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# Factors that drive and shape parents' expectations of teachers

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## Abstract

This article emanates from the findings of a study, which focused on middle-class parents' expectations of teachers and the effects that these expectations have on the workloads and the work-life of teachers. In the study's results and findings, evidence emerged, which suggests that middle-class parents hold increasingly high expectations of teachers. Increased parental expectations of teachers in middle-class contexts have precipitated intensification in teachers' workloads, particularly with regard to their core duties, namely teaching and learning activities such as lesson planning and preparation, assessment and remediation of learners' work, classroom management and discipline, extra-mural activities, pastoral and administrative duties and professional development. The review of the scholarship together with parents' responses to questions posed in an open-ended questionnaire, revealed that in terms of their children's education, middle-class parents appear to be driven by various factors, some explicit and others implicit, which directly influence the type of expectations they hold of teachers. The purpose of this article is to identify and define the salient factors that drive and shape middle-class parents' expectations of teachers.

## Introduction

The authors are of the opinion that it would prove to be infinitely beneficial to all role-players in education and in particular, to schools and teachers, if the explicit and implicit factors that drive and shape parents' expectations of teachers, not only in middle-class but all settings and socio-economic contexts, could be identified, defined and understood. One of the salient motives for the acquisition of this type of knowledge is that it may guide and support education authorities and policy writers in their pursuit to satisfy one of the aims of the South African Schools Act, No.84 of 1996 (SASA), namely to provide sustainable quality education for all learners. Furthermore, knowledge and an understanding of the explicit and implicit factors that drive and shape parents' expectations may assist schools and teachers in responding to and delivering the type of knowledge, skills and values, which parents view as critical for the future of their children in this country. The core question that this article poses and attempts to resolve, is what explicit and implicit

factors drive and shape the expectations that middle-class parents hold of teachers?

## Conceptual definitions

### Expectations

Jacob and Wilder (2010, p.3) define expectations as “those things, which individuals think will happen” while Carpenter (2008, p.165) defines expectations as “belief in the child’s likely future achievement.” In other words, an expectation may be described as anticipation, assumption, prospect, optimism, vision, likelihood, insistence or demand that something should happen in a particular way, or that someone or something should have particular qualities or behaviour.

### Class

The concept ‘class’ refers to style or sophistication. Class embraces the social, structural position groups hold relative to the economic, social, political and cultural resources of society. Class determines the access different people have to these resources and puts groups in different positions of privilege or disadvantage. Class standing determines how well social institutions serve the members of the class. Prominent indicators of class are income, wealth, education, occupation and place of residence (Andersen and Taylor, 2006).

### Middle-class

According to Banerjee and Duflo (2008) middle-class parents have fewer children and spend more money on their children’s education and health. They prefer to seek employment in sectors, which provide them with the security of a fixed monthly income. The perception of having a measure of control over the future allows them to focus on building their own careers and their children’s prospective careers.

## Middle-class in the post-1994 South African context

In the post-1994 South African context, people no longer define class in terms of race, as was the custom during the Apartheid era. Although the impression exists that a large percentage of South Africa's socio-economic middle-class consists predominantly of White communities, there is documented evidence of an emerging Black middle-class sector, referred to by Olivier (2007) as Black Diamonds. Olivier (2007) categorises Black Diamonds into four segments: 'Established' – people who are wealthy, educated, employed and stable, 'Young Family' – new, sometimes single parents, 'Start-me-ups' – youngsters starting out and on the way up and 'Mzansi Youth' – young, single students. Black Diamonds are largely optimistic, self-confident, aspiring and future-focused with a passion and drive for education (Olivier, 2007), which corroborates the Review of School Governance's (2004, p.55) claim that middle-class parents "place a great deal of store in the process of education".

## Literature review of factors that drive and shape middle-class parents' expectations of teachers

There appears to be a proliferation in research recently undertaken by scholars such as Spera and Wentzel (2009), Urdan, Solek and Schoenfelder (2007) and Rubie-Davies, Peterson, Irving, Widdowson and Dixon (2006) among others, which focuses on the correlation between teachers' and parents' expectations and aspirations for their children and the effect these have on learner outcomes, specifically self-esteem and academic performance. In spite of this, our search and review of both international as well as South African literature revealed a paucity of studies, which focus exclusively on the factors that drive and shape parents' expectations of teachers in middle-class contexts. In the following sections, we review theories and literature, which may assist us in not only identifying but also deriving theoretical definitions and an understanding of the explicit and implicit factors that drive and shape middle-class parents' expectations of teachers.

A study conducted by Kirk, Lewis-Moss, Nilsen and Colvin (2011) reveals a strong correlation between parent expectations and variables such as the socio-economic status and educational levels attained by parents, both of which play a key role in shaping learners' educational aspirations and by implication, academic achievement. Kirk, *et al.* (2011) draw on studies

conducted by Englund, Luckner, Whaley and Egeland (2004), which confirm that parent expectations are not only shaped by their own levels of education but more importantly, the extent to which they are involved in school activities and their children's academic careers. Furthermore, Rätty, Leinonen and Snellman (2002, p.130) draw on Bynner (1972) who reports that "the children of highly educated parents succeed better at school than others and the expectations of these parents for their children's education are aimed at an academic education." Similarly, Carpenter (2008) avers that parents' expectations may be defined in terms of the convictions they hold for their children's future level of achievement. This reasoning of these scholars also applies to the South African context, as evidenced by Roos' statement in the Review of School Governance (Soudien, Department of Education, 2004, p.55):

Ex-HOA<sup>1</sup> (House of Assembly) school governing bodies are very different in as far as they have large numbers of middle-class and professional people represented on them. In the seven schools studied in this category, all the parents were educated. Most of the school governing bodies had business people and professionals, such as lawyers and accountants. Important about this phenomenon in these schools, is that not only do these schools have a capacitated layer of parents to draw upon, but these kinds of parents are actually running their school's governing bodies (Roos, 2004, p.55).

In the review of literature for the study from which this article emanates, Dinham and Scott (2000) conducted empirical investigations entitled the 'Teacher 2000 Project', which focused on teacher job satisfaction and dissatisfaction in Australia, England, New Zealand and the USA. The findings revealed an increase in the expectations placed by society on teachers to solve the problems that society seems either unwilling or unable to deal with. In other words, parents' expectations of teachers are shaped primarily by their incapacity to solve the increasing social and societal challenges and demands, with which they and their children are continually confronted.

Chan and Mok (2001) on the other hand, claim that managerialism and marketisation, which emerged from decentralisation and neo-liberal education reform initiatives, are related closely to a heightened concern for quality of services, which may potentially shape middle-class parents' expectations of

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<sup>1</sup> Ex-HOA (House of Assembly) refers to the department responsible for white schools in the pre-1994 period.

teachers in terms of acceptable and improved quality service delivery. Similarly, Ball in Bowe, Ball and Gewirtz (1994, p.38) avers that education markets “can be exploited by the middle-classes as a strategy of reproduction in their search for relative advantage, social advancement and social mobility”. In other words, parents’ expectations may be shaped by their desire to prosper and advance both socially and financially within their respective community contexts. Ball’s (1994) notions appear to manifest in South Africa’s middle-class schools, which compete with each other in the same market and may need to develop sophisticated marketing strategies to attract parents and learners, who are the potential customers, particularly since provincial departments of education allocate teaching posts and educators to schools according to their learner enrolment figures. It follows that increased learner enrolment figures generate more funds for the school.

The following section focuses on specific types of motivation, which potentially drive and shape the expectations parents hold of teachers in terms of children’s scholastic performance, parental expectations, which appear to demand more and more of teachers.

## Theories of motivation that define and explain middle-class parents’ expectations of teachers

Clark Hull (1943) and Kenneth Spence (1956) generally are considered the creators of **Drive Theory**, which postulates that behaviour is primarily determined by drive, habit and incentives or rewards. This postulation suggests that drivers motivate individuals to think, behave, respond to needs and envisage expectations in certain ways. For this reason, literature equates driving factors with theories of motivation.

In an elucidation of **Attribution-based Theories of Motivation**, Weiner (2010) acknowledges motivational psychologists, whose contributions have proved pivotal in the development of motivational theories. The aim of Atkinson (1930–1970), one of the earliest motivational psychologists, was to pursue a ‘grand theory’ of motivation, which would identify the determinants of human actions over time. Atkinson held that the need for achievement was the main motivation for human action. Weiner (2010) also acknowledges the contributors to competing theoretical approaches on motivation. Among these are Edward Tolman (1932), Julian Rotter (1954) and Kurt Lewin (1938) who

argued that human behaviour is directed by need, expectancy for success and the value of achievement.

Steel and König (2006) discuss **Temporal Motivation Theory** (TMT), which they claim integrates the tenets of four recognized motivation theories, namely piceoeconomics, expectancy theory, cumulative prospect theory and needs theory, which demonstrate consilience because they may be applied across disciplines. According to Steel and König (2006) **piceoeconomics** is a theory first advocated by Ainslie and Haslam (1992), which accounts for choice of behaviour that individuals are inclined to favour from a variety of rewarding activities over time. When given two similar rewards, humans show a preference for the reward that arrives sooner rather than the one that arrives later. Humans have been found to discount the value of the later reward, by a factor that increases with the length of the delay.

**Expectancy Theory** also referred to as expectancy x value (E x V) theory, was first advanced by Victor Vroom in 1964. One of the core elements of expectancy theory is the perceived probability that for each expectancy, an outcome will occur of which the individual will perceive its value. The outcome that the individual is more likely to pursue is the one, which is perceived as holding the most value. Value represents the degree of satisfaction an individual may gain from a realised outcome and may differ from person to person (Steel and König).

Similarly, the key theoretical element of **Cumulative Prospect Theory**, as espoused by Amos Tversky and Daniel Kahneman (1992), advances patterns and regularities on the way in which individuals interpret expectancies and outcomes according to their utility value, particularly in terms of losses or gains (Steel and König, 2006). In other words, people tend to think of possible outcomes usually relative to a certain reference point, often the status quo, rather than to the final status, a phenomenon known as [framing effect](#). Moreover, they have different risk attitudes towards gains, i.e. outcomes above the reference point and losses, i.e. outcomes below the reference point and generally care more about potential losses than potential gains, a phenomenon known as [loss aversion](#).

Closely related to utility and value, is human need. **Needs Theory**, as demonstrated by Abraham Maslow's hierarchy of needs, represents an internal energizing force, which directs and drives an individual towards

behaviour and actions that will satisfy perceived needs. In other words, the intensity of fundamental human needs drives people to act in certain ways and do certain things (Steel and König, 2006). Steel and König (2006) furthermore state that scholars, such as Abraham Maslow in his 1943 paper entitled 'A Theory of Human Motivation', have identified two categories of fundamental human needs. The first category comprises primary or viscerogenic needs, which are related directly to human or fundamental physiological needs, e.g. the need for food and safety. The second category constitutes secondary or psychogenic needs, which are related directly to the human personality, e.g. the need for achievement and to overcome obstacles, the need for affiliation, socializing and sharing as well as the need for power, strength and prestige.

Another theory, which may apply to this study and explain the factors that drive parents' expectations of teachers, is Albert Bandura's **Social Cognitive Model of Motivation**. Bandura (1977) asserts that people possess an inherent cognitive ability to anticipate future consequences and outcomes of actions, which serves as a source of motivation for a specific behaviour. Bandura (1989) refers to this ability as '*forethought*'. Seen from this perspective, people set goals for themselves and plan courses of action, which have the greatest likelihood of producing desired outcomes. Once people have achieved the desired outcomes, expectations are created that "behaving in a certain way will produce anticipated benefits or avert future difficulties" (Bandura, 1977, p.193).

In the following section, we briefly explain the research methodology, specifically the sample selection and instrument used to elicit data from which this article emerged.

## Research methodology

### Sample selection, methodology and data collection

The *purpose* of the study from which this article emanates was to determine the expectations that the governing bodies of public primary schools situated in middle-class contexts hold of the work of educators, judged in the light of prevailing education labour law and other relevant law. It specifically examined school governing body expectations with respect to educator

workloads and the degree of alignment between such expectations and prevailing labour law as it applies to educators. The primary *research question*, which underpinned the study from which this article emanates, was ‘What do members of governing bodies of public primary schools situated in middle-class contexts expect of educators with respect to educator workloads?’ The study was situated within the qualitative, interpretive paradigm. Its *purposive* sample comprised nineteen public primary schools situated in the middle-class contexts of Paarl, Wellington, Durbanville, Bellville, Cape Town, Stellenbosch and Somerset-West in the Western Cape. The participants included nineteen parent members of school governing bodies who completed *open-ended questionnaires*, in which they articulated their expectations of teachers, particularly in respect of the core duties listed in the Personnel Administration Measures of the Employment of Educators Act, No.76 of 1998. The core duties included teaching time, planning and preparation of lessons, assessment and evaluation of learners’ work, classroom management, discipline, extra-curricular, pastoral and administrative duties as well as professional development responsibilities.

## Linking selected responses to questions posed in the open-ended questionnaire to the theoretical explication of factors that drive and shape parent expectations of teachers

For the purposes of this article, we link not all but only selected responses articulated by parent participants to questions posed in the open-ended questionnaire to the literature we reviewed as well as to achievement and temporal motivational theories, with the aim of identifying, defining and understanding the factors that drive and shape parents’ expectations of teachers.

## Linking selected responses to the reviewed literature

In this section, we link selected responses articulated by parent participants to questions posed in the open-ended questionnaire concerning their expectations of teachers in respect of the core duties, to the *literature* we reviewed.



<b>Correlation between Parent Expectations and Socio-Economic Status – Kirk, Lewis-Moss, Nilsen and Colvin</b>
Teachers must come across as professionals. They must be friendly, honest, sincere, hard-working and lead by example. Their classrooms must be cheerful and neat (GB7). <sup>2</sup>
Classroom management begins with the number of learners per class. The class must be painted neatly and learners' work must be displayed on pin boards and serve as a basis for information (GB6).
Teachers must make the classroom environment child friendly so that learners feel comfortable, which will make it easier for them to learn (GB10).
<b>Parent Education Level and Involvement in School Activities – England</b>
Teaching lessons must be understandable for children and such that I do not have to redo them at home (GB9).
<b>Incapacity of Parents to Solve Social Challenges – Dinham and Scott</b>
Teachers can be expected to contribute to the school's fundraising activities so that sufficient facilities can be provided for the learners (GB10).
Teachers are required to perform playground duty because the playground is the place where teachers will be able to notice unhappy and hungry children standing all alone and without a lunchbox (GB4).
Teachers can be expected to identify the social welfare cases in the school and to manage this according to policy (GB6).
<b>Improved Quality Service Delivery – Chan and Mok</b>
Thorough preparation contributes significantly to a 'high' standard of instruction (GB13).
Teachers, please do not come to class with your personal problems. Always be consistent, friendly, faithful and fair (GB5).
It is always nice to see teachers involved in school committees. This tells me one thing, 'Here is a teacher who is prepared to walk the extra mile.' (GB4).
All teachers must be good examples at all times concerning behaviour, conduct and that which is socially acceptable in the community. Teachers must keep abreast of the latest technological advances and be socially acceptable to the learners and their parents in the community. Teachers must improve their qualifications to fulfil their task at all times (GB6).

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<sup>2</sup> In Minnaar's study, each questionnaire completed and submitted by a parent participant was given the code GB (Governing Body) and a number for purposes of anonymity and compliance with ethics requirements.

<p>It is expected that there will at all times be a good relationship between the school governing body and the teachers in order to promote the good management of the school and to enable everything to run smoothly (GB10).</p>
<p>Teachers must attend courses and workshops if the learners will benefit from it. It also serves as enrichment to teachers as it broadens their knowledge (GB10).</p>
<p><b>Parents' Desire to Prosper and Advance Socially and Financially – Ball</b></p>
<p>Fundraising is very important for any school, which is managed like a business. Every school must have a PTA that works with the school on fundraising projects (GB5).</p>
<p>Finances are always important and everybody is expected to pay attention to the school's finances, including parents, teachers and learners (GB17).</p>
<p><b>Convictions Parents Hold for their Children's Future Level of Achievement – Carpenter and Expectations of Highly Educated Parents – Rätty, Leinonen and Snellman</b></p>
<p>Teachers must prepare lessons thoroughly at all times to ensure the optimal utilisation of available instruction time (GB16).</p>
<p>Lesson teaching must be modern, perhaps by means of Information Technology and must be performed with passion. Instruction must be aimed at learners' special needs such as learners who have Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD) (GB18).</p>
<p>Teachers must instil a thirst for knowledge in learners and motivate them (GB1).</p>
<p>Children of above average ability need to be stimulated. Teachers need to contact the parents so that the children can complete additional work at home (GB5).</p>
<p>Maintaining discipline is absolutely essential! Learners without discipline do not have the ability to learn (GB4).</p>
<p>As a parent, if my child were to encounter difficulties, I would expect the teacher to inform me immediately. I would also expect the teacher to show sympathy and empathy for the problem. The teacher could refer me to an expert who could assist me or show me ways in which I could assist my child (GB5).</p>

### Linking selected responses to temporal motivation theory

In this section, we link selected responses articulated by parent participants to questions posed in the open-ended questionnaire to Temporal Motivation Theory with the aim of identifying, defining and understanding the forces that drive and shape parents' expectations of teachers.

<b>Need for Achievement – Atkinson</b>
The teacher must complete lesson planning and preparation promptly. Preparation must be thorough and well thought about. Lessons must be prepared at a deeper level to accommodate gifted learners (GB7).
Every learner needs to be given an opportunity to achieve maximal academic success (GB6). The teacher must always keep extra, challenging work and tasks on hand for bright learners.
The ‘top’ learners must be able to compete with one another (GB7).
<b>Drive, Habit, Incentives, Rewards – Clark Hull and Kenneth Spence</b>
I expect lesson instruction to be not only the reading of a book or piece of paper, but that it will be made as enjoyable as possible for the learners (GB4).
Interesting lesson presentation keeps the learner positive (GB13).
<b>Need, Expectancy for Success and Value of Achievement – Tolman, Rotter and Lewin</b>
The teacher’s feedback to the learners is important to enable them to improve in their learning areas (GB10).
Teachers must serve on committees since they have experience in where the problem areas are and what the real needs are (GB6).

### Linking selected responses to temporal motivation theory

In this section, we link selected responses articulated by parent participants to questions posed in the open-ended questionnaire to Temporal Motivation Theory with the aim of identifying, defining and understanding the factors that drive and shape parents’ expectations of teachers.

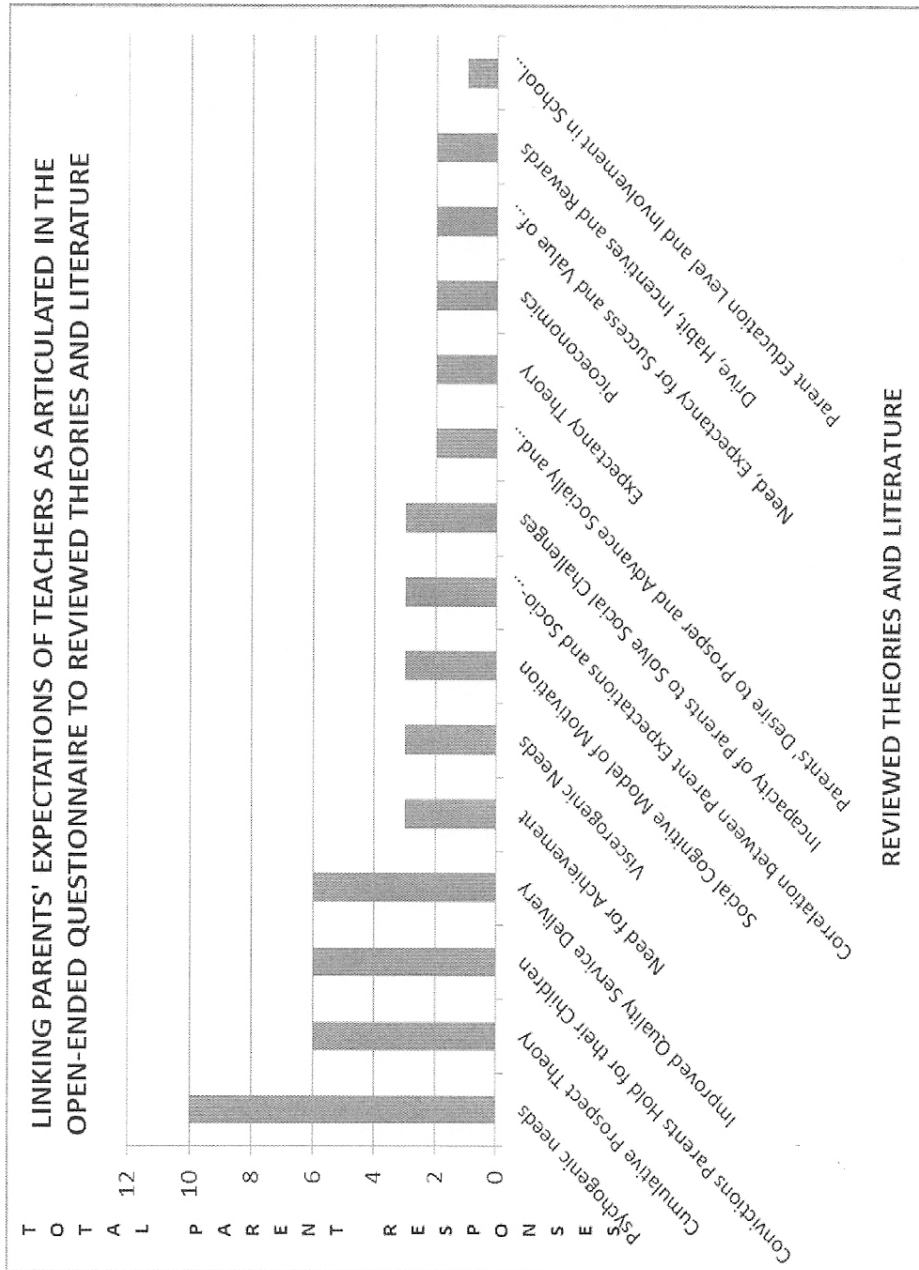
<b>Picoeconomics (Choice of Behaviour) – Ainslie and Haslan</b>
Teachers must apply discipline consistently and all learners must know what they may and may not do. The code of conduct must be in place (GB19).
A teacher must set an example of a balanced lifestyle at all times. A teacher may be expected to be involved in some cultural activities such as land service, debating, choir, chess, dancing and religion (GB6).

<b>Expectancy Theory – Victor Vroom</b>
Lessons must be specific and realistic. The learner must benefit from them (GB10).
Teaching must be conducted with enthusiasm and all learners must benefit from lessons (GB15).
<b>Cumulative Prospect Theory – Amos Tversky and Daniel Kahneman</b>
Planning and preparation of lessons must be thorough and purposeful so that the outcomes can be achieved (GB10).
Marking learners' work determines the success of instruction and serves as the basis for the planning of remedial activities (GB6).
The teacher must update learners' assessment records and profiles regularly so that if any child leaves the school, the parents and new school must be informed of the child's progress and problem areas (GB5).
It is nice to see teachers roll up their sleeves to work for extra funds, which are in any event ploughed back into the school, making it pleasant for them to teach (GB4).
Teachers must hold the interests of the school in their hands and contribute to the management of the school (GB10).
Teachers must keep abreast with their learning areas and be informed of the most modern trends in instruction. In this way, they can determine whether it is useful and to the learners' benefit (GB6).
<b>Psychogenic Needs – Abraham Maslow</b>
Planning and preparation of lessons must be thorough. The teacher must consider the individual needs of learners and do more in-depth research than simply the textbook (GB18).
It is extremely essential to mark learners' work and to provide feedback. In this way, learners will be able to see where they made mistakes and can pay attention to them (GB4).
Teachers need to identify learners with learning problems in class and alter their methods of instruction accordingly (GB2).
Progress reports to parents are essential because it is the channel whereby parents can see whether their child is progressing or not. If the child does not progress, the problem can be solved in good time, either in co-operation with the teacher or alone with the child (GB4).
Parents, make friends with your child's teachers. They are doing their best. Do not criticise the teachers and the school (GB5).

<p>There must always be place for sport in a school and teachers' involvement is always a plus point. It is another way of getting to know the learners and parents at a different level (GB4).</p>
<p>Teachers need to get to know their learners at a different level other than at only academic level. Teachers need to know the child's personality in all areas. Sport provides opportunities for learners who are not always successful (GB6).</p>
<p>The entire personnel must be involved in social activities such as team-building and other functions (GB5).</p>
<p>Teachers must be involved in social activities. They must get to know parents, associate and make friends with them. By knowing a parent you get to know the child (GB6).</p>
<p>To be involved in sport provides the learner with an opportunity to get to know the teacher in another area and not only in the classroom (GB10).</p>
<p><b>Viscerogenic Needs – Abraham Maslow</b></p>
<p>Pastoral duties are essential, especially in today's circumstances. Teachers must be on duty in strategic places to maintain school discipline and to see the ways in which learners keep themselves busy (GB6).</p>
<p>It is important that teachers move around between the learners to ensure that they are safe. In this way, teachers can also see how children communicate with and treat each other (GB10).</p>
<p>Teacher supervision is necessary, especially for learners who need to cross busy roads to get to school (GB10).</p>
<p><b>Social Cognitive Model – Albert Bandura</b></p>
<p>I expect teachers to be well prepared. It not only gives them self-confidence, it also enhances the learners' confidence (GB4).</p>
<p>Certain careers are a calling, not a job. Teaching is a calling. I expect teachers to put everything in, to prepare the country for the future efficiently (GB18).</p>
<p>Quality education cannot take place in an undisciplined, disorganised or unplanned environment. Self-discipline, class discipline, school discipline and parental discipline contribute to the good academic discipline of the school (GB6).</p>

Although the theme of this article suggests a qualitative rather than quantitative inquiry, counting and graphically recording the links between parent responses and the reviewed theories and literature, provides an indication of the theories that most likely drive and shape the expectations that parents in our sample hold of teachers in regard to the core duties. Figure 1 below depicts the number of links.

**Figure 1: Linking parents' expectations of teachers as articulated in the open-ended questionnaire to reviewed theories and literature**



## Discussion

Figure 1 above demonstrates that all the factors that were identified in the theories, collectively drive and shape the expectations that parents in our sample hold of teachers in regard to their core duties. The selected responses articulated by parent participants to questions posed in the open-ended questionnaire, however, indicate that *psychogenic* needs appear strongest and largely drive the expectations of most middle-class parents in this sample. This may mean that middle-class parents' expectations are driven by the need for their children to achieve at school, to such an extent that they will overcome or eliminate any obstacle, which they perceive as a hindrance to their children's scholastic progress and achievement. The hankering after achievement and prestige may also present as a psychogenic driving force of parent expectations of teachers.

It is of consequence that some schools that participated in the study upon which this article emanates, place a high premium, not only on academic excellence, but on sport too, as evidenced by GB4, GB6 and GB10's responses. Moreover, it has become common practice for some schools to reward what is known as the 'Top Ten' learners in each grade according to their academic performance each term. 'Top Ten' learners who have achieved the highest average percentages in the grade are rewarded with badges or cash prizes at a ceremony to which parents and the community are invited. Unbridled competition and rivalry between parents whose children regularly appear in the 'Top Ten' as well as those parents who aspire to having their children in the 'Top Ten' may also drive and shape parents' expectations of teachers in terms of quality of instruction, owing to the prestige this label engenders. As GB7 aptly states, "The 'top' learners must be able to compete with one another" (GB7).

GB6 further articulates middle-class parents' *psychogenic need* for affiliation, belonging and sharing thus: "Teachers must be involved in social activities. They must get to know parents, associate and make friends with them. By knowing a parent you get to know the child". This response suggests that parents are driven by the psychogenic need to socialise with the school community and experience a sense of belonging to the school community and for their children to feel accepted and liked by teachers.

It may prove meaningful to link these parental aspirations to Englund *et al.*'s (2004) assertion that parents' expectations are shaped by *their level of education* and the extent to which they are involved in school activities. If one correctly assumes that middle-class parents generally appear to be professional people who are well educated, it follows that professional parents expect their children to be exposed to the same high standards of education to which they were exposed. This assumption also links with Rätty, Leinonen and Snellman's (2002) claim that highly educated parents hold high expectations for their children's academic careers. Their claim is supported by parents' responses, such as GB1, who states "Teachers must instil a thirst for knowledge in learners and motivate them." This response indicates that the convictions and aspirations middle-class parents hold for their children's future level of achievement appear to play a pivotal role in shaping their expectations of teachers. Consequently, middle-class parents' expectations of teachers appear to be driven and shaped by their convictions that a teacher's fulfilment of the core duties, or neglect to do so, may directly or indirectly influence not only the quality of education children receive at school but also the academic, psychological, physical and social development and well-being of children. In other words, middle-class parents view their children's educational, emotional, moral and physical interests as paramount and expect teachers not only to instruct or teach but also to educate their children and furnish them with the prerequisite knowledge, skills and values they need, which will prepare them adequately for the future. This expectation is expressed explicitly by GB5 who states, "As a parent, if my child were to encounter difficulties, I would expect the teacher to inform me immediately. I would also expect the teacher to show sympathy and empathy for the problem. The teacher could refer me to an expert who could assist me or show me ways in which I could assist my child." In contrast, GB9's response, which reads "Teaching lessons must be understandable for children and such that I do not have to redo them at home" evokes a measure of concern for teachers if one deliberates on the number of middle-class parents who do not consider it their duty to assist their children with school-related activities at home.

A strong correlation exists between the expectations that middle-class parents hold of teachers and their *socio-economic* status as advocated by Kirk, Lewis-Moss, Nilsen and Colvin (2011). GB7, GB6 and GB10 emphasise the expectation for their children to be taught and educated in an aesthetically pleasing and educationally appealing classroom within a well-maintained teaching and learning environment in which children will feel excited to learn and motivated to achieve. Schools situated in high socio-economic and



middle-class contexts are able to fulfil parents' expectations as they have the financial resources to maintain and improve their infrastructure and facilities. In contrast to these schools in more affluent areas, schools situated in low socio-economic contexts or unsafe neighbourhoods do not have the financial resources for maintenance and repairs. These schools are often subjected to acts of vandalism such as graffiti, smashed windows, stolen light fittings and taps, which instils a sense of fear and insecurity in learners and teachers and negatively impacts on the teaching and learning process.

An analysis of parent participants' responses to questions posed in the open-ended questionnaire indicates that the expectations of teachers held by a number of parents in our sample appear to be driven by the tenets of Tversky and Kahneman's (1992) *Cumulative Prospect Theory*, which advocates that individuals interpret expectations and outcomes in terms of their *utility value*. A striking example is the response of GB6 who advances the expectation that, "Teachers must keep abreast with their learning areas and be informed of the most modern trends in instruction in order to determine whether it is useful and to the learners' benefit."

Responses also suggest that parent expectations of teachers may be shaped by a desire for heightened or *improved quality service* delivery as asserted by Chan and Mok (2001). GB18's response resonates with Chan and Mok's assertion: "Certain careers are a calling, not a job. Teaching is a *calling*. I expect teachers to put everything in, to prepare the country for the future efficiently." Similarly, Hakanen, Bakker and Schaufeli (2005) maintain that teaching is traditionally viewed as a profession with high commitment and can be viewed as a *calling*, but what precisely do people have in mind when they express a profession as a calling and what connotations do scholars attach to the concept 'calling'? Steger, Pickering, Shin and Dik (2010) posit that when viewed from a historical perspective, the concept 'calling' imparts **religious** nuances of one inspired by a Divine Power to fulfil specific purposes in the world. However, recent researchers prefer a more secular interpretation of one who accomplishes work in a quest for personal meaning and fulfilment while working for the greater good. Steger *et al.* (2010) furthermore report on established links and relationships between calling and optimistic work attitudes, enhanced enthusiasm, professional commitment and an acceptance of duties not typically included in job descriptions. Elangovan, Pinder and McLean (2010) concur that those who pursue a calling may be so devoted that they willingly engage in activities that exceed "assigned goals, expectations and rewards". Elangovan, Pinder and McLean (2010, p.437) cite

Serow (1994) who found that teachers who were devoted to their professions were willing to 'go the extra mile', meaning they fulfilled their duties thoroughly, focused on excellence and paid extra attention to detail. Serow's (1994) findings categorically encapsulate GB4's expectation, namely "Here is a teacher who is prepared to walk the extra mile" (GB4).

Bandura's (1977) *Social Cognitive Model of Motivation* anticipates the future consequences and outcomes of actions, which may appear to drive and shape parents' expectations of teachers. The upholding of effective discipline in schools, or failure thereof, may hold profound future consequences for educational outcomes. GB6 is of the opinion that, "Quality education cannot take place in an undisciplined, disorganised, or unplanned environment. Self-discipline, class discipline, school discipline and parental discipline contribute to the good academic discipline of the school." This parent's response implies that discipline is a prerequisite for the delivery of quality education. It also implies that discipline ought not to be the sole responsibility of schools and teachers. Ideally, parents need to accept prime responsibility for disciplining their children at home so they arrive at school as well-disciplined learners, eager to learn. This will enable teachers to not only optimally use the teaching and learning time at their disposal but also ensure a safe and secure learning environment. In doing so, teachers will subsequently fulfil parents' expectations in terms of the quality of education their children receive as well as concerns for their children's safety while at school, the outcomes of actions to which Bandura refers.

Viscerogenic needs, which include the fundamental needs for safety, physical security and health, are located within the second level of Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs (1943). Parents' concerns regarding their children's safety presumably emanate from widespread media reports of injuries and harm suffered by learners while at school. Joubert and Prinsloo (2009, p.138) assert, "Quality education is meaningless unless learners are able to pursue their educational rights in a safe and secure environment." According to law, teachers stand *in loco parentis*, a legal maxim that literally means that teachers exercise custody and control over learners as if they were the learners' parents. As a result, the common law principle of Duty of Care imposes an imperative command on teachers to care for learners under their supervision. Section 9 of the Children's Act, No.38 of 2005, underscores the Duty of Care principle by stating that in all matters concerning the care, protection and well-being of a child, the child's best interests are of paramount importance (Joubert and Prinsloo, 2009). In addition, Section 61 of

the South African Schools Act, No.84 of 1996, specifically the Regulations for Safety Measures at Public Schools, address safety concerns at schools, and are binding on all South African schools and teachers. These safety measures deal with; violence and substance abuse, access to schools, the transportation of learners, physical activities, emergency and fire procedures and the early release of learners from school (Joubert and Prinsloo, 2009).

Some parents' responses appear to illuminate Dinham and Scott's (2000) view that modern parents experience either an unwillingness or incapacity to solve *social challenges* and have subsequently shifted social responsibilities to schools and teachers. This tendency is evident in the response of GB6 who states, "Teachers can be expected to identify the social welfare cases in the school and to manage this according to policy." In the study from which this article emanates, teachers were asked to record their core duties and responsibilities in a time-use diary over two weeks. An entry in a participating teacher's diary reads as follows, "My pastoral duties in regard to the needy families at school include organising and collecting tinned food, grocery shopping and packing grocery hampers, collecting second-hand clothing and handing out clothing to the needy families. I do this one afternoon per month and it takes the entire afternoon." This response provides evidence that teachers' social responsibilities, even in middle-class contexts, have increased as asserted by Dinham and Scott. This finding begs the question: "Are school communities in middle-class contexts as socially and economically upwardly mobile as education authorities perceive them to be"?

In the following section, we draw our conclusions regarding the factors that drive and shape middle-class parents' expectations of schools and teachers.

### Conclusions drawn on the factors that drive and shape middle-class parents' expectations of teachers

It is evident that middle-class parents' expectations of teachers are unquestionably driven and shaped by their children's best interests. According to Malherbe (2008), the 'best interests of the child' is a universally accepted common law principle, which guides the adjudication of all matters concerning the welfare of the child, in this case the educational interests of the child. Malherbe (2008) furthermore argues that parents expect schools to take special care of their children, for their education, and for their protection

from harm during those hours that they are under the authority and care of the school. Not only does the ‘best interests of the child’ principle support the ideals for education, it also strengthens the commitment to realise the best possible education for learners.

In this study, a complex, interwoven array of factors drives and shapes the expectations that middle-class parents hold of teachers. The golden thread, which binds the parent participants’ responses, is the desire to expose their children to the highest quality of education and teaching possible, so that their children will ultimately achieve success, not only at school, but also in their future vocational or professional careers.

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