When asked whether schools encouraged parents to volunteer, the majority (N = 106) confirmed this was not the case.

4.1.2.4. Learning at Home

Epstein (1995, 2010) defines learning at home as parents' involvement in their children's learning activities at home, for example, homework support, goal setting, and other curriculum activities. Parents were asked three questions under this section of the questionnaire:

1. Do you support your child at home? If yes, what do you do when supporting your child at home?
2. Do you face any challenges when supporting your child at home?

All parents reported some form of involvement in their children's learning at home. However, type of home involvement varied amongst participants, as seen in the bar chart in figure 3. 118 parents reported hiring either external private tutors or a relative to support their children's homework at home. 11 out of the 129 parents reported providing direct, one-to-one support with their children's homework.

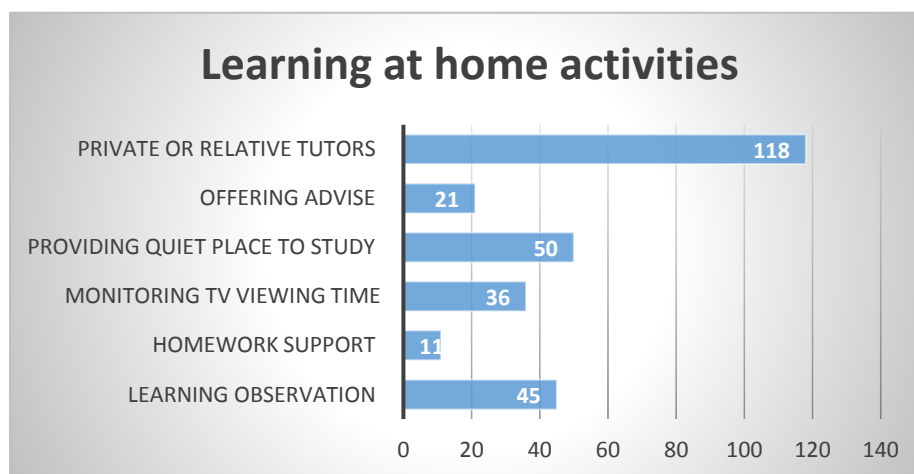


Figure 3 learning at home activities

The majority of parents (N = 100) who reported using private tutoring found providing homework support to their children challenging and sometimes beyond their capacity. However, 18 parents cited work commitments and a lack of time as reasons for hiring private tutors or asking relatives to support their children with their homework. Another challenge is a lack of quiet space at home to do school work. According to parents this challenge emanate from lack of adequate housing, which results Somali families living in an overcrowded houses.

While the majority of parents reported helping their children with their homework at home through private or relative tuition, additional activities were also been reported by parents, for example 50 parents described their main involvement at home as also including providing a quiet place for their children to study, and 45 reported observing their children's learning activities at home, whereas 36 and 21 said that monitoring TV viewing time and offering advice respectively as their additional main home involvement.

4.1.2.5. Decision-making

Decision-making as a type of parental involvement is conceptualised as enlisting parents in school decisions and developing parental leadership (Epstein, 1995, 2010). Parents can be part of the decision-making body of a school, by being members of the school governing council or the Parent Teacher Association (PTA).

Parents were asked the following questions under this category:

1. Are you a member of the school governing body?
 - a) Yes
 - b) If no, why?
2. Are you a member of the PTA?
 - a) Yes
 - b) If no, why?

When asked whether they were members of school governing bodies at their children's schools, eight parents reported currently serving as members of the school governing body. Parents who said they were not members of such a body were asked why: 54 said they have no time to participate and attend meetings, as they have other commitments; 48 respondents cited language barriers, and 19 parents said their membership of any decision-making body would not make any difference to school decisions.

125 said they are not member of the PTA, as they are not aware of its existences and were not informed of it by schools. 4 were members.

4.1.2.6. Collaborating with the Community.

Epstein (1995, 2010) conceptualises this role as the identification and integration of resources and services from the community to help school programmes, family practices and student learning and development.

Parents were asked the following question:

1. Does your child participate in or attend the following school-community activities?

Please select the ones that apply to your child:

- a. School organised university trips
- b. School organised work experiences with local business
- c. Community organised after-school clubs
- d. Community organised sports clubs

113 parents said their children attend Somali community organised after-school clubs, 13 said their children attended school organised university trips, and 3 said their children are members of community organised local sports clubs.

In chapter five the findings of the questionnaire is discussed in relation to Epstein's (1995,2010) parental involvement typology, in order to examine whether its six types of parental behaviours capture the nature and type of involvement of Somali parents in their children's education (see section 5.2.).

4.2. Interview Findings

Inductive thematic analysis of interview data from 15 parents and five pupils revealed 13 main and 36 related sub-themes. These themes will be individually elucidated and illustrated by participant responses, which have been translated verbatim.

4.2.1. Parents' main themes and sub-themes

Theme1: The nature of involvement

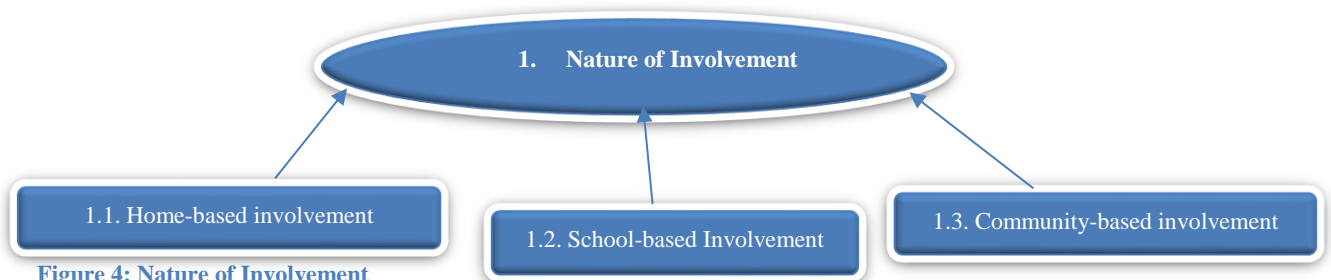


Figure 4: Nature of Involvement

Parents who took part in the interview described three types of involvements in their children's education: home-based, school-based and community-based. The following sections present the meaning of these sub-themes.

Sub-theme 1: Home-based involvement

All the parents (N=15) reported that their involvement mainly happens at home. Parents explained that home is where they feel confident to exercise their educational responsibilities in their children's schooling. There are a number of key activities that most parents engage in at home. These include creating an environment conducive to learning, helping with homework, checking their children complete their homework on time and hiring a private tutor to help their children at home.

The following excerpts exemplify the activities carried out by parents who involve themselves in their children's education at home: Jamila indicates that

'I do involve myself in my children's education at home more than any other place...because home is where I can apply my culture and language to help my daughter learn.' (Jamila, mother)

Mako explains that;

‘One of the main things I do to support my children learn at home is to find a quiet place in my home for them to do their homework.’ (Mako, mother)

Hikmo points out that;

‘Most of my involvement time is spent on simple observation during their homework and thorough inspection after they complete homework at home.’ (Hikmo, mother)

Some parents report that despite having an overcrowded home, they nevertheless help their children at home:

‘Three bedrooms and seven children and their mum means there is no place for studies, but we try our best to make sure that one room is dedicated as a study room during homework time.’ (Mohamed, father)

Parents also reported that when they cannot help their children at home on their own, they hire private tutors. Ali, father of two, explains,

‘I used to help my son with his homework, but since he moved to Year 10 I found it challenging to help him find the answers to, for example Algebra equations, now I have a private tutor at home who helps me and my son with maths.’ (Ali, father)

Sub-theme 2: School-based involvement

The majority of parents(N=13) indicated that they do not involve themselves in their children’s education at school level, apart from occasional need-based communications with class teachers on the progress of their children and behavioural issues, as well as attending parent-teacher evening sessions. The following quotes from parents explain the main school-based activities in which they engage:

All parents who took part in the interview said they occasionally contact the school to acquire general information on the attainment and progress of their children:

‘I do liaise with and ask them the general attainment and progress of my son, but only when I want to know more information.’ (Kadra, mother)

Samira adds,

‘I make an appointment with my daughter’s form tutor when and if needed, so that I can get information about her progress and any behavioural issues.’ (Samira, mother)

Ali explains that his main involvement at school level is when he attends parent-teacher evenings:

‘The only time I get involved with the school my son goes to, is when I am attending parent-teacher evenings, which invariably provide me with the information I need about my son.’ (Ali, father)

The lack of wider involvement at school level seems to have its roots in Somali parents’ general belief that ‘school should be responsible for the children’s education while they are at school’, and that they are only responsible for educational needs when their children are at home. The following excerpts from parents exemplify this belief:

‘Why would schools need parents to get involved at the school-level? They are the professionals...and the government pays them to teach our children...so they don’t need parents to be at school, helping them.’ (Halwo, mother)

‘I am always helping my children at home by asking them what they have learned at school, looking at their homework and contact book...I do this because I am responsible for their learning when they are at home and not at school.’ (Dunya, mother of two)

‘Culturally, we respect professionals such as teachers and doctors, therefore we don’t intervene when teachers are teaching our children at school.’ (Halane, father)

When parents were asked whether they take part in school-based activities such as volunteering, serving as school governors, fundraising for the school, being member of the PTA or a classroom assistant, 12 parents said they had never taken part in these activities. However, two parents said they had served as governors at school, while one respondent said he had worked as a class assistant:

‘I have served as a school governor before and I really liked it, it gives you a chance to see what and how decisions are made about schools.’ (Mohamed, father)

‘On two occasions, I have supported Year 9s in tutorial classes in the school my children go to, so yes I have worked as a class assistant.’ (Ahmed, father)

When a subsequent question was posed to parents, asking why they may not have taken part in the above activities and whether they wanted to take part in the future, 12 parents said they want to be involved at the school level but reported a lack of time, financial resources and confidence, as well as low expectations of Somali parents by schools as reasons preventing their involvement, as illustrated below:

‘It is good to be a governor or a member of the school committee at your child’s school, but these are unpaid roles and I don’t have time for that as I work for [sic] living.’ (Halane, father)

Hikmo adds that her shift work means that she has no time to volunteer at school:

‘I do a number of different shifts and I am a single mother, therefore it is almost impossible for me to volunteer at school.’ (Hikmo, mother)

Kadra believes that participating in these kinds of school activities would not help her child;

‘I would like to volunteer at the school my daughter attends, but would this help my daughter? No; it will help only the school, and maybe other children.’ (Kadra, mother)

Ahmed stated that it is not the parents who do not want to take part in school activities, but rather the schools who believe the majority of Somali parents lack skills to contribute at school level:

‘Despite time constraints...I still want to volunteer as a classroom assistant, but sometimes [the] school think that we [Somali parents] have nothing to contribute at school-level.’ (Ahmed, father)

Sub-theme 3: Community-based involvement

13 parents describe community-based involvement as their second main type of involvement, after home-based. Community-based involvement is described by parents who took part in the interview as participating in Somali community-wide cooperation for parents to become involved in their children’s schoolwork. Collaboration mainly occurs at after-school centres, where children are tutored mainly in English, maths and science.

Most after-school centres are run either by Somalis or jointly by Somalis and members of other ethnic minority groups

Parents describe this type of involvement as a way of ‘experience sharing’ and supporting one another in an environment conducive to their home language and culture, as the following excerpts illustrate:

‘I go to community centres and try to speak to other parents to encourage collaborative involvement. Other Somali parents also attend, and we all involve ourselves in our children’s education while they are tutored in maths and English.’ (Halane, father).

‘I always take my son to Somali community-organised after-school clubs, where he gets help with his maths and English homework.’ (Dunya , mother)

‘Attending after-school clubs like this [indicating the interview environment] helps my son immensely; he obtains valuable support from Somali speaking teachers and meets other Somali children, with whom he gets on well.’ (Jawhar, mother)

Samira adds that she takes her child to a community-run after-school centre, because parents exchange tips for support for their children:

‘Parents meet at these centres and share their experiences with one another, using the Somali language and in the context of the Somali culture.’ (Samira, mother)

While the majority of parents find their involvement at community level very useful for their children’s education, there are a number of dissenters who voice misgivings about the qualifications of teachers, as well as the quality of teaching and learning support at community centres:

‘I used to take my two daughters to community-run after-school centres, but I have stopped because I found the quality of teaching very poor, and as a result my daughters had made no progress.’ (Ahmed, father)

Some parents decided not to take their children to after school community centres for fear of their not obtaining ‘quality education’:

‘I don’t take my daughter to community-run after-school clubs, because most teachers who help the children at Somali after-school centres are not qualified, hence the children are not being exposed to professional teaching.’ (Ulumo, mother).

Theme2: Conceptualisation of parental involvement

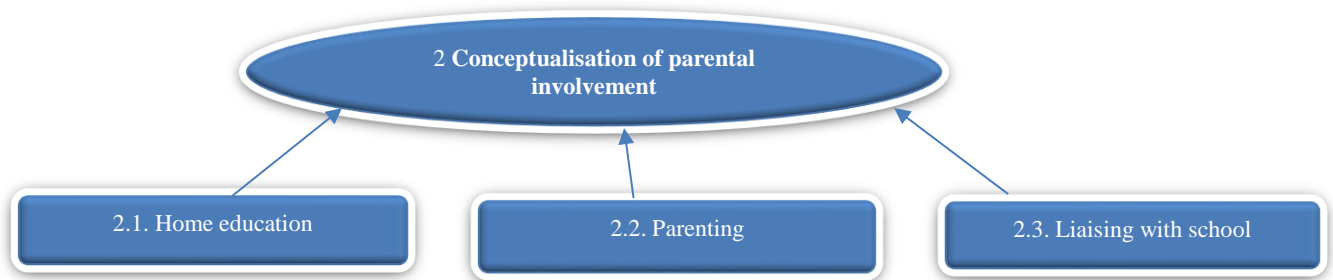


Figure 5: Conceptualisation of Parental involvement

This theme captures how the parents who participated in the interview part of this study conceptualise parental involvement. When parents were asked what parental involvement means to them, three distinct constructs emerged: providing home education, providing parenting, and liaising with school. The following sections discuss the meanings attached to above constructs.

Sub-theme 2.1. Providing home education

The majority of parents said their concept of parental involvement is providing home education for their children. According to all parents, the provision of home education consists of various educational support, not limited to formal education. For example, parents describe the provision of Islamic and cultural education to their children at home on the top of their support to school-based education such as homework and reading.

Parents also spoke about creating a home environment in which children can learn and receive home education as part of their concept of parental involvement:

‘To me, parental involvement means, among other things, providing home education such as Quranic lessons, and supporting your children with their schoolwork.’ (Ahmed, father)

Halwo adds that;

‘Parental involvement means creating a home environment that encourages and supports your child’s education.’ (Halwo, mother)

Jama states that

‘You are an involved parent when you support your children at home and teach them what they have not been taught at school.’ (Jama, father)

Sub-theme 2.2. Providing parenting

Parents also conceptualise 'Parenting' as a form of involvement in their children's education. According to parents, parenting consists of various roles, including looking after children's physiological needs, such as feeding, clothing and housing, and fulfilling roles such as buying educational materials for their children and doing the school run to and from schools.

The following quotes from parents typify how they conceptualise parenting as a form of involvement:

Halane says,

'My understanding of parental involvement is looking after your children, for example, making sure they are well fed, well clothed and well cleaned.' (Halane, father)

Sada adds,

'Parental involvement means being aware of your children's attendance at school every day, encouraging them to do well at school and protecting them from any harm' (Sada, mother).

Kadara, mother of two daughters, conceptualises parental involvement as;

'Buying educational materials for your children, observing their overall educational experiences at school and outside school, and providing them with general encouragement in their education.' (Kadra, Mother)

Mohamed adds that,

'as involved parents, my wife and I help my daughter with books and computers, we also make sure that she gets to school on time and that we collect her on time, and we provide her with parenting support such as feeding and shelter.' (Mohamed, father)

Dunya indicates that her involvement in her child's education starts with the attendance of her child's physiological needs:

'I make sure that they are fed well and clothed well, without which any meaningful involvement cannot happen' (Dunya, mother)

Sub-theme 2.3. Liaising with the school

Liaising with school is the third construct to emerge from parents' responses to how they conceptualise parental involvement. All parents point out that liaising with schools is part of how they understand parental involvement:

'For me, parental involvement means liaising regularly with the school, in order to know what is going on at the school.' (Jamila, mother)

Ahmed, father of four, adds that

'I liaise with the school my son goes to every day, because I believe this is an import part of my involvement with my son's education' (Ahmed, father).

Parents' conceptualisation of liaising with the school as part of their involvement revolves mainly around seeking information about their child's progress and happens more often than not at the subject or form teacher level (i.e. parents-teacher evening & private meeting with individual teachers):

'As part of my involvement, I liaise with the school. I speak mainly to my son's form tutor. If I want to see the other teachers, I attend parent-teacher evening. This, in my opinion, is essentially what parental involvement means.' (Ali, father)

Theme 3 Home-school Communication



Figure 6: Home-school communication

This theme captures the main types of communication that occur between home and school. There are two related sub-themes here: parent-teacher evening and subject teacher communication. Parents define their communication with the schools as 'irregular': apart from letters and occasional texts from the school, communication occurs when there is a need on either side. The following sub-themes describe the types and the nature of communication that takes place between Somali homes and schools their children attend. Themes are illustrated with translated verbatim responses from parents.

Sub-theme 3.1. Parent-teacher evening

The majority of parents said parent-teacher evening is their main home-school communication, for two reasons. First, it provides them with general information about their children's progress, and second, it allows them to see all their children's teachers on one evening.

The following excerpts exemplify parents' use of parent-teacher evening as form of home-school communication:

'I attend most parent-teacher evenings at my son's school, because this is my main communication channel with school. It allows me to speak to teachers and ask questions.' (Ali, father)

Halwo adds,

'Parent-teacher evening is for me the only and best communication with teachers, because I am able to meet all of them and ask them about my child's progress.' (Halwo, mother)

'I attend parent-teacher evening because I can see the work my daughter is doing at school and where she has her lessons. It is the only time I have a real opportunity to have face-to-face conversations with all her teachers.' (Jawhar, mother)

Despite the majority of parents using parent-teacher evening as their main form of home-school communication, a number of parents also spoke about what they called the challenges of attending parent-teacher evening on a regular basis owing to work commitments and child care issues, particularly in single parent households:

'I find it difficult to attend parent-teacher evenings regularly, owing to work commitments. I work different shifts and can't take off time off work.' (Halane, father)

'I am a single mother with two children at different schools. Sometimes the schools have parent-teacher evening in the same week, and finding someone to look after my young daughter is difficult.' (Samira, mother)

Sub-theme 3.2. Subject teacher communication

Subject teacher level communication is, according to parents, the second main type of home-school communication. This communication is usually a face-to-face encounter between parents and teachers, and by appointment. Parents describe their communication with subject

teachers as ‘comfortable’; such meetings are typically private and one-to-one. Parents said they sometimes prefer this type of communication with teachers, because it gives them the opportunity to express themselves clearly to teachers and to get up to date information about their children’s progress in a given subject. The following quotes illustrate parents’ communications at subject teacher level:

‘Subject-level communication is my second most used communication with my school...for example, whenever I have concerns about my son’s attainment, I make an appointment with one of his subject teachers for a face-to-face meeting. This allows me to get real time information about his progress.’ (Mohamed, father)

‘I prefer one-to-one communication with teachers, more than written communication, as I find written communication a bit challenging... in face-to-face communication, teachers always tell you what you need to do to help your children’ (Sada, mother)

‘I attend parent-teacher evening, but I also communicate with teachers privately, one-on-one.’ (Mako, mother)

Parents generally describe the communication between teachers and themselves as demand-driven, meaning parents make appointment with teachers when they have a specific need, such as wanting to find out about their children’s attainment and general educational progress without waiting for parent-teacher evening. According to parents, teachers also use this on-demand communication with parents when there are pressing issues such as behavioural problems and the need for intervention classes for Somali heritage students.

Theme 4 Home-school relationships



Figure 7 Home-School relationship

This theme captures the relationship between home and school. Parents describe their relationship with the schools as non-partnership, but courteous and friendly. The relationship is also characterised as a relationship where schools and parents know less about each other.

There are two sub-themes under the parent and school relationship theme, which describe the meaning attached to the home-school relationship. These sub-themes are unequal relationship and courteous relationship. The following sections describe each sub-theme, supported by quotes from parents who took part in the interview.

Sub-theme 4.1. Unequal relationship

When parents were asked to describe their relationship with schools, the majority of parents described it as one in which the schools and parents are not equal and one schools more often than not dictates the terms of relation without consulting the parents. The following responses from parents illustrate the unequal, one-sided relationships between schools and parents:

‘The school always tells us what to do to improve about our son’s grades, but they never ask us what we do at home or outside the school. This sometimes makes me feel that we have been dictated to and valued less as parents.’ (Sada, mother)

Jama adds that,

‘My relationship with the school my daughter goes to is a relationship in which my input is not sought; I only receive the outcome of the school’s decisions about my child as a final decision.’ (Jama, father)

Ahmed gives an example of the school not consulting him on time about a curriculum decision:

‘My son was put on the BTEC curriculum for his GCSE subjects, because the school said he would benefit and have a better opportunity of achieving good GCSE results. While I accept the school’s professional judgement, I was only notified of this decision five months later, which made me very angry.’ (Ahmed, father)

‘I would say that the relationship between me and the school is one in which the school generally respects me but knows nothing about me, and I know less about them.’ (Halwo, mother)

The meaning attached to the lack of the partnership between schools and parents is mainly around decisions about educational intervention. Parents talk about becoming the recipient of information rather than having the opportunity to discuss and make decisions about their children’s education with the schools. Parents also discussed the fact that schools are often ignorant about their home culture and practices, which makes them less inclined to seek parental input when making decisions.

Sub-theme 4.2. Courteous relationship.

This sub-theme captures a second meaning associated by parents in the home-school relationship. Parents explain that, despite having an unequal relationship with schools, the schools had never been hostile towards them and schools generally respect them.

Parents also mentioned that they do not experience difficulty making appointments with teachers, and can approach schools at any time:

‘I never had any problem with accessing the school and talking to teachers.... They are friendly and welcoming.’ (Mako, mother)

Jawhar says that she has no problem making an appointment to see teachers:

‘They [teachers] always tell me our doors are open for you so from that angle we have a respectful relationship.’ (Jawhar , mother)

‘Our relationship is generally friendly and the teachers always rearrange my appointment if I cannot make it, and answer my questions.’ (Dunya, mother)

Theme 5. Challenges faced when involved

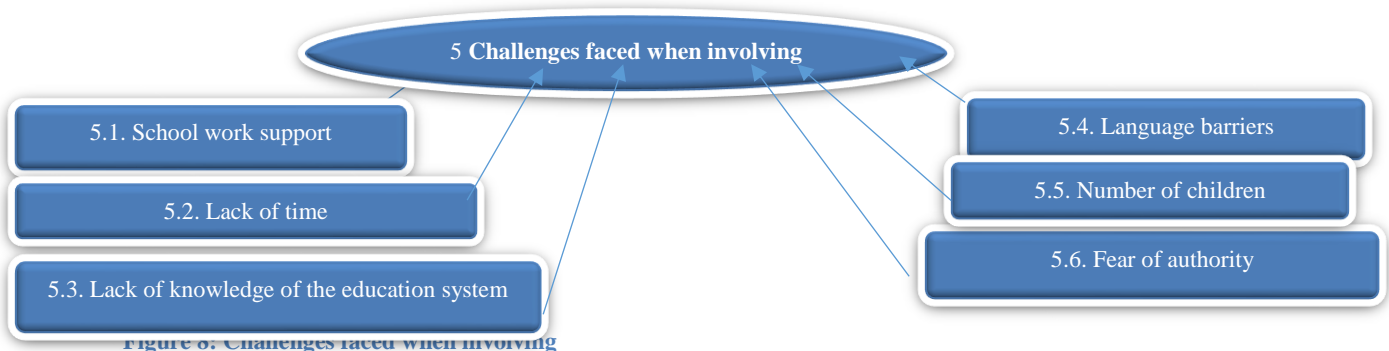


Figure 6: Challenges faced when involving

This theme captures the challenges faced by parents when they are engaged in their children's education. Six types of challenges were identified from analysis of parent responses: parental level of education, lack of time, lack of system knowledge, language barriers, household size, and fear of authority. Most of the above mentioned challenges are significantly impacted by parents' level of qualifications.

Theme 5. 1. School work support

Parental education level has a significant impact on the parent's ability to support their children in their school work. For example, a low level of parental education has been identified by parents who took part in the interview as a challenge in their attempts to help their children with their schoolwork. The majority of parents who took part in the interview (N = 8) have primary-level or no formal education, meaning most of them struggle to help their GCSE level children. 6 parents had secondary level education, whereas only 1 had a degree-level education. In order to compensate, most parents report hiring private tutors to help their children with their schoolwork at home and after school centres. The following quotes from parents exemplify challenges faced by them due to their level of education:

'I find it very difficult to help my son with his homework, because I only completed Form Three in Somalia (equivalent to Year 11).' (Hikmo, mother)

'I struggled at school when I was young in Somalia, which meant that I never had the chance to complete my primary education.' (Jawhar, mother)

‘The challenges I face when being involved in my child’s education stems from my own educational capacity, which falls short of their level, so I hire a private tutor to help my children at home.’ (Ali, father)

Theme 5.2. Lack of Time

Parents report that they find it challenging finding time to engage fully with their children’s education. According to parents, work commitments, which often means parents working different shifts, is the main cause of this challenge. Halane, a father of two daughters in Years Ten and Eleven, and Jamila, a single mother of four children - one in secondary school and three in primary school - describe the challenges they face being involved in their children as the following excerpts shows:

‘I would say that my main challenge is finding time to get involved in my children’s education. For example, I work part time, and when I finish work I go straight to collect them from school. After school I cook and clean; therefore, I have very, very little time to get involved in their school work.’ (Jamila, mother)

‘I work different shifts, which means that most of the time I finish work after my children go to bed. Finding time is therefore very problematic for me.’ (Halane, father)

Theme 5.3. Lack of knowledge of the education System

The parental educational level impacts on the ability of Somali parents to navigate through the British education system. However, due the educational level of the parents who took part in this study, one of the challenges they spoke about is their lack of knowledge about the British education system. For example, parents describe the British education system as a very different system from the one they used to have in Somalia. Most parents said they find it difficult to understand some aspects of the school system. For instance, parents find it difficult to comprehend how a pupil can progress to the next academic year without passing a summative assessment at the end of the year. Parents explain that in Somalia at the end of every academic year, pupils sit end-of-year exams. If a pupil fails to achieve a pass grade for the exam, they do not progress to the year above and stay in the same year grade until they pass their end-of-year exams. This is not the case in the British education system.

According to interviewed parents, they find it illogical to see pupils progressing in grades even if they are not making progress. For parents accustomed to the Somali progression

system, this creates the impression that their children must be doing well in their exams because they are progressing through the grades.

The following quote illustrates parents' confusion regarding the progression of their children in the British education system:

‘In the beginning, every year when I get her report, I expected to see fail and pass result, but all the time there are current and predicted grades in the report. I therefore thought that my daughter had never failed in her end-of-year exam, until I was told that children move up regardless of their grades.’ (Jama, father).

The above confusion experienced by Jama has a direct relationship with his educational level, which is in his case a low level.

Theme 5.4. English language barriers

A majority of parents identified language barriers between parents and schools as the biggest challenge facing them when involving themselves in their children's education. This is due mainly to the fact that their school education was in Somalia, where English was not the language of instruction, at least up until secondary level education.

Most parents who said they had language barriers were mothers. According to these parents, this happens because, in Somalia, it was boys who tended to continue their education beyond secondary education, rather than girls, who either get married early or remain home to help their mothers.

Parents indicated that the language barrier they face is at its most challenging when they are helping their children with their homework, rather than when communicating with teachers and schools, as this excerpt from Jamila, a Somali mother, illustrates:

‘While I can converse adequately in English with the teachers and schools, I find it very difficult to help my daughter with her homework, owing to my lack of mastery of the English language.’

The following quotes further elucidates the language barrier issue:

‘I never learned English at school in Somalia. The English I speak I have learned from my children and friends. My level of English is therefore not good enough either to

effectively communicate with schools or to help my son with his schoolwork.’ (Jawhar, mother)

‘I have no problem speaking and communicating with teachers and the school, as they all understand me, but when it comes helping my son with his projects, I am at a loss.’ (Ulumo, mother)

I struggle with the English language; I wish there were some Somali speaking teachers at school.’ (Hikmo, mother)

‘I can communicate in English with the school, face-to-face, but when it comes using it in emails and texts and reports, it is big ask.’ (Kadra, mother)

Theme 5.5. Household size

Parents also said that the number of children in their household contributes to the challenges parents face when being involved with their education. The average family size of parents who took part in the interviews were five children in addition to one or two parents; 13 parents said most of their children were of school age. According to the parents, larger family households face three types of challenges: helping children in their homework, attending school functions, and providing a suitable place to study.

Ahmed, a father of five children, explains his challenges due to his large household:

‘I have five children, three of them are at secondary school, two are at the same school and one is at another school. Attending parent-teacher evenings simultaneously, and helping with their homework at home, is very challenging for both my wife and myself.’ (Ahmed, father)

Theme 5.6. Fear of authority

Parental educational level impacts on the parents’ ability to know their rights as parents and the rights of their children in the education system and finally breach the cultural gap between the host country (i.e. UK) and their own cultural norms. However due to the low educational qualification of parents who took part in this study, parents express unease towards authority in the education system. According to parents, their fear of authority stems mainly from Somali child-rearing practices that emphasise discipline and conformity, which they believe are incompatible with school authority and British culture, this often makes parents more suspicious about the school system.

‘I always have a fear of breaking the law, such as children’s rights and being accused of child neglect, abuse, etcetera. This fear prevents me from fully engaging with my daughter’s school life and sometimes from challenging my daughter’s attitude towards education.’ (Jama, father)

Some parents expressed a hidden fear that schools may want to ‘westernise’ their Muslim children, as Halwo explains:

‘In my culture, my daughter has to obey me; if she doesn’t, I discipline her. If this happens, the school and social services would think that this is against the law, so I am always on the lookout when involving myself in my daughter’s school life, otherwise she [my daughter] may end up in leaving home and becoming westernised.’

Mako (mother) adds,

‘Sometimes I don’t know my legal position and what is wrong and what is acceptable to schools when it comes dealing my children.’

Parents describe a cultural gap not only between the school and the home, but between parents and their own children. According to parents, their children find it easier to assimilate the mainstream culture than they do. They acquire the English language faster than their parents, for example, and make friends with pupils from other cultures. Parents reported feeling as though their children are drifting away from their identity as Somalis and Muslims, and that if they were to do something about this, a more assimilated child might work with the school system to accuse the parents of abuse.

Dunya, a mother of three, exemplifies the fear some parents have about the school system and how this affects their full participation in their children’s education:

‘Sometimes I feel that the school culture is unsafe for my child. They [school] mainly promote western culture, and this make me feel scared that my child will adopt the western culture.’

Theme 6. Paternal & maternal roles



Figure 9: Paternal and Maternal roles

This theme captures the meaning parents associate with their roles when they are involved in their children's education. Two sub-themes emerged under this theme, which parents said influence the roles they adopt: culture, and gender on one hand as a two interrelated factors and parent education on the other hand.

Theme 6.1. Role allocation- based Culture & Gender

When parents were asked what roles they occupy in their children's education, the majority explained that their involvement is influenced mainly by a combination of their culture and gender. For example, in Somali culture it is mainly mothers who are involved in their children's education, because in the Somali culture, education and schooling of children are part of child rearing activities.

The following quotes from parents exemplify the impact of culture and gender on parents' roles when engaging in their children's education:

'It is me [mother] who is always involved in my children's education, because it's in our Somali culture that mothers are responsible for things like the school run, feeding and dressing and other child support.' (Dunya, mother)

'My husband works full time, he is responsible for putting food on table - the bread-winner, in other words - and I am responsible for looking after our children and their education.' (Mako, mother)

'I am responsible for taking my children to school, bringing them back from school, feeding, clothing and making them ready for learning at home and at school.' (Samira, mother)

Theme 6.2. Role allocation- based on Parental Qualifications

According to the parents, the level of their educational qualifications informs their involvement strategy in their children's schoolwork at home. For example, if one of the parents' educational level is higher than both the child and their spouse, then they tend to take on roles such as helping with homework, liaising with schools to clarify the nature of homework, buying and choosing educational materials to support their children at home, and finally, advising children on educational choices. However, if one parent's educational level is lower than their children and or their spouse, then they tend to adopt a more physical role, such as transport to school.

The following quotes from some of the parents who took part in the study show how parents and their qualifications or lack thereof, shape their involvements in their children's education.

Jama explained how he and his wife allocate involvement responsibility at home, based on their education level:

“Both my wife and I are involved in the education of my son, but how we are involved is determined by our educational level. I am slightly better educated than my wife, so I help them with their homework and she [my wife] does all the school runs and feeding and cooking and....of course cleaning.”

(Jama, father with FE level education)

Another parent indicated that owing to her husband's degree-level education, he is responsible for helping with their daughter's homework at home.

“I do all the school runs and my husband, who has a degree, is responsible for liaising with the school and helping my daughter with her homework and her educational choices.”

(Sada, mother)

Another parent indicated that having a good education himself enables him to provide adequate advice to his children on navigating the British school system, and it means he is able to support and assist his children with their homework and examination revision.

“My education is very important because it helps me help my children with their school work, it also reminds my children that they need to have education to improve their chances in life.”

(Mohamed, father with a degree- level education)

In addition to its impact on the parental role allocation, the parental educational qualification also has significant impact on these themes (5.1, 5.3, 5.6 & 11.1) that have emerged from analysis of the data in this chapter as challenges faced by parents who took part in this study when involving themselves in their children’s education.

Theme 7. Motivating factors

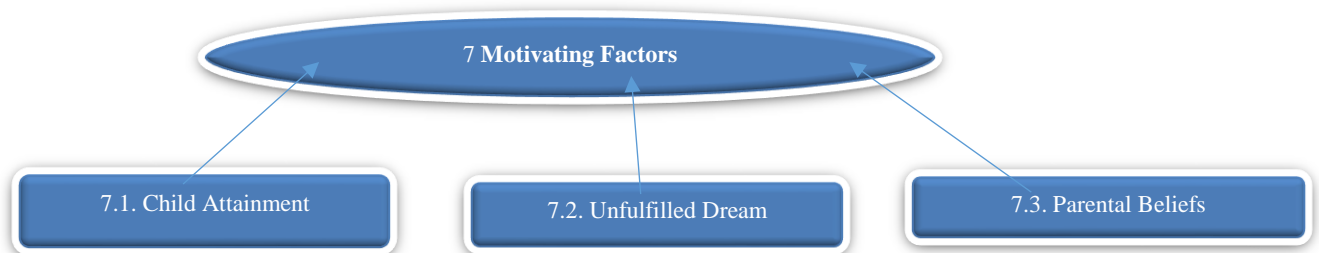


Figure 10: Motivating factors

This theme captures responses given by parents when asked what motivate them to involve themselves in their children’s education. Three sub-themes emerged from parents’ responses: child attainment, unfulfilled dreams, and parental beliefs. Below is a description of these sub-themes.

Theme 7.1. Child attainment- as a motivating factor for involvement

Parents said that one of the factors that motivates them to involve themselves in their children’s education and schoolwork is their own achievement, or lack thereof. According to parents, their involvement motivation peaks in two instances. When children are high achievers and are doing very well in their schoolwork, this acts as a motivating factor. Parents’ expectations of their children’s academic success increases and this in turn encourages them to be more involved than they otherwise might be. When children are

underachieving and need intervention to help them succeed, parents also become more involved. The following quotes from parents exemplify the above motivating factors within child attainment:

‘What really motivates me is the fact that my son is doing very well, he is in the top set in every subject that he is doing now. The more I see him doing well, the more I naturally become involved (Dunya, mother)

‘I always involved myself in my daughter’s education, but since she moved to Year Ten, her set level has dropped and this makes me sick with worry, because next year she will be sitting the GCSE exam. I am therefore more motivated than ever because of her achievement levels.’ (Mohamed, father)

‘My son’s grades motivate me and they do so when they are low and when they are high. When they are low, I want to be more involved because I want him to go to university. By the same token, when he is doing well I want to be more involved because he will have good future with well-paid job.’ (Jamila, mother)

Theme 7.2. Unfulfilled dreams-as a motivating factor for involvement

The second motivational factor to emerge from parents’ responses was what they termed in Somali, ‘*riyadaydii waxbarsaho een gaari waayay*’, which, roughly translates ‘my unfulfilled educational dreams’. When asked what this meant, parents described their current and past education experience. For example, many parents said that in their formative years they had dreamt of attending university and getting degrees, but were deprived of this opportunity, first by the civil strife that devastated Somalia, and second by the position they found themselves in the UK, as refugees.

Because their own dreams of obtaining university degrees had gone unfulfilled, they now invest their educational dreams in their children, and become involved in this way:

‘In Somalia, I always wanted to continue my education beyond secondary...and go to “*kuliyada Lafoole*” [the Faculty of Lafoole], which was part of the National University of Somalia...But the civil war has destroyed everything...my children now have the chance to go to university in this country, and I am determined to help them do so, *inshaa Allah* [God willing].’ (Halwo, mother)

‘My son has a chance that I never had in Somalia, so I always tell him work hard, work hard son...because I want him to succeed where I failed.’ (Ahmed, father)

When I came to the UK, I wanted to go to college, but dropped out because of financial pressures from home [relatives in Somalia], but my children don’t have to worry about this... as I work and all they need to do is realise “*riyadaydii*” [my own dream] in them. that is what motivates me most.’ (Halane, father)

Theme 7.3. Parental beliefs and attitudes to education- as a motivating factor for involvement

While the majority of parents said they are motivated either by their children’s school performances or their unfulfilled dreams of getting a degree, a number of parents simply stated that they are motivated by their beliefs and attitude towards their children’s education.

Hikmo, a mother of four, explains:

‘What really motivates me is my natural motherly love for my son and his education.... I want him to succeed and do well in life.’ (Hikmo, mother)

‘It is incumbent upon me to help my daughter with her education, as it was incumbent on my parents to help me when I was young.’ (Ulumo, mother)

Theme 8. The impact of parental involvement

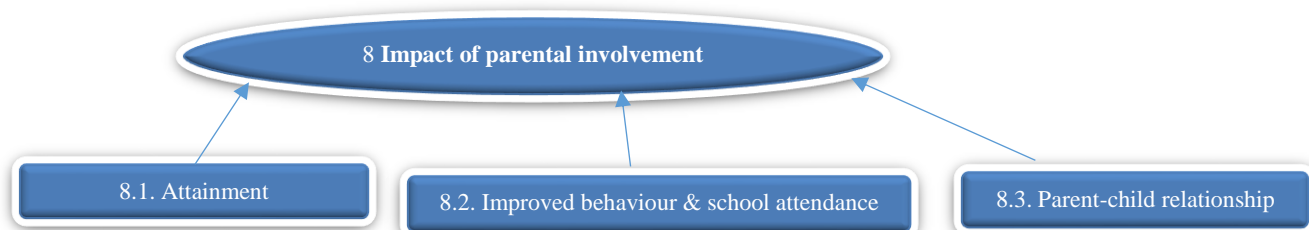


Figure 11: Impact of Parental involvement

This theme pertains to how parental involvement impacts on children. When parents who took part in the interviews were asked whether their involvement in their children’s education has an impact on their children’s school work, three distinct sub-themes emerged:

Theme 8.1. Increased child attainment

All parents reported an increase in child attainment as a result of their involvement. The increased attainment referred to is either a child who was already performing well at school and, because of their parents’ involvement, progress even further, or children who were underachieving and who improved as result of intervention in the form of parental involvement:

‘Oh yes, absolutely, one hundred per cent - I can easily see the difference in my daughter’s school work since I started to get involved...massive improvement.’ (Ulumo, mother)

‘I believe that without my involvement my son would have not been at the stage he is now. He is now in the top set for all his core subjects...this was not the case last year, when he was in the lower sets for most of his subjects. So, my involvement has given him a significant boost.’ (Mohamed, father)

‘Children need someone to motivate them, they need to be taught perseverance and how to work hard and keep going even if they feel they are not achieving good grades...I involve myself in my children’s education to do just that and the benefits from my encouragement and motivation are reflected in my two children’s attainments.’ (Dunya, mother of two)

‘I would say that my involvement has a very, very positive impact on my daughter’s educational attainment...although I have to say that she was always been a top student.’ (Hikmo, mother)

Theme 8.2. Improved behaviour and school attendance

The majority of parents in this study believed their involvement in their children’s education has a positive impact on their classroom behaviour and school’s attendance. This is due to, first, children’s perception of their parents’ involvement as parents who prioritise education, creating a ‘virtuous circle’, as one father called it, which makes children think twice about their schoolwork in general, and attendance and behaviour in particular. Second, improved behaviour and school attendance are due to what parents call ‘*Kawarqabka joogtada ah*’ which translates to ‘relentless observation’ of their children.

Parents also point out that, because they are involved, their children are aware that they are in constant communication with schools and that anything that happens at school will be shared with their parents:

‘My child knows that I am an involved parent...she knows that I will find out what is going on in school, therefore her attendances and attitude to learning is very good.’ (Halwo, mother)

Theme 8.3. Improved parent-child relationships

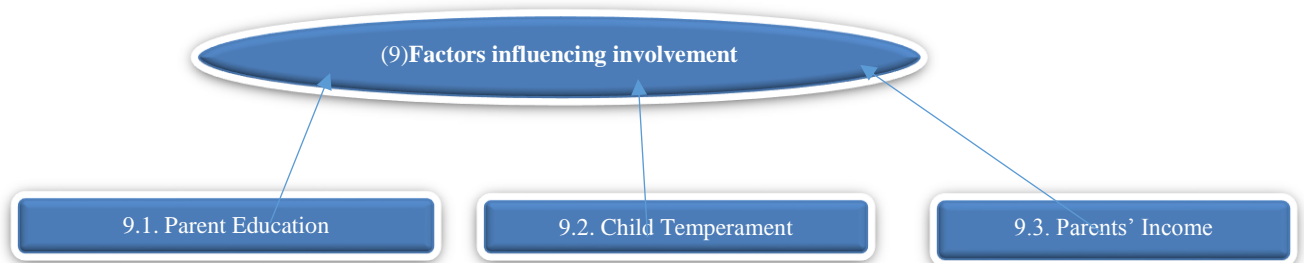
Parents report that being involved in their children’s education means they have close and caring contact with their children. According to parents, ‘being involved means talking to

children, working with them on their homework’, which engenders a closer relationship between them and their children.

As Jama, a father of a Year 10 pupil, explains, the closer relationship he has with his daughter through being involved in her education, means he has the capacity to address any educational difficulties early on, before they become problematic:

‘My daughter tells me everything about her education and what she feels about any potential educational problems... This is because of my involvement and the close relationship this has cultivated between her and I.’ (Jama, father)

Theme 9. Factors impacting involvement



When asked about factors that influence their involvement in their children’s education, three sub-themes emerged from parents’ responses: parent education, child temperament and family income. Parents explain that these factors have a positive influence when present and a negative influence when unavailable. These factors, and their impact on parents’ involvement, are discussed below.

Theme 9.1. Parent education on involvement

The majority of parents said that their education has an important impact on their involvement in their children’s education. According to parents, their education has two important influences on their involvement. First, having a good education themselves enables parents to provide adequate advice to their children to navigate the British school system and, practically, means they are able to support and assist their children’s with their schoolwork, such as homework and examination revision. Second, their own education provides a kind of template for their children, hence increasing children’s interest in education, which in turn makes parental involvement a two-way process, co-owned by parents and their children:

‘My education is very important because it helps me help my children with their school work, it also reminds my children that they need to have education to improve their chances in life.’ (Mohamed, father with a degree- level education)

‘I only have a secondary education...most of the time, I am unable to help my two daughters with their schoolwork, as it is beyond me.’ (Mako, mother).

Theme 9.2. Child temperament on involvement

The majority of parents in this study reported that the success and continuity of their involvement in their children’s school work hinges on their children’s temperament and general attitude towards learning. Parents overwhelmingly reported that everything depends on the child’s willingness to accept his or her parent’s support and involvement. Some parents reported that they have had a lot of resistance from their children when becoming involved in their education, and that this almost put them off:

‘As my son will not tell me anything about his schoolwork and what is going on in school, it is always me who asks him about his school. My son does not like these types of questions and he would say all is well.... he would eventually answer my questions. His lack of cooperation really discouraged me in the beginning, but I keep going.’ (Hikmo, mother)

Parents also explained the importance of establishing a good relationship with their children based on mutual trust, if their involvement was to be successful:

‘I have a good a relationship with my son, he knows that the reason I am involved in his education is not to spy on him, but to lend him a helping hand in his education. He knows and trusts me and, needless to say, I trust him too.’ (Halwo, mother)

An issue all parents acknowledged with regard to child temperament is the change in their children’s temperament with age, and their attempt to seek independence from their parents as they enter secondary school. Most parents acknowledged that the transition between primary school, during which parents are closely involved, and secondary school, when children are older and do things without their parents’ close observation, places strain on their relationships with their children:

‘Since my child moved to Year 7, I have no control over her school routine. She goes and takes the bus on her own; she comes home on her own. This was very difficult for me at first, as I didn’t want to let her go on her own, but was afraid she may see me controlling her... The difference between primary and secondary is so different - you feel you have lost control over your child’s schooling.’ (Sada, mother)

Theme 9.3. Parents' income on involvement

According to parents, income impacts on their involvements at two levels. First, Somali parents who work tend to work long hours and sometimes different shifts; this makes it very difficult for parents to involve themselves in their children's education as the following extracts from working parents explain:

'I work two different shifts as a forklift driver in a warehouse. By the time I finish work and get home, my children have already completed their schoolwork and are ready for bed... Some days when I am working a late shift, I am able to help them, but most of the time I can't ...because of my work.' (Jama, father)

'Although my wife attends our daughter's parent-teacher evenings and all other school meetings, I personally find it very difficult to attend, because of the different hours that I work.' (Halane, father)

The second level at which parents' incomes influences their involvement is in terms of being able to pay for private tutors, whom Somali parents usually employ when they do not have an adequate education to help themselves.

The majority of parents reported not being able to afford this expense, owing to unemployment or low paid jobs. By not being able to hire private tutors or to help their children themselves, a situation is created whereby parents remove themselves from being involved in their children's education altogether.

The following excerpt summarises the impact of family income on parental involvement in this capacity:

'I have four children, and they all need help with their homework, but I cannot afford to pay £30 per lesson for each of them...so the younger two stay home and help themselves, while the older two go to a tuition centre [an after school support centre].'
(Mako, mother)

4.2.2. Themes emerging from interviews with Pupils

Five pupils, three boys and two girls, attended the pupil group interview. Pupils were included in the interview phase in order to triangulate the parents' interview findings. All pupils said their parents were involved in their education in various capacities. From their responses to predetermined questions, four themes and eight sub-themes emerged: the type of parental involvement children receive, child motivation, parent-child relationships, and child-school relationships (see Figure 12, 13, 14 & 15). The meanings of these themes and their sub-themes will be independently illustrated with the support of verbatim responses from the pupils. To avoid including any identifiable names of pupils and places, responses are labelled numerically, ranging from 1 to 5, to differentiate participants in the group interview.

Theme 10. Types of parental involvement children receive

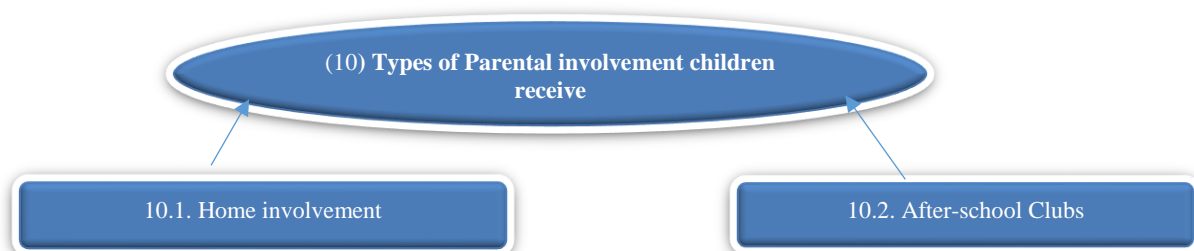


Figure 12: Types of involvement children receive

The majority of pupils indicated that their parents' involvement in their education happens in two places, which are outside school: home, where most pupils said they get parental involvement, and after-school clubs, where parents pay private tutors who support them in their schoolwork. The following quotes from pupils exemplify the support pupils said they get from their parents:

Theme 10.1. Home involvement

'My parents tell my sister, who goes to university and studies English Literature, to help me with my school work, which is how they help me at home.' (Pupil 4)

Theme 10.2. After-school clubs

'My parents are not very qualified to help me, so they send me to places like afterschool classes (...) and I have sisters at home who also help me from time to time.' (Pupil 1)

'Yes, my parents help me very much by sending me to tutors like this [pointing to the centre] and mum is pretty sharp with maths so she (...), but at times, when stuff gets a bit

extended or advanced, then I refer to tutors or to help at school. So she [mum] can help me with different aspects of my education, particularly with maths.’ (Pupil 2)

‘My father wants the best education for me. He encourages me, he buys all the educational materials; he also likes to support me when he can. For example, if I tell him I need help with science and things like that, he will give priority to finding a science teacher that is really good and he will tell me to go there. My father is like one of those types of people who is very committed to things, so he wouldn’t back down from anything, so that’s what encourages me as well.’ (Pupil 3)

Theme 11. Child motivation



Figure 13: Child Motivation

This theme emerged when pupils in the group interview were asked about the motivation that drives them in their education. Pupils gave responses indicating a number of motivations, ranging from the desire to have lucrative careers, to going back and helping their home country, Somalia. Two sub-themes with recurring responses emerged: parents’ education and making their families proud in their community. These two sub-themes are described below.

Theme 11.1. Parents’ educational level on child motivation

The majority of pupils said they derive motivation from their parents’ educational achievement, or lack thereof. For example, pupils explain that when their parents have a university-level education, especially one gained from a UK institution, it gives them the belief that they, too, can achieve a higher-level education. If their parents, ‘who immigrated to the UK’, can go all the way to university, so can they. Pupils also indicated in their responses that they are equally motivated when their parents have no educational qualifications; according to pupils, this is because they do not want to go through the ‘hardship’ their parents go through when looking for jobs and or helping their children with their education.

The majority of Somali parents who took part in this study (N = 75) have elementary or no formal education. This had an impact on parents' ability to help their children with their schoolwork and/or to find jobs with regular hours rather than with shift hours. The following responses demonstrate the motivation driving pupils in their education;

'My dad went to university and he helps me with my schoolwork. He also has a good job...on the other hand, my mum has no education and she is unable to help me. So the educational background of my parents definitely motivates me.' (Pupil 3)

'Mine is...I mean, I am motivated by a desire to do well in this country and to get a financially rewarding job...and to not end-up in the situation in which my parents found themselves. I mean, they have no education, so every time I try to quit something I remember if I quit it now am I going to be like them [my parents] in the future.' Pupil 1)

'What motivates me is that I can be the first in my family to go to university...right now, I am sixteen so I am closer to looking at colleges and universities, so that prospect is what motivates me the most.' (Pupil 5)

Theme 11.2. Making family proud in the community

The second motivating factor pupils mentioned was their desire to make their families proud in the Somali community. They spoke about how their parents encourage them to become 'visible, model people in the community. Pupils mentioned two Somali heritage personalities, namely the Olympic gold medallist, Mo Farah, and the former BBC war correspondent, Rage Omaar. They said these individuals had made the Somali community in Britain proud and that they wanted to achieve a similar influence. Following are a number of excerpts from pupils' responses to the above question:

'I always wonder if, like, in class why this person is getting higher than me. Why am I getting lower than them? So, especially if it's my friend, I like to be above them, I like to be better than them in subjects and stuff like that, because that makes me stand out in my community and makes my family proud.' (Pupil 4)

‘I think it’s mostly also money. I think it’s more to do with people I would like to be like, saying to their mums, now their child is getting loads of money, they are achieving stuff.’ (Pupil2)

‘Obviously you also want to get the job and to make your community and yourself stand out like Rage Omaar. He is a pretty cool guy yeah.’ (Pupil 1)

‘I agree with what she said. In our culture, for example, we value our family name and because we are organised in clans we like to make our family proud in the Somali community. Look what Mo Farah has done, not only for his family but also for all Somalis. This motivates me a lot.’ (Pupil 5)

Theme 12. Parent-child relations

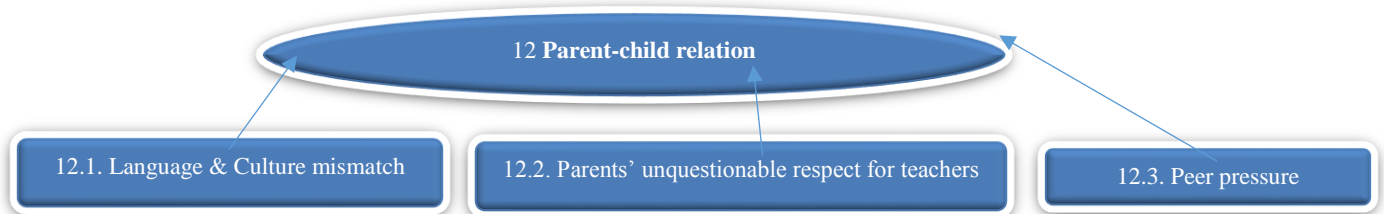


Figure 14: Parent-child relation

This theme contains the responses from pupils when asked about aspects of their relationships with their parents in the context of their education. All the pupils (N=5) said they had a good relationship with their parents. However, three sub-themes emerged from pupils’ responses, revealing subtle issues that impact negatively on the parent-child relationship, language and cultural mismatch, parents’ unquestionable respect for teachers, and peer pressure on pupils. The following paragraphs elucidate the meanings of these sub-themes.

Theme 12.1. Language & culture mismatch

This sub-theme contains the subtle meanings found in pupils’ responses to questions about their relationship with their parents. The responses exhibited a language and cultural mismatch between parents who want to keep their Somali culture and language alive in their children, and children who are fully integrated in the mainstream culture and find it difficult constantly to switch between home and mainstream culture. The following illustrate such mismatches:

‘Well, I have no problem with my parents, they both work hard and want me to succeed, but sometimes you know there can be some misunderstanding, parents always want to operate in their Somali culture 100 per cent. That is difficult sometimes, and we call them - in a nice way, of course - "freshees".’ [Interviewer: ‘What are "freshees"?’] ‘It is like slang for old-fashioned African...something like that.’ (Pupil 1).

‘Yeah, parents want you to speak perfect Somali at home, when all we do at school and outside home is speak English. I mean, all my mates, including Somalis, speak English, so I kind of think, no mum, learn English.’ (Pupil 3)

‘I agree with him. In my case, I sometime find it very difficult, because I have to keep my culture, and at the same time I have to integrate with the British culture.’ (Pupil 4)

Theme 12.2. Parents’ unquestionable respect for teachers

Pupils feel that their parents respect and listen to teachers more than the other, non-Somali-heritage parents. This renders pupils, as they put it, slightly ‘voiceless’. Further, they report that their parents have good relationships with their schools. According to the pupils, the Somali culture encourages children to treat teachers like second parents, hence parents advise their children to treat teachers like parents. As the pupils’ responses indicate, they do not necessarily agree with their parents and want them to be like ‘other British parents’. Below are quotes of pupils’ responses to this question.

‘Well, the problem is, especially in my school some teachers that are like not as good as you hoped they would be, and the problem is for my parents, they don’t usually have to listen to what the chap [teacher] has to say, so they believe whatever the teachers says, nine out of ten. And this makes me, like, ‘mum/dad, you don’t trust me.’ (Pupil 5).

‘My parents are very close to my school. I guess they like to know my school, like I have work and all that, so sometimes they trust school more than they should, really.’ (Pupil 2)

‘My mum and dad tell me all the time, respect teachers even if they are wrong (Pupil 1) ... Yeah, other British parents won’t do that they will stick up for their children.’ (Pupil 3)

[Interviewer: ‘What do you mean, stick up for their children?’] ‘I mean, like, they would say, "hang on, my son or daughter is so-and-so and can’t be wrong all the time"’.

‘I think it is cultural [it is Somali culture]. Teachers are seen as parents in our culture; this sometimes makes us Somali children voiceless.’ (Pupil 4)

Theme 12.3. Peer pressure on children

Pupils talk about the pressure they feel when negotiating between the two cultures, especially when they are with their friends as they do not want to be seen different from them. Pupils point out that they want to ‘hang and chill out with their mates’, but that their parents question them about who their friends are and what they do when not in school. Girls, particularly, feel more pressure, because of Somali customs regarding their mode of dressing. The following are some excerpts about the ‘pressure’ that pupils face:

‘We have friends from primary school and sometimes you want to be, like...I mean, going out and chilling out with them, but that is not allowed in our Muslim and Somali culture, so we have to, erm...what is the word? Navigate...’specially for us girls.’ (Pupil 4)

‘Because of culture and religion, I have to watch who I chose as a friend...my parents ask me who I have as friends at school, are they boys or girls? That kind of stuff makes you stressed, you see what I mean? Yes, I am a girl and my parents want me to be a good Muslim, but I am sixteen now and will be going to college and then uni [versity].’ (Pupil 3)

‘My parent doesn’t ask me about my friends, but I think they always worry about who my mates are and what I do after school.’ (Pupil 1) ... ‘Well, my parents do all the time.’ (Pupil 4) [Pupils laugh at the same time]

Theme 13. Child-school relationship

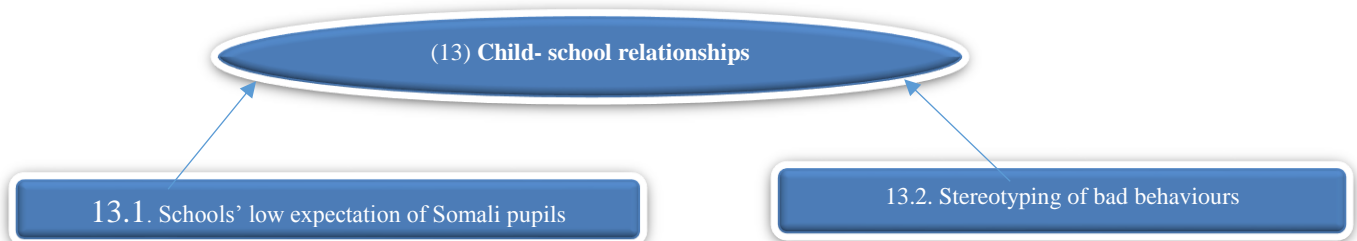


Figure 15: Child-School relationships

This theme concerns the meaning associated by pupils in their relationships with schools and teachers. This question followed the one probing parent-child relationships. Whilst parents and their children were shown to have generally good relationships with one another, with the occasional cultural and linguistic mismatch, the relationship between schools and Somali pupils who took part in the interview was characterised by mistrust. For example, pupils talk about schools having ‘low expectations’ of Somali pupils and sometimes teachers labelling them as ‘unruly pupils’. From pupils’ responses, two sub-themes emerged about child-school

relationships: schools' low expectations of Somali pupils and stereotyping of bad behaviours. Below are the descriptions of these two sub-themes, supported by pupils' verbatim responses:

Theme 13.1. Schools' low expectations of Somali pupils

Four pupils out of the five who took part in the interview said that their school and teachers have low expectations of them and other Somali pupils in their school. When probed further as to why schools have low expectations of them, pupils responded that schools think that 'Somali ethnic groups do not value education and their children require more support in English and maths.'

Below are a number of direct quotes from pupils explaining what they call 'schools' low expectation of Somali pupils':

'In our school, most of the students are Asians and the teachers they automatically assume that the Somalians are not as clever as the other pupils so they always separate us in to different groups.' (Pupil 1)

[Interviewer: 'Why do you think they do that? I mean, why would they label you as low achievers?']

'I'm not sure, especially in maths the teachers often put us in the lower groups and they automatically presume that we can't get anything higher than a B.' (Pupil 2)

Personally, I was put in a lower set for maths and within a week of being there they decided to move me up, so they kind of, like, misjudged how well I can actually do. Even though my test scores were higher than some people's already; they automatically put me in a lower class.' (Pupil 3)

[Interviewer: 'Do you think this is so because of your background?']

'I'm not entirely sure, but if you want to put it this way: I was getting higher marks than some of the white British students, but they still put those people above me, so it must have to do with my background as a Somali.' (Pupil 4)

'For me in my school, it's not that particularly [has higher expectations] ... But in other schools it definitely happens, like with my friends at other schools it definitely happens. I've been hearing stuff about whether they get high results or do not; I think it's because of their nature and their (...) [**Group talk**] ...maybe

not only for Somalis, but I have to admit (...). They are sometimes viewed as though they won't achieve this grade or that. It definitely happens.' (Pupil 5)

Despite the majority of pupils expressing frustration about their schools 'having low expectations', when asked whether teachers encouraged them to work hard, all pupils reported that some of their teachers 'push them' to achieve 'good grades' as exemplified by the following quotes:

Well, for me maths...I say yeah because my teacher, she's literally always pushing me, always she always says you can achieve good grades if you work hard... For example, on Mondays to Thursdays every week she makes me go to her class from 8.00am to 8.30am, when school starts at 8.40am. She always says to me, I want you to be the best, I want you to be the highest achiever in this class. You know what, I thank her for that.' (Pupil 5)

'My English teacher encourages me all the time to attend support classes. **[Interviewer: 'You mean intervention classes?']** Yeah, yeah - that is the one. And he always tells me I have a 'potential' in English so some teachers really expect you to do well.' (Pupil 1)

Theme 13.2. Stereotyping Somali pupils of behaving badly

When pupils were asked whether they have any problems at school, almost all said that they feel schools always treat them unfairly when it comes to class behaviour and general school discipline. Pupils report that they are 'stereotyped by teachers as trouble-makers' and always find themselves in their 'teachers books even if they had not done anything wrong'.

Following are some quotes from pupils with regard to classroom behaviour and school discipline.

[Interviewer; 'Do you have any problems at school?']

'Sometimes I feel like I'm getting labelled and I'm not sure why that is the case. I normally don't have any problems, but I get labelled as a trouble-maker. If anything happens in the class - anything bad, I mean - I am the first student in the teachers' book. I think I feel I am going to hit an anger button the moment something like that happens.' (Pupil 3)

'The same thing happens to me, too. My form tutor used to give me loads of detentions and letters to home. One day I was so angry that I nearly lost it. Eventually, I just walked

off. I really believe that my teacher targeted me because Somali kids are stereotyped as unruly and as trouble-makers.’ (Pupil 1)

[Interviewer: ‘Anyone else?’]

[Silence!]

‘I never had any problems with my school, but I know a lot of Somali friends have been excluded. **[Interviewer: ‘Were schools right to exclude them?’]** Maybe some, but it can’t be all. I mean, all Somalis cannot be bad, right?’ (Pupil 2)

‘I think Somalis stick up for one another and they react to situations quicker than others. Maybe the schools are racist or something; they never give us a chance. My mate, who is Somali and a very clever student, told me last year he was almost excluded because he was accused of calling a boy a ‘white boy’, and he said he is always called ‘black’, ‘Muslim’, and sometimes a ‘Somalis pirate’, and no one had done nothing about it.’ (Pupil 4)

‘Sometimes you feel schools stereotype Somali kids and think that because our parents are from a war torn country so we all have like ... what is the word? Some kind of emotional (Pupil 5). Yeah I agree. [All the group speak at once]’.

4.3. Chapter Summary

Chapter Four has presented the research findings from the two data collection phases. First, the questionnaire findings, on Epstein's parental involvement typology, were presented. These include parenting, communicating, volunteering, learning at home, decision-making, and collaborating with the community. Findings were illustrated by quoted responses from the research participants.

Second, interview findings were organised under themes that had emerged from the inductive thematic analysis of the data. Verbatim responses were also used as supportive descriptive data.

Pseudonyms were used to protect the anonymity of participants. Pupil participants were identified numerically, both for privacy reasons and to avoid confusion, since Somali parents and children often share names.

Interview and questionnaire findings will be discussed in relation to the research questions, the Epstein's (1995, 2010) six types of parental involvement typology, the Coleman's Social capital theory (1988), Hoover-Dempsey & Sandler Parent Role Construction for Involvement Theory (1995, 1997) and finally in relation to the existing parental involvement literature in the next chapter.

Chapter 5: Discussion

In this chapter, the research findings are discussed in relation to a) the research questions, and b) Epstein's (1995, 2010) six types of parental involvement typology. The question of whether this typology fully captures the nature of Somali parental involvement is addressed. Findings are discussed in relation to c) Social capital and parental role construction theories. These constitute the two main theories drawn on by the study. Finally, the overall findings are discussed in relation to d) the existing literature on parental involvement.

5.1. Discussion of the findings in relation to the research questions

The following five research questions were used to guide the study:

- How do Somali parents conceptualise parental involvement and family-school relationships?
- How do Somali parents construct their roles towards their children's education?
- To what extent and in which ways are Somali parents involved in their children's education?
- How does such involvement, or lack thereof, affect children's educational attainment?
- What challenges do Somali parents face in attempting to become involved in their children's education?

5.1.1. How do Somali parents conceptualise parental involvement and school-family relationships?

For these Somali parents, conceptualise parental involvement and family-school relationships as consisting three complimentary activities: providing home education, including homework support and educational advice; providing parenting, including feeding, cleaning, housing and school lifts; and liaising with the school, including attending parent evenings and making appointments to meet teachers.

The first two activities, providing home education and parenting, are seen by parents as their private roles and responsibilities for their children's education as involved parents. Parents indicated that they take it upon themselves to support their children's education at home, and that this is not exclusively school-based but includes, for example, Koranic lessons and cultural and home language lessons.

Parents understood the provision of parenting as an important part of parental involvement. Parents define parenting primarily as attending to the physiological needs of one's children, which translates into activities such as feeding, clothing and housing, as well as buying educational materials (such as books and computers) for their children and taking them to school.

The third activity involves establishing a relationship with the school their children attend. Parents report that liaising with the school allows them to keep updated of their children's progression and attainment, and to be in a position where they can obtain answers to specific questions about their children's education.

These three activities are complementary: the provision of parenting is complemented by the provision of home education. Parents argue that without providing the parenting activities described above, they would be unable to provide meaningful home education for their children. Liaising with the school complements the other two activities by linking parents and schools, which, according to parents, allows them to get specific answers about their children's education so that they may plan and prioritise interventions.

In the literature, parental involvement does not enjoy a universal definition (Baker & Soden, 1997; Jeynes, 2005; Lewis & Forman, 2002; Lopez & Stoelting, 2010). Parental involvement has been conceptualised as family-school partnership, parental contribution to school activities and parents as partners of the schools their children attend (Lloyd-Smith & Baron, 2010; Stevenson & Baker, 1986). It has also been defined as the presence of parents at school, as interaction with teachers, or as helping children at home with their homework (Deslandes et al., 1997; Epstein, 1995, 2010).

While parental involvement is conceptualised in different ways in the literature, the first two activities discussed by Somali parents in the current findings are consistent with the existing literature. Parental involvement has been conceptualised as, for example, a variety of undertakings that allow parents to contribute to the educational process at home or in school (Chavkin & Williams, 1985), and this equates to the provision of home education in the findings of this study.

Parental involvement conceptualised as the dedication of resources by a parent to a child (Grolnick & Slowiaczek, 1994), and as 'activities that happen within or outside school locations to help children's academic success' (Abdul-Adil & Farmer, 2006), equates to the

provision of parenting described in the findings of this study. Finally, the conceptualisation of parental involvement as liaising with the school, equates to parents' interaction with the schools their children attend in order to promote their academic success (Hill & Tylor, 2004).

While activities conceptualised as parental involvement by Somali parents in this study are supported by the literature, it is important to note that the majority of the existing literature considers parental involvement to be the physical presence of parents at school-based functions and/or the partnership between parents and teachers, (Lloyd-Smith & Baron, 2010; Stevenson & Baker, 1986; Epstein, 1995, 2010; Dearing et al 2006; Ho & Williams, 1996; Dunning 1995). For Somali parents, however, parental involvement means providing educational support at home and attending to the physiological needs of their children, only liaising with school when specific information is needed. Hence, participating in school activities and the partnership between home and school are not central to the notion of parental involvement as constructed by Somali parents in this study.

5.1.2. How do Somali parents construct their roles towards their children's education?

When involving themselves in their children education, Somali parents construct their roles according to three factors: gender, culture and level of parents' education.

Somali parents report gender, culture and level of education as influencing how they construct their roles in their children's education. Since their involvement is constructed mainly as providing home education and parenting, this is consistent with the domain of the mother in Somali culture and the role of parental involvement in education thus mainly falls to the mother. Somali culture views child education and schooling as part of child rearing activities, which are mainly overseen by the mother. Somali culture views the father as the head of household, as the provider for the family. His role is thus constructed to deal with activities outside child rearing and home parenting.

This tendency in Somali culture to link child education with child rearing responsibilities. These become gendered roles. Gendered roles in parental involvement, in which mothers are culturally assigned a role in children's educational involvement is not unique to Somali culture. This phenomenon occurs in other ethnic minority groups, too. For example, fathers in Black and ethnic minority groups were more difficult to engage with about their children's

education, owing to ‘practical issues such as limited time due to being the main breadwinner and cultural attitudes in which gender roles are clearly defined and raising children is delineated as being a predominantly female activity’ (Page et al, 2007, p.4). Moon & Ivins (2004) found that mothers from ethnic minority groups reported being more involved in their children’s education than their husbands.

According to parents, the third factor impacting on parents’ role construction in their children’s education is their level of education. If, for example, one of the parents’ educational level is higher than both the child and their spouse, they tend to take on roles such as helping with homework, liaising with schools, buying and choosing educational materials, and advising or helping children make educational choices. If, however, one parent’s educational level is lower than their children and or their spouse, they tend to adopt a more physical role, such as school lifts.

Roles such as homework support, liaising with schools and advising or helping children make educational decisions are filled mainly by Somali fathers, rather than mothers. These roles require a higher level of education on the part of the parent. In Somali culture, there is an emphasis on the education of boys, which means that few girls attain a level of education beyond high school. It is the norm that boys are expected at least to attend university. This educational inequality between boys and girls means that the fathers in Somali families are almost always more educated than the mothers.

As mentioned above, the level of education of parents is important in their involvement in their children’s education. For example, Dauber and Epstein (1995, 2010) found that better educated parents tend to be more likely to involve themselves in their children’s education, both at home and at school.

To understand how Somali parents, construct their roles when involving themselves in their children’s education, the intersection of three factors needs to be analysed: culture, gender and the level of parents’ education/ qualifications. As stated in the previous paragraphs (see p.131, section 5.1.2), Somali culture links a child’s education with child-rearing activities, which according to Somali culture, are the domain of the mother. In a traditional Somali family unit, culture and gender thus intersect at various points, as mothers are responsible for children’s feeding and schooling, as well as undertaking other home-based activities. In

contrast, fathers occupy the position of family breadwinner and work outside the home to provide for their families.

These activities have been the norm for Somali families while in Somalia. However, according to the participants of this study, when parents are involving themselves in their children's education and negotiating educational as well as cultural challenges in their host country (in this case the UK), an additional factor has emerged, which adds another layer to the culture and gender intersection: parents' education or qualifications. This emerged, according to parents, due to the unprecedented demands placed on mothers, such as the need to communicate in English with schools, to attend parents' evenings, and to help their children with homework, etc.

Consequently, the culture and gender-based roles which worked effectively in Somalia, where mothers were responsible for all child-rearing activities including children's education, and fathers had the sole responsibility of being a family's provider, had to be readjusted in order to deal with their children's education in the host country.

This readjustment happened, according to parents, because of what could be termed as the 'role shift'. This had two roots, the first being Somali fathers having partially or completely lost their sole role of being the family providers, due to the welfare system in the UK and the provision of a family 'safety net', which does not exist in Somalia. This change in role created the demand for fathers to involve themselves in activities that they had never fully involved themselves in before, including the educational support of children. The second was that the culture- and gender-based roles traditionally occupied by mothers in Somalia require, in the UK, skills and qualifications which are beyond most Somali mothers. These include English language skills for communication with schools, understanding Britain's education system for course selection and future careers, and the ability to help children with homework.

According to parents, these role changes have highlighted a third factor, which is parents' education/qualifications. Due to Somali culture and historically gender-based roles, which prioritised boys' education over that of girls, fathers now find themselves being obliged to assume the role of communicating with the British education system, since they tend to have more education and qualifications than their wives.

Reay (1998), conducted research investigating the role of working class parents in their children's education at the inter-sect of gender, found that there was 'clear division of labour' between genders (p.27).

In conclusion, these three factors, culture, gender and parents' qualifications, play important roles in how Somali parents construct their roles when engaging with their children's education or deciding which role parents may play in their children's education.

5.1.3. To what extent and in which ways are Somali parents involved in their children's education?

When asked about whether and how they involve themselves in their children's education, all the Somali parents (N = 129) said they involve themselves in their children's education. (N = 112) of these reported being highly involved in their children's education. Parents described three types of involvement: home-based, school-based and community-based. All parents reported that the majority of their involvement takes place at home, because they feel confident to exercise their parental responsibility in their children's education in this setting.

Most of the activities that parents engage in as part of their home-based involvement include creating study rooms at home that are conducive to learning. Others supportive activities engaged in by parents include assisting with their homework or hiring private tutors when they are unable to do so. Observing that their children complete their homework on time also features as a home involvement activity in children's education.

Parental involvement through home activities is one way in which parental involvement is operationalised in the literature. It consists in activities such as homework support and supervision (Steinberg et al., 1992; Keith et al., 1986), discussing school progress and educational activities (Hoover-Dempsey & Sandler 1995; Yap & Enoki, 1995; Peng & Wright, 1994), assistance with homework (Gonzales & Blanco, 1991), and reducing time spent watching television (Fehrmann et al., 1987; Paik, 2000). Whilst parental involvement in school-related activities at home are generally considered in the existing literature as beneficial to children's academic attainment (Feinstein & Symos, 1999; Sammons et al., 2007) and as being strongly related to positive child attainment (Fan & Chen, 2001; Ho and Willms, 1996), it is also considered an extension of the school culture to the home (Carvalho,

2001). This creates an overlap between homes and schools that has potential negative consequences for single parents and for socially disadvantaged families, as these groups may not be able to fulfil the expectation of the school culture (Crozier & Reay, 2005). It can create a power struggle between homes and schools (Kirkpatrick, 2000).

Nevertheless, Somali parents regard home-based involvement as a form of empowering parental involvement. Somali parents consider home involvement a way not only to help their children with their homework and to observe their educational progress, but also to afford them an opportunity to teach their children their home language and culture. Somali parents do not consider school work at home an invasion of the home by school culture, but as an opportunity for parents to help their children with both formal and informal education.

Somali parents acknowledge that supporting their children with their homework places great demand on their material resources and personal efficacy. As Vincent & Martin, 2000; and Vincent, 2001 point out, access to material resources and cultural capital differs vastly among parents, yet there is a tacit belief in the literature that, in order for parents to involve themselves in their children's education, they need to engage more with school-like activities in their home, regardless of their personal efficacy and level of material resources (Auerbach, 1989; Chavkin, & Gonzalez, 1995).

According to parents in this study, the second type of involvement adopted by Somali parents is school-based involvement. The majority of parents indicated that they do not involve themselves in their children's education at school level to the same degree as they do at home. School-based involvement is used as an occasional, need-based communication with class teachers about the progress and behavioural issues of their children. Parent-teacher evening sessions are also attended. School-based involvement involves volunteering as a classroom assistant, fundraising for the school, and becoming a member of decision-making bodies such as the parent teacher association and school governing body (Epstein, 1995, 2010; Stevenson & Baker, 1987).

School-based involvement is traditionally engaged in by middle class parents; this population group has 'the time to take an active part in school affairs and the resources to supplement school budgets' (Dunning 1995, p. 19). Research also shows that involvement in school-based activities may have a positive influence on children's learning and cognitive growth (Dearing et al., 2006). However, parental participation in school-related activities such as volunteering, attending parent-teacher conferences and fundraising, have less impact on

students' academic achievement than other parental activities (Stevenson & Baker, 1987; Ho & Williams, 1996).

Lack of participation in school-based activities is not unique to Somali parents; Grozier and Davies (2005) found that ethnic minority and white working class parents 'had little or no contact with schools' and did not see 'the need to visit schools' or to participate in school-related activities (p. 302). Existing literature attributes the lack of school-based participation by ethnic and working class parents to aspects such as the asymmetrical power relationship between parents and schools (Carvalho, 2001), low socio-economic and cultural capital (Hill & Tylor., 2004), and the 'cultural differences between parent and teacher roles' (Theodorou, 2007, p. 95).

Parents in the current study fulfil the criteria described above, and, as a result, although they are not completely disconnected from school-based involvement and do not regard it as unnecessary, they make use of it only occasionally, and only as a means of communication.

It can be argued that Somali parents are not more widely involved at school level because of the belief in the Somali culture that schools and homes have distinct, clearly delineated roles when it comes to educating pupils. Parents point out that 'school should have the responsibility for educating children while they are at school'

The third and final type of involvement in which Somali parents engage is community-based. Thirteen out of the fifteen parents who took part in the interview described community-based involvement as their second main type of involvement, after home-based. Parents describe community-based involvement as activities such as cooperation amongst Somali community members about how to support and help their children with schoolwork.

Cooperation among parents mainly occurs at afterschool centres, where Somali children are tutored in core curriculum subjects such as English, mathematics and science. This type of involvement is popular amongst Somali parents for two reasons. First, parents who cannot help their children with their homework tend to be involved in their children's education at the community-level, which is where their children may receive tutoring. Second, parents use afterschool centres, which are predominantly run by Somalis and other ethnic minorities, as a place where they may share information with other Somali parents with similar needs.

Community-level involvement is popular with Somali parents as a type of after-school, home-based involvement. There are, however, two issues raised by parents with regard to this type of involvement: they report misgivings about both the qualifications of tutors and the quality of teaching and learning support at after-school centres.

Community-level involvement in the form described by parents in this study, is absent from the existing literature of parental involvement and therefore need further investigation by different type of study.

5.1.4. How does such involvement, or lack thereof, affect children's educational attainment?

Parents' views are that their involvement in their children's education brings about three positive impacts: increased child attainment, improved behaviour and school attendances, and an improved parent-child relationship. Parents also believe that if it were not for their involvement, or 'kawarqabka joogtada ah' as one of them put it ('relentless observation') with their children, their attainment, behaviour and school attendance would have been poorer.

All parents reported that their involvement has improved attainment in their children - either in a child who was already performing well and, because of parental involvement, has progressed even further, or in a child who was underachieving and as a result of increased parental intervention has improved and attained grades that would have been impossible without intervention.

The second impact parents report is improved classroom behaviour and school attendance. According to parents, this occurs for two reasons. First, their children see them as parents who prioritise education over other things; this creates a virtuous circle, which in turn encourages children to consider the importance of their education in general and of attendance and classroom behaviour in particular. Second, attendance and classroom behaviour of children improve because children know that parents are observing their education and are in constant communication with the school and their subject teachers, which means that all incidents - positive and negative - will be shared with their parents.

Because children know this, parents believe they will be less likely to engage in activities that would make their parents unhappy.

The third impact of parental involvement is improved parent-child relationships. According to parents, their involvement cultivates a close, caring relationship with their children. Involvement includes talking to children, working with them on their homework, and making educational decisions with them.

The impact of parental involvement on children's academic attainment has been extensively discussed in the literature. A number of studies suggest that there is a positive correlation between parental involvement and the academic attainment of children (McBridge & Lin, 1996; Muller, 1998; Peressini, 1998; Bauch & Goldring, 1995; Bronstein et al., 1994; Crouter et al., 1999). However, Jeynes (2003) notes the limitations to these studies, such as; small samples, unclear definitions of parental involvement, and ill-defined measures of academic achievement.

Measuring the impact of parental involvement on the academic achievement of children is fraught with methodological and conceptual inconsistency. First, parental involvement is operationalised in various ways (Sui-Chu & Williams 1996). It has been conceptualised, for example, as the high expectations parents have of their children (Yamamoto & Holloway, 2010; Marjoribanks, 1988; Parsons, Adler, & Kaczala, 1982; Thompson, Alexander, & Entwisle, 1988). It has also been defined as participating in school-related activities (Epstein, 1995, 2010; Dearing et al 2006; Ho & Williams, 1996; Dunning 1995; Stevenson & Baker, 1987), and as how parents engage with their children at home (Sammons et al., 2007; Steinberg et al., 1992; Hoover-Dempsey & Sandler 1995; Yap & Enoki, 1995; Peng & Wright, 1994; Gonzales & Blanco, 1991; Steinberg, Lamborn, Dornbusch, & Darling, 1992; Fehrman et al., 1987; Paik, 2000; Feinstein & Symos, 1999).

Second, academic attainment is defined inconsistently. Some studies use standardised tests of specific areas such as mathematics and English (Merttens & Newland, 1996; Topping, 1996), whilst others take into account things such as the academic aspirations and academic self-concepts of students (Fan & Chen, 2001).

In attempt to reduce the multiple definitions of parental involvement in order to find common components, that are a) positively related to the academic achievements of students, and b) measureable, Fan & Chen (2001) and Hill & Tyson (2009) carried out a meta-analysis of the literature to determine which types of parental involvement activities are related to the academic achievement of students. These two analyses consisted of twenty-five and fifty studies. Most of them were quantitative. Findings suggested that some dimensions of parental

involvement are positively related to the academic achievements of students, while other aspects are not.

The aspirations and expectations parents have of their children's educational achievements and parental involvement reflecting academic socialisations between parents and children were found to have the strongest relationship with students' academic achievement (Hill & Tyson, 2008). However, parental involvement activities, such as home supervision and assistance with homework, were only weakly related to students' academic achievements (Hill & Tyson, 2008). Caution must be exercised in drawing a causal relationship between home supervision and homework assistance, and academic underachievement in children.

There are two main reasons for approaching these results with caution. Home supervision and homework support fall under other home-based parental involvement activities, and there is a growing body of literature suggesting that the provision of a home environment conducive to learning, with intellectually engaging materials, is supportive of academic achievement (Feinstein & Symos, 1999; Sammons et al., 2007; Rynolds & Gill, 1994; Desforges & Abouchaar, 2003). There is also evidence that parental involvement activities may depend on parents' behaviours, attitudes and beliefs about their children's education (Hoover-Dempsey and Sandler, 1995, 1997). The negative correlations reported amongst home supervision, homework help and achievement may be the result of parents reacting to children who were already underperforming, rather than meaning that parental home supervision and parents' homework support weaken achievements (Hill & Tyson, 2009).

Among parents who took part in this study, there was a universal agreement that involvement in their children's education influenced their children's educational attainment and schoolwork, and that without their involvement, their children would have underachieved. Although only one of the impacts from this study's finding is related to academic attainment, it may be argued that the other two (increased classroom behaviour and school attendance, and an improved parent-child relationship) also ultimately contribute towards the academic attainment of children. Good behaviour and regular attendance improve the chance of attainment, and a good parent-child relationship means shared ownership of the child's education, as shown by Jama and his daughter: The lesson that can be drawn from this is that, the positive impact of parental involvement is not only limited to children's academic attainments, but also there are family benefits as indicated above.

5.1.5. What challenges do Somali parents face in attempting to become involved in their children's education?

Parents in this study identified six types of challenges they face when involving in their children's education: their own level of education, a lack of time, a lack of knowledge of the education system in the UK, language barriers, household size, and fear of authority.

The first challenge faced by Somali parents is their level of education, which determines their ability to help their children with their homework. For example, the majority of parents in this study reported primary-level or no formal education; most of them therefore struggled to help their children with their homework once they had moved beyond primary school level. Most parents find this the most challenging, as a low level of education leads to other educational and system challenges.

Roles such as homework support, liaising with schools, and helping children to make educational decisions, are mainly filled by Somali fathers, rather than mothers, as these roles require a higher level of education on the part of the parent. The fathers of Somali families are almost always more educated than the mothers, because Somali culture emphasises the education of boys, which resulted fewer girls to attain a level of education beyond high school, whereas boys are expected at least to attend university (Abdi, Matthews and Yocum, 2011). The cultural tendency to emphasise boys' education over girls is still practiced in Somalia today according to research on gender gap in education in Somalia (Comunicazione, 2016).

This historical educational inequality among genders in Somalia is reflected in the profile of the participants of this study. Only two mothers out of the ten who took part in the interviews had high school-level education, whereas of the five fathers who took part in the interviews, one had a degree and four had high school level education. (See Appendix 13)

In order to compensate for this, most female-led households hire private tutors to help their children with their schoolwork at home, which leads to another challenge, financial in nature. This financial challenge born out of the need to compensate for their inability to help their children in their education, further confounds parents' ability to on one hand work long hours and on the other be available to their children to support in their education.

The second challenge parents face is a lack of time to involve themselves in their children's education fully. According to parents, this is due to work commitments, which often involves working shifts, and often at the times when their children do their homework.

According to parents in this study, working long hours and at times different shifts brings both advantages and disadvantages: the advantage is that, parents who would have been unable to afford to pay their children's tuition fee, would be able to hire private tutors to help their children. However, the downside of this is working long hours means less time for other parental involvement activities such as helping at home, liaising with schools etc.

The third challenge parents reported facing when involved in their children's education, is a lack of knowledge about the British education system and the schools' lack of understanding about the cultural needs of Somali parents

Parents note that this system is very different system from the Somali education system. As a result, certain aspects of the school system are difficult to understand. One aspect mentioned to be particularly unrecognisable is how a pupil can progress to the next academic year without passing the end-of-year examinations. Parents explained that in the Somali school system, at the end of every academic year, pupils sit end-of-year examinations. If a pupil fails, they do not progress to the year above and stay in the same year grade until they pass. This is not the norm in the British education system.

Other issues parents find challenging are the settings or levels in year groups, which places pupils into groups based on their Standard Assessment Test (SAT) grade at the end of Key stage two (KS 2), and the pressure schools place on parents to become involved in all aspects of their children's education. According to parents, this is particularly challenging for them, because their old Somali educational system placed the onus on the schools to educate pupils, rather than on parents involving themselves with all aspects of their children's education.

The fourth challenge parents face is the language barrier between themselves and the schools. This, according to parents, is the single biggest challenge after their level of education. The majority of Somali parents are not proficient in English. They were schooled in Somalia, where English is not the language of instruction, at least up until secondary education.

A central reason for the language barrier is that most of the involved Somali parents are mothers, and women in Somalia tend to receive less education than their men. Boys who continue their education beyond secondary education, and girls either marry early or remain at home to help their mothers.

The language barriers faced by Somali parents is at its most challenging when they are engaging with their children's homework, rather than when liaising with teachers and schools. Language experience of majority of parents in this study appears to be acquired through social encounters, rather than academic or formal training.

The fifth challenge is the size of their households. Parents report that, since their families are above average size, they struggle to help all of their children with their homework, with buying educational materials, with providing conducive places to study, and with attending all of the school functions required of them. These types of challenges are significant ones for the majority of Somali parents. The average family size of parents who took part in the interviews were five children, and the majority of those were of school age.

The sixth and final type of challenge reported by the parents in this study may be translated as a fear of authority underpinned by a cultural of mistrust between schools and Somali parents.

Although completely supportive of their children's education, parents nonetheless discussed their belief that the British school environment is culturally unsafe for their children and that there is always a chance of their children fully abandoning Somali culture and religion in preference of fully assimilating into British culture. This mistrust engenders a fear that if they openly use their Somali child-rearing practices with children in order to keep them anchored in Somali culture, the school authorities may interpret this as child abuse, and may introduce further undesired intervention. According to parents, this fear and mistrust makes them suspicious, and prevents them fully engaging in their children's education.

The Somali parents face great deal of challenges when engaging with their children's education and schoolwork. Language barriers coupled with a low level of education and a lack of familiarity with the British education system, underpinned by unemployment or low-paying jobs are the biggest challenges faced by Somali parents when involving themselves in their children's education. Family size, fear of authority and cultural dissonance are also challenges.

A number of barriers preventing ethnic minority parents from becoming effectively involved in their children's education have been identified in the literature. These barriers are either parent- or family-located, and include parents' level of education, available material resources and employment status (Pena, 2000; Harris et al., 2009; Brown, 1989); parents' fear and anxiety in dealing with teachers (Menahem & Halasz, 2000); negative past experiences with school settings (Power & Clark, 2001); lack of confidence with teachers (Duncan, 2003); parents' beliefs about and perception of invitations for parental involvement (Hornby & Lafaele, 2011; Lareau, 1987; Lynch & Stein, 1987); and parents' role construction (Hoover-Dempsey & Sandler 1995, 1997).

Most of these barriers reflects the ones Somali parents face when engaging in their children's education. Those consistent with the literature include parental level of education, material resources available to parents, and fear and anxiety for parents in dealing with teachers. Lack of confidence with teachers and negative past experiences with schools were not reported as challenges faced by the Somali parents in this study. Parents' beliefs about and perception of invitations for parental involvement as well as parents' role construction about the nature of their own involvement were not cited as barriers in this study.

The second category of barriers in the literature are school- and teacher-related, such as barriers experienced by parents when attending parent-teacher conferences (Lopez, 2001), teachers' availability to meet parents (Moles, 1993), and how teachers perceive minority parents (Kim, 2009).

Although this category of barriers is not conspicuously evident in the current study, factors such as a lack of time to attend parent-teacher conferences were noted in the findings. It was also clear from participant responses that there is a cultural divide between schools and Somali homes. Finally, it is worth mentioning that the majority of this study's participants reported a good relationship with teachers and never having had an issue meeting with them.

Discussion of the findings in relation to the Epstein's six types of parental involvement typology

Epstein's (1995, 2010) framework and its six types of involvement was tested for goodness-of-fit with the nature of Somali parental involvement, and with how Somali parents are involved in their children's education.

After understanding the current literature and models of parental involvement, a questionnaire was designed based upon Epstein's six types of parental involvement. Findings from the questionnaire revealed that only two out of the six types of involvement resonated with the nature of Somali parental involvement. Epstein's model thus cannot fully account for all the ways Somali parents are or may wish to be involved in their children's education; a new model may be appropriate, which takes this individual group's cultural and social needs into account.

Each involvement type is discussed here, as proposed by Epstein in relation to the questionnaire findings from the Somali parents. According to Epstein, parental involvement conforms to six types of activities: parenting, communicating between home and school, volunteering, teaching at home, decision-making, and collaborating with the community.

5.1.6. Parenting

Parenting is described in the model (Epstein, 1995, 2010) as establishing a home environment that supports children as students, and providing housing, health, nutrition and safety for children. When parents were asked what parenting as a form of involvement in their children's education meant to them, 123 out of 129 participants described parenting in terms of roles such as 'feeding, cleaning, school runs, buying educational material for their children, advising, helping with homework, providing a home, teaching them a home language and Islamic values'. According to parents, parenting as described by Epstein fully captures what the Somali parents who took part in this study do when involved in their children's education.

5.1.7. Communicating between home and school

Communicating is defined as an activity of parental involvement as two-way communication between school and home (Epstein, 1995, 2010). When parents were asked about the nature and frequency of their communication with schools, the majority of participants (N = 103 out of the 129) described their communications as irregular and on a needs-based basis.

Communication between home and school occurs when there is a demand from either side, rather than regular interaction. Only 19 parents reported regular two-way communication with the school.

The findings from parents on communication between homes and schools shows that Somali parents do not have regular two-way communication with the schools their children attend. This does not mean there is no communication between schools and homes, but that the communication does not conform to the Epstein model. This type of involvement, as conceptualised in the model, thus may not fully capture how Somali parents communicate with schools.

5.1.8. Volunteering to support school and students

Volunteering is defined as parents helping at school with activities such as classroom assistance and fundraising (Epstein, 1995, 2010). When parents were asked whether they had volunteered at the schools their children attend, 4 out of the 129 parents reported having volunteered at schools as a classroom assistant. However, the majority of parents 125 had not volunteered. 54 described volunteering as something that would help the school, but not their child. Some reasons given by Somali parents for not volunteering include work commitments, lacking English language skills, and cultural and religious differences with the schools' environment. Finally, when parents were asked whether schools encouraged them to volunteer, the majority 106 out of the 129 parents confirmed that this was not the case.

It appears that the majority of Somali parents in this study do not volunteer at schools. This is not, however, because they are not involved with their children's school, but because of a combination of above factors, they are unable to volunteer. Thus, volunteering as defined by Epstein's as an involvement activity, may not fully capture the volunteer behaviour of Somali parents and the reasons behind this behaviour.

5.1.9. Learning at home

Epstein defines learning at home as parents' involvement in their children's learning activities, such as homework support, goal setting and other curriculum activities (Epstein, 1995, 2010).

All parents who took part in the questionnaire reported some form of involvement in their children's learning at home: they offered their children educational advice, provided them

with a quiet place to study, helped them with homework, observed their learning, and hired private tutors to help them.

Somali parents' support of learning at home is in accordance with Epstein's typology. The results reveal this to be the second activity of the six proposed by Epstein, that is consistent with Somali parents' involvement in their children's education after parenting.

5.1.10. Decision-making

Decision-making as a type of parental involvement in Epstein's model is described as enlisting parents in school decisions and developing parental leadership (Epstein, 1995, 2010). Parents can be part of the decision-making body of a school, by being members of the school governing council or the Parent Teacher Association (PTA). When parents were asked whether the school enlisted them to be part of the school's decision-making body through membership on these committees, only 8 participants reported that they are currently serving as members of a school governing body. Parents who were not members gave reasons such as 'having no time for meetings', 'language barriers', 'not knowing the membership process', and 'not believing that any membership of such a body makes any difference to school decisions'.

According to parents' responses, the majority of Somali parents who took part in this study are not part of any decision-making bodies. This is not because they are uninvolved in their children's educational decision-making processes, but because a combination of factors means they are unable to become members of these bodies. This activity, as stipulated by Epstein, may therefore be unable to fully capture the involvement of Somali parents in their children's educational decision-making processes.

5.1.11. Collaborating with the Community.

Collaborating with the community as an involvement activity is conceptualised in the Epstein model as resources and services identification and integration from the community to promote school programmes that foster family and student's teaching (Epstein, 1995, 2010).

The majority of parents (N = 113) - reported that their children attend Somali community-organised after-school clubs. These organisations are unaffiliated with the schools and contribute no services or resources either to schools or families. Parents are charged a fee for their children to attend tutoring classes. However, 13 parents report that their children attend

school-organised university trips, and 3 parents said their children are members of community-organised local sports clubs.

The majority of parents who took part in the interview stage of this study (i.e. 13/15) described community-based involvement as their second main type of involvement, after home-based involvement. Community-based involvement, according to these parents, was described as Somali community-wide cooperation for parents to become involved in their children's schoolwork.

According to these parents, Somali community-wide collaboration mainly occurs in after-school centres, where 'many Somali parents pay for their children to have extra tuition after school and at weekends' (Demie et al., 2008, p.99). Such after-school centres provide Somali children with tutorials, mainly in English, Mathematics and Science.

The high attendances of Somali children at after-school centres can be attributed to the increased concern exhibited by the majority of Somali parents regarding the under-achievement of their children at school (MEN, 2013). Parents' concerns about their children's achievements are underpinned by their awareness of the need for their children to do well in school, and the increased level of attendance at supplementary schools has helped Somali children to do better than other black Africans in the UK (The Economist, 2013). Supplementary schools do not only benefit GCSE-level Somali heritage pupils, but also pupils at other key stages. A study carried out by Evans and Vassie (2012) on the impact of supplementary classes on pupils' attainment in mainstream schools, found out that 95% of African heritage pupils, the majority of whom were Somalis, attending supplementary schools in Brent, achieved level 4 KS2 in English. According to the study, this is '28% higher than the average for Somali students throughout the borough' (p.6)

According to the parents who took part in this study, another important factor that encourages Somali parents to send their children to after-school centres is the fact that most are run either by Somalis or jointly by Somalis and members of other ethnic minority groups. This is important, according to parents, because it gives them the opportunity to converse in Somali with teachers at the centres, as well as to exchange experiences with other Somali parents who have children with similar educational needs.

Despite the high attendance of Somali children at supplementary classes at after-school centres and their increased academic attainment, two concerns about after-school centres were raised

by Somali parents who took part in this study (see p.155). These concerns were focused on the educational qualifications of tutors and the quality of teaching in the centres.

The apparent contradiction between parents' concerns about the teaching quality and the qualifications of the teachers in the after-school provision and the high attendance at these centres by Somali pupils, merits further exploration, which is beyond the scope of this study. However, the researcher of this study argues that one reason which may explain the apparent contradiction is that Somali parents not only use after-school centres to enable their children to be tutored in key curriculum areas, such as Mathematics and English, but also use them for sharing information and exchanging experiences with other Somali parents whose children attend these centres. For example, parents spoke about exchanging advice regarding support for their children with other parents and ways of supporting each other (parents) in an environment conducive to their home language and culture, as the following excerpts illustrate:

“Parents meet at these centres and share their experiences with one another, using the Somali language and in the context of the Somali culture.” (Samira, mother)

Finally, it is worth noting that the majority of the parents found these centres to be very useful for their children's education, with only two dissenters among the 15 interview participants, who voiced misgivings about the qualifications of the teachers and questioned the quality of the teaching and learning support available at the after-school centres, . Thus, this contradiction may not be generalisable to the wider Somali community attending after-school centres. The following direct quotes are from the two parents who voiced dissatisfaction about the supplementary education in after-school centres.

“I used to take my two daughters to community-run after-school centres, but I have stopped because I found the quality of teaching very poor, and as a result my daughters had made no progress.” (Ahmed, father)

“I don't take my daughter to community-run after-school clubs, because most teachers who help the children at Somali after-school centres are not qualified, hence the children are not being exposed to professional teaching.” (Ulumo, mother)

Parent responses about this kind of involvement revealed a collaboration between community and Somali families. This collaboration, however, is not perfectly consistent with the model, hence this type of involvement - collaboration with the community - also may not fully be captured by the typology.

In summary, Epstein's (1995, 2010) parental involvement framework fails to capture the full nature and types of Somali parental involvement behaviours when engaging in their children's education. Two out of the six types of involvement behaviour as conceptualised Epstein (1995, 2010) were found to be consistent with the findings of this study. In the light of this mismatch, this study proposes a new parental involvement model, which more accurately represents the nature of Somali parental involvement in their children's education, providing a better understanding of the educational needs of this group.

5.2. Discussion of the findings in relation to Social Capital Theory and Parental Role Construction Theory

This study drew upon Coleman's Social Capital Theory (1988) and Hoover-Dempsey & Sandler's theory of Parent Role Construction for involvement theory (1995, 1997) see Sections 2.4.1 & 2.4.5).

Coleman's social capital theory (1988)

Coleman (1988) defines social capital theory 'by its functions' and argues that:

'It is not a single entity but a variety of different entities, with two elements in common: they all consist of some aspect of social structures, and they facilitate certain actions of actors- whether persons or corporate actors- within the structure.'
(p.S98)

Coleman's social capital theory was utilised in this study to understand the nature and the type of Somali parents' involvement in their children's education. In the light of this theory, the findings suggest that Somali parents involve themselves in their children's education by utilising social capital forms (inside and outside the family) obtained from: communicating with school teachers; collaborating with the wider Somali community; using cultural norms and honours; and building mutual trust among parents and children.

The following paragraphs discuss the social capital forms found inside and outside the family that were used by Somali parents to engage in their children's education, according to the findings of this study.

Social capital found in the family

According to Coleman (1988), the social capital found inside a family hinges on the relationships between parents and their children. In relation to the findings of this study, the Somali parents who participated utilised two main types of home-based involvement as a social capital to support their children's education, namely providing home education and providing parenting.

Providing home education

According to the findings, the majority of the Somali parents who participated in this study provided their children with home education, which consisted of a variety of educational support that was not limited to formal education. For example, parents described the provision of Islamic and cultural education to their children at home, on top of their support for school-based education, such as homework and reading, observations, monitoring their studies and providing encouragement. In order for these activities to be effective, there must be a strong relationship and trust, as well as obligation between parents and their children. This is illustrated in the following statement by one of the fathers:

“You are an involved parent when you support your children at home and teach them what they have not been taught at school.” (Jama, father)

Providing parenting

Parents also utilise parenting as a form of involvement in their children's education. According to the participants, this type of involvement consisted of various engagements with their children, including looking after their children's physiological needs, such as feeding, clothing and housing, and fulfilling roles such as buying educational materials for their children and transporting their children to and from school.

The above home-based activities, i.e. providing home education and parenting, were seen by parents as their private role, and it was their responsibility to engage with their children's education.

It is worth noting that the above activities are not only based on the relationship between parents and their children, but also include the involvement of older and more educated children in helping their siblings with their school work, as the following comment from one of the pupils who participated in the study exemplifies:

“My parents tell my sister, who goes to university and studies English Literature, to help me with my school work, which is how they help me at home.” (Pupil 4)

Although other capitals, such as human capital (parents’ ability to help their children with their homework) and physical capital (parents’ financial ability to buy educational materials necessary for their children to study at home) are at play together with social capital, such as the relationship, communication, obligations and trust between parents, the researcher of this study argues that it is the social capital that is important in parents’ efforts to be involved in their children’s education. This is because if parents were not present at home to engage with their children, their human and physical capital would have no meaning for their children’s intellectual and cultural development.

A similar point is argued by Coleman in his paper ‘Social capital in the creation of human capital’ (1988), which was discussed in Chapter Two. Coleman provides the example of John Stuart Mill’s father’s presence in his son’s life and how this helped the young John Stuart to enhance his intellectual development at an early age. Coleman (1988) highlights that John Stuart’s intellectual growth from a young age had nothing to do with his father’s human capital, rather it was to do with the ‘time and effort he spent... with the child on intellectual matters’ (S110).

Social capital found outside the family

According to Coleman (1988), the social capital that parents can utilise to help their children develop ‘does not reside solely within the family’ (S113), but can also be found outside the family among the wider community members, where there are social connections between them and the parents. The findings of this study suggest that Somali parents utilise two social capitals found outside the family: the social connection with the schools their children attend, and the social connection between parents and the wider Somali community with similar aged children. The following paragraphs present and briefly describe these social connections.

School-based involvement

Although the majority of parents who took part in this study indicated that they were not involved in their children's education at the school level, meaning they were not engaged with activities such as fundraising, volunteering and school meetings, they nevertheless invested in two social connections known to the parents as 'need-based communications' with 'parent-teacher' evening sessions, where they gained a holistic view of their children's educational progress and with 'class teachers' on the progress of their children and behavioural issues, and.

According to the parents, these connections were very important in their efforts to help with their children's education. Each of these two connections had an important role to contribute to children's intellectual development, according to the parents. For example, the first level of the school-home connection occurred during parent-teacher evenings hosted by schools for the parents. According to the parents, this connection provided two important benefits, namely general information concerning their children's progress, and the opportunity to see all their children's teachers in one evening. Parents could acquire essential information, such as progress, attendance, punctuality and causes for concern or celebration about their children's education. The connection afforded by this meeting also allowed parents to cover all subjects and not only to meet with specific teachers.

The second connection that parents had with their children's schools was defined by the parents as 'subject teacher' communication. Subject teacher communication was seen as an important connection and usually occurred through face-to-face encounters between parents and teachers, by appointment only, and typically in private. Parents described their communication with subject teachers as their preferred method of communication with schools, because according to them it provided the opportunity to express themselves clearly to teachers and to obtain up-to-date information about their children's progress in a given subject. In contrast, parent-teacher evening sessions were less private and tended to be shorter, providing a more holistic view of their children's education.

Community-based involvement

The second social capital outside the family, which the Somali parents who participated in this study utilised to help their children, was 'community-based' social connections. This type of social connection was described by parents as 'participating in Somali community-wide

cooperation for parents to become involved in their children's schoolwork'. Collaboration mainly occurred via after-school centres, where children were tutored mainly in English, Mathematics and Science. The majority of these after-school centres were run either by Somalis or jointly by Somalis and members of other ethnic minority groups. Parents described this type of connection as a way of 'experience sharing' with other likeminded parents and a way of supporting one another in an environment compatible with their home language and culture. These after-school centres were, according to the parents, unlike schools because they (the parents, staff and children) could speak Somali to one another and use Somali culture to support learning in the centres.

This wider-Somali community social connection utilised by the participating parents to help their children is consistent with what Coleman (1988) calls 'community.....social relationships that exist among parents, in the closure exhibited' social structure and 'in the parents' relations with the institutions of the community' (S113).

Parents who attended such after-school centres were part of close-knit social groups who reinforced social and cultural norms among their children, and according to the parents, this benefited them as a community and not only individually. The benefits that the wider-Somali community got from their collaboration in helping their children's education, and in particular from the enforcement of Somali cultural norms in their children's intellectual development, are also consistent with what Coleman (1988) defines as the 'public goods aspects of social capital' (S116). According to Coleman (1988), this transcends the private benefits that one may gain from social connections investment; the public goods aspects of social capital benefits the community as a whole, rather than primarily the individuals that participate.

Considering the findings concerning how the Somali parents who participated in this study involved themselves in their children's education in the light of Coleman's (1988) social capital theory, it appears that the Somali parents utilised a number of social capital forms as conceptualised by Coleman (1988), which were found both inside the family and outside the family, in order to help their children with their school work.

Parent Role Construction theory (1995, 1997)

Parental role construction theory is the second theory utilised as a theoretical framework in this study. It focuses on how parents construct their roles in their children's education based on factors such as parent's beliefs, attitudes and behaviours towards their children's education (Grolnick et al., 1997).

According to the theory, three orientations reflect the beliefs and behaviours of parents: the first is parent-focussed orientation, which suggests that parents are principally responsible for their children's school success; the second is school-focused orientation, which suggests that schools are responsible for the education of the child; and the final is partnership-focused, which implies the joint responsibility of both parents and schools (Hoover-Dempsey & Jones 1997). This theory was used in the study to examine how Somali parents construct their roles and responsibilities towards their children's education. Findings suggested that Somali parents construct their roles in their children's education based on three factors: gender, culture and level of parents' education.

The first is a gendered role. The second is the Somali culture, which consider the child's education as part of the childrearing process, which is in turn considered in the Somali culture as the mother's domain. According to parents, the third factor impacting on parents' role construction in their children's education is their level of education, for example, when one parent's educational level is higher than both the child and their spouse, they tend to adopt roles such as helping with homework, liaising with schools, buying and choosing educational materials, and advising or helping children make educational choices.

According to the parents, Somali parents view children's education as a shared responsibility between the teachers at school and the parents out of school that is at home.

Considering the findings about how parents construct their role in their children's education in the light of role construction theory, it appears that the role of Somali parents in their children's education is constructed in the 'partnership-focused orientation', which means Somali parents believe that educating children is a shared responsibility between parents and schools. According to them, schools are responsible for the education and wellbeing of their children when they are at school, and parents are responsible for their education and wellbeing when they are out of school.

5.3. Discussion of the overall findings in the context of the existing literature

The literature review demonstrated that parental involvement is a multidimensional construct (Sui-Chu & Williams 1996) and there is no consensus on a precise definition of exactly what constitutes parental involvement (Baker & Soden, 1997; Jeynes, 2005; Lewis & Forman, 2002; Lopez & Stoelting, 210).

In the existing literature, parental involvement is conceptualised in a number of ways (see section 2.3). It is considered generally beneficial to children's academic attainment and experiences (Disgorges & Abouchaar, 2003). However, despite its reported benefit to children's academic attainment, the rationale underpinning current research on parental involvement indicates that it has been framed as a resource tool to improve the educational attainment of children, and to address educational underachievement of difficult to reach populations (Carvalho, 2001).

The findings of this study suggest that Somali parents involve themselves heavily in their children's education. All parents reported that the majority of their involvement is at home, where they provide homework support, educational advice, and instruction in the home language of the family. They are confident to exercise their parental responsibility with regard to their children's education, in their own homes. They are also involved with their children's education at community-level, in the form of afterschool centres run by Somalis, where children are tutored in core subjects such as mathematics, English and science. Private tutors are able to help the children more than their parents could, and they also meet other Somali parents with similar needs, and exchange experiences and information to help support their children in their education.

Although parents liaise with the schools, they only do so as needed. There is neither a regular, two-way communication between parents and schools nor an engagement with school-based activities, such as volunteering and fundraising.

Parents face barriers to communicating, engaging and becoming involved with their children. Barriers are located at both family- and school-levels. Most Somali parents lack the English language skills and knowledge of the school system and culture to become fully involved in their children's education. Likewise, schools lack the knowledge and

skills needed to conceptualise the Somali home culture in order to encourage involvement outside school.

In addition to the parent interviewees, five pupils took part in this study. Their responses confirmed that their parents involve themselves in their education mostly outside of school, including at home and at after-school centres. Findings also suggest that while the relationships between Somali parents and children are relatively good, the same cannot be said about relationships between the children and their schools. The pupils characterised the relationship as mistrustful. Pupils spoke about schools having ‘low expectations’ of them, and as stereotyping them as ‘unruly’:

Providing evidence in support of schools’ low expectations of Somali heritage pupils, Gillborn (2008) highlights the central role that institutional racism plays in explaining the under achievements of ethnic minority pupils.

Gillborn’s ‘coincidence or conspiracy’ analysis, using the concepts of critical race theory and Roithmayr’s (2003) ‘locked-in inequality’ as a theoretical framework, argues that the historical discrimination and racism against ethnic minority groups have been institutionalised, and as such, even if barriers to achievement and equality at the personal level are removed, the low attainment of ethnic minority pupils will remain.

In the case of the Somali-heritage pupils who took part in this study, their perception of their schools having low expectations of them is consistent with Gillborn’s central argument on schools’ practices, such as putting pupils with an ethnic minority background into lower sets for Maths and other core curriculum subjects, which in turn results in lowered academic progression and continued attainment gaps.

A similar argument is offered by Phillips (2011), in her assessment of institutional racism and ethnic inequalities via an extended multi-level framework. Phillips uses three analytical levels: micro – racism and prejudiced attitudes at the personal level (e.g. teachers, police officers etc.); meso – temporal and spatial factors (e.g. socio-economic disadvantages, neighbourhood composition and their effects); and macro – located at the institutional level. This multi-level assessment, particularly at the micro level, is consistent with the Somali pupils’ experience in this study, where they reported ‘being stereotyped as unruly and as trouble-makers’ by their teachers, although the pupils argued that they did nothing to account for this labelling.

It is also useful to note the consistency between what Phillips (2011) terms as ‘favourable racialised stereotyping by teachers’ (p. 180) in the case of some ethnic minority pupils, namely Chinese, and negative racialised stereotyping of black Caribbean and black African groups, within which Somalis are located. This racialisation at the ‘micro’ level is consistent with the experiences which pupils spoke about in this study. For example, in schools where a high percentage of Asian heritage pupils attended along with Somalis, pupils spoke about ‘teachers assuming that Somalis are not as clever as other pupils’ hence ‘putting them into different lower groups.’

While Gillborn’s (2008) argument on the role of institutional racism and Phillips’s (2011) multi-level framework of racialisations operating at the micro, meso and macro levels are presented as contributory factors in the persistent under-achievement of minority pupils in British schools, caution must be exercised with regard to the pupils who took part in this study. In essence, one needs to exercise some caution in simply assuming that there is a direct causal relationship between the underachievement of Somali pupils and the quoted institutionally racist British education system. This is particularly important because of the small sample size of pupils (five in number), which cannot be adequately generalised to the wider experience of Somali pupils in the UK.

The findings of this study contradict the existing literature on Somali families and their children, which suggest a lack of parental involvement of Somali parents in their children’s education (Ali & Jones, 2000; Demie et al., 2008, Rasmussen, 2010; Strand, 2010).

According to the findings of the current study, this is not the case, as almost all participants reported that they involve themselves heavily in their children education.

The findings of the current study also suggest that Epstein’s (1995, 2010) framework and its six types of parental involvement behaviours, which is widely cited in the contemporary parental involvement literature (Desforges & Abouchaar, 2003; Bower & Griffin, 2011), does not fully represent the nature and types of Somali parental involvement in their children’s education.

In order therefore to fully understand the nature of Somali parents’ involvement in their children’s education as well as to engage with Somali parents and their children in parental involvement programmes that may be beneficial to them, a new parental involvement model is warranted. The findings of this study contributes towards such a new theoretical model.

5.4. Chapter Summary

In this chapter, the findings of the current study have been discussed in relation to the research questions, to Epstein's (1995, 2010) parental involvement model, to Social capital theory and Parental role construction theory, and, finally, in relation to the existing parental involvement literature.

Findings from both phases of the research answered the research questions, and were illustrated by direct quotes from participants, which were discussed in relation to the relevant reviewed literature. The findings suggest that Somali parents are highly involved in their children's education. This was reinforced by the findings from five pupils who took part in this study. Findings from pupils also revealed that, whilst parent-child relationships are relatively good, the relationships between children and their schools are not, and are characterised by mistrust.

Findings were discussed in relation to Epstein's (1995, 2010) parental involvement model. It was found that this model does not adequately measure the involvement of Somali parents in their children's education. Only two of the six types of involvement outlined by Epstein were consistent with the manner in which Somali parents engage with in their children's education.

Social capital theory and parental construction theory were also discussed in relations to the findings, which indicated that the components of capital theory, such as financial and human capital, clearly influence how Somali parents involved themselves in their children's education. Findings showed that Somali parents construct their roles in their children's education based on three factors: gender, culture and the level of parents' education. Parents view their children's education as a shared responsibility between teachers at school and parents at home. Parents therefore construct their roles from a 'partnership-focused orientation, which represents one component of Parental role construction theory.

Finally, findings were discussed in relation to existing literature on parental involvement. Findings indicate that Somali parents are involve themselves overwhelmingly in their children's education contrary to previous studies, which suggest a lack of parental involvement (Ali & Jones, 2000; Demie et al., 2008; Rasmussen, 2010; Strand, 2010).

In order therefore fully to understand how Somali parents are involved in the education of their children, a new parental involvement model - one that may assist in the construction of a

parental involvement programme beneficial to Somali families - is proposed. This will contribute towards addressing the gap in the literature.

Chapter 6: Conclusion & Recommendations

6.1. Conclusion & Recommendations.

The goals of this study were (a) to examine how Somali parents conceptualise the notion of parental involvement and home-school relationships, (b) to investigate the nature of Somali parents' involvement in their children's education, and (c) to test Epstein's (1995, 2010) parental involvement typology and its six types of involvement with Somali parents, to explore whether Somali parents' involvement behaviours resonate with the six types of parental involvement conceptualised in the typology.

The following research questions were posed:

- How do Somali parents conceptualise parental involvement and school-family relationships?
- How do Somali parents construct their roles in their children's education?
- To what extent and in which ways are Somali parents involved in their children's education?
- How does such involvement, or lack thereof, affect children's educational attainment?
- What challenges do Somali parents face when attempting to become involved in their children's education?

The research was conducted at two after-school centres attended mainly by Somali pupils in East and South East London, which provided support to students at Key Stage 3 and 4: those between the ages of 11 and 16 years, who are studying towards GCSE.

This study explored the nature and extent of Somali parents' involvement in their children's education. Furthermore, it examined how Somali parents conceptualise parental involvement and the school-family relationship. A constructivist paradigm was adopted. Constructivism assumes that people, including researchers, construct their own reality (Charmaz 2006). In this study, constructivism was applied to the research in order to explore the parents themselves: how they construct their reality around the notion of parental involvement, and the relationship between schools and Somali homes.

Two theories provided the framework for the study: Colman's Social Capital Theory (1988), and Hoover-Dempsey & Sandler's Parental Role Construction Theory (1995, 1997).

Each theoretical framework was selected for a unique reason. Coleman's social capital theory was utilised in this study to understand the nature and the type of Somali parents' involvement in their children's education. In the light of this theory, the findings suggest that Somali parents involve themselves in their children's education by utilising social capital forms (inside and outside the family) obtained from: communicating with school teachers; collaborating with the wider Somali community; using cultural norms and honours; and building mutual trust among parents and children.

Hoover-Dempsey & Sandler's Parental Role Construction Theory (1995, 1997) was used to understand how Somali parents construct their roles according to their beliefs, attitudes and behaviours when engaging with their children's education.

Two sequential data collection techniques were employed. During the first phase, 150 participants were administered a questionnaire designed specifically for this study (see Appendix 7), of which 129 questionnaires were completed and returned. The questionnaire fulfilled two purposes. First, it tested the ways in which Somali parents are involved in their children's education, against the six types of Epstein's (1995, 2010) parental involvement typology. Second, the findings of the questionnaire were used to inform the design of semi-structured interviews, to further explore conceptions and practices of parental involvement in Somali parents, as well as how they perceive the relationship between school and home. The questionnaires were presented with both Somali and English text, so that bilingual participants could choose in which language to respond.

During the second phase of data collection, semi-structured interviews were conducted: 15 parents and five pupils were interviewed (parents first followed by pupils). Parents were asked fifteen questions; pupils were asked 14. Interviews were carried out in two stages. First, one-to-one interviews were conducted with the parents. Second, one group interview was conducted with the pupils. Interview data gathered from the pupils was used as triangulation to see whether the pupils' data conformed to the responses of the parents. All interviews were conducted at the after-school centres, in the participant's language of choice. Questionnaire data was analysed with Deductive Qualitative Analysis (DQA), because the questionnaire was based on prior framework (Epstein, 1995, 2010). The interview data was analysed with Inductive Thematic Analysis (ITA).

DQA is based on the premise that 'researchers have [prior] theories they think will help them to focus on their research questions' and these theories involve preconceptions about research' (Gilgun, 2005, p. 2); therefore, DQA is used to 'test, refine, reformulate, refute and replace theoretical models qualitatively' and helps 'ensure that researchers do not force preconceptions onto their findings' (Ibid, p. 44).

Inductive thematic analysis was considered a better fit for analysing predominantly descriptive interview data (Braun & Clarke, 2006). Inductive thematic analysis is defined as a 'method for identifying, analysing, and reporting patterns/themes within data' (Ibid, p. 6). Themes capture 'something important about the data in relation to the research question and represents some level of patterned response or meaning within the data set' (Ibid, p. 10).

This kind of analysis allowed the exploration of potential emergent themes beyond the preselected questionnaire analysis codes, in order to move 'beyond counting explicit words or phrases' and concentrating on 'identifying and describing both implicit and explicit' concepts and responses (Guest et al., 2012, p. 10). 13 main themes and 36 related sub-themes relevant to the research questions emerged from the interview data.

Contrary to existing literature on the Somali families and their children's education (Ali & Jones, 2000; Demie et al., 2008, Rasmussen, 2010; Strand, 2010), which indicate that Somali parents are less involved in their children's education, the findings of this study suggest that Somali parents involve themselves overwhelmingly in their children's education. This was supported by data from the five pupils who were interviewed. Questionnaire analysis indicated that Epstein's well-established framework and its six types of parental involvement behaviours do not fully capture how Somali parents involve themselves in their children's education. Of the six types of parental involvements conceptualised by Epstein (1995, 2010), only 'Parenting' and 'Home involvement' resonated with parents participating in this study.

The findings adequately addressed the research questions and achieved the aims and purposes of the study. Below are the research questions and summaries of their answers:

To what extent and in which ways are Somali parents involved in their children's education?

According to the findings of this study, Somali parents involve themselves overwhelmingly in their children's education in the following three ways: (a) Home-based (b) School-based

(c) Community-based involvement. All parents said that the majority of their involvement is at home, because this is where they feel confident to engage with their children's schoolwork. A number of activities are consistently reported as part of involvement at home: providing a quiet place to study, helping with homework, observing and monitoring school projects and completion of homework, hiring private tutors to help with homework when parents are unable to do so themselves, and providing education-related advice.

Second, parents report school-based involvement, which they describe as demand-based: parents only involve themselves in this way on an as-needed basis. For example, parents describe obtaining information on the progress and school behaviour of their children from their subject teachers. This type of involvement is irregular; both schools and parents only use them when required. Common activities reported as part of this type of involvement include communicating with subject teachers and attending parent-teacher meetings. The final type of involvement parents reported is community-based. 116 of the 129 parents who took part in the study reported this as their second main type of involvement, after home-based. Community-based involvement is defined as taking part in Somali community-wide cooperation for parents to become involved in their children's schoolwork. Collaboration typically takes place at the after-school centres, where children are tutored mainly in English, mathematics and science. The after-school centres are usually run either by Somalis or jointly by Somalis and members of other ethnic minority groups. Parents reported enjoying sharing experiences with other Somali parents at the centres, as well as the support their children obtain here for their core curriculum, in an environment conducive to their home language and culture.

Findings indicate that Somali parents conceptualise parental involvement and family-school relationships as consisting three complementary activities: providing home education to their children, including homework support and educational advice; parenting their children, including feeding, cleaning, housing and taking children to school; and liaising with their children's schools by attending parent evenings and meeting teachers to discuss their children's behaviour and progress.

Two main types of communication were found to exist between Somali parents and schools: parent-teacher evenings, which the majority of parents use as their main communication and obtain information on the progress of their children; and communication with subject

teachers, which is usually privately arranged face-to-face and one-on-one. Parents describe the later type of communication ‘comfortable’ and as their preferred type of communication method, because they do ‘not need’ high levels of English language proficiency to engage with teachers.

According to these findings, communication between Somali parents and schools is not bidirectional or regular, and rather tends to be demand-driven: parents book appointments with teachers when they have a specific agenda, such as wanting to find out about their children’s achievement and general educational improvement without waiting for the next parent-teacher evening. Likewise, schools only communicate with Somali parents when there is a need, for example, when a child demonstrates behavioural problems and intervention is required. Findings further revealed that Somali parents and schools enjoy a good, courteous relationship, in which there is respect between parties. However, their relationship is characterised as unequal: one party dictates to the other without consultation. The parties also know little of each other.

Three factors were found to influence the roles parents construct to engage with their children’s education: gender, culture, and level of parental education. According to participants, Somali culture views child education and schooling as synonymous with child rearing. Thus the education of children is considered the responsibility of Somali mothers, while Somali fathers are viewed as the providers and household guardians.

Level of parental education also influences how parents construct their roles. For example, if one of the parents has received more education than the other, and is therefore able to help their children with their homework and advise them on educational matters, that parent automatically adopts the key roles mentioned above.

Three factors were found to motivate parents to involve themselves in their children’s education and schoolwork: child attainment, whether this is increased or decreased attainment; the unfulfilled educational dreams of parents, often owing either to the Somali civil war or to unfavourable circumstances in the host country; and parent’s beliefs about their responsibility for their children’s education, dictated, for example, by parental love.

Somali parents face a number of challenges when engaging with their children's education. Parents have identified six types of challenges: parental level of education, lack of time owing to work commitments, lack of system knowledge, language barriers, household size, and fear of authority. These challenges prevent parents from fully engaging in their children's education.

There is evidence that parental involvement positively impacts on children in a number of ways: increased child attainment; improved behaviour and school attendance, owing to children knowing their parents are involved and will know if they behave poorly or do not attend school; and improved parent-child relationship, owing to the collaboration between parent and child, resulting in trust and respect on both sides.

Three factors were found to have a positive impact when present and a negative impact when absent: parental level of education, which impacts on the parents ability to help their children with their homework, to give educational advice, to liaise with schools, and to understand the education system; child temperament, which influences children's attitude to education and their willingness for their parents to be involved in their education; and family income, which influences parents' ability to pay educational costs such as tuition fees, or to take time off work to attend school functions, such as parent-teacher meetings.

Five major themes emerged from the literature review: (a) the conceptualisation of parental involvement, for example, how parental involvement is constructed, defined and operationalised in the current parental involvement literature; (b) theories prevalent in the parental involvement literature, including ways in which theories have guided research on parental involvement; (c) parental involvement policies, which examine current parental involvement policies in the UK school context; (d) the impact of parental involvement on children's educational attainment; and (e) challenges to effective parental involvement in minority ethnic and language groups.

The review and subsequent discussion of key themes in the literature show that, currently, parental involvement is generally discussed as a resource tool, used to address educational inequality and academic attainment in students classified as belonging to difficult-to-reach groups (Carvalho, 2001).

The literature review also reveals that, although some parental involvement behaviours are more effective than others (Fan & Chen, 2001; Hill & Tyson, 2009), it is generally beneficial

to the education attainment and school experience of children (Disgorges & Abouchaar, 2003). Nevertheless, the concept of parental involvement has no universal definition (Bakker & Denessen, 2007) and has been conceptualised and applied in a number of ways (Baker & Soden, 1997; Jeynes, 2005; Lewis & Forman, 2002; Lopez & Stoelting, 210).

The findings of this study contradict the existing literature on Somali children's educational attainments (Ali & Jones, 2000; Demie et al., 2008; Rasmussen, 2010; Strand, 2010). Such research attributes the underachievement of Somali pupils in UK schools as compared with other minority groups as well as other nationals such as US, Finland and New Zealand (Nderu, 2005; Alitolppa-Niitaamo, 2002, 2004; Ibrahim et al., 2009; Koch, 2007; Humpage, 2009; Warsame, 2009) to a lack of parental involvement by Somali parents (*see* section 1.5.1.).

The findings of this study indicate that, contrary to the findings reported above, Somali parents do involve themselves in their children's education, and hence cannot be blamed for the lower attainment of Somali pupils in schools. Furthermore, the findings of this study indicate that Epstein's model (1995, 2010), which is the most widely cited and used, cannot fully account for how Somali parents are involved in their children's education

Results also indicated that two out of the six types of involvement behaviours conceptualised in Epstein's (1995, 2010) typology resonate with Somali parents' conceptualisation of their own involvement in their children's education.

In the light of these findings and the contradiction of the existing literature, this study proposes an alternative parental involvement model (*see* section 6.3), which will provide a better understanding of the nature and types of involvement Somali parents practice when engaging with their children's education, so that parental involvement programmes that are effective for Somali parents and their children may be devised by schools and policymakers.

6.2. Limitations of the Study

The limitations of this study are threefold. First, the involvement of the parents was investigated only from the perspective of parents and pupils themselves. Teacher perspectives were not included, which may have provided contradictory evidence or cast the other accounts in a new light. This study was limited to the perspectives of parents and pupils.

Second, the study is limited to parents whose children are of secondary school age, and who live in London. Findings, therefore, cannot be generalised to all Somali parents in the UK. Thus further study, which take all Somali parents into account, including those with primary school aged children, should be conducted to investigate whether different parental involvement behaviours are practiced by parents of primary school aged children.

Third, the responses in Somali were translated to English at the data analysis stage (Interviews) and during the data collection stage (questionnaires). With the exception of the pupils, all interviews were conducted in Somali, transcribed in Somali, and translated into English. Whilst transcription and translation were rigorous, and every effort was made to preserve the integrity of the data, English translations may inaccurately convey the tone of the participants, and the cultural meaning of some Somali phrases. Most participants completed questionnaires in Somali and were translated these to English first during the data collection stage by two bilingual research volunteers and second were verified during the deductive analysis and coding stage by the researcher, who is also a bilingual.

6.2.1. Opportunities for Future Work

Three clear opportunities for future research arise from the current study:

- Research on how schools involve Somali parents and families and whether they use specific parental involvement models for Somali parents. This will contribute to the literature and inform our current understanding of how schools encourage Somali parents to engage in their children's education.
- Research on all Somali parents who have children at school, instead of a specific age group: Might the nature of parental involvement behaviours in Somali parents change from primary school to secondary school?
- Application of the model presented in this study in a variety of research settings and population groups, in order further to evaluate its usefulness in understanding how Somali parents involve themselves in their children's education (see Original contribution to knowledge).

6.3. Original Contribution to Knowledge

This study has made an original contribution to knowledge in three respects. First, it provides an original understanding of the nature and type of involvement of Somali parents in their children's education, as well as how they conceptualise the notion of parental involvement and the family-school relationship in the secondary school context of the UK.

The nature and the types of Somali parental involvement was found to be based upon three types of involvement: home-, school-, and community-based, Somali parents conceptualise parental involvement as providing home education, providing parenting and liaising with schools.

This original contribution differs from the understanding in the existing literature, which claims a lack of involvement by Somali parents in their children's education (Ali & Jones, 2000; Demie et al.; 2008, Rasmussen, 2010; Strand, 2010).

This new understanding of Somali parental involvement behaviours, informed by the findings of this study, could help schools and teachers devise effective parental involvement programmes to better engage with Somali families and their children.

Second, the study empirically tested Epstein's (1995, 2010) parental involvement typology as applied to Somali parents of children age between 11 and 16 attending various secondary schools in London, providing evidence that this typology, cited extensively in the contemporary parental involvement literature (Desforges & Abouchaar, 2003; Bower & Griffin, 2011) cannot fully capture how Somali parents of secondary school aged children are involved or wish to be involved in their children's education. Therefore, this and other similar parental involvement models may not adequately explain the parental involvement behaviours engaged in by Somali parents in their children's education.

The third and final original contribution of this study is its presentation of an alternative, original parental involvement model to Epstein's framework, which can accurately represent how Somali parents are involved in their children's education. The model consists of four involvement behaviour types, which are consistent with what Somali parents do when involving themselves in their children's education. When practiced and linked together, these involvement behaviours significantly contribute to the attainment of Somali children in the UK school context (see figure 16).

Proposed Parental involvement model for Somalis

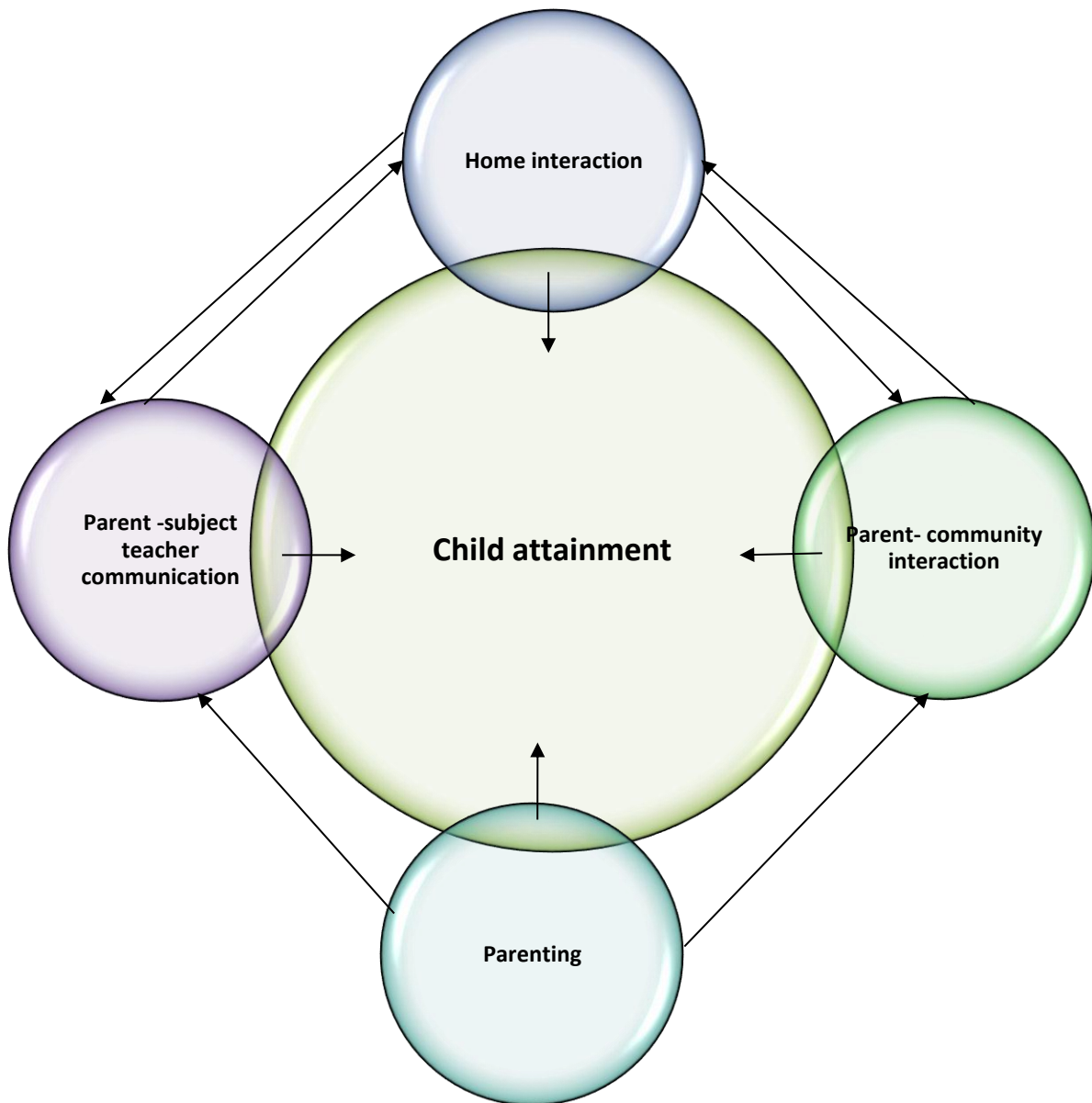


Figure 16. Proposed PI Model for Somalis

There are links between the components of the model. These links are uni- and bidirectional. For example, parent-subject communication is the first component where the involvement behaviour of other components starts. In this component, parents start consulting with subject teachers and, based on their consultation, which may include but not be limited to current child attainment levels, attendance and behaviour of child, the second component of the model (home interaction) is initiated. In this component, activities such as homework support and educational advice for the child may take place. Therefore, all involvement behaviours

that take place in the home interaction component of the model are informed in a two-way manner by the parent-subject communication component. The link between home-interaction and parent-subject teacher communication is therefore bidirectional.

The home interaction component is fully informed by the parent-subject communication components, which then initiates parent-community interaction based on the need that has risen from the interaction between these two components.

The parent-community component comprises involvement behaviours, such as taking children to after-school clubs and sharing experiences with other parents. This component is only initiated when parents experience difficulties in their home-interaction involvement behaviours, such as homework support and or want to gain experiences from other Somali parents at after-school centres. The link between parent-community interaction and home interaction is therefore bidirectional.

The fourth component of the model is the parenting component, in which involvement behaviours include housing, feeding, buying education materials for child, etcetera. This component links with other components unidirectional, by supporting other components. For example, all other components rely on this component (i.e. parenting) as it involves meeting the basic physiological needs of the child. Parents attend to this component first, before educational involvement needs are addressed.

Each component in the model consists of a number of involvement activities which contribute towards the overall behaviour of each involvement behaviour type. (See Table 4).

Somali parents' Involvement behaviours and their activities in tabular

| PARENTING | HOME INTERACTION | Parent-community Interaction | Parent-subject teacher communication |
|--|---|--|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Housing, feeding, cleaning and clothing for child • Doing school runs • Buying educational materials, such books, computers etc. for child | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Creating an environment conducive to learning • Helping with homework • Observing child complete homework on time • Offering educational advice to child | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Taking child to after-school community run clubs • Experience sharing with other Somali parents • Hiring private tutor for home & after-school club sessions | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Liaising with subject teachers • Privately Meeting with subject teachers to discuss child behaviour and attainment • Attending parent-teacher evenings/ meetings |

Table 4: Involvement behaviours & their activities

It is hoped that this original contribution to knowledge may inform policy and practice in the education of Somali heritage students and the role of families in their educational needs; for example, by enabling schools and teachers to design more effective parental involvement strategies to suit the specific needs and perceptions of Somali parents.

6.4. Recommendations

In light of this study's findings, it is recommended that:

Schools might consider establishing a group for Somali mothers to advocate for the educational needs of their children. Somali mothers are important because of two reasons; first the majority of involved parents in this population group are the mothers, second, there is a natural tendency in Somali culture to link child education with child rearing responsibilities, which are mainly overseen by the mothers

- Schools should encourage Somali parents to use after-school and homework clubs offered by schools, rather than to obtain private tutoring for their children, as this places a financial hardship on parents, particularly on single-parent households.
- Schools that already have after-school clubs should encourage a bilingual environment, so that Somalis may utilise their rich home language in order to help their children bridge the grade gap.
- Schools should take into account of the culture of Somali families and build parental involvement programmes on the home practices and parenting strategies of Somali culture.
- Schools should invite Somali parents and involve them when devising parental involvement programmes, so that interventions reflect educational needs.
- Schools should educate their teachers and staff on Somali culture.
- The hiring of Somali-speaking learning support assistants and family liaising would greatly assist Somali parents in becoming involved in the schools their children attend.

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Appendices

Appendix 1: Permission to Access Research Site 1&2 respectively

TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN

Sombrit Youth is an independently run after school centre for Somali heritage pupils and their parents. We provide specialist tutoring and revision services for Somali heritage pupils aged between 11 and 16 years old.

After carefully reading the research information sheet, we would like to confirm that we give permission to Nuur Hassan to come and conduct his doctoral research into Somali parents and their children. Although we grant Nuur the permission to come and conduct his research at Sombrit Youth, we have clearly indicated to him that, research participants would have to give their personal permission to participate in this study.

Should you need further information please do not hesitate to get in touch with us?

Yours faithfully

Mohamed Farah

Director Sombrit Youth

Greater London Learning
12A Asylum Road, London, SE15 2RL
Tuition Timetable
Monday to Friday 16.45-21.00
Saturday: 0900- 1900

TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN

Greater London Learning centre is an independently run after school centre for Somali heritage pupils and their parents. We provide specialist tutoring and revision services for courses from primary education to A level.

After carefully reading the Nuur's research information sheet, we would like to confirm that we give permission to Nuur Hassan to come and conduct his doctoral research on Somali parents and their children. Although we grant Nuur the permission to come and conduct his research at our centre, we have clearly indicated to him that, research participants would have to give their personal permission to participate in this study.

Should you need further information please do not hesitate to write to us?


Yours faithfully

Hamdi Sh Abdullahi

Centre Manager

Appendix 2: A letter of ethical approval from the university's research

Ethics committee

 The picture can't be displayed.

Appendix 3: Research Information sheet for Parents



Participant (Parent) Information Sheet:

With the Somali Language Translation

Macluumaad kaqaygalaha kusocota oo afka soomaaliga ku turjuman

Title of the study: The nature of Somali parental involvement in their children's education: an exploratory study of how Somali parents are involved in their children's education as well as conceptualising the notion of parental involvement and family-school relationships.

Cinwaanka: Sida ay waalidiinta Somalida ay oola tacaalaan caruurtooda waxbarashadooda: Daraasaad lagu baadhayo sida ay waalidiinta Somalida ay oola tacaalaan waxbarashada caruurtooda iyo sida ay sida uu fahansanyihi waxa uu yahay taxluuqidooda iyo xiriirka ka dhaxeeya iyaga iyo schoolka.

Dear Participant

My name is Nuur Hassan; I am a doctoral candidate at the University of Greenwich. I am investigating the nature, impact and pattern of the Somali parents' involvement in their children's educational outcomes and school experiences. I would kindly like to request your participation in the study.

Dear Ka Qayb gale

Magacayga waxaa layiraahdaa Nuur Hassan, waxaana ahay musharax shahaadada doctoreedka ah ka wada jaamacada Greenwich. Waxaan baarayaa sida ay waalidiinta soomaaliyeed ula tacaalaan waxbarashada caruurtooda iyo saamaynta ay arintan kuleedahay natiijadooda waxbarashada iyo waxa ay kala kulmaan iskuulada. Waxaan si xushmad leh kaaga codsanayaa inaad ka qayqaadatid cilmi baadhistan.

What is the purpose of this investigation?

The Somali-heritage pupils are largest refugee group in British schools an estimated 22% and are consistently under-performing according to the existing literature. One of the frequently cited factors behind the Somali pupils' under-performing is "lack of parental involvement". The aims of this investigation are therefore to;

- Map out how Somali parents involve themselves in their children's education?
- Establish the level of involvement of Somali parents in their children's education.
- Map out the challenges faced by Somali parents in their attempt to become involved in their children's education?

Maxay tahay ujeedada cilmi baadhistaan?

Caruurta Somaaliyeed ee iskuulada dalkan ingriiska dhigata waa kooxda oogu badan marka la fiiriyo laajiyiinta dalkan kunool, waxaana lagu qiyaasaa 22%, waxaa kaloo taas wehilasa sida waafaqsan baadhitaamo lasameeyay, in ay mar walba caruurta somaaliyeed ay natiijadoodu hoosayso.

Baaritaanadii lasameeyay waxaa ay inta badan isku raaceen in arinkan waxyaalaha sababa ee ugu waa wayn inuu kamid yahay "Waaladiinta Somaaliyeed oon caruurtooda la tacaalin" ama aana waxbarashadooda la soconin.

Markaa anigoo kaduulaya arinkan ayaan waxaan goostay inaan arinkan baaro. Ujeedada cilmi baadhistaan waa sidan soo socota;

- *Inaan cabirno sida ay waalidiinta somaaliyeed ay oola tacaalaan caruurtooda waxbarashadooda?*
- *In intee le eg ayay waalidiinta somaaliyeed latacaalaan waxbarasha caruurtooda.*
- *Inaan baaro caqabadaha ay lakulmaan waalidiinta soomaaliyeed marka ay la tacaalayaan waxbarashada caruurtooda.*

Do you have to take part?

Your participation in this study is entirely voluntary, and you have the right to withdraw at any stage of the study.

Ma waajibaa inaan ka qaybqaato cilmi baadhistan?

Ka qayb qaadashada cilmi baadhistan waa mid adiga uun kugu xiran oona cidna xil kugu saaraynin. Waxaadna kaloo yeeli kartaa hadaad damacdo inaan iska dayso ka qaybqaadashadan marka aad shaxda marinayso waad iska dayn kartaa.

What will you do in the project?

As a participant in this study, you will be completing a questionnaire and take part in a one to one interview, which will not take longer than 15 minutes and 1 hour respectively

Maxaa lagaaga baahan yahay inaad qabato?

Ka qayb gale ahaan waxaa lagaaga baahanyahay inaad buuxiso foom/form aana kugu qaadanaynin wax kabadan 15 daqiiqo, waxaa kaloo lagaaga baahanyahay inaad suaalo afka laga waydiinayo oon iyagana aan qaadanaynin wax kabadan saacad ama ugu badnaan ah saacad.

Why have you been invited to take part?

You have been invited to take part in this study because; you satisfy the sample criteria of this study, which are as follows;

- Somali parent with children aged between 11 and 16 years old.
- Live in one of the three case study boroughs (i.e. **Camden, Lambeth and Ealing**)

Will your child take part in this research?

Based on your questionnaires and interview data, your child maybe invited to attend a one to one interview and or focus group session. Should your child required to take part in the interview, permission letter requesting your authorisation and a consent form will be provided to you to sign.

Ilmahayga maka qayb qaadan doonaa cilmi badhistan?

Waxay ku xirantahay in ilmahaaga waraysi laga qaado iyo ini kale macluumaadka kazoo baxa waraysigaada iyo suaalahaada lagu waydiin doono. Hadii ay dhacdo in aan waraysi ka qaadno ilmahaaga waxaan kuu soo diri doonaa warqad kaa codsanaysa in aad noo ogolaato waraysigan.

Maxay tahay sababta laguugu Marti qaaday inaad ka qayb gasho cilmi baaristan?

Sababta laguugu marti qaaday inaad ka qayb gasho cilmi baadhistan waaxaa weeye inaad soo buuxisay sharuudihii ka qayb galka oo ha sidan soosocota;

- *Inaad waalid soomaaliyeed tahay caruur dad doodu udhaxayso 11 ilaa iyo 16 jirna aad dhashay ama aad masuul katahay*
- *Inaad ku nooshahay sedex xaafadood oo kuyaala London(sida Camden, Lambeth iyo Ealing)*

What happens to the information in the project?

All the data collected during this research will be analysed and the finding will be written as a university thesis. During the data analysis all the personally identifiable data will be transcribed and kept on a password protected computer system, and destroyed after the research is completed.

Thank you very much for reading this information, please ask me anything that is not clear about this information.

Macluumaadka kasoo baxa cilmi baadhistan xagee ku danbayn doonaa?

Macluumaadka kasoo baxa cilmi baadhistan, waa la gorfayn doonaa kadibna waxaa lagu qoridoonaa buug jaamacadeed. Macluumaadka shaqsiyadka ah ee ku saabsan dadka ka qayb galaya cilmi baadhista waxaa lagalin doonaa inta ay gorfayntan socoto computer xidhan oon la gali Karin, kadib marka ay cilmi baadhistu dhamaatana waa la tirtiri doonaa macluumaadkan shaksiyaadka kusaabsan.

What happens next?

If you are happy to take part in this research, a consent form will be provided for you to sign to confirm your participation.

Ugu dambayntii

Fadalan hadaad raali ka tahay inaan ka qaybqaadato cilmi baadhista mihiimka ah, waxaad buuxisaa foom/form ogolaanshaha.

Researcher & Supervisors Contact Details:

Cilmi baadhaha iyo la taliyaashiisa faah faahintiisa
Nuur Hassan
Doctoral candidate at the University of Greenwich

University address

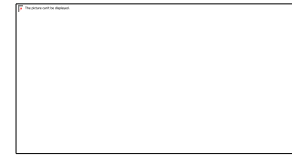
Queen Anne Court
University of Greenwich
Old Royal Naval College
Park Row
Greenwich
London SE10 9LS
E-mail: research_ethics@gre.ac.uk

Supervisors:

Gordon Ade-ejo: g.o.ade-ojo@gre.ac.uk
Hatice Choli: h.choli@gre.ac.uk

School of Education
University Of Greenwich
Avery Hill Campus - Mansion Site
Bexley Road
Eltham
London SE9 2PQ

Appendix 4: Permission request to parents to approach children for an interview



Permission request from parents to approach their children for an interview

Dear Parent/Guardian

As you are one of the research participants who took part in the follow-up interview, I would kindly like to request your permission to conduct 45 minutes to an hour interview with your child.

The aim of this interview is to investigate your child's perspectives on the nature and the type of your involvement in his/her education and school work.

No personally identifiable data will be collected from your child and questions asked will be solely on parental involvement in his/her education and school work.

I would also like to assure you that, one of the tutors at the centre will be present throughout the interview.

Should you decide to allow me to interview your child, your child will be approached to ask his/her permission and if they agree to take part in the interview, consent form will be provided for you and your child to sign.

If you need further information about this interview, please do not hesitate to get in touch with me.

Thank you in advance

Researcher & Supervisors Contact Details:

Nuur Hassan
Doctoral candidate at the University of Greenwich

Supervisors:

Gordon Ade-ejo: g.o.ade-ojo@gre.ac.uk

Hatice Choli: h.choli@gre.ac.uk

Dear Waalid/Masuul

Maadaama aad tahay ka qaygalayaasha cilmi baadhista ee loogu yeedhay inay ka qayb qaataan waraysiga cilmi baadhista, waxaan su xushmadleh kaaga codsanayaa in aad ii ogalaato inaan waraysi ka qaado ilmahaaga. Warysigan waxaa uu qaadanayaa mudo aan ka badnayn 45 daqiiqo ilaa iyo halsaac.

Ujeedada waraysigan waxaa weeye oo kaliya inaan ogaano fikirka uu ka qabo ama sida uu arko doorka aad kuleedahay ilmahaaga waxbarashadiisa iyo saamaynteeda.

Wax kusaabsan ilmaha magaciisa ama iskuulkiisa ama macluumaad shakhsiyan ah oola waydiinayo majirayo.

Waxaan kaloo rabaa inaan kuusheego in marka la waraysanayo ilmahaaga uu joogi doono mid kamid ah macalimiinta xarunta

Hadii aad ii ogolaato inaan waraysto ilmahaaga, waxaan samayn inaan marka hore waydiiyo isagana inuu raali kayahay in waraysi laga qaado, hadii uu ogolaado kadib waxaa la idinsiin form ogalaansha ah aad labadiinaba wada sixiixdaan.

Waad mahadsantahay

Cilmi baadhaha iyo la taliyaashiisa faah faahintiisa

Nuur Hassan

Doctoral candidate at the University of Greenwich

Supervisors:

Gordon Ade-ejo: g.o.ade-ojo@gre.ac.uk

Hatice Choli: h.choli@gre.ac.uk

Appendix 5: Research information sheet for pupils



Pupils Information Sheet

Title of the study: the nature of Somali parental involvement in their children's education: an exploratory study of how Somali parents are involved in their children's education as well as conceptualising the notion of parental involvement and family-school relationships.

Dear Pupil

My name is Nuur Hassan; I am a doctoral student at the University of Greenwich. I am trying to find out how Somali parents help their children with their education and school work. I would kindly like to request your participation in this study.

What is the purpose of this study?

The aims of this study are to:

- Find out the ways in which Somali parents involve themselves in their children's education?
- Find out ways in which this involvement takes place.
- Map out the challenges faced by Somali parents in their attempt to become involved in their children's education?

Do you have to take part?

Your participation in this study is voluntary, and you have the right to withdraw at any stage of the study.

What will you do in the study?

As a participant in this study, you will only take part in a one to one interview and/or focus group discussion. Please note that the interview or the focus group discussion will not take more than an hour.

Why have you been invited to take part?

You have been invited to take part in this study because; we believe that it is important for us to get your perspective on how your parents help you in your education and school work.

What happens to the information in the project?

What you tell me will be used to write a university thesis and no personal information such as name, location and school will be included. All personal information collected will be destroyed immediately after the study is finished

Thank you very much for reading this information, please ask me anything that is not clear in this information.

What happens next?

If you are happy to take part in this research, your parents/guardians will be approached to give a parental/guardianship consent on your behalf. A consent form will also be provided for you to sign to confirm your participation.

Researcher Contact Details:

Nuur Hassan
Doctoral student at the University of Greenwich

University address
Queen Anne Court

University of Greenwich
Old Royal Naval College
Park Row
Greenwich
London SE10 9LS
E-mail: research_ethics@gre.ac.uk

Supervisors:

Gordon Ade-ejo: g.o.ade-ojo@gre.ac.uk
Hatice Choli: h.choli@gre.ac.uk

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University Of Greenwich
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London SE9 2PQ

Appendix 6: Pupil's consent form to take part in the interview



PUPILS' CONSENT FORM

Project Title: *Title of the study:* the nature of Somali parental involvement in their children's education: an exploratory study of how Somali parents are involved in their children's education as well as conceptualising the notion of parental involvement and family-school relationships.

Nuur Hassan: Doctoral student at the University of Greenwich.

Supervisors:

Gordon Ade-ejo: g.o.ade-ojo@gre.ac.uk

Hatice Choli: h.choli@gre.ac.uk

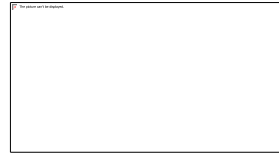
This form requests your permission to participate in the interview of this study and allows us to request your parents/guardians to consent to your participation.

- I have read the information sheet about this study
- I have had the chance to ask questions about this study
- I have received satisfactory answers to all my questions

- I fully understand what the nature of the study is
- I understand that I am free to withdraw from this study:
 - At any time (until such date as this will no longer be possible, which I have been told)
 - Without giving a reason for withdrawing:
- I understand that my research data may be used for a further project in

| | |
|---|------|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • anonymous form, but I am able to opt out of this if I so wish, by ticking here. • I agree to take part in this study's interview <input type="checkbox"/> • I agree the researcher to ask my parents/guardians' permission to interview me <input type="checkbox"/> | |
| Signed (participant) | Date |
| Name in block letters | |
| Signed (parent / guardian / other) | Date |
| Name in block letters | |
| Signature of researcher | Date |
| <p>This project is supervised by:</p> <p>Gordon Ade-ejo: g.o.ade-ojo@gre.ac.uk</p> <p>Hatice Choli: h.choli@gre.ac.uk</p> | |
| <p>Researcher's contact details (including telephone number and e-mail address):</p> <p>Nuur Hassan</p> <p>Doctoral student at the University of Greenwich</p> | |

Appendix 7: Data collection Phase: Questionnaire sample



QUESTIONNAIRE FOR PARENTS/GUARDIANS

Dear Parent,

This research aims to explore how the Somali parents of pupils aged between 11 and 16 years old involve themselves in their children's education as well as conceptualise the notion of parental involvement. Could you please kindly spare 15 minutes to complete this questionnaire by highlighting your choices and where written answer is required filling in the spaces provided.

Thank you in advance

Foomka Suaalaha ee waalidiinta

Ku socota waalid

Ujeedada cilmi baadhista waxaa weeye in la ogaado sida ay waalidiinta somaaliyeed ee dhalay caruurta ay da dooda u dhaxayso 11 ilaa iyo 16 sano jir ay ooga qayb qaataan caruurtooda waxbarashadooda iyo sida ay u fasirtaan ama ay micnaystaan waajibka waalidiinta ka saaran carruurtooda waxbarashadooda. Fadlan waxaa si xushmadleh lagaaga codsanayaa inaad formkan oon Shan iyo toban taqiiqo kabadan qaadanaynin aad buuxiso suaalaha kaa quseeya.

Waad mahadsantahay

PERSONAL INFORMATION

Please select one/ Fadlan xariiq mid

| | | |
|----------------------------------|--|--------------------------|
| Gender | Male/lab | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| | Female/dhadig | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Educational Qualification | University graduate | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| | High school graduate | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| | Elementary or no formal education | <input type="checkbox"/> |

The 6 Types of involvements as conceptualized in Epstein’s (1995 & 2010) parental involvement typology

PARENTING AS AN EDUCATIONAL INVOLVEMENT

1. Do you involve yourself in your child/children’s education/school work?

Caruurtaada waxbarashadooda door ma ku leedahay

- a) Yes/Haa, *what do you do? Please explain/side? Fadlan sharax waxa aad qabato?*

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b) No/Maya, why you are not involved/ Maxay tahay Sabata keentay inaad door kulahayn caruurtaad?

.....

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.....

2. What does parenting in your child's education mean to you? How do you conceptualise/construct the concept of parental involvement?

Sidee baad u fasiran kartaa waxa uu yahay doorka waalidiinta kaga aadan waxbarasha caruurtooda?

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3. How do you describe the level of your parental involvement in your child's education? Please select one. Sidee baad ku qiyaasi kartaa doorkaada ama caawinta aad siiso caruurtaada waxbarashadooda? Fadalan mid ka xulo hoos

- a. High-level of Involvement: Aad ayaan ooga qayb qaataa
- b. Medium-Level of Involvement/ ka qayb qaadashadaydu waa dhaxdhaxaad
- c. Low-level of involvement/ doorkaygu waa yaryahay
- d. No involvement:/wax door ah kuma lihi caruurtayda waxbarashadooda

4. What is your main parenting role in your child’s education? Please tick one? *Maxuu yahay doorkaaga kuugu wayne ee aad ka qaadato caruurtaada waxbarashadooda? Fadlan xariiq mid?.*

- a. Adviser/*lataliye*
- b. Supporter in school work/homework/*kalkaaliye*
- c. Motivator/*dhiirigaliye*
- d. None /*Midna*
- e. Others please explain/ *waxyaabe kale, fadlan sheeg*

.....

5. What would you say is your single most important parental role in your child’s education? Please list. *Maxuu yahay baad isleedahay waa doorka kaliya ee oogu mihiimsan ee aad ka qaadato ilmahaaga waxbarashadooda? Fadlan hoos ku sheeg*

.....

COMMUNICATION BETWEEN HOME AND SCHOOL & HOME SCHOOL RELATIONSHIP

6. How often do you communicate with the school your child attends? *Goormaad la xirriirtaa skuulka caruurtaada aado? Fadlan mid xulo*

- a. All the time/*Mar kasta*
- b. When there is a need/ *Markaan u baahdo*
- c. No communication/ *Wax xiriir aha lama lihi*
7. What type of communication methods do you use to communicate with school? *Sidee baad oola xiriirtaa iskuulka caruurtaada aado? Fadalan mid xulo*
- a. Face to face/ *Ka fool ka fool*
- b. Parent evening/*waalidiinta marka lala kulmayo*
- c. Letters sent home/*warqadaha la isku diro*
- d. Emails/*emailada*
- e. Text messages/ *Textgi telefooka la iskaga diro*
8. How would you describe the relationship between you and the school? *Sideed buu yahay xiriirka adiga iyo ilmahaada iskuulkooda ka dhaxeeya? Fadlan xariiq mid*
- a. Good/*fiican*
- b. Poor/*liitaa*
- c. No relationship/*xiriir ma lihin*

VOLUNTEERING TO SUPPORT SCHOOL AND STUDENTS

9. Have you ever done any volunteering at the school your child attends? Such as fundraising, class assistance, etc. *Waligaa shaqo bilaash ah ma u samysay iskuulka si aad u caawiso, sida caawin class, lacag u aruurin, iyo wixii la mid ah.*

YES

NO

If not, what stops you from volunteering? *Hadii jawaabtu ay maya tahay maxaa kaa hortaagan inaad samayso volunteering? Fadlan sharax*

.....

.....
.....
10. Do you want to volunteer your time at school? *Ma rabtaa inaad shaqa bilaash ah u samayso iskuula?*

YES

NO

Others

.....

.....

.....

.....

11. Do you think volunteering at school would support your child's educational attainments? *Ma kula tahay in hadii aad shaqo bilaash ah u samayso iskuulka waxay caawinaysaa ilmahaada waxbarashadiisa? Fadlan sharax*

.....

.....

.....

.....

12. Does your child's school encourage you to volunteer? *Iskuulka ilmahaada aado ma kugu dhiiri galiyaa inaad volunteering samayso?*

YES

NO

If no why do you think is the reason? Please explain. *Haday jawaabtu tahay maya maxay tahay baad u malaynaysaa sababtu? Fadlan sharax*

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

LEARNING AT HOME

13. Do you support your child at home? *Ilmahaaga guriga ma ku caawisaa?*

Yes

If yes what do you do when supporting your child at home? *Haday jawaabtu tahay haa maxaad qabataa marka aad ilmahaaga ku caawinayso guriga?*

.....
.....
.....
.....
.....

No?

If no why? *Haday ma tahay jawaabtaada maxaadan ilmahaaga guriga oogu caawinin*

.....
.....
.....
.....
.....

14. Do you face any challenges when supporting your child at home? *Wax caqabad ah ma la kulantaa markaad ilmahaaga waxbarashooda ku caawinayso eed guriga joogto? Fadlan sharax*

.....
.....
.....
.....
.....

DECISION MAKING

15. Are you a member of school governing body? *Matahay iskuul governor?*

c) Yes

d) No.

If No why? *Maya haday tahay maxaadan u ahayn iskuul governor*

.....
.....
.....
.....
.....
.....

16. Are you a member of parent-teacher association at the school your child attends?

Member maka tahay PTA ururka waalidiinta iyo macalimiinta?

c) Yes

d) No.

If No why? *Maxaa sababay inaadan kamid noqonin ururka waalidiinta iyo macalimiinta?*

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Collaborating with the Community.

17. Does your child participate in or attend the following school-community activities?

Please select the ones that apply to your child/ *Ilmahaagu ma ka qaybqaataa activityada ay iskuula iyo local communitiga ay soo qaban qaabiyaan? Fadlan mid ka xulo?*

e. School organised university trips/*safar jaamcadaha lagu booqdo oo uu ilkuulka qaban qaabiyo*

a. School organised work experiences with local business/ *shaqo khibradeed ay iskuula qaban qaabiyaan oo ilmahaaga uu ka qayb qaato*

b. Community organised after-school clubs/ *tuitiono ardayda wax lagu baro ama lagu caawiyo*

c. Community organised sports clubs/ *isportis iyo ciyaaro ay soo qaban qaabiyaan communitiga*

d. Others

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END OF QUESTIONNAIRE/ *SUAALIHII WAY DHAMAADEEN*

Thank you for completing this questionnaire/ *waad ku mahadsantahay buuxinta aad buuxisay formkan*

Researcher & Supervisors Contact Details:

Cilmi baadhaha iyo la taliyaashiisa faah faahintiisa

Nuur Hassan

Doctoral candidate at the University of Greenwich

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Appendix 8: Data collection Phase2: Parents' interview schedule

Sample Interview questions

INTERVIEW SCHEDULE FOR PARENTS/GUARDIANS

HELLO AND WELCOME

First of all, I would like to thank you for accepting my invitation to take part in this follow-up interview. This interview aims to find more about your involvement in your child/children's educational outcome and school experiences.

Your participation in this interview is entirely voluntary and you have the right to withdraw at any stage.

The interview will take between 45 minutes and an hour. Please answer all the questions to the best of your knowledge.

Thank you very much

ASK PARTICIPANTS CHOICE OF LANGUAGE* (SOMALI OR ENGLISH)

Name:

Gender: Male Female

Educational qualification: Under-graduate Post-graduate

College Secondary No formal education

START TAPE RECORDING NOW

1. **Do you involve yourself** in your child/children's education/school work?

Yes: Probe: How do you involve? What do you do with them? What do you don't do?

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No: Probe: Why don't you involve in your children's education, what stops you engaging with your children's education?

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2. What is your main role in your child/children's education/school work?

Prompt: Homework support, buying educational materials, etc.

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3. What do you think is your most important role in your child/children's education/school work?

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4. Is there anything that you don't do, but would have liked to do with your children's education?

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5. **The term "parental involvement"** may mean different thing to different people, what does this term mean to you? How do you construct the idea in your head?

Prompt: Liaising with schools/ parent evening, volunteering at school, homework and helping children at school. What is not parental involvement for you?

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.....

Probe more (what is your responsibility as a parent in your child’s education?)

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.....

6. How do you involve yourself with the school your child go? Please select one or more?

a) As a school governor

b) Mainly at parental evening

c) Volunteering

d) Fundraiser

e) Class assistance

7. Does your child/children’s school encourage/help you get involve in your children’s education/school work?

.....

.....

.....

.....

...

Prompt: What information do they provide you? How useful is the information you get from the school about your child’s education?

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8. How do you describe the relationship between you and your child’s school?

Prompt: partnership, one that is dominated by the school

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9. How often do you get in touch with the school your child goes?

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Prompt: do these contacts relate to behavior, assessment, result, requesting help!

10. Do you face any challenges when engaging with your child/children’s education/school work?

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11. Do you face challenges when engaging with the school your child goes?

Prompt: Literacy, language, financial etc.

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12. Are there any factors that impact negatively or positively on your involvement in your child/children's education?

Prompt: Education, housing, number of children, employment/unemployment

.....

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.....

13. What motivates you to get involve in your child/children’s education/school work?

Prompt: your child’s performance, future work and career prospective etc.

.....

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.....

14. Do you or your spouse have different roles in your child’s education and school work?

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15. Is there any impact on child’s attainment by your involvements?

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END OF INTERVIEW

STOP THE TAPE

*This interview will be carried out in Somali where necessary (in other words if participants are not comfortable with the English language, the researcher will ask questions in Somali)

Appendix 9: Pupil's interview schedule



INTERVIEW SCHEDULE FOR PUPILS

HELLO AND WELCOME

Thanks for coming, in this interview I will be asking you a number of questions about how your parents help you in your education and school work.

Your participation in this interview is voluntary and you have the right to stop at any stage.

The interview will take between 45 minutes and an hour. Please answer all the questions to the best of your knowledge.

Thank you very much

ASK PARTICIPANTS CHOICE OF LANGUAGE* (SOMALI OR ENGLISH)

START TAPE RECORDING NOW

1. Do your parents help you in your education or school work?

Yes.....

*Probe/ How do they/ what do they do?

.....
.....
.....
.....

No.....

Probe/ why don't they? Anything that stops them help you?

.....

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.....

2. What is the most important role of your parents in your education?

*Prompt: Advisor, motivator, helping school work, helping financial, others

.....
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.....

3. Do your mother and father have different roles in your education?

Yes

Probe/ Why do think is this is the case

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.....
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No.....

4. Do your parents have difficulties when helping you in your school work/education?

.....
.....

Prompt

Probe

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.....
.....

5. Do you think your parents do enough to help you in your education?

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6. What is the educational qualification of your parents?

Prompt: Secondary level, college, Degree, etc

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7. How important is the educational qualifications of your parents in your school work and attainments?

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8. Do you see your parents' academic achievement as a role model for you to do well in your school work?

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9. What motivates you to do well in your school work?

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.....

Prompt: to get a job, to make your parent happy, to make your community and culture proud

.....

10. How do you describe the relationship between you and the school you attend?

.....

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Prompt

.....

.....

11. Does your school encourage your parents to get involve themselves in your education?

No / why

.....

.....

Yes / how

.....

.....

12. What is/are the best way/s that your parents can help you in your education?

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13. What do you think your parents can do more to help you in your education?

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14. Do you have any suggestions for Somali parents when helping their children in their education?

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END OF SAMPLE INTERVIEW

STOP THE TAPE

*This interview will be carried out in Somali where necessary (in other words if participants are not comfortable with the English language, the researcher will ask questions in Somali)

*Probes and prompts will vary according to the interviewees' answers

Appendix: 10 Sample Coding process for categorising of questionnaire responses under the six types of involvements.

| PA | C2SCH | V@SCH | L@HM | DM | CC |
|--|--|---|---|---|---|
| <p>All (N = 129) of the Somali parents who completed a questionnaire said parenting is their main involvement.</p> <p>123 of them described parenting in terms of roles such as described in Epstein model such as feeding, cleaning, school runs, buying educational material for their children, advising,</p> | <p>104 participants described their communications with schools as irregular and on demand or ‘need-based’</p> <p>19 participants report regular two-way communication. 97 parents said schools do not communicate in a timely manner.</p> <p>6 parents indicated to have no meaningful communication.</p> | <p>4 out of the 129 parents reported having volunteered at the schools as a classroom assistant. N = 125) had not volunteered at school. 54 of them described volunteering as none useful. 71 of respondents wanted to volunteer. Barriers identified to volunteering as language barriers, cultural difference, and work commitment.</p> | <p>129parents reported some form of involvement in their children’s learning at home. Majority of parents hire private tutors to help their children (N=118). Home learning activities reported; supporting with homework, monitoring TV viewing time, offering educational & providing quiet place to study.</p> | <p>8 parents reported currently serving as members of the school governing body. 121 not a member of a decision making body. 54 have no time. 48 have cited language barriers. 19 said DM will not add any value to their children’s education 125 said are not aware of existence of PTA. 4 were members</p> | <p>113 parents said their children attend community organised after school centres. 13 parents said their children attend at school organised after school centres. Collaboration means interactions among Somali community in learning and supporting setting.</p> |

Glossary: PA= Parenting, C2SCH =communicating to school, V@SCH= Volunteering at school, L@HM= learning at home, DM= Decision making, CC= collaborating with community

Appendix 11: Sample of Themes and their sub-themes with corresponding participants' responses

Parents' Sample

| Main themes & codes representing the themes | Sub-themes | Supporting quotes |
|--|---|--|
| Theme 1: <i>The nature of involvement.</i> (NPI=nature of parental involvement) | Sub-theme 1: Home-based involvement | 'I do involve myself in my children's education at home more than any other place...because home is where I can apply my culture and language to help my daughter learn.' (Jamila, mother) |
| | Sub-theme 2: School-based involvement | 'I do liaise with and ask them the general attainment and progress of my son, but only when I want to know more information.' (Kadra, mother) |
| | Sub-theme 3: Community-based involvement | 'I always take my son to Somali community-organised after-school clubs, where he gets help with his maths and English homework.' (Dunya, mother) |
| Theme2: <i>Conceptualisation of parental involvement</i> (CPI= conceptualisation of parental involvement) | Sub-theme 2.1. Providing home education | 'To me, parental involvement means, among other things, providing home education such as Quranic lessons, and supporting your children with their schoolwork.' (Ahmed, father) |
| | Sub-theme 2.2. Providing parenting | 'My understanding of parental involvement is looking after your children, for example, making sure they are well fed, well clothed and well cleaned.' (Halane, father) |
| | Sub-theme 2.3. Liaising with the school | 'For me, parental involvement means liaising regularly with the school, in order to know what is going on at the school.' (Jamila, mother) |

| | | |
|---|--|--|
| <p><i>Theme 3 Home-school Communication (H&Sch C= home-school communication)</i></p> | <p>Sub-theme 3.1. Parent-teacher evening</p> | <p>‘I attend most parent-teacher evenings at my son’s school, because this is my main communication channel with school. It allows me to speak to teachers and ask questions.’ (Ali, father)</p> |
| | <p>Sub-theme 3.2. Subject teacher communication</p> | <p>‘Subject-level communication is my second most used communication with my school...for example, whenever I have concerns about my son’s attainment, I make an appointment with one of his subject teachers for a face-to-face meeting. This allows me to get real time information about his progress.’ (Mohamed, father)</p> |
| <p><i>Theme 4 Home-school relationships (H&SchR= Home-school relationship)</i></p> | <p>Sub-theme 4.1. Unequal relationship</p> | <p>‘The school always tells us what to do to improve about our son’s grades, but they never ask us what we do at home or outside the school. This sometimes makes me feel that we have been dictated to and valued less as parents.’ (Sada, mother)</p> |
| | <p>Sub-theme 4.2. Courteous relationship.</p> | <p>‘I never had any problem with accessing the school and talking to teachers.... They are friendly and welcoming.’ (Mako, mother)</p> |
| <p><i>Theme 5. Challenges faced when involved(chwi=challenges faced when involved)</i></p> | <p>Theme 5. 1. Parental level of education</p> | <p>‘I find it very difficult to help my son with his homework, because I only completed Form Three in Somalia (equivalent to Year 11).’ (Hikmo, mother)</p> |
| | <p>Theme 5.2. Lack of Time</p> | <p>‘I would say that my main challenge is finding time to get involved in my children’s education. For example, I work part time, and when I finish work I go straight to collect them from school. After school I cook and clean; therefore, I have very, very little time to get involved in their school work.’ (Jamila, mother)</p> |
| | <p>Theme 5.3. Lack of system knowledge</p> | <p>In the beginning, every year when I get her report, I expected to see fail and pass result, but all the time there are current and predicted grades in the report. I therefore thought that my daughter had never failed in her end-of-year exam, until I was told that children move up regardless of their grades.’ (Jama, father).</p> |
| | <p>Theme 5.4. English language barriers</p> | <p>‘While I can converse adequately in English with the teachers and schools, I find it very difficult to help my daughter with her homework, owing to my lack of mastery of the English language.’</p> |

| | | |
|--|--|---|
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| | Theme 5.5. Household size | 'I have five children, three of them are at secondary school, two are at the same school and one is at another school. Attending parent-teacher evenings simultaneously, and helping with their homework at home, is very challenging for both my wife and myself.' (Ahmed, father) |
| | Theme 5.6. Fear of authority | 'In my culture, my daughter has to obey me; if she doesn't, I discipline her. If this happens, the school and social services would think that this is against the law, so I am always on the lookout when involving myself in my daughter's school life, otherwise she [my daughter] may end up in leaving home and becoming westernised.' |
| <i>Theme 6. Paternal & maternal roles (P&MR= parental & maternal roles)</i> | Theme 6.1. Culture & Gender | 'It is me [mother] who is always involved in my children's education, because it's in our Somali culture that mothers are responsible for things like the school run, feeding and dressing and other child support.' (Dunya, mother) |
| | Theme 6.2. Parent education | 'Both my wife and I are involved in the education of my son, but how we are involved is determined by our educational level. I am slightly better educated than my wife, so I help them with their homework and she [my wife] does all the school runs and feeding and cooking and.... of course cleaning.' (Jama, a father) |
| <i>Theme 7. Motivating factors(MF= motivating factors)</i> | Theme 7.1. Child attainment | What really motivates me is the fact that my son is doing very well, he is in the top set in every subject that he is doing now. The more I see him doing well, the more I naturally become involved (Dunya, mother) |
| | Theme 7.2. Unfulfilled dreams | 'In Somalia, I always wanted to continue my education beyond secondary....and go to "kuliyada Lafoole" [the Faculty of Lafoole], which was part of the National University of Somalia...But the civil war has destroyed everything...my children now have the chance to go to university in this country, and I am determined to help them do so, <i>inshaa Allah</i> [God willing].' (Halwo, mother) |

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| | Theme 7.3. Parental beliefs and attitudes to education | <p>‘It is incumbent upon me to help my daughter with her education, as it was incumbent on my parents to help me when I was young.’ (Ulumo, mother)</p> |
| <i>Theme 8. The impact of parental involvement (IPI=impact of parental involvement)</i> | Theme 8.1. Increased child attainment | <p>I believe that without my involvement my son would have not been at the stage he is now. He is now in the top set for all his core subjects...this was not the case last year, when he was in the lower sets for most of his subjects. So, my involvement has given him a significant boost.’ (Mohamed, father)</p> |
| | Theme 8.2. Improved behaviour and school attendance | <p>‘My child knows that I am an involved parent...she knows that I will find out what is going on in school, therefore her attendances and attitude to learning is very good.’ Halwo, mother</p> |
| | Theme 8.3. Improved parent-child relationships | <p>‘My daughter tells me everything about her education and what she feels about any potential educational problems... This is because of my involvement and the close relationship this has cultivated between her and I.’ (Jama, father)</p> |
| <i>Theme 9. Factors impacting involvement (FIPI=factors impacting parental involvement)</i> | Theme 9.1. Parent education | <p>‘My education is very important because it helps me help my children with their school work, it also reminds my children that they need to have education to improve their chances in life.’ (Mohamed, father)</p> |
| | Theme 9.2. Child temperament | <p>‘As my son will not tell me anything about his schoolwork and what is going on in school, it is always me who asks him about his school. My son does not like these types of questions and he would say all is well... he would eventually answer my questions. His lack of cooperation really discouraged me in the beginning, but I keep going.’ (Hikmo, mother)</p> |
| | Theme 9.3. Parents’ income | <p>‘I work two different shifts as a forklift driver in a warehouse. By the time I finish work and get home, my children have already completed their schoolwork and are ready for bed... Some days</p> |

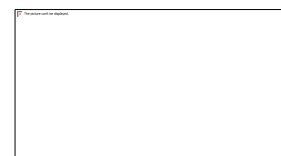
| | | |
|--|--|--|
| | | when I am working a late shift, I am able to help them, but most of the time I can't ...because of my work.' (Jama, father |
|--|--|--|

Pupils' Sample

| Main themes | Sub-themes | Supporting quotes |
|--|---|---|
| <i>Theme 10. Types of parental involvement children receive</i> (TPICR=types of parental involvement children receive) | Theme 10.1. Home involvement | 'My parents tell my sister, who goes to university and studies English Literature, to help me with my school work, which is how they help me at home.' (Pupil 4) |
| | Theme 10.2. After-school clubs | 'My parents are not very qualified to help me, so they send me to places like afterschool classes (...) and I have sisters at home who also help me from time to time.' (Pupil 1) |
| <i>Theme 11. Child motivation</i> (CM= child motivation) | Theme 11.1. Parents' education | 'My dad went to university and he helps me with my schoolwork. He also has a good job...on the other hand, my mum has no education and she is unable to help me. So the educational background of my parents definitely motivates me.' (Pupil 3) |
| | Theme 11.2. Making family proud in the community | 'I always wonder if, like, in class why this person is getting higher than me. Why am I getting lower than them? So, especially if it's my friend, I like to be above them, I like to be better than them in subjects and stuff like that, because that makes me stand out in my community and makes my family proud.' (Pupil 4) |
| <i>Theme 12. Parent-child relations(P&CR= parent-child relationship)</i> | Theme 12.1. Language & culture mismatch | Well, I have no problem with my parents, they both work hard and want me to succeed, but sometimes you know there can be some misunderstanding, parents always want to operate in their Somali culture 100 per cent. That is difficult sometimes, and we call them - in a nice way, of course - "freshees".' [Interviewer: 'What are "freshees"?'] 'It is like slang for old-fashioned African...something like that.' (Pupil 1). |

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| | Theme 12.2. Parents' unquestionable respect for teachers | 'Well, the problem is, especially in my school some teachers that are like not as good as you hoped they would be, and the problem is for my parents, they don't usually have to listen to what the chap [teacher] has to say, so they believe whatever the teachers says, nine out of ten. And this makes me, like, 'mum/dad, you don't trust me.' (Pupil 5). |
| | Theme 12.3. Peer pressure on children | 'We have friends from primary school and sometimes you want to be, like...I mean, going out and chilling out with them, but that is not allowed in our Muslim and Somali culture, so we have to, erm...what is the word? Navigate...'specially for us girls.' (Pupil 4) |
| <i>Theme 13. Child-school relationship</i> (C&SchR= child and school relationships0 | Theme 13.1. Schools' low expectations of Somali pupils | 'In our school, most of the students are Asians and the teachers they automatically assume that the Somalians are not as clever as the other pupils so they always separate us in to different groups.' (Pupil 1) |
| | Theme 13.2. Stereotyping Somali pupils of behaving badly | 'Sometimes I feel like I'm getting labelled and I'm not sure why that is the case. I normally don't have any problems, but I get labelled as a trouble-maker. If anything happens in the class - anything bad, I mean - I am the first student in the teachers' book. I think I feel I am going to hit an anger button the moment something like that happens.' (Pupil 3) |

Appendix 12: Parents' consent to take part in the research



PARENTS/GUARDIANS' CONSENT FORM **(With the Somali Language Translation)**

Title of the study: SOMALI PARENTS' INVOLVEMENT IN THEIR CHILDREN'S EDUCATION: AN EXPLORATION OF PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT AND FAMILY-SCHOOL RELATIONSHIPS

Cinwaanka: Sida ay waalidiinta Somalida ay oola tacaalaan caruurtooda waxbarashadooda: Daraasaad lagu baadhayo sida ay waalidiinta Somalida ay oola tacaalaan waxbarashada caruurtooda iyo sida ay sida uu fahansanyihii waxa uu yahay taxluuqidooda iyo xiriirka ka dhaxeeya iyaga iyo schoolka.

Cilmi baadhaha iyo lataliyaashiisa faah faahintooda

Nuur Hassan: Doctoral candidate at the University of Greenwich.

Supervisors:

Gordon Ade-ejo: g.o.ade-ojo@gre.ac.uk

Hatice Choli: h.choli@gre.ac.uk

To be completed by the participant. If the participant is under 18, to be completed by the parent / guardian / person acting *in loco parentis*. *Waa inay buuxiyaan ka qaybgalayaasha, hadii ay ka yaryihiin 18 sano waa inay buuxiyaan waalidkii*

- I have read the information sheet about this study
Waan akhriyay waana fahmay warbixinta ku qoran formkan
- I have had an opportunity to ask questions and discuss this study
Fursad ayaan u helay inaan su aal waydiiyo cilmi baadhaha
- I have received satisfactory answers to all my questions
Jawaab saafi ah ayaa la isiiyay
- I have received enough information about this study
Warbixin buuxda ayaa la iga siiyay cili baadhistaan
- I understand that I am / the participant is free to withdraw from this study:
waxaan fahansanahay inaan ahay ka qayb gale xorna u leeyahay inaan kabaxo markaan rabo
 - At any time (until such date as this will no longer be possible, which I have been told) inay xili aan suurta gal ahayn aan gaaro mooyee
 - Without giving a reason for withdrawing: Wax jawaab ah uma baahni inaan bixiyo

| | |
|---|--------------------|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ (If I am / the participant is, or intends to become, a student at the University of Greenwich) without affecting my / the participant's future with the University: hadaan jaamacada Greenwich dhigto iyo hadaana dhiganin ba ○ Without affecting any medical or nursing care I / the participant may be receiving. In wax caafimaad barasho ama daawaynba ayna wax sabab ah u lahayn • I understand that my research data may be used for a further project in anonymous form, but I am able to opt out of this if I so wish, by ticking <input type="checkbox"/> here. Waxaan fahan sanahay in nuxulka cilmi baadhista in loo isticmaali karo cilmi baadhis kale, laakiin aan xor uleeyahay in aan diido • I agree to take part in this study Waxaan ku raacsanay inaan ka qayb qaato cilmi baadhistan | |
| Signed (participant) Saxiixayga | Date Taariikhda |
| Name in block letters Magacayga oo far waawayn ku qoran | |
| Signed (parent / guardian / other) (if under 18) Magaca waalidka hadii aan ka yarahay 18 | Date Taariikda |
| Name in block letters Magacayga oo waawayn ku qoran | |
| Signature of researcher Saxiixa cilmi baadhaha | Date Taariikhda |
| This project is supervised by: Magaca la taliyaha Gordon Ade-ejo: g.o.ade-ojo@gre.ac.uk Hatice Choli: h.choli@gre.ac.uk | |
| Researcher's contact details (including telephone number and e-mail address): Cilmi baadhaha faahfaahintiisa Nuur Hassan: Doctoral candidate at the University of Greenwich. | |

Appendix 13: Parents' Demographics

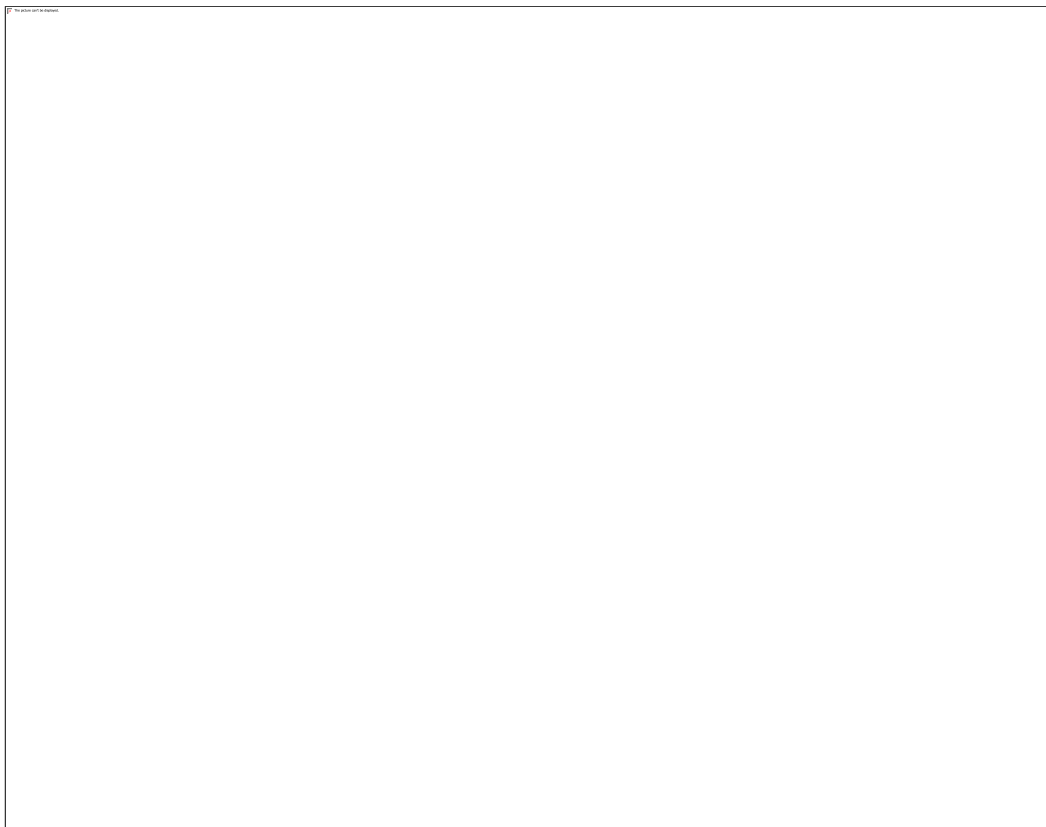
| Total surveyed | Mothers | Fathers |
|-----------------------------------|---------|---------|
| 129 | 116 | 13 |
| Educational Qualification | | |
| University graduate | 2 | 5 |
| High school graduate | 39 | 8 |
| Elementary or no formal education | 75 | 0 |

| Total interviewed | Mothers | Fathers |
|-----------------------------------|---------|---------|
| 15 | 10 | 5 |
| Educational Qualification | | |
| University graduate | 0 | 1 |
| High school graduate | 2 | 4 |
| Elementary or no formal education | 8 | 0 |

Appendix 14: The Hoover-Dempsey & Sandler (1995, 1997) Model of Parental Involvement

The Model

The Hoover-Dempsey & Sandler (1995, 1997) Model of Parental Involvement.



| LEVEL 1: Parental Involvement Decision (The Parent's Positive Decision to Become Involved) Influenced by: | | | |
|--|--|---|---------------------------|
| Parent's Construction of the Parental Role | Parent's Sense of Efficacy for Helping Child(ren) Succeed in School | General Opportunities and Demands for Parental Involvement Presented by: | |
| | | The Parent's Child(ren) | Child(ren)'s School(s) |
| | | | |

Adopted from: Vanderbilt University