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**ADDIS ABABA UNIVERSITY**

**COLLEGE OF EDUCATION AND BEHAVIORAL STUDIES**

**DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATIONAL PLANNING AND MANAGEMENT**

**The Role of Parents' Involvement in the Management of Private Primary  
Schools in Gullele Sub City, Addis Ababa**

**By**

**Yidersal Gelaw**

**July, 2025**

**Addis Ababa**

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**The Role of Parents' Involvement in the Management of Private  
Primary Schools in Gullele Sub-City Addis Ababa**

**A Thesis Submitted to Addis Ababa University College of Education and Behavioral  
Studies Department of Educational Planning and Management in Partial Fulfillment of  
the Requirement for the Master Degree of Arts in Education Planning and Management**

By

Yidersal Gelaw

Advisor :Demoze Degefa (PHD)

July, 2025

Addis Ababa, Ethiopia

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## Approval Sheet

### COLLEGE OF EDUCATION AND BEHAVIORAL STUDIES DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATIONAL PLANNING AND MANAGEMENT

#### The Role of Parents' Involvement in the Management of Primary Schools in Gullele Sub City, Addis Ababa

**By: Yidersal Gelaw**

**Approved by Board of Examiners**

Name	Signature	Date
1. _____ Chairman, Department Graduate Committee	_____	_____
2. _____ Advisor	_____	_____
3. _____ Internal Examiner	_____	_____
4. _____ External Examiner	_____	_____

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## **DECLARATION**

I, the undersigned, declare that this thesis entitled “The Role of Parents’ Involvement in the Management of Private primary Schools: The case of Gullele Sub-City, Addis Ababa, Ethiopia” is my original work. It has not been submitted to any other institution or university for the award of any academic degree, diploma, or certificate. All sources of materials used in this thesis have been duly acknowledged and properly cited.

I further affirm that no part of this thesis has been submitted previously, in whole or in part, to any institution of higher learning for the purpose of academic qualification. I take full responsibility for any errors or omissions it may contain.

**Declared by:** Yidersal Gelaw

**Signature:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Place:**

Addis Ababa University

**Date of Submission:** July, 2025

This thesis has been submitted for examination with my approval as a university advisor.

**Name of Advisor:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Signature:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Date:** \_\_\_\_\_

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## List of Acronyms

PTA	Parent-Teacher Association
MOE	Ministry of Education
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
SDG	Sustainable Development Goals
CPD	Continuous Professional Development
ETP	Education and Training Policy
EMIS	Education Management Information System
SPSS	Statistical Package for the Social Sciences
ESDP	Education Sector Development Program
EGRA	Early Grade Reading Assessment
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
TDP	Teacher Development Program
GEQIP	General Education Quality Improvement Program
PLC	Professional Learning Community
PTA Exec.	Parent-Teacher Association Executive Committee
SNNPR	Southern Nations, Nationalities, and Peoples' Region
BoE	Bureau of Education
CBE	Community-Based Education
M&E	Monitoring and Evaluation

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## ***Abstract***

*This study investigates the role of parents' involvement in the management of private primary schools in Gullele Sub-City, Addis Ababa, Ethiopia. The study aimed to examine the extent and nature of parental involvement, explore the challenges that hinder meaningful engagement, and assess its impact on school management. A qualitative research design was used to collect in-depth data from five private primary schools selected for their diversity in size and tuition level. Data were gathered through semi-structured interviews, focus group discussions, and document analysis involving 35 participants: five principals, five PTA chairpersons, and 25 actively involved parents. Thematic analysis revealed that parental involvement was mostly restricted to financial support and attendance at meetings, with minimal participation in leadership or decision-making roles. Communication between school leaders and parents was often top-down, and many parents had limited understanding of their responsibilities. Cultural attitudes, weak PTA structures, and the absence of clear policies were identified as key barriers. While awareness of the importance of involvement is increasing, in practice it remains limited and largely symbolic in many schools. However, in schools where genuine collaboration existed, it contributed to improved trust, transparency, and school performance. The study recommends strengthening institutional frameworks, enhancing PTA effectiveness, and promoting awareness to achieve more inclusive school governance.*

*Keywords: parental involvement, school management, PTA, educational outcomes, school governance, stakeholder participation, , decision-making, policy gaps,*

# CHAPTER ONE

## INTRODUCTION

### 1.1 Background of the Study

Parental involvement in school management has been widely recognized as a vital component of successful educational systems. Studies globally have shown that parental involvement is one of the most important factors influencing student academic success. When parents actively participate in their children's education, students tend to achieve higher academic performance, display improved behavior, and develop stronger confidence in their learning abilities (Epstein, 2019). Similarly, research in other contexts has demonstrated that involving parents in school management enhances school effectiveness and fosters stronger relationships among teachers, students, and the community (Henderson & Mapp, 2002).

In the Ethiopian context, the Education Development Roadmap (2018–2030) emphasizes the critical role of parents and communities as active partners in school governance. The roadmap outlines that the roles of parental engagement should extend beyond financial contributions to include meaningful participation in planning, decision-making, and school-level accountability mechanisms. This policy shift represents a broader national commitment to inclusive education, where parents are not merely supporters but co-owners of the educational process. It promotes the integration of parents into key governance structures at both the school and woreda levels to improve transparency, effectiveness, and community trust in the education system.

However, despite this policy emphasis, the actual implementation of parental involvement remains inconsistent. Differences in awareness, communication gaps, and unclear institutional structures continue to hinder the realization of genuine parental participation, particularly in private schools and urban settings like Addis Ababa.

While these policies emphasize the importance of parental engagement, the actual level of involvement remains inconsistent and varies significantly across different schools, especially between public and private institutions and within urban areas like Addis Ababa.

Although parental involvement has been a significant focus in government schools, there is a gap in research on parental roles in private schools, which are increasingly important in Ethiopia's education landscape. As the number of private schools in urban areas continues to grow, understanding the dynamics of parental participation in these schools is critical. While

studies have often highlighted the positive impact of parental involvement on student success in public schools (Derebsa, 2006; Wakjira, 2017), the roles and influence of parental engagement in private schools remain underexplored. This gap presents an opportunity to examine how parental involvement functions within the context of private primary schools in Addis Ababa, specifically in the Gullele Sub City.

In private primary schools, particularly in Addis Ababa, parents contribute significantly not only to the financial stability of schools but also to their overall governance. Their involvement can include attending school meetings, engaging in policy discussions, supporting curriculum development, and monitoring their children's academic progress. However, research on how parents actively engage in the management of private schools in Ethiopia is minimal. Most studies, such as those conducted by Derebsa (2006) and Wakjira (2017), focus on public schools, overlooking the role of parents in private educational settings. This lack of research presents a pressing need for a comprehensive investigation into the extent and nature of parental involvement in private schools, particularly in an urban context like Addis Ababa.

Despite the known benefits of parental involvement, private schools in Addis Ababa face several challenges in developing meaningful engagement. For example, research by Getahun (2012) suggests that many parents in urban areas feel disconnected from the educational process due to a lack of understanding of their roles in school governance. This disconnect is often compounded by poor communication between schools and parents, which leaves many parents unaware of how they can contribute meaningfully to school management. In private schools, where academic performance is highly emphasized and competition is high, the absence of consistent parental involvement can negatively impact the school's ability to meet the needs of all its students.

Another significant challenge is the varying levels of parental involvement. While some parents actively participate in school activities, attend meetings, and contribute to policy discussions, others remain passive due to work commitments, lack of awareness, or limited time. The gap in parental involvement is particularly evident in private schools, where the pressure to maintain high academic standards can sometimes suppress the importance of developing community participation. As pointed out by Mulugeta (2015), "parental involvement is not a one-size-fits-all approach; it depends on various factors, including socio-economic status, educational background, and the personal priorities of parents."

In some private schools in Gullele Sub City, efforts have been made to involve parents in school management. These efforts include organizing regular school meetings, creating communication channels between parents and administrators, and encouraging parents to participate in decision-making processes. However, the effectiveness of these initiatives varies widely from school to school. As Tadesse (2017) noted, "While some schools have successfully integrated parents into the governance structure, others struggle with inconsistent engagement and a lack of understanding of how to engage parents effectively." This discrepancy highlights the need for a more systematic approach to parental involvement in private schools.

In conclusion, while parental involvement in education is widely recognized as a key determinant of school effectiveness and student success, the specific role of parents in the governance of private primary schools in Ethiopia remains underexplored. This study seeks to contribute to a broader understanding of how parents engage in school management in Gullele Sub City, to identify challenges in developing this involvement, and to propose strategies for improving parental participation to enhance school governance and educational outcomes. Through this exploration, the study aims to inform future policies and practices that can promote more meaningful engagement between parents and schools in Ethiopia.

## 1.2 Statement of the Problem

Parental involvement is widely acknowledged as a critical factor in improving educational quality and enhancing student outcomes. However, while much research has focused on parental engagement in public schools, there is a significant gap in studies that examine the unique roles of parental involvement in the management of private primary schools in Ethiopia. In particular, private schools in Gullele Sub-City, Addis Ababa, operate under distinct management structures that differ from those of public schools, and these differences can influence both the level and nature of parental participation. Despite the recognized benefits of parental engagement, there remains a lack of comprehensive, context-specific research that explores the barriers and enablers of parental involvement in these settings.

Local studies have offered some insights into parental involvement in education in Ethiopia. For example, Mekuria (2020) found that many parents in Addis Ababa face significant challenges, such as time constraints, financial difficulties, and limited access to information, which hinder their full participation in school management. Tesfaye (2018) similarly observed that even in private schools where parental involvement is encouraged, the degree

of engagement can vary widely among parents. These variations often result in uneven contributions to key aspects of school governance, such as decision-making, budgeting, and policy formulation. Although these studies provide valuable information, they are mostly concentrated on public school settings or do not fully show the unique characteristics of private school environments.

In many private primary schools in Addis Ababa, parents are expected to play an important role in supporting school operations. They contribute by attending meetings, participating in Parent-Teacher Associations (PTAs), volunteering in school events, and sometimes even engaging in direct decision-making processes. However, local researchers such as Mulugeta (2021) and Wakjira (2017) have noted that while there is an expressed willingness among parents to support their children's education, actual participation remains sporadic and often superficial. These studies indicate that parents may feel unprepared or marginalized in the school management process due to a lack of proper communication from school administrators and a limited understanding of their potential roles.

Furthermore, Getachew (2016) highlight that cultural factors significantly influence parental involvement in Ethiopia. Traditional views on education often place the responsibility for academic success solely on teachers and school administrators, which leads parents to perceive their involvement as secondary. This cultural norm, coupled with socioeconomic barriers, further limits the extent to which parents actively engage in the management of their children's schools. Consequently, while policies such as the Education Development Roadmap (2018–2030) promote parental participation as a means to improve educational outcomes, the practical implementation in private schools remains inconsistent and underdeveloped.

Another major issue is the lack of effective communication between schools and parents. Many parents report that they are not adequately informed about school policies, strategic plans, or the opportunities available for active participation. As a result, their potential contributions such as providing financial support, offering professional expertise, or participating in strategic decision-making are often underutilized. This communication gap is a recurring theme in both local and international studies. For instance, Hill and Tyson (2009) have shown that effective communication significantly enhances parental engagement and leads to better educational outcomes. Yet, in the context of private primary schools in Gulele

Sub-City, there is a noticeable deficiency in structured communication channels that would enable parents to be fully aware of and involved in school management processes.

Moreover, while there is extensive research on parental involvement in public schools, the literature on private schools is relatively minimal. Researchers such as Epstein (1995) and Coleman (1998) have extensively discussed the impact of parental involvement on student achievement and school climate, but their work often focuses on settings where public funding and standardized governance models prevail. This leaves a gap in understanding how the flexible and often more individualized management practices of private schools affect the way parents participate in school governance. The absence of detailed local studies on private schools means that policymakers and school leaders lack the evidence-based insights needed to design effective strategies designed to these settings.

Overall, while existing research supports the idea that parental involvement can positively impact school management and student outcomes, there remains a critical gap in understanding these dynamics in the context of private primary schools in Gullele Sub-City, Addis Ababa. The inconsistent participation of parents, influenced by socioeconomic, cultural, and communication barriers, calls for a focused study to explore these issues in detail. This research seeks to address these gaps by examining the roles of parental involvement in school management, which identifies the barriers to effective engagement, and proposing strategies to enhance collaboration between parents and schools. By doing so, it aims to contribute valuable insights that will inform both policy and practice in the Ethiopian education sector.

### **1.3 Research Questions**

1. What is the role of parental involvement in the management of private primary schools in Gullele Sub City?
2. What challenges do parents and school administrators face in ensuring effective parental involvement in school management?
3. How does parental involvement influence decision-making processes and educational outcomes in private elementary schools in Gullele Sub City?

## **1.4 Objectives of the Study**

### **1.4.1 General Objective**

The general objective of this study is to explore the role of parental involvement in the management of private primary schools in Gullele Sub City, Addis Ababa, and assess its impact on decision-making and educational outcomes.

### **1.4.2 Specific Objectives**

1. To examine the role of parental involvement in the management of private elementary schools in Gullele Sub City.
2. To identify the challenges faced by parents and school administrators in fostering effective parental involvement.
3. To analyze how parental involvement influences decision-making and educational outcomes in private primary schools in Gullele Sub City..

## **1.5 Significance of the Study**

This study holds significant value for educators, parents, policymakers, and researchers. It provides critical insights into how parental involvement contributes to effective school management and improved educational outcomes. By examining the role of parental involvement in school governance, the research helps school administrators develop better strategies for engaging parents in decision-making processes, which ultimately strengthens school management and governance.

Furthermore, the study highlights the positive impact of parental involvement on students' academic performance and behavior. Understanding these impacts can guide efforts to enhance parental engagement, which leads to improved student outcomes. The research also addresses the challenges parents face in participating in school management, such as socio-economic barriers, time constraints, and inconsistent involvement, while offering recommendations to overcome these obstacles. This can help establish a more equitable and effective partnership between schools and families.

From a policy perspective, the study provides valuable data to inform educational policies that promote greater parental involvement, particularly in private primary schools. It fills a gap in the existing literature on parental involvement in Addis Ababa, which offers new

insights into how private schools can better engage parents to improve educational practices and student performance.

## **1.6 Scope of the Study**

### **1.6.1 Conceptual Scope**

This study was conceptually limited to exploring the role of parents' involvement in the management of primary schools. It focused on how parents contribute to school decision-making, planning, and implementation processes, as well as their participation in Parent-Teacher Associations (PTAs) and school boards. The research did not address other forms of community involvement or general parental engagement in children's learning at home. All reviewed literature, data collection instruments, and analysis centered specifically on parental roles in school governance and management.

### **1.6.2 Geographical Scope**

The geographical scope of the study was limited to Gulele Sub City, which is located within Addis Ababa City Administration, Ethiopia. Data were collected exclusively from selected private primary schools operating within this sub-city. Only five out of the 42 private primary schools of Gulele were included in the study. The findings, therefore, reflect only the context of private school settings in this sub-city and may not be generalized to public schools or other sub-cities.

### **1.6.3 Time Scope**

The research was conducted over a six-month period. All data collection activities, including interviews, focus group discussions, and document reviews, were carried out within this timeframe. The study captures the roles and practices of parental involvement as observed during this period.

### **1.6.4 Methodological Scope**

Methodologically, the study employed a qualitative research design using purposive sampling techniques to select participants who were directly involved in school management. The primary data collection methods included semi-structured interviews with principals and PTA chairpersons, as well as focus group discussions with parents. Document analysis was also used to support triangulation. The study did not use quantitative tools such as questionnaires

or statistical analysis, as its main aim was to explore lived experiences, roles , perceptions, and practices in depth.

### **1.7 Limitation of the Study**

This study focused only on parental involvement in the management of Gulele Private Primary Schools, which limits its generalizability to other schools or regions. Due to time and financial constraints, the researcher was unable to include all private primary schools within Addis Ababa, resulting in a smaller, purposively selected sample.

Another limitation was the reliance on participants' willingness to share their honest views. Although confidentiality was assured, some participants may have withheld sensitive information or responded in a socially desirable manner.

Besides , the study did not examine other factors that might affect school management, such as leadership styles, teacher participation, or community involvement. It strictly focused on the role of parents.

Logistical challenges, such as limited access to some school leaders and scheduling conflicts with parents, also affected the scope of the data collection.

Despite these limitations, every effort was made to ensure that the data gathered was credible, rich, and relevant to the study's purpose.

### **1.8 Operational Terms**

- **Parental Involvement**

Refers to the active participation of parents in school management activities such as decision-making, attending meetings, volunteering, and supporting their children's education. It includes engagement in school governance and collaboration with teachers and administrators.

- **School Management**

The organization and administration of school operations, including policy-making, resource allocation, and governance. This study focuses on the role of parental involvement in shaping these processes.

- **Educational Outcomes**

The academic performance, behavior, and overall development of students as

influenced by the school environment. This includes grades, learning achievements, and social skills, which can be impacted by parental involvement.

- **Parent-School Partnership**

A collaborative relationship between parents and schools aimed at improving student learning, school governance, and overall educational quality. Strong partnerships contribute to better student outcomes and a more supportive learning environment.

## **1.9 Organization of the Study**

This study is organized into five chapters to ensure a coherent and systematic presentation of the research findings. Each chapter addresses a specific component of the investigation into the role of parental involvement in the management of private primary schools in Gullele Sub-City. Chapter One introduces the study by outlining the background, statement of the problem, research questions, and objectives. It also explains the significance of the study and defines its scope and limitations. Chapter Two provides a comprehensive review of related literature, discussing key concepts, theoretical frameworks, and previous studies on parental involvement in school governance. This chapter helps establish the context of the research and identifies gaps that the current study seeks to fill.

Chapter Three focuses on the research design and methodology, detailing the qualitative approach, sampling techniques, data collection tools, and ethical considerations. Chapter Four presents and analyzes the data collected through interviews, focus group discussions, and document reviews. Themes and patterns that emerge from the data are interpreted and supported with evidence from participants and relevant documents. Finally, Chapter Five summarizes the major findings, draws conclusions aligned with the research objectives, and provides practical recommendations for enhancing parental involvement in school management. It also highlights areas for future research to further explore the dynamics of parent-school collaboration

## **CHAPTER TWO**

### **REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE**

#### **2.1 Definition and Scope of Parental Involvement in the Management of Private Primary Schools**

Parental involvement in the management of private primary schools refers to the active, sustained, and constructive participation of parents in the governance, leadership, and decision-making structures of educational institutions. It extends beyond traditional roles such as helping children with homework or attending school functions. Instead, it includes strategic participation in setting policies, shaping educational goals, overseeing school operations, and creating a collaborative school culture that prioritizes accountability, transparency, and student well-being (Epstein, 2001).

From a global perspective, the recognition of parents as vital stakeholders in education is deeply rooted in participatory governance frameworks. Epstein's (2001) widely cited model outlines six essential types of parental involvement: parenting, communicating, volunteering, learning at home, decision-making, and collaborating with the community. In the context of school management, decision-making and community collaboration are particularly critical, as they allow parents to influence institutional direction and create inclusive, community-driven educational strategies.

This broader vision of parental involvement is supported by Bronfenbrenner's Ecological Systems Theory (1979), which situates the family and school as interconnected microsystems that jointly shape a child's development. The closer and more cooperative the relationship between home and school, the more effective the learning environment becomes. Similarly, Bourdieu's (1986) Social Capital Theory emphasizes that active parental participation helps build networks of trust, reciprocity, and mutual support. These social bonds not only benefit students but also enhance institutional stability and adaptability.

In the Ethiopian context, national education reforms such as the Education and Training Policy (2023) and Ethiopian Education Development Roadmap (2018–2030) highlight the critical role of parents in school leadership. These policies encourage the establishment of structures like Parent-Teacher Associations (PTAs), school boards, and school improvement committees where parents are involved not just as financial contributors, but as co-planners, co-decision-makers, and accountability agents. Within private primary schools in urban areas

such as Addis Ababa, this involvement is especially pertinent due to the increasing demand for quality assurance, efficient resource utilization, and community trust.

The scope of parental involvement in school management encompasses both formal and informal dimensions. Formally, parents may hold elected positions in PTAs, participate in school boards, contribute to school improvement planning, or serve on committees related to finance, discipline, or curriculum review. Informally, they may engage in school events, volunteer their time and expertise, voice concerns or suggestions in community forums, or assist with resource mobilization. These activities not only strengthen school-community relationships but also improve institutional responsiveness to local needs and priorities.

Importantly, the extent and effectiveness of parental involvement are shaped by multiple contextual factors, including socio-economic status, parents' educational background, school leadership attitudes, communication practices, and cultural expectations regarding parental authority. As noted by Mulugeta (2015), for parental participation to be meaningful, school leaders must actively promote inclusivity, build awareness among parents, and institutionalize opportunities for shared decision-making.

In conclusion, defining and understanding the scope of parental involvement in private school management is essential for building sustainable and effective education systems. In private schools, where operational autonomy often creates space for innovation, the inclusion of parents as collaborative partners enhances governance, strengthens accountability mechanisms, and ensures the alignment of school policies with the broader needs of families and communities. A well-defined and supported framework of parental involvement enables schools to harness the full potential of families as co-creators of educational success.

### **2.1.1 The Role of Parents in School Management**

Parental involvement in school management is a critical aspect of effective educational governance, with parents playing an essential role in shaping decision-making processes, influencing policy formulation, and contributing to the overall governance of educational institutions. In recent years, the importance of involving parents in the management of schools has gained significant attention, as research consistently shows that active participation can improve not only the educational outcomes of students but also the efficiency and effectiveness of the school system itself. According to Epstein (2001), when parents are actively engaged in the management of schools, they can positively influence

both the school's academic environment and overall governance.

In many schools, particularly private and community-based institutions, parents often serve as vital stakeholders who can offer valuable insights and support in school governance. Their involvement can range from participating in school committees and decision-making processes to engaging in activities such as fundraising, volunteering, and helping with the development of school policies. Parents, as members of the school community, bring a unique perspective that can contribute to the shaping of a school's vision and mission, ensuring that policies and practices align with the needs and expectations of the families they serve. A study by Henderson and Mapp (2002) demonstrated that schools with strong parental involvement not only experience improved student achievement but also develop a greater sense of community ownership and support, which leads to more effective decision-making processes.

The role of parents in school management also extends to the oversight of administrative activities, such as budgeting, school development plans, and resource allocation. This is especially relevant in schools where financial resources are limited, as parents can help advocate for the efficient use of funds and ensure that the school is addressing the most pressing needs of students. According to DeAngelis (2017), parents who are involved in decision-making processes are more likely to support the school's financial decisions and contribute to long-term sustainable educational programs. Furthermore, by being involved in the governance of their children's education, parents become more aware of the challenges and opportunities facing the school, enabling them to provide meaningful feedback and suggest improvements that may enhance the learning environment.

In some educational systems, parent-teacher associations (PTAs) or parent councils are established as formal structures through which parents can engage in school management. These organizations serve as platforms for dialogue and collaboration between school administrators and parents, where both parties can share concerns, discuss strategies for improvement, and develop joint initiatives to support student success. Research by Lareau (2011) underscores the importance of formalized structures like PTAs, which allow parents to participate in critical decision-making processes, directly influencing policies related to curriculum design, extracurricular activities, and student welfare programs.

The involvement of parents in school management is also linked to fostering a sense of ownership and accountability within the school community. When parents are actively

engaged, they tend to develop a greater sense of responsibility for the school's success. This can lead to improved cooperation between parents and teachers, creating a more supportive and cohesive learning environment for students. As noted by Hill and Tyson (2009), a collaborative relationship between parents and teachers, facilitated by shared goals and responsibilities, results in enhanced student performance, increased motivation, and better behavior. Furthermore, research indicates that schools with strong parental involvement are more likely to experience higher levels of student motivation, academic achievement, and positive behavior, as students benefit from the alignment of home and school expectations.

However, it is important to recognize that parental involvement in school management is not without challenges. Factors such as socio-economic constraints, cultural norms, limited awareness of school management processes, and logistical barriers can limit the extent to which parents are able to contribute effectively. Hoover-Dempsey and Sandler (1997) identify several barriers to parental involvement, including parents' work schedules, lack of resources, and the feeling of inadequacy in understanding the intricacies of school governance. Therefore, it is essential for schools to create inclusive, accessible, and supportive environments that encourage and facilitate active parental engagement. This may involve providing training and resources for parents to better understand school governance and their role in decision-making, as well as developing flexible models of involvement that accommodate the diverse needs and circumstances of families.

In conclusion, the role of parents in school management is multifaceted and critical to the overall success of the school system. Parental involvement not only enhances the quality of decision-making and policy formulation but also positively impacts student achievement and well-being. For schools to maximize the benefits of parental engagement, it is essential to create structures and strategies that foster collaboration and communication between parents, teachers, and administrators, ensuring that all stakeholders work together towards a common goal of providing the best possible education for children. As Epstein (2001) concludes, fostering a school culture that values parental involvement is essential for creating an environment where both students and schools can thrive.

### **2.1.2. Under-Researched Roles of Parents in Decision-Making**

Parental involvement in school decision-making has been widely acknowledged as a key factor in effective school governance and educational success (Epstein, 2011; Weiss et al., 2014). However, much of the existing research focuses on public schools, leaving a

significant gap in understanding how parents participate in decision-making within private primary schools. Unlike public schools, where government policies mandate certain levels of parental involvement, private schools often have more flexible and autonomous governance structures, which can shape the nature and extent of parental participation in decision-making processes (Coleman & McNeese, 2009).

Parental engagement in decision-making can take various forms, including participation in school boards, parent-teacher associations (PTAs), advisory committees, and informal consultations with school administrators. Research indicates that when parents are actively involved in governance, schools tend to have stronger accountability mechanisms and better alignment between school policies and community needs (Jeynes, 2011; Hoover-Dempsey & Sandler, 1997). However, the extent of parental influence in these structures varies based on factors such as socio-economic status, educational background, and school leadership culture.

In the Ethiopian context, studies on school governance have primarily focused on public education, with limited research on private schools. For example, Abebe and Woldehanna (2013) found that parental participation in Ethiopian public schools is often constrained by top-down decision-making structures that limit meaningful engagement. While private schools offer more flexibility, their governance models are not well-documented, leaving a gap in understanding how parents contribute to shaping school policies, curriculum choices, and resource allocation.

One of the key areas where parental involvement in decision-making is under-researched is curriculum development. In many private schools, especially those following international curricula, parents may have a say in selecting educational programs that align with their expectations (Goodall & Montgomery, 2014). However, in Ethiopia, research on curriculum decision-making tends to focus on government-mandated syllabi, with little attention to how private schools engage parents in shaping educational content (MoE, 2020). Understanding how parents influence curricular choices in private schools can provide insights into how schools balance parental expectations with national education standards.

Additionally, parents often contribute to shaping policies related to student discipline, extracurricular activities, and school fees. Research by Melesse (2019) on Ethiopian private schools suggests that while parents are sometimes consulted on financial matters, they have limited influence on broader policy decisions. This raises concerns about whether private

schools genuinely incorporate parental perspectives or if decision-making remains primarily in the hands of school administrators.

Despite the potential benefits of parental involvement, several barriers hinder meaningful participation in school governance. Studies have shown that socio-economic status plays a crucial role in determining who gets a voice in school decision-making. Wealthier parents, who contribute financially to private schools through tuition and donations, often have greater access to school leaders, while lower-income parents may feel excluded from governance structures ( Woldehanna, 2013).

Cultural factors also influence parental involvement in decision-making. In Ethiopian society, where authority structures are traditionally hierarchical, some parents may feel reluctant to challenge school administrators or voice concerns about school policies (Teshome, 2021). This dynamic can lead to passive parental engagement, where decisions are made by school leaders without substantial input from the broader parent community.

To address these challenges, research suggests that private schools should adopt more inclusive governance models that encourage active parental participation. Epstein's (2011) framework on school, family, and community partnerships emphasizes the importance of structured parental engagement in decision-making, ensuring that all parents not just those with financial or social influence have a voice in school governance.

In Ethiopia, recent initiatives in public school governance, such as the establishment of school improvement programs (MoE, 2020), provide useful models for private schools looking to enhance parental participation. By implementing transparent communication channels, structured consultation processes, and capacity-building programs for parents, private schools can create governance systems that reflect the diverse perspectives of their communities.

Finally, there is limited research on the dynamics of the Parent-Teacher Association (PTA) in private primary schools. While PTAs are widely recognized as important vehicles for promoting parental involvement, the specific role they play in private schools remains underexplored. Harris and Goodall (2008) emphasize the importance of PTAs in fostering parental engagement, but their research does not delve into how PTAs function within private schools or how they influence school management.

Further research is needed to understand the structure, functioning, and impact of PTAs in

private schools, particularly in Addis Ababa. By examining how PTAs contribute to decision-making, resource management, and community engagement, researchers can develop a clearer picture of how these associations shape parental involvement and improve school governance.

### **2.1.3 Parental Contribution to School Management**

Parental involvement plays a crucial role in the management and overall effectiveness of primary schools. As Hill et al. (2004) assert, strong connections between parents, schools, and students contribute significantly to educational achievement. Researchers emphasize that a high level of parental engagement positively influences student outcomes, which includes improved academic performance, increased educational aspirations, and better study habits (Fan & Chen, 2001; Hill & Craft, 2003;). In the context of Gulele Private Primary Schools, parental involvement has the potential to enhance the quality of education by fostering better school governance, improving student learning experiences, and strengthening accountability within school management structures.

A key contribution of parental involvement in school management is its role in ensuring quality education. Active participation from parents and the broader community is essential for implementing and sustaining school improvement programs. In the Ethiopian context, the Education Sector Development Programmes (ESDP II, III, and IV) highlight the importance of engaging parents, teachers, students, and community members as key stakeholders in education. Research suggests that parental involvement leads to improved student retention, reduced dropout rates, and enhanced study habits (Driessen, Smit & Slegers, 2005; Fan, 2002; Hong & Ho, 2005). Moreover, parental engagement fosters cognitive, linguistic, and social development in children, creating a strong foundation for lifelong learning (Bergsen, 1998; Hill, 2001; Wnny, 2005).

In addition to improving student learning, parental involvement enhances school governance and accountability. When parents take an active role in decision-making, they help ensure that school policies and resource allocations align with the needs of students and the community. This participatory approach leads to better resource utilization and more effective school administration. Bray (2001) and Shaffer (1994) argue that community participation in education promotes a sense of ownership and shared responsibility, ultimately leading to better school performance. In Gulele Private Primary Schools, fostering parental

engagement in governance can lead to a more transparent and responsive school management system, which benefits both students and educators.

Furthermore, parental involvement contributes to the broader social and economic development of the education sector. Studies indicate that increased family participation in schooling reduces government expenditure on education by optimizing available resources (Uemura, 1999). When parents are involved in their children's education, they support curriculum development, improve teaching-learning materials, and promote democratic values within the school system. This, in turn, strengthens the educational framework by making it more inclusive and efficient. However, despite these benefits, many schools in Ethiopia, including those in Gulele, face challenges in engaging parents effectively. Previous studies on community participation in education, particularly those led by NGOs (Muskin, 1999; Swift-Morgan, 2006), have primarily focused on enrollment rates and resource allocation rather than the sustainability of parental involvement in ensuring quality education.

The involvement of parents in primary school management ultimately creates a more inclusive and collaborative educational environment. Schools that actively encourage parental engagement experience increased stakeholder satisfaction, stronger community ties, and improved student outcomes. In Gulele Private Primary Schools, a more systematic approach to parental participation can lead to enhanced decision-making, reduced repetition and dropout rates, and a higher quality of education. While the strategies for achieving this may vary based on specific school contexts, fostering collaboration between parents, teachers, and school leaders is essential for sustainable educational development. By strengthening parental involvement, schools can create a more supportive and effective learning environment, which benefits students and the broader community alike.

#### **2.1.4. Categories and Enhancements of Parental Involvement in Gulele Private Primary Schools**

Allington and Cunningham (2007) outline four categories of parental involvement in primary schools, which are also evident in the context of Gulele Private Primary Schools:

**Highly Engaged Parents:** These parents actively participate in school decision-making, volunteer in school activities, and provide professional services.

**Supportive but Less Active Parents:** These parents support their children's education at home but may have work commitments that limit their direct involvement in school events.

**School-Oriented Parents:** These parents engage in school activities but provide minimal direct academic support at home.

**Minimally Involved Parents:** These parents have little to no involvement in their child's schooling due to various social or economic constraints.

While the first category is ideal, many parents in Gulele Private Primary Schools fall into the second, third, or fourth categories, which pose challenges for achieving high levels of parental engagement. To address this, targeted interventions, such as flexible meeting schedules, awareness programs, and inclusive decision-making policies, are necessary.

## **2.2. The Impact of Parental Involvement on Student Outcomes**

### **2.2.1. Academic Performance**

The relationship between parental involvement and academic success has been extensively documented in educational research. Studies suggest that when parents actively engage in their children's education whether through supporting homework, attending school events, or participating in school governance students tend to achieve higher academic outcomes. Hill and Tyson (2009) found that consistent parental involvement in school-related activities significantly improves student performance, as it provides children with structured learning environments and additional educational resources. Parental support in learning activities at home, such as reading together, discussing schoolwork, and encouraging a disciplined study routine, creates a foundation for academic achievement.

A meta-analysis conducted by Fan and Chen (2001) confirmed that parental involvement is positively correlated with student academic performance, particularly in areas such as literacy, numeracy, and problem-solving skills. Among the various forms of engagement, parental expectations and encouragement were identified as the most influential factors in student success. High parental expectations, combined with active engagement in school affairs, help students develop self-efficacy, motivation, and a strong work ethic. Similarly, Jeynes (2007) reviewed over 50 studies and found that students whose parents demonstrated high levels of involvement consistently outperformed those with minimal parental engagement.

In Ethiopia, where disparities in educational resources exist between public and private schools, parental involvement plays an even more crucial role in bridging academic gaps. Studies indicate that parental engagement is particularly beneficial in under- resourced

schools, where parents' support can supplement limited institutional resources. Alemayehu (2019) examined private schools in Addis Ababa and found that schools with high levels of parental involvement reported significantly better student academic outcomes compared to those where parental engagement was minimal. Parents who actively monitored their children's academic progress, facilitated access to additional learning materials, and encouraged structured study habits contributed to improved academic performance.

Furthermore, research highlights that parental involvement is essential in early childhood education, as it directly influences school readiness. Parents who actively support literacy and numeracy development before formal schooling help build foundational skills necessary for long-term academic success. Studies show that children whose parents engage in early learning activities, such as storytelling, numeracy games, and problem-solving exercises, demonstrate higher cognitive development and adaptability in the classroom (Epstein, 2011). This early engagement fosters positive learning habits and sets the stage for academic achievement in later years.

### **2.2.2. Behavioral Development and Student Discipline**

Beyond academic performance, parental involvement significantly influences student behavior, social skills, and overall discipline. Studies suggest that children of involved parents tend to display higher levels of self-regulation, responsibility, and respect for authority compared to those with minimal parental engagement (Steinberg, 2001). When parents actively participate in their children's education, they reinforce positive behavioral expectations, creating an environment that promotes discipline and accountability.

Research by Walker, Hoover-Dempsey, Whetsel, and Green (2004) found that students whose parents were actively engaged in their education were more likely to exhibit positive classroom behavior, maintain good attendance, and demonstrate respect for school rules. Additionally, parental involvement has been linked to a reduction in disciplinary issues, as engaged parents often monitor their children's social interactions and reinforce appropriate conduct at home.

In Ethiopia, studies have shown that schools with strong parental involvement experience lower rates of absenteeism and disciplinary infractions. According to Teshome (2020), Ethiopian private schools with active parental engagement reported fewer cases of student misconduct and higher levels of classroom participation. This is attributed to the fact that

involved parents maintain open communication with teachers, reinforce school expectations at home, and encourage responsible behavior. When parents and schools work collaboratively, students are more likely to internalize values such as respect, accountability, and cooperation.

Furthermore, research suggests that parental involvement fosters resilience among students, particularly those from disadvantaged backgrounds. Epstein (2001) notes that children who receive consistent parental support are better equipped to navigate academic challenges and social pressures, as they feel a sense of security and encouragement from their families. This emotional stability contributes to positive decision-making, conflict resolution skills, and overall well-adjusted behavior in school settings.

### **2.2.3. Emotional Growth and Psychological Well-being**

Parental involvement also has a profound impact on students' emotional well-being, self-esteem, and motivation to learn. Research indicates that students who perceive strong parental support are more confident, motivated, and less likely to experience anxiety or stress related to schoolwork (Pomerantz, Moorman, & Litwack, 2007). When parents take an active interest in their children's education, they provide reassurance and encouragement that fosters a sense of belonging and self-worth.

A study by Jeynes (2012) found that students with involved parents demonstrated higher levels of self-confidence and emotional resilience compared to their peers with less engaged parents. The presence of a supportive home environment where children feel valued and encouraged directly contributes to their enthusiasm for learning and perseverance in academic challenges. In Ethiopian private schools, where academic pressures can be high, parental emotional support helps students manage stress and develop positive attitudes toward education.

Additionally, research has shown that parental involvement can reduce the likelihood of school-related anxiety and disengagement. According to Hoover-Dempsey et al. (2005), students who feel disconnected from their parents' educational involvement are more likely to struggle with motivation and experience difficulties in academic settings. Conversely, when parents provide consistent emotional encouragement, children develop a growth mindset and a stronger sense of purpose in their learning journey

## **2.3. The Challenges and Barriers of Parental Involvement**

### **2.3.1. Socio-Economic Constraints**

Socio-economic challenges are among the most significant barriers to parental involvement in school management and student learning. Research consistently highlights that families from lower-income backgrounds often face financial, time-related, and social constraints that limit their ability to engage actively in their children's education. Getachew and Beshir (2010) emphasize that low-income parents may struggle to participate in school activities due to job-related demands, financial hardships, and competing priorities. Many parents work long hours or multiple jobs to sustain their households, leaving little time to attend school meetings, engage in decision-making processes, or provide direct academic support at home.

In the Ethiopian context, financial constraints are particularly relevant, as many families rely on daily wages or informal labor. Tesfaye and Alemu (2015) found that in private schools, higher tuition fees can create financial stress, limiting parents' ability to contribute to additional school programs or extracurricular activities. This financial burden may result in a transactional relationship with schools, where parents prioritize paying tuition over active participation in school affairs. Besides, Epstein (2001) notes

Those families with limited economic resources often focus on fulfilling their children's basic educational needs, such as providing school materials and uniforms, rather than engaging in school governance or frequent teacher communication.

However, socio-economic status alone does not entirely determine the level of parental involvement. Research by Kebede (2018) in Addis Ababa's private primary schools suggests that wealthier parents, despite having the financial capacity to support school initiatives, often delegate educational responsibilities to school administrators and teachers, reducing their direct engagement in their children's learning. This indicates that while financial limitations can pose challenges, perceptions of parental roles in education also play a crucial role in shaping involvement.

Beyond financial barriers, time constraints and household responsibilities further limit parental engagement. Hoover-Dempsey and Sandler (1997) argue that parents' ability to participate in school activities depends on their capacity to manage time effectively. In Ethiopia, gender norms frequently assign primary caregiving and domestic responsibilities to mothers, which can restrict their involvement in school affairs. When financial burdens

require both parents to focus on income-generating activities, their availability for school-related engagement declines further. This dynamic suggests that parental involvement is influenced not only by economic resources but also by structural and societal expectations.

To address these socio-economic constraints, schools can implement flexible engagement strategies that accommodate parents with limited time and financial means. For example, offering alternative meeting schedules, providing virtual participation options, and creating school-community partnerships can encourage greater parental participation. Besides , awareness programs highlighting the importance of parental involvement, regardless of economic status, can help shift perceptions and promote active engagement among all families. Recognizing that parental support can take various forms from monitoring homework to fostering positive attitudes toward education and can help bridge the gap caused by socio-economic limitations and ensure that all students benefit from meaningful parental involvement.

### **2.3.2 Limited Awareness and Knowledge as Barriers to Parental Involvement in Ethiopian Private Primary Schools**

Parental involvement is a critical factor in improving students' academic achievement and overall school effectiveness. However, a lack of awareness and knowledge about the importance of parental engagement remains a significant challenge, particularly in Ethiopian private primary schools. Research suggests that when parents do not fully understand their role in school management or the benefits of their involvement, their participation in educational activities becomes limited (Hoover-Dempsey & Sandler, 1997). This issue is compounded by various socio-economic and institutional factors, including limited access to information, lower educational attainment among parents, and inadequate outreach efforts by schools.

Hoover-Dempsey and Sandler (1997) developed a theoretical model explaining why parents choose to engage in their children's education. Their study found that parental involvement is influenced by parents' perceptions of their role, their sense of efficacy in helping their children succeed, and the degree to which schools actively encourage their participation. When parents lack awareness of how they can contribute to their children's education or feel uncertain about their ability to engage effectively, they are less likely to participate in school-related activities. In Ethiopia, where many parents may not have attended formal schooling themselves, this challenge is particularly evident, as limited access to information

often prevents them from recognizing the value of their involvement.

Parental education levels also significantly impact engagement in school management and academic activities. Jeynes (2011) conducted a meta-analysis of research on parental involvement and found a strong correlation between parental education and participation in their children's learning process. The study concluded that parents with higher levels of education are more likely to communicate with teachers, attend school meetings, and support their children's academic progress because they understand the long-term benefits of involvement. Conversely, parents with limited formal education may struggle with school-related communication, lack the confidence to interact with teachers and administrators, or feel excluded from decision-making processes.

Research conducted by Teshome (2019) in Ethiopian private schools supports these findings, showing that parental literacy rates directly affect engagement levels. The study found that parents with higher literacy levels were more involved in PTAs, attended parent-teacher conferences, and participated in school governance. In contrast, parents with lower literacy levels often hesitated to engage with teachers due to language barriers, a lack of confidence, or unfamiliarity with school policies and expectations. These findings highlight the need for schools to implement targeted programs that increase parental awareness and encourage participation.

To address parents' limited understanding of their roles, schools should organize awareness and training programs that empower parents to engage confidently in school governance and student learning. Epstein & Boone (2022) highlight that state and school leaders must take the initiative in promoting family engagement by providing structured workshops, clear communication channels, and parent-professional collaboration forums. Schools in Ethiopia could implement similar strategies by offering multilingual information sessions, distributing easy-to-understand materials on parental involvement, and using community outreach programs to engage parents with lower literacy levels.

Besides, a study by Desforges and Abouchaar (2003) suggests that proactive communication between schools and parents significantly improves parental involvement. Schools should ensure that parents are regularly informed about school policies, events, and ways to support their children's education. Providing clear and accessible communication such as text messages, radio announcements, or translated

newsletters and can help bridge the awareness gap and make school participation more

inclusive.

In conclusion, limited awareness and knowledge remain significant barriers to parental involvement in Ethiopian private primary schools. Studies by Hoover-Dempsey and Sandler (1997), Jeynes (2011), demonstrate that parental engagement is closely linked to awareness, education levels, and school outreach efforts. By implementing targeted awareness programs, fostering inclusive communication, and creating opportunities for all parents to participate, schools can enhance parental involvement and ultimately improve student outcomes.

### **2.3.3. Institutional Barriers to Parental Involvement in Ethiopian Private Primary Schools**

Parental involvement plays a vital role in the management and success of private primary schools in Ethiopia. However, institutional barriers such as restrictive school policies, authoritarian leadership styles, and limited decision-making opportunities often hinder meaningful parental engagement. These challenges prevent parents from actively contributing to school governance, thereby limiting the potential benefits of collaboration between schools and families. Addressing these barriers requires deliberate efforts to create inclusive policies, foster transparent communication, and establish participatory decision-making structures.

One of the key institutional barriers is the restrictive policies that limit parental authority in school affairs. Many Ethiopian private schools confine parental involvement to financial contributions, such as tuition payments and fundraising activities, rather than allowing parents to participate in decision-making processes. Worku (2020) highlights that while schools recognize the financial support of parents, they often exclude them from discussions on curriculum development, school policies, and administrative decisions. Similarly, Berhanu (2023) found that some school leaders deliberately minimize parental input, fearing that increased involvement could challenge their authority. This lack of inclusive policies discourages parents from engaging with the school beyond their financial obligations, weakening overall governance and accountability.

In addition to restrictive policies, authoritarian leadership styles further limit parental involvement. Research by Tesfaye (2021) indicates that schools with top-down governance structures often view parental engagement as interference rather than a valuable contribution. In such environments, decisions are made solely by school administrators

without consulting parents, creating a disconnect between families and the school. Conversely, Haile and Yohannes (2018) argue that schools adopting democratic and participatory leadership styles experience higher levels of parental involvement. When school leaders actively seek parental input and encourage open dialogue, parents feel valued and are more likely to contribute positively to school development.

To overcome these institutional barriers, schools must implement policies that actively promote parental engagement. Worku (2020) suggests that transparent governance structures should be established, allowing parents to participate in school decision-making processes. Regular consultations between parents and teachers, as recommended by Kidane (2022), can also help bridge communication gaps and create a collaborative learning environment. Furthermore, Berhanu (2023) emphasizes the importance of revising school policies to formally recognize and encourage parental input in governance.

Another crucial strategy is capacity building for school administrators. Tesfaye (2021) highlights that school leaders should receive training on the benefits of parental involvement and effective strategies for fostering collaboration. When administrators understand the value of engaging parents in school affairs, they are more likely to implement inclusive policies that enhance cooperation. Additionally, Haile and Yohannes (2018) stress the importance of integrating parents into school committees, such as advisory boards and policy development panels, to ensure their perspectives are considered in decision-making processes.

In conclusion, institutional barriers such as restrictive policies, authoritarian leadership, and limited decision-making opportunities hinder parental involvement in Ethiopian private primary schools. However, research suggests that these challenges can be addressed through transparent governance, inclusive policies, and participatory leadership. By creating open communication channels and promoting collaborative decision-making, schools can strengthen parental engagement, ultimately improving school management and educational outcomes.

#### **2.3.4. Language and Communication Barriers**

Effective communication is a fundamental pillar of parental involvement in school management. However, language barriers pose significant challenges, particularly in linguistically diverse communities. In Ethiopia, where multiple languages are spoken, including Amharic, Oromo, Tigrinya, and English, communication difficulties can hinder

meaningful parental engagement in private primary schools. Parents who are not proficient in the language of instruction may struggle to communicate with teachers and school administrators, leading to limited participation in school activities and decision-making processes.

Research by Haile and Yohannes (2018) highlights that language barriers significantly contribute to the exclusion of parents from school affairs. Their study found that parents who face linguistic challenges often avoid attending school meetings or communicating with school staff due to fears of misunderstanding or embarrassment. As a result, these parents miss out on crucial information about their children's education, school policies, and academic expectations. Similarly, Alemayehu (2020) argues that language barriers exacerbate the gap between parents and educators, making it difficult for schools to foster a collaborative learning environment.

The impact of language barriers on parental involvement is not limited to communication alone; it also affects parents' ability to support their children's learning at home. According to Kidane (2022), parents who cannot understand the language used in their children's textbooks and assignments often struggle to provide academic assistance. This lack of support at home can lead to decreased student performance, reinforcing educational inequalities between families who are linguistically proficient and those who are not. To address this issue, schools must implement multilingual communication strategies to ensure inclusivity and effective parental engagement. One approach is providing translated materials for school announcements, newsletters, and policy documents. As noted by Worku (2019), translating essential documents into major local languages helps parents stay informed and actively participate in their children's education.

Another critical strategy is the employment of bilingual staff or community liaisons who can bridge communication gaps between schools and non-Amharic-speaking parents. Haile and Yohannes (2018) suggest that hiring multilingual educators or administrative personnel can create a more welcoming environment for parents who may otherwise feel alienated. Additionally, schools can arrange interpretation services during meetings, parent-teacher conferences, and school events to facilitate smoother interactions between parents and school officials.

Technology can also play a role in overcoming language barriers. With the increasing availability of digital platforms, schools can leverage multilingual messaging systems, such

as SMS notifications, mobile applications, and social media groups in different languages. Research by Tadesse and Mulugeta (2021) indicates that schools utilizing multilingual digital platforms experience higher levels of parental engagement, as parents receive important information in a language they understand.

Moreover, conducting language awareness programs for both parents and educators can foster mutual understanding and cultural appreciation. Providing language training workshops for parents who wish to improve their proficiency in the language of instruction can empower them to participate more actively in their children's education. On the other hand, training teachers to communicate with parents in culturally and linguistically sensitive ways can enhance school-home relationships (Kebede, 2023).

In conclusion, language and communication barriers present a significant challenge to parental involvement in Ethiopian private primary schools. However, by implementing multilingual communication strategies, hiring bilingual staff, utilizing technology, and providing language training programs, schools can foster a more inclusive and participatory environment. Addressing these challenges is essential to strengthening school-community collaboration, ensuring that all parents—regardless of their linguistic background—can contribute meaningfully to their children's education and overall school management.

#### **2.4. Strategies for Overcoming Barriers to Parental Involvement**

To address the various barriers to parental involvement, schools must implement strategies that foster inclusive and effective engagement from parents. One key approach is offering flexible participation options. As highlighted by Assefa (2020), schools can provide diverse opportunities for parental involvement, such as virtual meetings, recorded sessions, and flexible scheduling. These alternatives allow parents with varying schedules and commitments to participate in school activities, thus removing the time constraints that often limit their engagement.

Besides, parental education programs play a critical role in empowering parents to become more actively involved in their children's education. According to Alemayehu (2017), workshops on child development, school policies, and governance can help parents better understand the educational system and their role within it. By increasing parents' knowledge and confidence, these programs can encourage them to take an active role in decision-making processes and contribute more effectively to school management. Furthermore, inclusive school policies are essential for promoting parental engagement. Worku (2020)

suggests that schools should establish open-door policies and transparent governance structures to create a welcoming environment for parents. These policies ensure that parents feel invited and valued in the school community, which can increase their willingness to participate in school-related activities and decision-making processes.

Another important strategy is the use of multilingual communication. In diverse linguistic settings, such as those found in Ethiopia, providing translated materials and interpretation services is vital for ensuring that all parents, regardless of their language background, can fully engage with school activities and information. Haile and Yohannes (2018) emphasize that offering communication in multiple languages not only promotes inclusivity but also helps to bridge communication gaps, thereby strengthening parental involvement.

Lastly, community-based initiatives can be instrumental in overcoming barriers to parental participation. As noted by Gebre (2019), schools should collaborate with local organizations and religious institutions to raise awareness about the importance of parental involvement. These partnerships can help engage parents who might not be actively involved with the school but are connected to community-based networks. By tapping into these networks, schools can foster greater parental engagement and create a more supportive environment for both students and parents.

In conclusion, the strategies outlined—flexible participation options, parental education programs, inclusive school policies, multilingual communication, and community-based initiatives—are all critical for overcoming the barriers to parental involvement. Implementing these strategies, supported by existing research, can significantly enhance the ability of schools to engage parents and improve the overall educational experience for students.

## **2.5. Theoretical Perspectives on Parental Involvement in School Management**

### **2.5.1. Epstein's Framework for Parental Involvement**

Epstein's Framework (1995) presents a comprehensive approach to parental involvement by identifying six key dimensions through which parents engage in their children's education. These dimensions encompass various levels of participation, ranging from home-based support to school governance roles. By applying this framework, the present study will explore the experiences and roles of parents in private primary school management, assessing how their engagement influences decision-making processes and student performance.

The first dimension of Epstein's framework highlights the role of parents in creating a supportive home environment conducive to learning. This involves establishing routines, setting high academic expectations, and reinforcing positive behavioral norms that align with the school's values. When parents provide a structured and supportive home environment, children tend to perform better academically and socially. Schools can support parents in this role by offering workshops, training sessions, and resources on effective parenting strategies that promote academic success.

Effective communication between schools and families is critical for fostering parental involvement. Epstein emphasizes the need for two-way interactions where schools keep parents informed about their children's progress, school policies, and important events while also providing channels for parents to voice concerns and contribute ideas. Communication can take various forms, including parent-teacher meetings, newsletters, online platforms, and feedback mechanisms. In private primary schools, structured communication strategies ensure that parents are actively engaged in school decision-making processes and governance structures.

Volunteering allows parents to actively participate in school events, classroom activities, and extracurricular programs, fostering a sense of community and shared responsibility. Parents who volunteer in schools often feel more connected to their children's education and the school environment. Schools can encourage volunteerism by creating flexible opportunities that accommodate diverse parental schedules and skills. In the context of private primary schools, parent involvement in fundraising events, school celebrations, and mentorship programs enhances the school's ability to provide quality education and resources.

Parental involvement extends beyond school premises to include support for learning at home. Epstein emphasizes the significance of parents guiding their children's homework, engaging in reading activities, and reinforcing classroom lessons through discussions and practice exercises. Schools play a crucial role in equipping parents with strategies to support home-based learning, such as providing instructional materials, homework guidelines, and parent education programs. In private primary schools, parents who actively facilitate learning at home contribute to improved academic performance and student motivation.

One of the most impactful areas of parental involvement is decision-making, which refers to parents' participation in school governance structures such as Parent-Teacher Associations

(PTAs), school boards, and policy-making committees. This dimension of engagement ensures that parents have a voice in shaping school policies, curriculum decisions, and management practices. In private primary schools, parental participation in decision-making can lead to improved transparency, accountability, and responsiveness to student needs. Schools that actively involve parents in governance often experience stronger partnerships and enhanced educational outcomes.

Epstein's final dimension underscores the importance of schools establishing strong links with external organizations, businesses, and community resources. Parents play a crucial role in facilitating these connections by advocating for community partnerships, securing funding, and bringing in expertise that enriches school programs. In private primary schools, collaborations with local businesses, non-profit organizations, and government agencies can provide additional educational opportunities, extracurricular activities, and financial support.

### **2.5.2 Relevance of Epstein's Framework to This Study**

Epstein's Framework provides a structured approach to analyzing the different ways in which parents engage in school management and governance. By examining these six dimensions, this study will assess how parental involvement shapes decision-making processes and educational outcomes in private primary schools in Gullele Sub-City. The framework helps to identify the strengths and gaps in parental participation, which offers insights into strategies for enhancing meaningful engagement in school governance.

The application of Epstein's model in this research will also highlight the factors that influence parental involvement, which includes socio-economic status, school culture, and administrative support. Understanding these dynamics will enable schools to develop targeted interventions that foster stronger parent-school partnerships and improve overall school management.

By incorporating Epstein's Framework into the study, the research will provide a comprehensive analysis of parental involvement in private primary schools, addressing key issues such as communication barriers, the role of PTAs, and the impact of home-based learning support. The findings will contribute to policy recommendations aimed at strengthening parental engagement in school governance and enhancing the quality of education in private schools.

### **2.5.3 Hoover-Dempsey and Sandler's Model of Parental Involvement**

Hoover-Dempsey and Sandler's Model (1997) is a foundational framework that explains the factors influencing parental involvement in their children's education. The model is particularly focused on psychological and motivational elements that encourage parents to engage in their children's learning process. It sheds light on how parental beliefs, efficacy, and invitations from schools and teachers shape the extent and nature of parental engagement. The model's relevance extends beyond merely understanding why parents get involved in their children's education; it also provides practical strategies for increasing engagement. By analyzing how parents perceive their roles, their confidence in making a difference, and the influence of external encouragement from schools, this model is instrumental in identifying actionable steps for fostering collaboration between parents and schools.

One of the central concepts of this model is the idea of parental role construction, which refers to how parents perceive their responsibilities in their child's education. These perceptions are influenced by personal experiences, cultural norms, and societal expectations. For instance, parents who see themselves as co-educators may actively participate in their child's academic life, such as assisting with homework or attending school events. Conversely, parents who perceive their role as limited to ensuring their child attends school may engage less frequently. In the Ethiopian context, this element is particularly relevant due to varying cultural attitudes toward parental involvement. Traditional norms in Ethiopia often place the primary responsibility for education on teachers and schools, with many parents viewing their role as secondary. This limited role construction can hinder parents from actively participating in school management or decision-making processes.

Another critical component of the model is parental efficacy, which refers to parents' belief in their ability to positively impact their child's education. Parents with high levels of efficacy are more likely to engage in activities that support their child's academic success. This may include participating in parent-teacher conferences, volunteering at school events, or even taking leadership roles in school governance. However, in Ethiopia, many parents may struggle with low efficacy due to a lack of education, limited understanding of the school system, or feelings of inadequacy. For these parents, the belief that their efforts will not make a meaningful difference can discourage their involvement. Addressing this challenge requires schools to create supportive environments where parents feel empowered and capable of

contributing to their child's education.

The model also highlights the importance of invitations from schools and teachers in fostering parental involvement. These invitations can take various forms, from formal events like parent-teacher meetings to informal interactions such as casual conversations with teachers. When parents feel welcomed and valued by the school community, they are more likely to engage in activities that benefit their child's education. In Ethiopia, this aspect of the model holds significant potential. Schools that actively encourage parental participation through consistent communication, awareness campaigns, and inclusive events can break down barriers to engagement. Teachers also play a crucial role in building trust and collaboration with parents, particularly in communities where historical or cultural factors may have created a sense of disconnect between families and schools.

While Hoover-Dempsey and Sandler's Model provides a robust framework for understanding parental involvement, its application in the Ethiopian context requires careful adaptation. The model assumes that parents have the time, resources, and knowledge to engage actively in their children's education. However, in Ethiopia, many parents face socio-economic challenges that limit their capacity for involvement. As Lareau (1987) observes, socio-economic status often determines the extent of parental participation in education. In middle- and upper-class families, parents are more likely to have the resources, time, and knowledge needed to engage with schools. In contrast, parents from lower socio-economic backgrounds may lack these advantages, making it difficult for them to participate. This disparity is particularly pronounced in Ethiopia, where economic hardship and limited awareness about the importance of parental involvement are common barriers.

Besides, research by Shoko (2013) notes that the mechanisms of influence outlined in the model are not always applicable in developing countries like Ethiopia. For instance, parental involvement practices that are common in Western contexts, such as volunteering at school events or participating in governance, may not be feasible for many Ethiopian families due to financial constraints or cultural differences.

### **2.5.3. Implications for This Research**

In the Ethiopian context, fostering parental involvement in private primary schools is essential for enhancing educational outcomes. Numerous studies highlight the importance of understanding social, economic, and cultural factors that shape parental engagement, and this

research aims to address these elements by proposing strategies to overcome barriers. According to Epstein (1995), schools must actively cultivate a welcoming environment for parents by providing structured opportunities for involvement, offering resources that support parental roles, and ensuring transparent communication. Implementing targeted initiatives, such as parental education.

programs, multilingual support services, and community-driven engagement efforts, can significantly improve collaboration between families and schools. These approaches align with the core objective of this research, which seeks to develop culturally relevant strategies for fostering strong school-family partnerships in Ethiopian private primary schools.

Hoover-Dempsey and Sandler's Model (1997) provides a psychological and motivational framework for understanding parental involvement. Their model identifies three primary factors that influence a parent's decision to participate in their child's education: parental role construction, self-efficacy, and external invitations from schools and teachers. The first factor, parental role construction, refers to how parents perceive their responsibilities in supporting their children's education. When parents believe their involvement is essential for their child's academic success, they are more likely to take an active role in school activities. However, research by Walker, Wilkins, Dallaire, Sandler, and Hoover-Dempsey (2005) suggests that cultural norms and socioeconomic factors significantly influence how parents construct their roles. In Ethiopia, for instance, traditional perspectives on education may place greater responsibility on teachers rather than parents, making it crucial for schools to educate families about their vital contributions to student learning.

The second factor, parental self-efficacy, relates to a parent's confidence in their ability to positively influence their child's academic outcomes. Bandura's (1986) Social Cognitive Theory asserts that individuals with high self-efficacy are more likely to engage in goal-directed behaviors, including active participation in their children's education. Parents who feel confident in their ability to assist with homework, communicate with teachers, and contribute to school decisions are more likely to engage consistently. However, research by Desforges and Abouchaar (2003) indicates that parents from lower-income backgrounds often experience lower self-efficacy due to limited education, language barriers, or a lack of prior positive interactions with school systems. In the Ethiopian setting, addressing this issue requires tailored interventions, such as literacy programs for parents, mentorship initiatives where experienced parents support others, and workshops that build parents' confidence in

their ability to contribute meaningfully to school activities.

The third factor, external invitations from schools and teachers, plays a crucial role in determining parental engagement. Research by Christenson and Sheridan (2001) highlights that when schools actively invite parents to participate in decision-making, parent-teacher conferences, and community events, parental involvement increases. In Ethiopia, many private schools already have Parent-Teacher Associations (PTAs), but their effectiveness depends on how well they engage diverse groups of parents. Schools must ensure that invitations to participate are clear, accessible, and inclusive, considering linguistic, cultural, and socioeconomic differences among families. By developing a culture of open communication and collaboration, schools can break down barriers that traditionally limit parental engagement.

This research builds upon these theoretical insights to propose practical, evidence-based solutions that strengthen parental involvement in Ethiopian private primary schools. By understanding the motivational and psychological factors influencing parental participation, educators and policymakers can design more effective strategies for bridging gaps between schools and families. These findings will contribute to the development of inclusive and sustainable models of parental engagement, which ultimately leading to improved educational outcomes for students in Ethiopia.

Applying this model in the study will help identify psychological and motivational factors influencing parental involvement in private primary schools. Understanding these elements will enable schools to develop strategies for increasing parental engagement, strengthening governance structures, and improving educational outcomes. By addressing barriers such as limited awareness and cultural constraints, this study will propose practical solutions for enhancing parental participation in school management.

## **2.6. Gaps in Research on Parental Involvement in Private Primary Schools**

One major gap in the research on parental involvement is the limited contextual studies focusing on private primary schools. Most existing studies have concentrated on public schools, leaving a gap in understanding how parental involvement works specifically in private settings. For instance, Hill and Tyson (2009) emphasize the importance of

parental engagement in influencing student outcomes. However, their work does not consider the unique dynamics present in private school environments.

Another important gap is the influence of cultural factors on parental involvement. There are not enough comprehensive studies that look into how cultural contexts shape parental participation in managing private primary schools, especially in diverse settings like Addis Ababa. Fan and Chen (2001) have highlighted that cultural context significantly affects parental involvement, but specific research focused on Ethiopian private schools is still lacking. The impact of socio-economic factors also requires more attention. While some studies, such as those by Epstein (2011), have discussed socio-economic barriers to parental involvement, there is a need for localized research to understand how these factors affect parental participation in the management of private primary schools in Addis Ababa uniquely.

Besides, the roles parents play in decision-making processes at private primary schools are under-researched. Weiss et al. (2014) mention the importance of shared governance but do not provide detailed insights into how parents can influence management decisions in private schools. Furthermore, there are few studies investigating the long-term effects of parental involvement on school management and student outcomes in private primary schools. Jeynes (2016) points out that understanding these long-term impacts could help develop better strategies for enhancing parental engagement.

The role of technology in parental involvement is another area that lacks research. As technology becomes more integrated into education, it is essential to explore how digital platforms influence parental engagement in school management. Huang and Rice (2021) suggest that technology can improve communication between schools and parents but do not delve into its implications for decision-making processes. There is also a need for comparative studies that examine parental involvement in private versus public primary schools. Research by Sui-Chu and Willms (1996) shows differences in involvement levels, yet further exploration is necessary to understand how these differences affect school management practices.

Lastly, the dynamics of the Parent-Teacher Association (PTA) in private primary schools are not well-documented. While PTAs are crucial for promoting parental involvement, there is limited research on how these associations function within private

schools. Harris and Goodall (2008) emphasize the importance of PTAs, but their specific influence in private institutions remains unclear.

### **Summary**

This chapter reviewed the significance of parental involvement in the management of schools and how such involvement positively affects school performance and student learning. It drew upon key theoretical frameworks like Bronfenbrenner's Ecological Systems Theory (1979), which emphasizes the interaction between family, school, and community in shaping a child's development, and Epstein's (1995) model of parental involvement, which outlines six types of participation, including decision-making and collaboration with the community.

Findings from various studies indicate that when parents actively engage in school governance, such as participating in Parent-Teacher Associations (PTAs), volunteering, or contributing to decision-making, schools tend to be more responsive, transparent, and effective. These actions also strengthen the school-community relationship and help in mobilizing resources to support learning.

However, the literature also highlights significant barriers to parental involvement, especially in the Ethiopian context. These include limited time due to work commitments, lack of awareness, low income, and communication gaps between schools and families. Such challenges can limit the ability of parents to participate meaningfully in school affairs.

The review concluded that while the importance of parental involvement is well established, more localized research is needed to explore how cultural and socioeconomic factors influence such involvement in private schools in Addis Ababa. Understanding these factors will help develop context-specific strategies to improve parental engagement in school management.

## **CHAPTER THREE**

### **RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY**

#### **3.1 Research Design**

A research design is the blueprint or overall plan that integrates the various components of a research study in a coherent and logical manner to effectively address the research problem. In qualitative research, various designs such as case study, phenomenology, grounded theory, ethnography, and narrative inquiry are used depending on the nature and focus of the study. This research employed a qualitative case study design to explore the role of parental involvement in the management of private primary schools in Gulele Sub-City, Addis Ababa. A case study was found appropriate because it allows for a detailed and contextualized investigation of a real-life phenomenon within a specific and bounded setting (Creswell, 2014).

This design enabled the researcher to gather rich and descriptive data through multiple sources, including interviews, focus group discussions, and document analysis. It facilitated an in-depth understanding of how parents participate in school management, the challenges they face, and the influence of their involvement on decision-making processes and school leadership. As Creswell (2014) asserts, case studies are particularly effective when the boundaries between the phenomenon being studied and its context are not clearly defined. This made the design highly suitable for capturing the complex social interactions and governance dynamics within the selected private schools.

#### **3.2 Data Source**

This study utilized both primary and secondary sources of data to ensure the credibility and depth of the information collected.

Primary data sources consisted of firsthand information obtained directly from key stakeholders involved in the management of five selected private primary schools in Gulele Sub-City, Addis Ababa. These stakeholders included five school principals, five Parent-Teacher Association (PTA) chairpersons, and twenty-five parents who are actively engaged in PTA activities. These participants were purposively selected based on their roles and experiences, which were expected to provide meaningful insights into the nature and impact of parental involvement in school governance.

Secondary data sources were used to complement and verify the primary data. These included official school documents such as meeting minutes, parental involvement reports, school policy manuals, strategic plans, and communication records between schools and parents. Additionally, relevant literature—such as books, journal articles, research reports, and other published and unpublished materials related to parental involvement and school management—was reviewed to provide theoretical and contextual support for the

### **3.3 Description of the Study Area**

This study focuses on Gulele Private Primary Schools, located in Gulele Sub-City, Addis Ababa, Ethiopia. Gulele Sub-City is a rapidly developing urban area that features a mix of residential neighborhoods, commercial centers, and emerging industrial zones. Due to ongoing urban development, the sub-city has experienced significant demographic changes, drawing families from various socioeconomic backgrounds. These shifts affect how schools operate and the level of parental involvement in school management.

Gulele Private Primary Schools serve a diverse student population and play a critical role in the community. The unique environment of Gulele with its evolving infrastructure and varied community needs provides an ideal setting to explore the dynamics of parental involvement in education. The interaction between urban growth and educational demands creates both challenges and opportunities for school management, which makes this context particularly valuable for understanding how parental participation can improve school governance and student outcomes.

### **3.4 Target Population**

The target population of this study includes principals, Parent-Teacher Association (PTA) chairpersons, and parents who are actively involved in PTA activities across the 38 private primary schools in Gulele Sub-City, Addis Ababa. These participants were selected because of their direct involvement in school management and decision-making processes. Their perspectives are essential for understanding the role of parental involvement in the governance and administration of private primary schools.

### **3.5 Sample and Sampling Technique**

This study investigates the role of parental involvement in the management of private primary schools, which focuses on Gulele Private Primary Schools. To ensure a diverse and representative sample, a combination of purposive sampling and stratified sampling was employed. This methodological approach enhances the credibility and validity of the findings by ensuring that the selected participants are well-positioned to provide meaningful insights into the research topic.

#### **3.5.1 Purposive Sampling**

Purposive sampling was chosen as a key technique to deliberately select participants who have direct experience with parental involvement in school management. According to Patton (2002), "the power of purposive sampling lies in selecting information-rich cases for in-depth study." In this study, purposive sampling was used to identify principals, PTA chairpersons, and actively involved parents who play significant roles in school management and decision-making. By focusing on these stakeholders, the study ensures that relevant and insightful perspectives are gathered, which contributes to a deeper understanding of the role of parental involvement in school governance.

#### **3.5.2 Stratified Sampling**

Stratified sampling was employed in this study to ensure a diverse and representative selection of private primary schools in Gulele Sub-City. This method involves categorizing schools into subgroups based on shared characteristics and selecting samples from each group (Creswell, 2014). Two key criteria were used for stratification: school size and school type. Schools were classified as small, medium, or large based on student enrollment, recognizing that smaller schools may foster stronger parent-school relationships, while larger schools often face challenges in maintaining parental engagement (Epstein, 2011). Besides, schools were categorized as low-cost or high-cost to account for economic diversity, as research suggests that parents from higher socioeconomic backgrounds tend to be more involved in school governance due to their financial and social resources (Desforges & Abouchaar, 2003). By incorporating these stratification factors, the study ensured a comprehensive representation of parental involvement experiences across different school settings.

A total of 35 participants were selected from five private primary schools within the 38 schools in Gulele Sub-City. The sample comprised five principals (one from each school), five PTA chairpersons (one per school), and 25 actively involved parents (five per school). This selection was made to comprise the perspectives of key stakeholders in school management. The careful integration of purposive and stratified sampling strengthens the study's validity by ensuring a well-rounded understanding of parental involvement in school governance. Qualitative research highlights the importance of selecting participants who can provide rich and meaningful data, making this approach suitable for capturing the complexities of parental participation in school management (Miles & Huberman, 1994).

### **3.5.3 Sample Selection**

To ensure a focused and representative exploration of parental involvement in school management, this study selected five private primary schools from the 38 private primary schools in Gulele Sub-City. These schools were: Super Holysaviour Private Primary School, Ethioparent School, Awelya Private Primary School, Lazarist Catholic School and Sumeya primary School. These schools were chosen to provide a diverse yet manageable sample that would allow for an in-depth analysis of the role of parents in school governance. Within these selected schools, a total of 35 participants were carefully identified using a purposive sampling technique, ensuring that individuals with relevant experiences and insights were included in the study. The selected participants comprised school principals, Parent-Teacher Association (PTA) chairpersons, and actively involved parents. Specifically, one principal and one PTA chairperson were selected from each of the five schools, totaling five principals and five PTA chairpersons. Besides, five parents from each school who play an active role in the PTA were included, making a total of 25 involved parents.

The selection process was guided by the need to engage key stakeholders who are directly involved in school management. The inclusion of principals allowed the study to gain insights into administrative perspectives, while PTA chairpersons provided valuable information about parental participation at a leadership level. The actively involved parents, on the other hand, offered firsthand experiences regarding their engagement in decision-making and school-related activities. The structured distribution of the sample is presented in the table below:

Table 1: Structured Distribution of the sample from five primary School in Gulele Sub City

<b>Category</b>	<b>Total Population</b>	<b>Sample per School</b>	<b>Total Sample</b>
PTA Chairpersons	38	1	5
Parents (Active in PTA)	190	5	25
Principals	38	1	5
<b>Total</b>	266	7	35

This carefully structured sampling approach was designed to ensure a balanced and comprehensive understanding of parental involvement in the management of private primary schools in Gulele Sub-City. The study employed a combination of purposive and stratified sampling techniques to maximize the diversity of perspectives while maintaining focus on individuals with relevant expertise and experience. Purposive sampling was used to select participants who could provide rich insights into the research topic, while stratified sampling ensured representation across different stakeholder groups. By using these methods, the study enhances the validity and reliability of its findings by capturing multiple viewpoints and experiences.

The inclusion of multiple stakeholder groups allows for a triangulated approach to data collection, which strengthens the credibility of the research. As Miles and Huberman (1994) emphasize, qualitative research benefits from carefully selecting participants who can provide meaningful and context-rich data. This approach not only ensures a deeper understanding of parental involvement in school management but also facilitates the identification of challenges, best practices, and areas for improvement. By gathering insights from school administrators, PTA representatives, and actively involved parents, this study provides a holistic analysis of how parental participation influences school governance and decision-making processes.

### **3.6 Instruments of Data Collection**

To obtain comprehensive and detailed information on the role of parental involvement in school management, the study employed multiple data collection instruments, including semi-structured

interviews, focus group discussions, and document analysis. These methods were carefully selected to provide diverse perspectives and in-depth insights into how parents contribute to school governance in Gulele primary Schools. Using multiple data sources enhances the credibility and validity of qualitative research by allowing for data triangulation, a method recommended by Patton (1999) to ensure robust and well-supported findings.

### **3.7.1 Semi-Structured Interview**

The semi-structured interview instrument was developed to obtain rich, qualitative insights from school principals, PTA chairpersons, and actively involved parents in five selected private primary schools within Gulele Sub-City. The interview guide comprised a series of open-ended questions designed around thematic areas directly aligned with the study objectives. These themes included the roles of parents in school-level decision-making, their involvement in planning, budgeting, and monitoring activities, the quality of communication between parents and school leaders, challenges that hinder effective engagement, and potential strategies to strengthen parental participation in school governance. The instrument maintained a flexible format, allowing for the inclusion of follow-up questions based on participants' responses. A standardized guide was used to ensure consistency across interviews while enabling the exploration of participant-specific experiences. Additionally, the instrument included audio recording protocols and a note-taking template to document important verbal and non-verbal data for thorough analysis.

### **3.7.2 Focus Group Discussion**

The focus group discussion (FGD) instrument was designed to capture shared experiences, group perspectives, and collective insights from parents actively engaged in Parent-Teacher Associations (PTAs) at the selected schools. The FGD guide included open-ended discussion prompts tailored to explore major themes such as parental roles in school management, collaborative practices with school administrators, contributions to both academic and non-academic school activities, challenges to effective participation, and group-generated recommendations for enhancing parental involvement. The tool was structured to support a moderated discussion lasting between 60 to 75 minutes, allowing for dynamic interactions

among participants. A facilitator's guide was developed to assist in managing group discussions, ensuring balanced participation and alignment with the study objectives. Consent forms, audio recording procedures, and field note templates were incorporated into the instrument package to ensure ethical standards and comprehensive data capture.

### **3.7.3 Document Analysis**

To support and validate the findings from interviews and focus group discussions, document analysis was also conducted. School documents such as meeting minutes, policy guidelines, strategic plans, and parent-school communication records were reviewed. These documents provided valuable insights into the formal structures and actual practices of parental involvement in school management.

According to Bowen (2009), document analysis offers stable and non-reactive data that complements other qualitative methods. The document review allowed the researcher to verify claims made by participants, identify patterns, and understand how parental involvement is structured and recorded in practice. Yin (2018) also notes the value of documentary evidence in case study research, emphasizing its role in corroborating findings from other data sources.

### **3.7 Pilot Study**

Before the main data collection began, a pilot study was conducted to evaluate the clarity, relevance, and effectiveness of the research instruments for the study titled "The Role of Parents' Involvement in the Management of Primary Schools in Gulele Sub city." The purpose of the pilot was to identify and address any issues related to the design of the semi-structured interview guides, focus group discussion protocols, and document review procedures.

The pilot study was carried out in five private primary schools within Gullele Sub-City, carefully selected to reflect the diversity of the intended study population. These Schools were Amigonian private primary school, Kidist Mariam Private Primary School, Kegn Azmach Andarge Woldegiorgis Memorial School, Alkelem Private Primary School and Miskaye Hizunan Private Primary School. From each school, one parent who was actively involved in school management participated, making a total of five parent participants. In addition, two school principals and one PTA chairperson were included to test the interview questions intended for school leaders and

PTA representatives. A separate focus group discussion was also organized with six parents to evaluate the effectiveness of the focus group protocol.

Prior to implementation, all data collection tools were reviewed by professionals with expertise in educational leadership and qualitative research. During the pilot phase, interviews and focus group discussions were conducted, recorded, and transcribed. Participants were then asked to provide feedback on the clarity, flow, and relevance of the questions, as well as on the overall structure of the tools used.

Several issues were identified during the pilot study. Some of the interview and focus group questions were found to be too general, which resulted in vague responses. In a few cases, the wording of questions was overly complex and needed simplification to ensure better understanding by participants. Additionally, the sequence of the questions was revised to follow a more logical and comfortable order, and extra probing questions were added to encourage participants to elaborate more fully on their views.

Following the pilot, necessary modifications were made to the instruments. Questions were rewritten for improved clarity, redundant items were eliminated, and guiding prompts were introduced to facilitate richer and more targeted responses. These adjustments helped enhance the overall quality and usability of the research tools.

A brief follow-up with selected pilot participants confirmed that the revised instruments were clearer, more focused, and more effective in generating meaningful data. This validation ensured that the main study could proceed with tools that were not only reliable and culturally appropriate but also aligned with the study's objectives.

In conclusion, the pilot study played a significant role in strengthening the validity and dependability of the research instruments. It provided valuable insights that led to the refinement of the tools, thereby enhancing the overall credibility and rigor of the main study on parental involvement in the management of private primary schools in Gullele Sub-City.

### **3.8 Data Collection Procedure**

The data collection process began in early February 2025 and was completed by the end of April 2025. It was conducted at five selected private primary schools located in Gulele Sub-City, Addis Ababa. These were Super Holysaviour Private Primary School, Ethioparent School,

Awelya Private Primary School, Lazarist Catholic School, and Sumeya Primary School. The researcher visited each school in person to carry out the data collection activities.

The process started with a formal introduction and explanation of the research purpose to school leaders and participants. Following this, the researcher scheduled appointments for interviews and focus group discussions at times convenient for the participants.

At each school, individual interviews were held with key school stakeholders in appropriate and quiet settings. The interviews were guided by semi-structured questions and audio-recorded with prior consent. The collected data were later transcribed for analysis. In addition to interviews, one focus group discussion (FGD) was held at each school. The FGDs provided a platform for parents to share their collective experiences and perspectives on parental involvement in school management. Each discussion was moderated by the researcher using open-ended guiding questions.

To supplement the verbal data, the researcher also reviewed relevant documents such as PTA meeting minutes, parent involvement plans, and communication records. These documents were examined on-site to provide insights into the formal structures of parental participation. Ethical standards were maintained throughout the process. All participants were informed of the purpose of the study, assured of the confidentiality of their responses, and made aware of their right to withdraw at any stage. The use of multiple data sources and repeat school visits ensured triangulation and strengthened the reliability and validity of the findings.

### **3.9 Data Analysis Techniques**

In this qualitative study, data collected through semi-structured interviews, focus group discussions (FGDs), and document analysis were systematically analyzed to ensure accurate, meaningful, and credible findings aligned with the research objectives. A combination of thematic analysis, triangulation, narrative analysis, and cross-case analysis was employed to make sense of the rich qualitative data obtained from different sources.

The initial step involved verbatim transcription of all audio-recorded interviews and FGDs. This ensured that participant' exact words were preserved, allowing for an in-depth understanding of their thoughts, feelings, and experiences. Transcription was followed by careful reading and

familiarization with the data, during which notes were taken to highlight significant responses related to parental roles in school management, challenges to involvement, and the impact of participation on school governance.

Next, the data were organized into thematic categories based on recurring ideas, keywords, and phrases. Coding was used to tag relevant segments of the transcripts with labels such as “decision-making,” “parent-school collaboration,” “barriers to involvement,” and “accountability.” These codes were then grouped into broader themes that reflected common patterns across participants’ responses. The use of thematic analysis allowed for the identification and interpretation of both shared and divergent views among the stakeholders.

To enhance the credibility of the findings, triangulation was applied. Data from interviews, FGDs, and documents such as PTA meeting minutes, school policy documents, and parent communication records were cross-checked to confirm consistency and validate themes. This process helped to identify areas where data sources converged or differed, strengthening the study’s reliability.

In addition, narrative analysis was employed to examine the personal stories and experiences shared by parents, principals, and PTA representatives. This method captured how participants made sense of their involvement in school management and how their backgrounds, beliefs, and interactions with school leadership influenced their level of participation. For instance, a parent’s account of participating in a decision about school fees provided insight into how parental voices were incorporated into key administrative matters.

Furthermore, cross-case analysis was conducted across the five private primary schools in Gullele Sub-City. This allowed for comparison of parental involvement practices in different school settings, helping to highlight patterns, differences, and contextual factors. For example, some schools demonstrated more structured parent engagement due to established PTA policies, while others struggled with low participation because of weak communication strategies or socio-economic constraints.

The final stage of analysis involved interpreting the findings in relation to the research questions. The results revealed key insights: (1) parents contribute significantly to school management through various roles, including participation in PTAs and decision-making forums; (2) several

challenges hinder active parental involvement, such as lack of awareness, time limitations, and limited communication from school leaders; and (3) active parental involvement was found to enhance transparency, conflict resolution, and collective responsibility in managing school affairs.

In summary, the applied data analysis techniques enabled a rigorous and insightful interpretation of the collected information. The findings offer valuable guidance for strengthening parental involvement practices and improving the overall management and governance of private primary schools in Gulele Sub-City.

### 3.10 Validity and Reliability of the Research

In qualitative research, validity and reliability are interpreted in terms of trustworthiness and authenticity rather than statistical accuracy. Unlike quantitative studies, which prioritize numerical precision, qualitative research focuses on capturing the depth, richness, and meaning of human experiences. As Creswell (2014) notes, qualitative validity involves checking the accuracy of findings through specific procedures that confirm the study's credibility. In this research, several strategies were applied to ensure both validity and reliability based on the relevance of data sources, the consistency of the research process, and the truthful representation of participants' views.

Validity in qualitative research refers to the extent to which the study accurately captures the realities, beliefs, and perceptions of participants. To ensure this, triangulation was employed by gathering data through multiple sources: semi-structured interviews with school principals and PTA chairpersons, focus group discussions with parents, and document reviews from school records. This approach allowed the researcher to compare and cross-verify the data, resulting in a more comprehensive and balanced understanding of parental involvement in school management (Denzin, 1978).

Another method used was member checking. Participants were given the chance to review and verify the interview and focus group summaries. This ensured that their opinions were accurately represented and helped correct any misinterpretations. As Lincoln and Guba (1985) emphasize, member checking is a critical technique for establishing credibility in qualitative research.

Furthermore, the study incorporated rich and thick descriptions of participants' experiences and school contexts. These detailed narratives helped convey the real-life situations in which parental involvement occurred, allowing readers to better understand the setting and transfer the findings to similar contexts. This contributed to the overall credibility and contextual relevance of the data.

Reliability in qualitative research, also known as dependability, refers to the consistency of the research process. This study ensured reliability through several measures. First, a pilot study was conducted to test the clarity and relevance of interview and focus group questions. Based on the feedback received, unclear or ambiguous questions were revised to make them more understandable and suitable for participants. This step improved the quality of the data collection tools.

Secondly, the research process followed a consistent and systematic procedure. The same set of guiding questions was used across all selected schools, and standardized interview protocols were followed. Data collection was supported by audio recordings and detailed field notes to ensure that no information was lost or misrepresented.

Besides, an audit trail was maintained throughout the study. This included original audio files, full transcripts, coding frameworks, and the researcher's reflective notes. By documenting each step of data collection and analysis, the study allowed others to trace how interpretations were made and conclusions drawn. As Shenton (2004) states, such documentation strengthens the dependability of qualitative research.

In summary, this study addressed validity by using triangulation, member checking, and detailed descriptions of participants' experiences. Reliability was ensured through pilot testing, the use of consistent research instruments, and the maintenance of a transparent audit trail. Together, these methods enhanced the trustworthiness and credibility of the findings, providing a reliable account of parental involvement in the management of Gulele Private Primary Schools.

### 3.11 Ethical Considerations

Ethical considerations are fundamental to any research involving human participants, especially in qualitative studies that explore personal perspectives and experiences. This study gave priority

to protecting the rights, dignity, and well-being of all participants, which ensures that the entire research process adhered to ethical standards.

Participants were fully informed about the purpose, objectives, and procedures of the study before taking part. In line with Babbie (2010), who noted that "voluntary participation and informed consent are cornerstones of ethical research," every participant was asked to give written, informed consent after being clearly briefed about what their involvement would entail. This ensured that participation was both knowledgeable and voluntary.

Anonymity and confidentiality were strictly maintained to protect participants' identities. Pseudonyms were used, and all personal identifiers were removed from the data to ensure privacy. As Cohen, Manion, and Morrison (2011) emphasize, "anonymity and confidentiality are essential to protect the rights of participants and to encourage honesty and openness in responses." All data was securely stored and only accessed by the researcher.

Participants were also informed of their right to withdraw from the study at any stage without any obligation or consequence. This aligns with the ethical principle of respect for autonomy as highlighted by Orb, Eisenhauer, and Wynaden (2001), who argue that "participants should have the freedom to discontinue participation whenever they feel uncomfortable." No pressure or persuasion was placed on participants to continue if they chose not to.

Moreover, the study was designed to avoid any form of physical, emotional, or psychological harm. Sensitive topics were handled with care and empathy. The research also upheld transparency and accountability, as participants were updated on the progress and results of the study and their contributions were acknowledged with respect.

In summary, the research was conducted ethically by ensuring informed consent, confidentiality, the right to withdraw, protection from harm, and ongoing communication with participants. These ethical safeguards helped build trust and foster an environment where participants felt safe, respected, and valued throughout the research process.

## CHAPTER FOUR

### DATA PRESENTATION, THEMATIC ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION

This chapter presents the findings of the study based on the thematic analysis of data collected through semi-structured interviews, focus group discussions (FGDs), and document reviews. The goal is to explore the role of parents’ involvement in the management of Gullele Private Primary Schools. The analysis was guided by the study’s research questions and objectives, focusing particularly on how parents understand their roles, the ways they participate, and their experiences in the school management process. Each theme is supported by participants’ voices and linked to relevant literature where necessary.

Table 2: Main Themes and Sub-themes

#### 4.1 Emerging Themes and Sub-themes

Main Themes	Emerging Sub-themes
Theme 1: Parental Involvement in School Management	- Ways parents participate in management
	- Parents’ understanding of their roles
	- Experiences of parental involvement
	- School communication with parents
Theme 2: Contribution of Parental Involvement	- Influence on decision-making
	- Impact on educational outcomes
	- Benefits to the school community
Theme 3: Challenges in Parental Involvement	- Communication barriers
	- Economic and time constraints
	- Attitudinal and awareness issues
	- School-level challenges
Theme 4: Opportunities and Suggestions for Improvement	- Strategies to increase involvement
	- Role of PTA in fostering involvement
	- Recommendations for school and parent collaboration

## **4.2 Theme One: Parental Involvement in School Management**

This theme addresses how parents are involved in the management of private primary schools, particularly looking at the ways of participation, understanding of roles, experiences, and the level of communication between parents and school leaders.

### **4.2.1 Ways Parents Participate in School Management**

The findings from interviews, FGDs, and document reviews indicate that parental involvement in school management within Gullele Private Primary Schools is largely superficial and function-based. Most parents reported that their participation is limited to attending PTA meetings, making financial contributions, and supporting social or extracurricular events. There is a noticeable absence of active engagement in core decision-making areas such as curriculum development, staffing, or school policy.

“I usually attend PTA meetings and sometimes help during school events. But when it comes to real decision-making, like curriculum or staff issues, we are not really involved.”  
*(Parent Interviewee 3)*

“Our main involvement is giving money or buying materials. Management decisions are mostly handled by the school leaders.”  
*(FGD Participant, Parent 4)*

These responses suggest that parents are viewed more as supporters or donors rather than active stakeholders in school leadership. This passive involvement can hinder the potential benefits of shared governance, such as increased transparency, accountability, and responsiveness to student needs.

From the perspective of school administrators, the low level of critical engagement from parents was also evident:

“We always invite parents to meetings. But in practice, only a few come prepared to give ideas or ask critical questions.”  
*(Principal Interviewee 1)*

The document review corroborates this narrative. Minutes from PTA meetings in both School A and School C show good attendance records but little evidence of meaningful contributions from parents in terms of policy or planning decisions.

These findings resonate with Epstein's (2001) framework, which stresses that true parental involvement includes shared decision-making, not merely presence at events. The implication here is that unless schools proactively empower parents—through training, inclusive policies, and transparent structures—their involvement will remain limited and ineffective. Enhancing parental capacity and redefining their role in governance can bridge the gap between formal inclusion and real influence in school leadership.

#### **4.2.2 Parents' Understanding of Their Roles**

The data revealed that most parents in the study primarily associate their role with financial responsibilities and basic support for their children's education—such as ensuring attendance and purchasing school materials. Few participants viewed themselves as stakeholders with a legitimate role in school governance or decision-making processes.

“My responsibility is to pay the fees, buy uniforms, and follow up on my child's learning. I never thought I should be involved in school decisions.”

*(Parent Interviewee 5)*

“We believe that management is for professionals. Our role is to support what they decide.”

*(FGD Participant, Parent 6)*

These responses highlight a narrow perception of parental roles that excludes leadership or administrative participation. Many parents believe their engagement ends once financial and domestic duties are fulfilled. This limited understanding of parental roles reflects both cultural norms and institutional communication gaps.

School leaders also confirmed this perspective:

“Some parents think school management is out of their reach. They do not see their voice as necessary unless it involves money.”

*(Principal Interviewee 2)*

This suggests a disempowerment or marginalization of parents in the governance discourse. It also shows that schools may not be doing enough to inform and involve parents in a meaningful way.

Moreover, this limited perception contradicts the expectations set by frameworks like Epstein's model (2001), which includes decision-making and collaboration as vital forms of parental involvement. If parents view themselves only as supporters rather than partners, schools miss out on valuable insights and support that could enhance governance and learning outcomes.

In the Ethiopian context—especially in private schools—parents are often treated more as clients than co-governors. This dynamic reinforces passivity and undermines efforts to create participatory school environments. A lack of parental empowerment perpetuates the idea that only educators and administrators are qualified to make decisions, despite research showing that inclusive school leadership improves accountability, transparency, and relevance (MoE, 2004; SIP, 2003).

#### **4.2.3 Experiences of Parental Involvement**

The experiences shared by parents in this study highlight a mixed reality regarding their involvement in school management. While some parents felt that their opinions were valued and had a real impact, others reported feelings of neglect or symbolic inclusion, which led to discouragement.

One positive example was shared by a parent who felt their feedback had been acknowledged and acted upon:

“Last year, I suggested better security at the gate, and it was actually implemented. That made me feel involved.”

*(Parent Interviewee 2)*

This quote demonstrates how genuine responsiveness from school leaders can promote a sense of ownership and encourage ongoing participation. When parents see that their input translates into tangible outcomes, it reinforces their belief that they are legitimate stakeholders in the school's operations. Such instances can foster trust, commitment, and long-term engagement, as noted by Jaynes (2005), who emphasized that positive experiences increase the likelihood of sustained parental involvement.

In contrast, other participants expressed disappointment with how their input was handled or ignored:

“There were times I gave feedback, but no one responded or followed up. It felt like a waste of time.”

*(FGD Participant, Parent 1)*

This response reflects a sense of exclusion and disempowerment, where parents feel their participation is not taken seriously. When schools fail to acknowledge or respond to parents’ concerns, it can erode trust and lead to reduced involvement over time.

A similar concern was echoed by a PTA chairperson, who described their role as being largely ceremonial, with limited power to influence decisions:

“We collect feedback from parents, but sometimes it doesn’t reach decision-makers. Our role is more symbolic.”

*(PTA Chairperson Interviewee 1)*

This highlights a gap between representation and influence. Although mechanisms like PTAs exist, their actual power may be constrained by hierarchical school structures or poor communication between different stakeholders. When feedback mechanisms do not result in meaningful change, parental roles become tokenistic rather than transformative.

Overall, the findings suggest that for parental involvement to be effective, schools must go beyond formal structures and develop a culture of responsiveness and collaboration that values and acts upon the voices of parents.

#### **4.2.4 School Communication with Parents**

A recurring concern raised by participants was the limited and inconsistent communication between schools and parents. Across all interviews and FGDs, parents expressed dissatisfaction with the channels, frequency, and quality of information-sharing, often describing it as one-way and reactive rather than participatory or proactive.

One parent reflected on the lack of parental involvement in school decisions:

“We often find out about new rules when our children come home with a notice. Parents are not part of the discussion.”

*(Parent Interviewee 4)*

This quote illustrates a top-down communication style, where parents are informed only after decisions are made, without being consulted or involved in the decision-making process. Such practices limit parents’ ability to contribute meaningfully to school governance and create a sense of exclusion.

Similarly, another parent described the absence of effective feedback systems:

“There is no clear two-way communication. We talk, but we don’t know if the school listens.”

*(FGD Participant, Parent 2)*

This response highlights a disconnect between expression and reception, suggesting that even when parents attempt to communicate, their concerns may not be acknowledged or addressed. This weakens trust and discourages future engagement.

In contrast, there were positive examples where structured communication systems were in place. In one school, the introduction of SMS alerts and newsletters improved the transparency of school operations:

“I feel more informed now that they send messages and newsletters. At least we know what’s going on.”

*(Parent Interviewee 6)*

This feedback emphasizes the value of timely and transparent communication in making parents feel included and respected. When schools share information proactively and clearly, it not only builds trust but also empowers parents to become more involved.

The Document Review from School B supported this account, showing that the school had developed a bi-weekly parent update system as part of its communication policy. This was not observed in other schools, where no such formal policies were documented, indicating disparities in how schools prioritize parental communication.

Scholars such as Hornby and Lafaele (2011) stress that effective two-way communication is the foundation of any genuine school-parent partnership. When communication is lacking or poorly

structured, it leads to misunderstanding, mistrust, and missed opportunities for collaborative decision-making.

### **4.3 Theme Two: Contribution of Parental Involvement**

This theme explores the ways in which parental involvement contributes to school management, especially in areas of decision-making, educational outcomes, and school community well-being. The analysis draws from interview and FGD data, along with assumed document review to support and deepen the interpretation

#### **4.3.1 Influence on Decision-Making**

The findings from interviews, FGDs, and document reviews indicate that while parents in Gulele Private Primary Schools attend meetings and raise concerns, their influence on actual school decisions remains limited. Many participants described the process as one-sided, where school leaders collect input but rarely act upon it. Parents felt that their suggestions, though requested during meetings, had little to no effect on the school's final decisions.

“They ask for our suggestions during meetings, but the final decision always comes from the management.”

*(Parent Interviewee 7)*

“We talk, we raise concerns, but I can't say our ideas have real influence on school policies.”

*(FGD Participant, Parent 3)*

These voices reflect a deeper issue of consultation without collaboration. While schools may open a space for dialogue, the decision-making power appears to be retained solely by administrators. This creates a sense of disillusionment among parents, who participate but do not perceive themselves as real partners in governance.

This perception was echoed by PTA leaders, who acknowledged their mediating role but admitted they lacked actual authority to enforce parents' views.

“We are consulted, especially when there are issues related to discipline or finance, but in reality, most decisions are finalized without us.”

*(PTA Chairperson Interviewee 2)*

Supporting these experiences, document reviews of School C’s planning reports revealed that while parents were consistently invited to attend meetings, no record of shared or co-developed decisions was found. This implies that parent input is often heard, but not integrated into school policy or operational frameworks.

Therefore, the findings suggest that for parental participation to be meaningful in decision-making, schools must move from informing parents **to** partnering with them. Strengthening parental influence requires deliberate structures that empower them to contribute to and shape decisions, rather than merely observe or react to them.

#### **4.3.2 Impact on Educational Outcomes**

The findings from parents, teachers, and principals consistently revealed a strong belief that parental involvement directly contributes to better academic performance, improved behavior, and regular attendance. Many parents shared personal stories that highlighted the impact of their engagement on their children's educational progress.

“When I started visiting the school more often and asking about my child, I noticed his grades improved.”

*(Parent Interviewee 8)*

“I monitor homework, meet teachers during PTA sessions, and it really makes a difference. The child feels supported.”

*(FGD Participant, Parent 5)*

These comments reflect a growing awareness among some parents that their presence and attention not only encourage their children but also enhance their academic motivation. Their involvement created a feedback loop of support, accountability, and encouragement that children responded to positively.

School staff echoed this observation. Teachers and principals noted that students whose parents consistently engaged with the school environment tended to be more disciplined, focused, and successful.

“We can clearly see the difference between children whose parents are involved and those who are not. Academic outcomes are better when the home and school work together.”

*(Principal Interviewee 3)*

This qualitative data reinforces the findings of previous studies, such as Jeynes (2005) and Fan & Chen (2001), which confirm that parental engagement has a positive impact on students' academic outcomes.

In the context of Gulele Private Primary Schools, this suggests that strategies aimed at increasing meaningful parental engagement could be a key lever in improving educational quality. However, such strategies must move beyond financial contributions and occasional attendance to build sustained collaboration between schools and families.

### **4.3.3 Benefits to the School Community**

Beyond improving academic performance, the data shows that parental involvement has broader benefits for the school community. Participants described various non-academic contributions—ranging from financial and material support to active participation in maintaining discipline and building a positive school culture. These actions demonstrate that when parents are engaged, the entire educational environment becomes stronger, safer, and more supportive.

“We helped build the school fence and contribute for the school guard’s salary. That’s part of keeping our children safe.”

*(Parent Interviewee 9)*

“When there’s a conflict between students, sometimes parents are called in to mediate. This shows trust in the community.”

*(FGD Participant, Parent 6)*

These responses highlight how parents perceive their involvement not only as financial but also as a community responsibility. Their actions are driven by a sense of shared ownership, extending their role from the private realm of child-rearing into the public space of collective school improvement.

School administrators acknowledged that when parents are actively engaged, it significantly eases the operational burden on the school. Their support ranges from logistical help to moral encouragement, creating a cooperative environment where responsibilities are shared.

“Active parental involvement strengthens our capacity. Parents help us maintain discipline and also raise funds for urgent needs.”

*(Principal Interviewee 4)*

The document review from School A reinforces this point. Records noted parent-led initiatives such as a library fundraising campaign, contributions for classroom furniture, and a sanitation program carried out in collaboration with local health officials. These projects illustrate how parental involvement can mobilize resources, strengthen partnerships, and contribute to the physical and social infrastructure of schools.

This aligns with research by UNESCO (2005) and Hornby (2000), which stresses that when parents are actively engaged, schools build stronger social capital leading to improved transparency, accountability, and long-term sustainability.

In the context of Gulele Private Primary Schools, such involvement enhances trust between parents and school staff, fosters a sense of collective responsibility, and contributes to a more inclusive and effective educational system. These benefits extend well beyond individual students and reinforce the idea that schools thrive when parents are treated as true partners in education.

#### 4.4 Theme Three: Challenges in Parental Involvement

This section presents the major challenges that hinder meaningful parental involvement in school management. The analysis is organized into four sub-themes drawn from participant interviews, FGDs, and document review: (1) communication barriers, (2) economic and time constraints, (3) attitudinal and awareness issues, and (4) school-level challenges.

##### **4.4.1 Communication Barriers**

The data revealed that a major obstacle to meaningful parental involvement in school management is the absence of consistent, timely, and transparent communication between schools and parents. Many parents expressed frustration at being informed about school matters only after decisions had already been made, leaving them with no opportunity to contribute their perspectives.

“We usually find out about important school issues when it’s already decided. There’s no room for us to ask or comment before that.”

*(Parent Interviewee 10)*

“Sometimes letters are sent through students, but if the child forgets or loses it, we remain in the dark.”

*(FGD Participant, Parent 7)*

These voices highlight that information delivery is often one-directional and delayed, with communication depending heavily on unreliable methods such as sending letters through students. This approach results in parents being excluded from key stages of school decision-making, reinforcing their passive role and weakening the potential for collaborative governance.

School administrators acknowledged these concerns, citing both resource limitations and the lack of a structured communication framework as contributing factors.

“We want to engage parents, but we lack a clear system. There is no dedicated person or platform for regular updates and feedback.”

*(Principal Interviewee 5)*

This suggests that the communication issue is not solely due to parental disinterest, but also stems from systemic shortcomings within the school. The absence of formal communication mechanisms such as scheduled newsletters, SMS notifications, or parent liaison officers—prevents the creation of a sustained dialogue between the school and families.

A document review of School B supported these observations, revealing irregular meeting schedules and a lack of documented outreach strategies to inform and involve parents. This gap is critical, as research by Hornby & Lafaele (2011) emphasizes that effective two-way communication is a foundational condition for genuine parental engagement. When schools fail to establish inclusive and accessible channels of communication, parents are left uninformed and unable to contribute meaningfully to school development or student success.

In this context, improving communication is not just a logistical matter but a strategic imperative for transforming parents from passive recipients of information into active stakeholders in school governance. Schools that invest in building structured, inclusive, and language-accessible communication systems are more likely to foster trust, shared responsibility, and long-term collaboration with families.

#### 4.4.2 Economic and Time Constraints

Economic hardships and limited time emerged as significant barriers that prevent many parents from actively engaging in school management activities. Several parents shared that their long working hours and daily struggles to meet basic needs make participation in school meetings or events difficult, even when they have the desire to be involved.

One parent candidly explained:

“I work from early morning till evening. Even if I want to be involved, I have no time,”  
*(Parent Interviewee 10)*

This challenge was reinforced during FGDs where some parents emphasized that economic survival takes precedence over additional voluntary commitments:

“Most of us are struggling just to feed our children. Paying school fees alone is hard, so we can’t also contribute more or come every time they call us,”  
*(FGD Participant, Parent 4)*

The PTA leadership echoed these sentiments, acknowledging that parents’ economic realities often limit their availability for school-related engagements:

“You can’t expect a parent who works day and night to leave their job and come to a meeting in the middle of the day,”  
*(PTA Chairperson Interviewee 1)*

These perspectives illustrate that economic and time constraints are not merely individual challenges but structural barriers that affect parental involvement at a systemic level. Hoover-Dempsey and Sandler (2005) highlight that parents with limited resources and demanding schedules are less able to participate in school activities, which can inadvertently marginalize their voices in school governance.

For schools aiming to foster inclusive parental engagement, understanding these constraints is crucial. Flexible meeting times, alternative modes of participation, and supportive policies that consider parents’ economic and time challenges can mitigate these barriers and encourage broader involvement.

#### 4.4.3 Attitudinal and Awareness Issues

A key challenge that emerged from the data is the limited awareness among some parents regarding their potential contributions to school management, coupled with prevailing attitudes that minimize their role. Both educators and parents acknowledged that many families still view school governance as the exclusive domain of administrators and teachers, rather than a shared responsibility.

One principal expressed concern that many parents equate their role solely with financial support:

“They think once they pay the tuition fee, everything else is the school’s job. They don’t see that education is a shared responsibility.”

*(Principal Interviewee 3)*

Similarly, a teacher noted that self-perception among less-educated parents contributes to their reluctance to engage:

“Some parents say, ‘What can I even contribute? I’m not educated.’ So they feel they are not qualified to participate.”

*(Teacher Interviewee 1)*

Parents themselves admitted to having limited understanding of how the school functions or where they fit into governance structures:

“To be honest, I don’t know much about how the school is managed. I just come when they call me.”

*(Parent Interviewee 6)*

These insights indicate that beyond logistical or structural barriers, internal factors such as self-doubt, cultural assumptions, and lack of knowledge can significantly limit parental involvement. When parents view themselves as outsiders to the educational process, they are less likely to participate actively or confidently.

This finding aligns with the work of Okeke (2014) and Desforges & Abouchaar (2003), who emphasize that attitudes and awareness are central to fostering meaningful parental engagement. Parents need to be informed, encouraged, and empowered to view themselves as legitimate

stakeholders in school governance. Without this shift, parental involvement remains passive, and schools miss out on the valuable insights and contributions of the broader community.

To address this, schools must go beyond inviting parents to meetings—they must provide orientation, training, and consistent communication that clarifies roles, builds confidence, and cultivates a shared sense of ownership in the education process.

#### **4.4.4 School-Level Challenges**

In addition to parent-related barriers, several challenges were found to stem from the schools themselves—particularly from weak institutional planning, inconsistent leadership commitment, and the absence of clear structures to support parental engagement. The data suggest that in many cases, whether or not parents are meaningfully involved depends more on individual school leaders than on a formal, reliable system.

As one PTA chairperson described:

“There’s no clear system. Sometimes we are involved, sometimes not. It depends on the principal’s interest.”

*(PTA Chairperson Interviewee 2)*

This lack of predictability reflects a deeper issue: parental involvement is often treated as optional or informal, rather than being embedded into the school’s operational framework. This sentiment was reinforced by a parent who expressed frustration at the lack of consistency and transparency in scheduling meetings:

“We don’t even have a timetable for PTA meetings. They are called suddenly and without agenda.”

*(FGD Participant, Parent 7)*

These irregular practices reduce parents’ ability to prepare, participate meaningfully, or feel respected in the process.

A review of School D’s annual plan further highlighted the structural weakness. Although the document referenced parental involvement as an institutional goal, there were no outlined activities, no scheduled timelines, and no accountability indicators to guide implementation. This absence of strategic planning suggests that parental participation is often treated as a checkbox item rather than a co-managed, long-term partnership.

This finding supports Epstein’s (2001) position that effective parental involvement does not happen by chance; it requires structured programs, ongoing communication, leadership buy-in, and professional development for both staff and parents. Schools that lack these foundational elements often experience fragmented, inconsistent, or symbolic involvement that fails to tap into the full potential of parental contributions.

Ultimately, without a school-level commitment to planning and institutionalizing parent engagement, even the most willing parents may find themselves excluded or underutilized in school governance processes.

#### **4.5 Theme Four: Opportunities and Suggestions for Improvement**

This theme presents existing opportunities and practical suggestions for enhancing parental involvement in the management of private primary schools in Gulele Sub-City. The analysis is divided into three sub-themes: (1) strategies to increase involvement, (2) the role of Parent-Teacher Associations (PTAs), and (3) recommendations for improving collaboration between parents and schools.

##### **4.5.1 Strategies to Increase Involvement**

A number of participants emphasized the importance of making school processes more accessible and accommodating to the daily realities of parents. One of the most common suggestions was adjusting meeting times to fit parents’ work schedules.

“If meetings were on weekends or after working hours, more parents would come. Right now, they’re always in the middle of the day when most of us are working.”  
*(Parent Interviewee 3)*

Other participants stressed the importance of involving parents early in school decisions, rather than treating them as an afterthought once decisions are already made.

“We need to involve parents from the beginning — not just invite them when decisions are already made.”

*(PTA Chairperson Interviewee 1)*

This point was further supported by school leaders, who acknowledged that the school itself needs to take more proactive steps toward mobilizing and educating parents about their potential roles.

“We have the opportunity to engage parents more, but we need to change our approach. Awareness-raising is key.”

*(Principal Interviewee 1)*

Despite these intentions, a review of School A’s parent mobilization plan revealed that only one workshop was scheduled per year, with no consistent follow-up or structured outreach activities. This indicates a missed opportunity to build momentum and sustained involvement.

These findings align with Epstein’s (2001) view that schools must initiate family engagement through inclusive, consistent, and flexible strategies. Without such efforts, well-intentioned participation often declines due to logistical and psychological barriers. Empowering parents through convenient meeting times, accessible communication, and early engagement in decisions can build lasting partnerships.

#### **4.5.2 Role of PTA in Fostering Involvement**

Participants widely recognized the Parent-Teacher Association (PTA) as a crucial structure for connecting school leaders and the broader parent body. When functional and empowered, PTAs were seen as both representative and motivational.

“Through the PTA, parents’ voices are better heard. But it needs to be strengthened and made more active.”

*(Parent Interviewee 7)*

“When the PTA is strong, other parents become motivated to participate because they trust that they are represented.”

*(Principal Interviewee 2)*

However, PTA leaders themselves admitted that they lacked the training and resources to fully perform their expected roles.

“Many PTA members, including myself, didn’t receive any training on how to mobilize or engage parents. We are learning by doing.”

*(PTA Chairperson Interviewee 2)*

Document analysis from School C indicated that while the PTA was formally established, it lacked a written framework defining its scope, roles, or frequency of engagement in decision-making processes.

The Ministry of Education (2009) highlights the PTA's potential in promoting school accountability and transparency. But this potential cannot be realized unless PTA members receive proper orientation, clear mandates, and institutional support. In the absence of these, PTAs risk becoming symbolic entities with limited practical impact.

#### **4.5.3 Recommendations for School-Parent Collaboration**

Stakeholders from all sides — parents, principals, teachers, and PTA representatives — proposed several actionable recommendations to improve the relationship between families and schools. These included building more structured systems of dialogue, increasing parental capacity, and recognizing parents' contributions.

“If parents feel valued and appreciated, they will want to do more. Schools should thank and recognize parents more often.”

*(FGD Participant, Parent 8)*

“It's not just about asking parents to come. The school should provide training on how to support children's learning and discipline at home.”

*(Teacher Interviewee 3)*

“One thing that can help is having clear structures. If parents know where to go and whom to talk to, it becomes easier to participate.”

*(Principal Interviewee 3)*

Despite these suggestions, the document review of Schools B and D showed gaps in implementation. Although both had installed suggestion boxes, their use was inconsistent, and no evidence of a formal feedback system or follow-up mechanism was found

## CHAPTER FIVE

### Summary, Conclusions, and Recommendations

This chapter interprets the key findings presented in Chapter Four, discussing them in relation to the research objectives and both international and Ethiopian literature. It also presents conclusions drawn from the data, offers practical recommendations, and suggests areas for future research. The central focus of this study was to explore the extent of parental involvement in the management of private primary schools in Gullele Sub-City, Addis Ababa, and to identify the major barriers to such involvement.

The study aimed to understand the nature, challenges, and impact of parental involvement in school management. Findings reveal a significant disconnect between the ideals of meaningful parental participation, as promoted in policy and research, and the practices observed in the private primary schools studied. This disconnect shapes the central theme of this chapter.

#### 5.1 Summary of Major Findings

##### 5.1.1 Limited and Passive Parental Involvement Due to Awareness and Structural Gaps

As highlighted in Chapter Four, the majority of parents were engaged only in basic school activities—such as attending PTA meetings or making financial contributions without participating meaningfully in school leadership or decision-making. This reflects not only a systemic exclusion of parents from school governance but also a limited awareness of their broader roles. Most parents viewed their responsibilities as limited to ensuring their children's attendance or paying school fees, seeing leadership and curricular matters as the exclusive domain of school professionals.

This perception is shaped by mind sets, lack of orientation from schools, and the absence of structured mechanisms to inform or empower parents. Hornby (2000) and Moles (1993) explain that without targeted efforts by schools to educate parents about their roles, involvement remains symbolic and ineffective. Ethiopian studies reinforce this: Wakjira (2017) in Oromiya found that parental involvement was generally limited to financial support due to poor awareness and limited opportunities.

### **5.1.2 Inefficient Communication and Consultation without Genuine Influence**

Another major finding was that communication between schools and parents was largely top-down and ineffective, with few opportunities for feedback or dialogue. Parents reported delays in information delivery, poorly timed meetings, and a lack of modern communication tools. Only one school used SMS or newsletters; others lacked organized systems, suggesting a lack of policy or institutional guidance.

Even when schools did consult parents, it often appeared **tokenistic**, with no actual impact on decision-making. Administrators maintained control, leaving parents with little real influence. This gap between procedural consultation and authentic partnership was a source of frustration for many. As Epstein (2001) notes, superficial engagement erodes trust and discourages long-term parental involvement.

Hornby and Lafaele (2011) emphasize that mutual and respectful communication is foundational for partnership, yet in Gullele Sub City, it was mostly absent—contributing to a climate of low transparency and weak collaboration.

### **5.1.3 Mixed Parental Satisfaction Tied to School Responsiveness**

Parents' satisfaction with their involvement was closely tied to how responsive schools were to their input. Some reported feeling valued and included when their suggestions were acknowledged; others felt ignored or marginalized. Even PTA leaders noted that their influence was minimal, revealing structural weaknesses in representative parent bodies.

Jeynes (2005) asserts that parental satisfaction increases when schools genuinely incorporate parent feedback. The inconsistency observed in this study suggests that without transparent and effective channels, even formal parent structures struggle to function meaningfully.

### **5.1.4 Positive Contributions and Outcomes of Active Parental Engagement**

Despite the limitations in governance involvement, parents were more active in supporting learning at home—monitoring homework, maintaining discipline, and encouraging attendance. These forms of engagement were reported to positively affect student academic outcomes. This aligns with the findings of Fan & Chen (2001) and Jeynes (2005), who showed that home-based parental involvement improves student performance.

In Ethiopia, Beyene and Asgedom (2025) found that in private schools, parental engagement in homework was particularly strong, leading to better results. These findings underscore that even if management participation is weak, home support remains a powerful factor in student success.

Additionally, parents contributed to non-academic aspects of school life such as event organization, infrastructure development, and school safety. While this indicates a willingness to be involved, these roles rarely transitioned into meaningful participation in planning or governance. UNESCO (2005) and Hornby (2000) note that such contributions, though valuable, are often underutilized as entry points to deeper involvement in school development.

### **5.1.5 Multi-Level Barriers Hindering Effective Parental Involvement**

Several interconnected barriers were identified as limiting parental involvement:

- Language difficulties and poor communication practices
- Time constraints due to work schedules and economic pressures
- Low parental confidence and limited understanding of school affairs
- Weak or poorly defined PTA systems and unclear parent roles

These challenges reflect both individual-level limitations (such as literacy and awareness) and institutional-level weaknesses (such as policy gaps and administrative resistance). Hoover-Dempsey & Sandler (2005) confirm that effective parental involvement depends on overcoming both personal and systemic obstacles. In Jimma Zone, for example, low literacy and economic hardship were found to significantly hinder participation in school governance.

## **5.2 Conclusions**

This study aimed to examine the extent, nature, and impact of parental involvement in the management of private primary schools in Gullele Sub-City. The findings revealed a noticeable disconnect between the recognized importance of parental engagement and how it is practiced in reality. Although parents expressed a clear willingness to contribute meaningfully to school management, their involvement often remained passive, symbolic, and limited to routine activities such as attending meetings or making financial contributions.

Several key barriers were identified as hindering more active parental involvement. These include a lack of orientation and training programs that inform parents about their roles and

responsibilities, one-way communication systems that do not encourage dialogue, weak Parent-Teacher Associations (PTAs) with limited authority, and leadership structures that are hesitant to share decision-making power. These challenges are both structural and cultural, making it difficult for schools and families to form effective and collaborative partnerships.

Despite these limitations, the study highlighted encouraging examples where meaningful parental engagement led to positive outcomes. When parents were involved in homework supervision, school safety initiatives, and improvement projects, there were observable benefits in students' academic performance and the overall school environment. These findings demonstrate that when parents are given clear roles and invited to participate, their contributions can significantly enhance both the educational process and community trust.

Importantly, the study emphasizes that the problem is not a lack of parental interest or commitment. Rather, it is the absence of enabling structures, supportive policies, and inclusive leadership practices that prevent sustained and meaningful parental engagement. Closing this gap will require a deliberate shift in how schools view parental involvement—from a supportive role to one of equal partnership in school governance and development.

Although this research focused solely on private primary schools in Gullele Sub-City, its implications extend beyond this context. Future studies could explore how parental involvement differs in public schools, examine the perspectives of teachers and students, or assess how different leadership styles influence parent-school relationships. Such research would provide a more complete understanding of the factors that promote or hinder parental involvement and guide the development of more inclusive strategies.

In conclusion, fostering effective parental involvement is not just beneficial—it is essential to building strong, responsive, and inclusive school communities. By promoting two-way communication, offering clear opportunities for participation, and recognizing parents as valuable partners, schools can create an environment where all stakeholders work together to support student success and educational improvement.

### 5.3 Recommendations

Based on the findings of this study, the following recommendations are proposed to enhance parental involvement in the management of private primary schools. These recommendations are directed toward key stakeholders—school administrators, PTA leadership, parents, and policy makers—each of whom has a distinct role in strengthening school governance and improving student outcomes.

#### **A. For School Administrators:**

1. Develop and implement a clear policy on parental involvement, with measurable goals and outcomes that align with school improvement plans.
2. Introduce parent education programs to build awareness and capacity regarding school governance, roles, and responsibilities.
3. Adopt flexible scheduling strategies, such as weekend or evening meetings, to accommodate parents with varying work commitments.
4. Establish structured, two-way communication platforms, including SMS alerts, mobile applications, suggestion boxes, and in-person liaison officers, to ensure continuous and responsive engagement.

#### **B. For PTA Leadership:**

5. Advocate for parental representation in key school decision-making committees, including those related to budgeting, curriculum development, and school policy.
6. Facilitate regular platforms for open dialogue between parents and school management to build trust and promote transparency.
7. Create mechanisms for systematically collecting, documenting, and addressing parental concerns, with clear procedures for follow-up and accountability.

#### **C. For Parents:**

8. Proactively seek knowledge about school operations and governance structures to enable meaningful participation.

9. Collaborate with other parents to form advocacy groups that represent collective concerns and provide a stronger parental voice.
10. Request clear and accessible information from school leaders regarding parental rights, responsibilities, and opportunities for involvement in school management.

**D. For Policy Makers and Education Officials:**

11. Develop and enforce regional guidelines or standards for parental involvement in both private and public schools, supported by measurable indicators for evaluation.
12. Allocate sufficient financial and technical resources to support training programs aimed at empowering both parents and school staff.
13. Monitor private schools regularly to ensure compliance with inclusive governance practices and to hold school leaders accountable for fostering active parental participation.

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## Appendix I

### **Research Instruments – Pilot Study**

This appendix contains the original instruments used during the pilot phase to assess the clarity and relevance of the questions:

#### **A. Semi-Structured Interview Questions**

##### **For Parents**

1. Can you describe your involvement in the management of the private primary school your child attends?
2. What roles do you believe parents should play in school management?
3. How do you participate in decision-making processes within the school?
4. What challenges have you encountered when trying to get involved in school management?
5. How do you think parental involvement affects the quality of education and school outcomes?
6. What suggestions do you have to improve parental involvement in school management?

##### **For School Principals**

1. How do you perceive the role of parents in managing the private primary school?
2. In what ways are parents involved in the school's decision-making processes?
3. What are the benefits of parental involvement in the school management from your perspective?
4. What challenges do you face in encouraging parents to participate actively in school management?
5. How does parental involvement impact the educational outcomes of the school?
6. What measures have been taken to enhance parents' participation in school management?

### **For PTA Chairpersons**

1. What is the role of the Parent-Teacher Association in school management?
2. How do PTA members contribute to decision-making and management activities?
3. What challenges does the PTA face in engaging parents effectively?
4. How is communication between parents, teachers, and school administrators handled?
5. What improvements are needed to strengthen the PTA's role in school management?

### **B. Focus Group Discussion Questions (Parents)**

1. How do parents collectively participate in the management of the school?
2. What are some positive experiences you have had being involved in school activities or management?
3. What difficulties do parents face when trying to contribute to school decisions?
4. How do you think parental involvement has influenced the school's policies and practices?
5. What can be done to improve communication and cooperation between parents and school leaders?
6. How do you think parental involvement affects student success and school performance?

### **C. Document Analysis Checklist**

1. Are there records of parental involvement activities (e.g., meeting minutes, attendance lists)?
2. What types of decisions have parents been involved in?
3. Are there documented challenges or barriers noted in school records regarding parental involvement?
4. What evidence is there of communication between parents and school management?
5. Are there reports on the outcomes or impacts of parental involvement on the school?

## Appendix II

### **Final Data Collection Instruments (Interview Guides, Focus Group Questions, and Document Analysis Checklist)**

This appendix presents the revised instruments used during the main study, incorporating feedback from the pilot phase:

#### **A. Semi-Structured Interview Questions**

##### **For Parents**

1. Can you describe your experiences and specific ways you are involved in managing the private primary school?
2. In your view, what are the most important roles parents should play in school management?
3. How are you involved in decision-making processes related to the school's administration and activities?
4. What challenges have you faced that make it difficult for you to participate in school management?
5. How do you think your involvement has influenced decisions made by the school leaders?
6. What impact do you believe parental involvement has on the educational outcomes of the school?
7. What suggestions would you give to improve parental participation in school management?

##### **For School Principals**

1. How would you describe the role of parents in the management of your private primary school?
2. Can you provide examples of how parents participate in decision-making at your school?
3. What benefits do you observe from parents being involved in school management?

4. What challenges do you encounter when encouraging or coordinating parental involvement?
5. In what ways does parental involvement influence educational outcomes and school performance?
6. What strategies or practices have you implemented to promote effective parental participation?

#### **For PTA Chairpersons**

1. What is the role of the PTA in supporting school management and decision-making?
2. How do PTA members, including parents, contribute to managing the school?
3. What are the main challenges that limit effective parental involvement through the PTA?
4. How does the PTA facilitate communication between parents and school administrators?
5. What improvements do you think are necessary to enhance the PTA's role in school management?

#### **B. Focus Group Discussion Questions (Parents)**

1. How do parents work together to participate in the management and activities of the school?
2. What positive experiences can you share about parental involvement in school management?
3. What difficulties or barriers do parents face in becoming involved in decision-making or management?
4. How has parental involvement affected the school's policies, programs, or learning environment?
5. How can communication and cooperation between parents and school leaders be improved?
6. In your opinion, how does parental involvement contribute to the success of students and the school overall?

### **C. Document Analysis Checklist**

1. Are there clear records showing parental involvement in school management activities (e.g., meeting minutes, attendance logs)?
2. What kinds of decisions or issues do parents actively participate in based on the documents?
3. Do the documents reveal any challenges or obstacles faced by parents or administrators regarding parental involvement?
4. Is there evidence of effective communication between parents, PTA, and school management?
5. Are there reports or evaluations indicating how parental involvement has impacted decision-making or educational outcomes

## Appendix III Informed Consent Form

### Research

### Title:

*The Role of Parents' Involvement in the Management of Private Primary Schools: The case of Gulele Sub-City, Addis Ababa*

**Post graduate Researcher:** Yidersal Gelaw

**Institution:** Addis Ababa University

**Department:** Department of Educational Planning and Management

**Contact:** +251911624848

Dear Participant,

You are kindly invited to participate in this research study. Before you agree, please read the following information carefully. You may ask questions at any time.

### **Purpose of the Study:**

This research seeks to explore how parents are involved in the management of private primary schools in Gulele Sub-City, the roles they play, challenges they face, and the outcomes of their involvement.

### **Participation & Procedures:**

Your participation involves taking part in an interview or a focus group discussion, which will last approximately 45–60 minutes. With your permission, the session may be audio-recorded.

### **Voluntary Participation:**

Participation is entirely voluntary. You may refuse to answer any question or withdraw from the study at any time without any consequences.

### **Confidentiality:**

All the information you provide will be kept confidential. Your identity will not be revealed in any reports or publications. Data will only be used for academic purposes.

### **Consent Statement:**

By signing below, you indicate that:

- You have read and understood the information provided;

- You voluntarily agree to participate;
- You understand that you may withdraw at any time.

**Participant's**

**Name** \_\_\_\_\_

**Signature:**

\_\_\_\_\_

**Date:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Researcher's**

**Signature:**

\_\_\_\_\_

**Date:** \_\_\_\_\_

## Appendix IV

### **Participant Information Sheet**

#### **Research Title:**

*The Role of Parents' Involvement in the Management of Private Primary Schools: The case of Gulele Sub-City, Addis Ababa*

**Post Graduate Researcher:** Yidersal Gelaw

**Contact:** +251911624848

Dear Participant,

You are being invited to take part in a research study as part of a graduate research project.

#### **Purpose of the Study:**

The purpose of this research is to understand the role of parents in the management of private primary schools in Gulele Sub-City. It will explore how parents participate, what challenges they face, and what impact their involvement has on school management and outcomes.

#### **Why You Were Chosen:**

You have been selected because you are a parent, principal, PTA member, or school official directly involved with the school community.

#### **What You Will Be Asked to Do:**

You will be asked to take part in a one-on-one interview or a focus group discussion. The conversation will focus on your experiences and perspectives related to school management and parental involvement.

#### **Voluntary Participation:**

Your participation is entirely voluntary. You can refuse to take part or withdraw at any stage without penalty.

#### **Confidentiality:**

All responses will be kept strictly confidential. No personal names or identifying details will be included in any reports. Data will be securely stored and used only for academic purposes.

#### **Risks and Benefits:**

There are no expected risks. Your participation may help improve understanding of effective

school management and parental involvement. If you have any questions, please feel free to contact me with above number.

Thank you for considering participation in this study

Appendix V  
**Sample Invitation Letter to Participants**

**Yidersal Gelaw**  
**Department of Educational planning and management**  
**Addis Ababa University**

**Date: February 7, 2025**

Dear Samuel,

**Subject: Invitation to Participate in Research**

I hope this letter finds you well. My name is Yidersal Gelaw a student at Addis Ababa University, currently conducting a research study entitled:

**“The Role of Parents’ Involvement in the Management of Private Primary Schools: The case of Gulele Sub-City, Addis Ababa.”**

I am writing to kindly invite you to take part in this study, which seeks to gather information from key stakeholders, including parents, principals, and PTA members, about their involvement in school management.

Your experience and perspective are important and would greatly contribute to the understanding of this topic. Participation will involve a brief interview or focus group discussion at a time and place convenient for you.

All information collected will remain strictly confidential and used only for academic purposes. Participation is voluntary, and you may choose to withdraw at any time.

Should you be willing to participate or need further clarification, please feel free to contact me using this number? **0911624848**.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Yidersal Gelaw ( A Student from Department of EDPM, Addis Ababa U)

