



UNIVERSITI PUTRA MALAYSIA

***RELATIONSHIPS BETWEEN PRINCIPALS' CREATIVITY
COMPETENCIES, COLLABORATIVE SCHOOL PRACTICES, SCHOOL
CLIMATE AND PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT IN MALAYSIAN
SECONDARY SCHOOLS***

KEETANJALY A/P ARIVAYAGAN

FPP 2022 15



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COLLABORATIVE SCHOOL PRACTICES, SCHOOL CLIMATE AND
PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT IN MALAYSIAN SECONDARY SCHOOLS**

By

KEETANJALY A/P ARIVAYAGAN

**Thesis Submitted to the School of Graduate Studies, Universiti Putra
Malaysia, in Fulfilment of the Requirements for the Degree of
Doctor of Philosophy**

September 2021

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DEDICATIONS

எல்லாம் சிவமயம்

Above all, I express my utmost gratitude to Sai Baba, The Lord of The Heavens and Earth, The Most Beneficent, The Most Merciful for granting me the capability and perseverance to complete this thesis dissertation successfully.

My Doctor of Philosophy (PhD) award is especially dedicated to my dearly beloved family. My family has always been very supportive and proud of all my accomplishment in my life. Words cannot describe how grateful I am to my dearest amma and appa, Mr. & Mrs. Arivayagan-Krishna Kumari, my two lovely sisters, Shanta Kumari and Ratna Devi, my sister in-law, Vigneswari and my late father in-law, Muniandy for all of the sacrifices that they have made on my behalf and were always supportive in the moments when there were no answers to my queries. Their prayers for me were what sustained me this far.

Importantly, this dissertation is especially dedicated to my hero, my best friend, my soulmate, Vegneswaran. To my husband... because of your understanding and patience, it was easier for me to complete this dissertation. You are my pillar of strength in all my endeavors. There were many times, when I was frustrated, impatient and went through the tough times, your persistence, love and encouragement kept me on the task and guided me through to do my best. You have motivated me to continue with my dream. I sincerely apologize for stealing your time to spend it on my research work. Thank you for your unconditional love, care and for having faith in me during the entire process.

♥ I love you very much. You have been a wonderful life mentor for me.

I would like to thank three very special people in my life who have influenced me more than they will ever know. Both of my late periamma, Vijayalaksmi and my late brother, Kanageswaran had a lasting impact on my life as they always encouraged me to keep trying and be myself. I deeply miss both of you ♥.

Next, Professor Dr Zaidatol Akmaliah Lope Pihie, a former academican of Universiti Putra Malaysia, was a strong example of how to be a researcher and effective educator while pursuing a dream of obtaining a doctorate degree. Thank you, Prof., for your dedication to the education field and to me as one of your many students!

Thank you to all my friends who kept me focused by never failing to ask, "when will you be finishing?" I treasure your friendship even as I've been in a world of my own for the last several years while pursuing this dream. I would also extend my gratitude to my great friends/family; Goofy Clan, Shenbagam 2.0, Rishani darling, 'Sunday Bootcamp', and Sagadevan who supported and motivated me to strive towards my goal. My deepest gratitude to Mageswary akka for providing a conducive place for me to conduct my VIVA smoothy. Special thanks to Suresh anne, Gane anne, and Sashitharran for being there

when I needed help especially for my data collection by providing me with transportation.

All of them were the driving force and the reason that inspired me to accomplish a dream, and now...

Dr Keetanjaly, PhD



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Abstract of thesis presented to the Senate of the Universiti Putra Malaysia in fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy

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September 2021

Chairman : Associate Prof. Suhaida Abdul Kadir, PhD
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Despite the increment of school-community relations in Malaysian schools, by the same token, previous studies have pointed out parental involvement in school activities across the country particularly in secondary schools has yet to reach satisfactory and must be improved. Therefore, this study aimed to examine the factors (i.e., principals' creativity competencies, collaborative school practices and school climate) that influence parental involvement from the stance of teachers in Malaysian secondary schools. This study theorised System Theory as the primary underpinning theory, supported by Overlapping Sphere Theory along with the integration of Generativity Theory, Six Types of Involvement Framework, and Ecological Theory to describe the factors that contribute towards parental involvement in Malaysian secondary schools.

The proposed model was empirically evaluated using a postage survey involving 373 respondents, who were randomly selected from four different states: namely Perak, Selangor, Pahang, and Johor. Structural Equation Modelling (SEM) was employed to assess the structural model of the study. All the tested hypotheses were accepted and significant. Findings proposed a model that describes principals' creativity competencies, collaborative school practices and school climate as significant influences of parental involvement. In precise, the model strengthens the mediation analysis by presenting collaborative school practices that mediated the correlation between principals' creativity competencies and parental involvement.

This study has provided a conceptual theoretical framework from educational administration context to develop and test an integrated model that examines how school-based factors influence parental involvement, which in this case, refers to the willingness of the school to foster parental involvement in

secondary schools. As a whole, fostering parental involvement exerts significant effects on school organisational development, programmes, and training. These aspects are essential in the school community and management to impart knowledge to schools and parents as well as to improve the effectiveness and performances of the school organisation, which is bound to substantially strengthen the efforts taken by the Ministry of Education (MoE). This model may facilitate school administrators and teachers to better comprehend school-community relationships, as aligned with the SARANA toolkits and Malaysian Education Blueprint (MEB) initiatives in supporting children's social and academic development. These findings may provide insights into ways to develop a supportive system that facilitates and encourages parental involvement in secondary schools. More broadly, future research can be done by using split sampling approaches by integrating the proposed model to cross-validate the robustness of the empirical study as well as, conducting comparative studies.

Abstrak tesis yang dikemukakan kepada Senat Universiti Putra Malaysia
sebagai memenuhi keperluan untuk Ijazah Doktor Falsafah

**HUBUNGAN ANTARA KOMPETENSI KREATIVITI PENGETUA, AMALAN
KOLABORATIF SEKOLAH, IKLIM SEKOLAH DAN PENGLIBATAN IBU
BAPA DI SEKOLAH-SEKOLAH MENENGAH MALAYSIA**

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Di sebalik peningkatan hubungan sekolah-komuniti di sekolah-sekolah Malaysia, pada masa yang sama, kajian lepas menunjukkan penglibatan ibu bapa dalam aktiviti sekolah di seluruh negara khususnya di sekolah menengah masih belum mencapai tahap yang memuaskan dan perlu dipertingkatkan. Oleh itu, kajian ini bertujuan untuk menentukan faktor (kompetensi kreativiti pengetua, amalan sekolah kolaboratif dan iklim sekolah) yang mempengaruhi penglibatan ibu bapa dari persepsi guru di sekolah menengah, Malaysia. Secara keseluruhannya, kajian ini menyokong *System Theory* sebagai teori asas utama melalui pengukuhan *Overlapping Sphere Theory* dengan mengintegrasikan *Generativity Theory*, *Six Types of Involvement Framework*, dan *Ecological Theory* untuk menjelaskan faktor yang menyumbang kepada penglibatan ibu bapa di sekolah menengah di Malaysia.

Model yang dicadangkan telah dinilai secara empirikal menggunakan tinjauan pos melibatkan seramai 373 responden, yang dipilih secara rawak dari empat buah negeri yang berbeza; iaitu Perak, Selangor, Pahang, dan Johor. Kaedah *Structural Equation Modelling* (SEM) telah digunakan untuk menguji model struktur kajian tersebut. Kesemua hipotesis yang diuji diterima dan signifikan. Hasil kajian mengusulkan satu model yang menerangkan kompetensi kreativiti pengetua, amalan kolaboratif sekolah dan iklim sekolah menjadi faktor penentu yang signifikan terhadap penglibatan ibubapa. Selanjutnya, model ini juga menerangkan amalan kolaboratif sekolah sebagai pengantara (*mediator*) bagi meningkatkan pengaruh kompetensi kreativiti pengetua terhadap penglibatan ibubapa.

Kajian ini telah mengusul kerangka teori konseptual dengan menggunakan pendekatan konteks pentadbiran pendidikan untuk membangun dan menguji

model yang mengintegrasikan bagaimana faktor beraskan sekolah mempengaruhi penglibatan ibu bapa, di mana dalam konteks ini, merujuk kepada kesanggupan pihak sekolah untuk memupuk penglibatan ibu bapa di sekolah menengah. Memupuk penglibatan ibu bapa memberikan kesan yang ketara terhadap pembangunan organisasi sekolah, program dan latihan. Aspek-aspek ini adalah penting komuniti dan pengurusan sekolah kerana ia mempunyai peranan penting untuk menyampaikan maklumat kepada sekolah and ibubapa serta meningkatkan keberkesanan dan juga prestasi organisasi sekolah yang secara substansial akan memperkuatkan usaha Kementerian Pendidikan Malaysia untuk meningkatkan penglibatan ibubapa di sekolah. Kerangka kerja ini akan membantu pihak pentadbir sekolah dan guru untuk memahami dengan lebih baik dengan memberi tumpuan kepada hubungan sekolah-komuniti yang diusulkan dalam kajian ini sejajar dengan inisiatif Pelan Pembangunan Pendidikan Malaysia 2013-2025 dan kit SARANA, dalam menyokong perkembangan sosial dan akademik anak mereka.

Hasil penemuan dari kajian ini, mungkin akan memberikan sumbangan dari segi cara untuk membangunkan sistem sokongan bagi memudahkan dan menggalakkan penglibatan ibu bapa di sekolah menengah. Secara lebih luas, penyelidikan masa depan boleh dijalankan dengan menggunakan pendekatan pensampelan berpecah dengan menyepadukan model kajian yang dicadangkan untuk mengesahkan kekukuhan kajian empirikal dan juga, menjalankan kajian perbandingan.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

First and foremost, I would like to express my sincere gratitude to my supervisory committee members, Associate Professor Dr Suhaida Abdul Kadir, Professor Dr Wong Su Luan, and Dr Arnida Abdullah. My supervisory committee members have been an invaluable resource throughout the process of writing my thesis. They have helped me to develop the research project with their time, wealth of experiences, and incredible knowledge that they so willingly shared with me. I am especially thankful for the excellent thesis writing guidance and advice. Without their support and expertise, this thesis would not have been possible.

My deepest gratitude is extended to my previous proposal defense examiner and VIVA examiners for their valuable suggestions, comments, and guidance in supporting efforts to the completion of this dissertation. Their generosity has been one of the valuable contributions for this thesis. A special thanks to the panel experts for sharing their ideas with helpful suggestions during the process of questionnaire validation. Also, my sincere thanks to the Educational Planning and Research Division, Ministry of Education, State Education Department (Perak, Selangor, Pahang, and Johor), Universiti Putra Malaysia Ethics Committee (JKEUPM) for their support and assistance in one way or another towards the completion of this thesis as well as Research Management Center (RMC), UPM for financially supporting this research through Geran Putra-IPS (GP-IPS/2018/9628100).

Heartfelt thanks to the forty school principals for their interest in my project, and in particular Assistant school principals / "*Guru Penolong Kanan*" for their help and assistance in acquiring samples for my study. And of course, thank you to all the participants who have contributed with their valuable time to complete my questionnaire. I would like to thank Facebook page/groups: Dr Othman Talib, mySEM, SLR Student Support, Academic Hub, and Doctoral Support Group for providing me with the information on proper ways of academic writings. Many thanks to the academicians especially Professor Dr Bahaman, Professor T. Ramayah, Dr Donnie Adams, Dr Jayson Cham, Dr Peter, and Professor Dr Karuthan for sharing their ideas and helpful suggestions on the process of writing my thesis.

Thank you to Proofreading by UK Team and Rishani teacher for providing me with valuable advice on ways to improve my thesis in terms of language, content, and format. I am also thankful to Associate Professor Dr Ramli Basri, Dr Azhar Harun, Nalani teacher, Cikgu Norehan, Cikgu Zul, and Professor Dr Vijayalakshmi for assisting in the translation of the questionnaire items. Thank you to my wonderful fellow friends for their support and advice, and also for providing me with many good laughs throughout this journey in particular, Sabihah, Renuka, Jawahir, Cheng Lee, Iskandar, Sa'haadah, Kavitha, Hafiz, Thiru, and Viji. Last, but not the least, I would like to take this opportunity to thank Emeritus Professor Dr Robert Epstein, Emeritus Professor Dr Joyce L.

Epstein, Professor Dr George G. Bear, and Dr Jennifer Wee Beng Neo for permitting me to use their survey tool in my research. I would also like to thank the librarian staff for their support in locating the right materials for my study and my sincere gratitude to Universiti Putra Malaysia, Faculty of Educational Studies, and School of Graduate Studies for their kind cooperation during these years of my study both academically and officially.

Thank you very much dear all!



This thesis was submitted to the Senate of the Universiti Putra Malaysia and has been accepted as fulfilment of the requirement for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy. The members of the Supervisory Committee were as follows:

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

AMOS	Analysis of Moments Structures
AVE	Average Variance Extracted
CB-SEM	Co-variance based Structural Equation Modelling
CFA	Confirmatory Factor Analysis
CMV	Common Method Variance
CR	Composite Reliability
DSCS-T	Delaware School Climate Survey for Teachers
EPRD	Education Planning and Research Division, Malaysia
e.g.	Exempli Gratia/For Example
etc.	Et cetera
FA	Factor Analysis
JPN	Jabatan Pendidikan Negeri (State Education Department)
GTP	Government Transformation Programme
HPS	High Performing School
MEB	Malaysia Education Blueprint
MoE	Ministry of Education, Malaysia
<i>ECCi-m</i>	Epstein Creativity Competencies Inventory for Managers
ρ	Significant value
PSG	Parents Support Groups
PTA	Parents Teacher Association
SEM	Structural Equation Modelling
SKPMg2	<i>Standard Kualiti Pendidikan Malaysia Gelombang 2</i> (Standard for Quality Education in Malaysia Wave 2)
SPSS	Statistical Package Science Social
SD	Standard Deviation

M	Mean
VAF	Variance Accounted For
VIF	Variance Inflation Factor



CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Chapter One introduces the nature of this study by outlining the problem statement, the research objectives, and questions, as well as the hypotheses developed from the preliminary literature review. The chapter continues with the significance of this study, the research scope, its delimitations, and limitations, as well as some associated assumptions. The final part of this chapter presents the conceptual and operational definitions of the key terms relevant to this study.

1.1 Background of the Study

On an international scale, parental involvement in school has long been heralded as one of the key predictors of school effectiveness and school improvement. Parental involvement is part of the school system, specifically as a sub-system of school-community relations which has a vital role in children's education and socioemotional development (Đurišić & Bunijevac, 2017; Ghani, 2014; Rutter & Maughan, 2002; Shannon & Bylsma, 2007; Zamir, 2020). Not merely confined to school, the learning process also occurs at home and in the community (Epstein et al., 2018; Kim, 2019). Nevertheless, there is considerable variation in the ways that school manage their relationships with parents, as well as variation in what parents themselves view as important for involvement with their children's schooling.

In the 1980s, studies pertaining to parental involvement were conducted as part of the school effectiveness movement. Parental involvement was listed as one of the twelve main components identified in "effective schooling" by Mortimore and his associates (School Matters, Open Books Publishing, 1988 as cited in Gálvez & Tarrés, 2017, p. 94). Since then, research work on parental involvement began to expand prominently as the role of school to involve and assist parents in their children's scholastic learning and school matters turned to be a significant characteristic of a successful partnership. Additionally, the Malaysia Education Blueprint (MEB) 2013-2025, which was launched in 2012, has imbued schools with new responsibilities primarily to elevate the national education system based on a set of eleven elements listed in the blueprint. One of these elements emphasises on the involvement of parents and community-based stakeholders in schools that places students' academic success and support system into the limelight (MEB 2013-2025 Annual Report 2013; 2014; Government Transformation Programme [GTP] Annual Report 2013, 2014). Schools are geared to have substantially greater responsibilities and authority to run their academic operations based on the needs of students, apart from involving parents, community, and private sectors to improve the quality of the education.

Progressively, parental involvement programmes are prolific in school organisations, along with new endless initiatives constantly devised by policy makers and educationists. Subsequently, in 2013, 'SARANA IbuBapa' and 'SARANA Sekolah' toolkits were launched by the MoE under GTP 2.0 with the aim of increasing parental involvement across schools. Participating schools that meet the specific criteria are awarded with 'Excellent Parents Teacher Association' (PTA) (see Appendix A1), wherein achieving such recognition is a pride for each school. Accordingly, many studies have highlighted that the collaboration between schools and parents has a beneficial influence not only for the students, but also for the families and schools (Ellis, Morgan, & Reid, 2013; Gálvez & Tarrés, 2017; Helgøy & Homme, 2017; Islam, 2019; Kandasamy, Hutagalung, Abdul Razak, & Md Isa, 2016; Lloyd-Smith & Baron, 2010; Omar & Esa, 2009). Therefore, a supportive and healthy relationship between school and parents emphasises on the importance of the active role played by parents in their children's social and cognitive learning.

Nevertheless, the efforts to increase parental involvement in secondary schools in Malaysia appear to be perplexing due to the low importance given to the role of parents as co-partners in the learning process (Rode & Wong, 2016; Seng, Hanafi, & Taslikhan, 2016). Besides, prior studies have shown lack of parental involvement activities required in secondary schools (Hashim, Syed Hassan, Mansur, & Badzis, 2015; Yusof, Zakaria, & Ahmad, 2013; Zakaria, Hasim, Mohd Salleh, & Mohd Yusoff, 2013). This is mainly because most parents are unaware of the ways to guide their children's learning process and less involvement in school-initiated parental involvement programmes (Mahamud, Che Hassan, & Mohd Fakhruddin, 2018; Ramalingam, Maniam, & Karuppanan, 2019; Seng et al., 2016).

Previous studies have pointed out that parental involvement has the tendency to decrease throughout middle and secondary schools (Abdullah, Ismail, & Omar, 2015; Seng et al., 2016; Zakaria et al., 2013) as parents feel less confident when the subject matters become more challenging (Ab Latif & Abdullah, 2016; Zakaria et al., 2013), less initiatives from schools to overcome parental involvement barriers (Abdullah et al., 2015) and adolescence venture is more independent (Rode & Wong, 2016; Seng et al., 2016). Vellymalay (2012a) described that not only the socioeconomic status (SES) of parents influenced the level of involvement, but the collaboration of school also has a major role in increasing the level of parental involvement in schools. Omar and Esa (2009) asserted that schools ought to have strong and friendly relationships with parents, as the accomplishment of the national education system relies on how well these elements support and complement each other towards the success of students. Thus, this study takes into accounts these complexities by determining the school-based factors that foster the involvement of parents in secondary schools.

In keeping with the pace, many studies have related the focus of transformational leadership practices in schools (Balyer, 2012; Ghavifekr, Amy, Hee, & Tan, 2014; Md Nasir & Sin, 2016) with creative leadership practices in

an organisational perspective (Kuan, 2012; Petrie, 2014; Phimkoh, Tesaputa, & Somprach, 2015). Although some scholars reckon the magnitude of creative leadership in schools (Botha, 2013; Jarvis, 2015; Stoll & Temperley, 2009; Zhang, Siribanpitak, & Charoenkul, 2020), only a handful have explored this area within the context of educational organisation, especially in parental involvement. Specifically, principals must be able to identify problems that lurk in schools and address them accordingly. This involves expertise, analytic thinking, problem solving, and decision making from the principal's stance (Botha, 2013; Jarvis, 2015; Mohd Dom et al., 2019; Phimkoh et al., 2015; Zhang et al., 2020). These perceptual measures leadership attributes and were better predictors for creative performance, group interactions, creative solutions, innovative idea generation, and granted autonomy (Hughes, Lee, Tian, Newman, & Legood, 2018; Mumford & Hemlin, 2017). Given these claims, it emphasises the need for principals to have practical expertise and incorporate problem-solving skills as powerful tool on group performance such as encouraging teachers' interaction with parents, supporting parental involvement programmes to tackle uprising issues and reaching out for opportunities in every walk of school life. Jones and his peers (2015) opined that some of the main concerns among Malaysian principals are to re-skill new practices and to deploy effective strategies that drive students' outcomes. Hence, it is essential to scrutinise principals' creativity competencies in promoting parental involvement in their children's education.

Further, a growing number of studies also have highlighted the role of school to encourage parental involvement in school by adhering to Epstein's six types of parental involvement practices (Dotterer & Wehrspann, 2016; Gálvez & Tarrés, 2017; Park & Holloway, 2018; Thompson et al., 2014; Yulianti, Denessen, Droop, & Veerman, 2019), namely: parenting, communication, volunteer, home involvement, decision-making, and collaboration with the community. It is important for schools to reinforce their efforts by recognising, respecting, and supporting parental involvement in their children's learning process. Epstein's (2010) typology, which is widely acknowledged as school-parent-community framework in schools, has been adopted by educationists, policy makers, university researchers, and agencies to advance the research domain pertaining to parental involvement in pre-school, elementary, middle, and high schools (Hamlin & Flessa, 2016; Lusse, Notten, & Engbersen, 2019; Hashim et al., 2015; Yulianti et al., 2019). Epstein's (2010) six typology of parental involvement practices have been applied to explore the roles of schools in educating and informing parents both on school-based and home-based learning activities. Collaborative school practices reflect the '*SARANA Sekolah*' (school-based) and '*SARANA Ibumama*' (home-based) toolkits. Such legislations have made school practices to engage parents based on a voluntary goal for each school across the country. It is crucial to grasp the details of collaborative school practices as a determinant factor of parental involvement in secondary schools.

Adding on, multiple studies have suggested that for schools to successfully form partnerships with parents, a positive school climate is essential (Goldkind & Farmer, 2013; Pourrajab, Ghani, & Panahi, 2018; Ramsey, Spira, Parisi, &

Rebok, 2016; Siegel et al., 2019). School climate is the subjective experience of the quality and character of school life, as reflected in norms, goals, values, relationships, organisational structure, and methods of teaching and learning within the school (Cohen, McCabe, Michelli, & Pickeral, 2009). Nonetheless, higher level of parental involvement has been connected with overall school climate perceived by parents as safe, trustworthy, respectful, friendly, inclusive, and collaborative (Berkowitz et al., 2017a; Goldkind & Farmer, 2013; Ramsey et al., 2016). Meanwhile, disengaged parents have cited a negative school climate as a barrier to their involvement in their children's learning and school (Olsen & Fuller, 2008; Hornby & Lafaele, 2011). Therefore, parental involvement is considered as an essential part of school climate as parents work together with students, teachers, school staff members, and community. Particularly, the role of parental involvement in school climate was related to student attainment and well-being (Alhosani, Singh, & Al Nahyan, 2017; Berkowitz et al., 2017a; Rosenblatt & Peeled, 2002).

The present parental involvement initiatives, including '*SARANA Sekolah*' and '*SARANA IbuBapa*' in Malaysia, have been predetermined by the fact that the MoE aspires to culminate school-parents partnership by year 2025 (MEB 2013-2025, 2013). However, paucity has been noted in studies focusing on the effective strategies and approaches to involve parents in secondary schools, when compared to primary schools in Malaysia. Similarly, Vellymalay's (2012a) pointed out that the research work on parental involvement is still inadequate to reveal the significances of parental involvement to guarantee a child's academic achievement. In a similar vein, Mahamud et al. (2018) indicated that parental involvement in school activities is not active enough, whereby this dearth stems from lack of adequate resources and proper sensitisation to issues associated with parental involvement in secondary schools. Some investigations have documented less successful school-parents partnership, thus the need to explore factors that impede the formation of a successful partnership between school and parents. For example, Ramalingam et al. (2019) discovered that the absence of effective interactions between teachers and parents led to children's progress in school was unlikely to reach their parents at home.

Apart of the initiatives mentioned above, teachers have been viewed as the linchpin between parents and school that encourage and solicit parents to involve in their children's scholastic achievement and academic support (Boyd, 2015; Carpenter, Young, Bowers, & Sanders, 2016; Mohd Radzi, Abd Razak, & Mohd Sukor, 2010). In this regard, Mohd Radzi et al. (2010) emphasised on the importance of teachers' perceptions concerning parental involvement and the manner the perceptions are fortified when teachers delve and position themselves in the evidence to indicate that parental involvement agendas indeed invigorate students' outcomes. Teachers' beliefs, opinions, and prior experiences may equip their readiness to understand and to encourage parental involvement as an approach to enhance school achievement (Boyd, 2015; Patte, 2011; Yulianti et al., 2019). Teachers' understanding on parental involvement may silhouette their preconceptions that serve important purposes and value of the programmes initiated by the Government.

Despite the vast literature on parental involvement within the context of education, Mahamud et al. (2018) and Seng et al. (2016) pointed out that studies on parental involvement in secondary schools are still inadequate and relatively untapped, thus the need to further exemplify the school-initiated based factors on parental involvement to guarantee a child's academic achievement. Having that said, this present study determined the crucial school factors that could improve parental involvement in Malaysian secondary schools in the context of educational administration. Grounded with System Theory supported by Overlapping Sphere Theory, this study offers empirical evidence on parental involvement in secondary schools in Malaysia from the viewpoint of teachers.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

Within the context of school as an open system in educational administration perspectives, studies that have looked more deeply into the development of children's education have highlighted parental involvement as an integral indicator for school effectiveness (Ghani, 2014; Rutter & Maughan, 2002; Shannon & Bylsma, 2007). While the increase in the number of empirical studies on parental involvement is encouraging, nevertheless, the lack of progress on the theoretical front is disconcerting especially in the context of educational administration on how schools actually function in reaching out to parents throughout the process made up of subsystems that interact to convert inputs (constraints, such as expectations of parents, requirements of school policies, values, and social norms) into outputs (school-community relations such as balancing the needs of parents' vis-à-vis educators' professional autonomy).

In Malaysia, the involvement of parents in school is channelled through Parents Teachers Association (PTA) and Parents Support Groups (PSG) (Aziz, 2016; Ismail & Abdullah, 2013; Mohd. Satar, Zakaria, & Ishak, 2020). Nevertheless, parents have little influence on express opinions or initiatives in parallel with school's vision (Simon, 2017; Kandasamy et al., 2016). This is because many schools face difficulties establishing relationships with parents (Cheong, Hill, Leong, Zhang, & Zhang, 2018; Zakaria et al., 2013). For example, influence of parents from privileged backgrounds might cause discomfort for schools and teachers as parents tend to act as customers. The most compelling evidence chronology in the context of parental involvement is that issues of communication and collaboration present in teacher-parent relationships (Mohamed Nor & Mohd Yasin, 2018; Hussein, Shariff, & Mantoro, 2017; Ramalingam et al., 2019; Yusof et al., 2013). School-parents' partnerships are primarily unidirectional, instead of reciprocal and bidirectional, which are required to foster collaborative relationships among school, teachers, and parents. For example, parents might not check on the school messages that were uploaded on the school's social website or portal regularly or provide feedback despite having the teacher's or school's contact information.

Despite the increment of parental involvement in school, by the same token, parental involvement in school activities across the country has yet to reach satisfactory and must be improved (Aziz, 2016; Kandasamy et al., 2016; The Star Online, 2018). However, there have been relatively less efforts to apply from educational administration context to examine school as an open system in the level of interrelationships among community structures of school administration especially the effectiveness of parental involvement in school-related matters which influences children's education. Little is known about the extent to which institutional factors of school (Mohd. Satar et al., 2020) as an open system account for ways to increase parental involvement in secondary schools. Accordingly, Patel (2014) conducted a survey for Institute for Democracy and Economic Affairs (IDEAS) claimed that basically, parents viewed their role of involvement only to discuss their children's academic performance. Hence, school and parents need to recognise the importance of their distinctive role in improving the disputes linked with education. Numerous studies have explored the parental role towards students' achievement, but little attention is given to the subject on ways to facilitate parental involvement in secondary schools (Mahamud et al., 2018; Yulianti et al., 2019). Until recently, there is less reliable evidence on the crucial factors that influence parental involvement in secondary schools.

Albeit new, the concept of parental involvement in Malaysia is gaining its momentum. When compared to the western practices, local studies may not be able to form the western practices completely due to variance in educational settings (Yamamoto et al., 2016). Nevertheless, their practices may be modified to suit the values of different cultural systems, as practiced in Malaysia (Mahamud et al., 2018; Ramalingam et al., 2019). Relatively, there has been little quantitative analysis on how parental involvement is enacted and realised in Malaysian secondary schools based on teacher's perceptions. As such, this study investigated these problems by analysing the literature to identify the determinant school-based factors of parental involvement in secondary school. Owing to the matter, this study incorporated principals' creativity competencies, collaborative school practices and school climate to further comprehend parental involvement in secondary school. This study also has represented collaborative school practices as the mediation effect variable that intervenes between principals' creativity competencies and parental involvement. In doing so, this study substantiated System Theory relating to parental involvement in the context of educational administration. The insights gained from the study outcomes should facilitate parental involvement in Malaysian secondary schools.

1.3 Research Objectives

The general objective of this study is to assess the factors that influence parental involvement from teachers' perceptions in Malaysian secondary schools. This primary research objective is fragmented into several specific objectives, as listed in the following:

- RO1: To determine the extent of parental involvement, principals' creativity competencies, collaborative school practices and school climate in secondary schools.
- RO2: To determine the influence of principals' creativity competencies on parental involvement.
- RO3: To determine the influence of collaborative school practices on parental involvement.
- RO4: To determine the influence of school climate on parental involvement.
- RO5: To determine the mediating effect of collaborative school practices on the relationship between principals' creativity competencies and parental involvement.

1.4 Research Question

The research question was formulated based on research objective one, as given below:

- RQ1: What is the level of parental involvement, principals' creativity competencies, collaborative school practices and school climate in secondary schools?

1.5 Research Hypotheses

The research hypotheses were devised based on the literature review depicted in Chapter Two. In precise, this study addresses four hypotheses based on research objectives two until five of this study. The following hypotheses are presented individually to represent each variable studied.

- H1: Principals' creativity competencies have a significant influence on parental involvement in Malaysian secondary schools.
- H2: Collaborative school practices have a significant influence on parental involvement in Malaysian secondary schools.

- H3: School climate has a significant influence on parental involvement in Malaysian secondary schools.
- H4: Collaborative school practices mediate the relationship between principals' creativity competencies and parental involvement practices in Malaysian secondary schools.

1.6 Significance of the Study

This study contributes to the growing body of knowledge concerning parental involvement in Malaysian secondary school from teachers' perceptions - a topic that has been researched extensively worldwide, but little efforts has been made to examine the factors that contribute in Malaysian secondary schools. This increases the value of the study outcomes by bridging the gap towards the slowly growing educational administration literature on parental involvement in school generally and secondary school specifically. The study findings offer key messages for theoretical practical, and methodology perspectives, which significantly contribute to the body of knowledge in several ways.

1.6.1 Theoretical Significance

From the theoretical point of view, this present study offers theoretical foundation to formulate the research framework.

In contrast to most previous studies that have focused on parental involvement in sociological perspectives, this research seeks to provide a more robust theoretical knowledge of parental involvement in secondary schools, precisely in educational administration perspectives on ways schools approaches parents as a partnership whereby school and parents will achieve an equilibrium approach by feeling valued and recognised. So far, the dearth of educational studies has proven the correlations among principals' creativity competencies, collaboration school practices and school climate towards facilitating parental involvement in secondary schools. The research model in this study helps in extending the body of knowledge by adopting appropriate practices to encourage parental involvement in secondary schools. The research model of this study supports schools and organisations in engaging parents in a fun and interactive way but with maximum benefits.

The contributions of this study are manifold. First, the researcher integrates relevant and essential theories by introducing the variables as the determining factors to enhance parental involvement in school, namely, i) principals' creativity competencies - Generativity Theory (Epstein, 1999), ii) collaboration school practices - Six Types of Parental Involvement Practices based on Overlapping Spheres Theory (Epstein, 2010; Epstein et al., 2018), and iii) school climate - Ecological Theory (Bronfenbrenner, 1977). The focal point is to

develop the proposed model for examining key factors influencing parental involvement in the context of Educational Administration field. The integration of these theories will provide a comprehensive results and more holistic analysis of parental involvement in secondary schools.

Second, many studies regarding parental involvement in school tend to focus more on psychological perspectives, such parents or familial relationship with children (e.g. Hanafi, Yaakub, & Awang Hashim, 2002; Wang & Sheikh-Khalil, 2014; Zakaria et al., 2013), influence of parents' socioeconomic or demographic variables (e.g. Barg, 2019; Vellamallay, 2012b; 2012c), parents' parenting skills in home learning (e.g. Ab Latif & Abdullah, 2016; Hanafi, 2004), parents' motivational factors (e.g. Green, Walker, Hoover-Dempsey, & Sandler, 2007; Omar, Ahmad, Hassan, & Roslan, 2017), and barriers of parental involvement (e.g. Hornby & Lafaele, 2011; Hornby & Blackwell, 2018). Therefore, this study bridges the gap of parental involvement in secondary schools from the stance of educational administration.

In particular, the key antecedents and consequences of System Theory (Lunenburg & Ornstein, 2011) that measures the inter-relationship interactions and observes discrete functions components in school settings are examined. There is no doubt about the effects of System Theory factors on school-community relations as outcome, yet scholars have called for further research into factors that contribute towards promoting parental involvement in secondary schools (Wilder, 2014; Zolkoski, Sayman, & Lewis-Chiu, 2018). This study also contributes to the growing body of knowledge in System Theory by extending the elements of school-community relations through determining the association between parental involvement as the antecedents for effective partnership between school and home to express the importance of education.

Third, the study had tested a new variable (principals' creativity competencies) and developed a framework based on theoretical support of Generativity Theory. Within the relational sphere of parental involvement in schools, scholars also have concentrated on school leaders as supportive pillars to promote school-parent partnership (Epstein & Sheldon, 2019; Jeynes, 2018; Thompson, Gillis, Fairman, & Mason, 2014; Povey et al., 2016). According to Barr and Saltmarsh (2014), the central role of a school leader in facilitating parental involvement is through principal's leadership style, communication, attitudes, and expectations. Therefore, based on Barr and Saltmarsh's (2014) notion, school leaders play an essential role in school-initiated programmes to improve school-parent collaboration. While school leaders are being held accountable, unrestrained surrounding that magnifies school improvement demands principals to lead and manage both creatively and idealistically (Jones et al., 2015; Puccio, Mance, & Murdock, 2011). Research about leadership towards fostering parental involvement has been mostly restricted to limited comparisons of shared and collaborative leadership. So far, however, there has been little discussion about principals' creativity competencies towards fostering parental involvement.

Most importantly, the findings of this study towards the applicability and effectiveness of principals' creativity competencies, together with collaborative school practices and school climate as multi-dimensional facets can be very beneficial for secondary school administrators to gauge, scrutinise, and assess plausible factors that contribute towards improving the extent of parental involvement in their schools. Taking hold of the existing school-parents partnership and evaluating those settings that lead to active and sustained parental involvement practices are indeed essential. This requires effective application of school administrators to equip parents and teachers with knowledge of specific areas, as well as to promote meaningful learning through professional collaboration. Also, this study elicits the suitability of schools to expand their horizons by sharpening their present strategies in involving parents as part of the school community.

1.6.2 Practical Significance

From the practical point of view, the need for parental involvement, especially as it pertains to students' academic, emotional, and social development, has become more imperative since the past few years. However, a pressing need is present to further explore into the educational administration perspectives on its way of implementations since most schools execute a considerable scheme devised by the MoE towards enhancing and supplementing parental involvement practices at schools. As such, this study offers an exciting opportunity to enhance parental involvement in secondary schools by delving how teachers' perceptions build their value of school-initiated programmes could create awareness of the underlying influences the teachers have on such programmes. Similarly, these programmes able to assist teachers to obtain the required professional competency to support the promotion of parental involvement through "practising parent outreach, establishing a relationship with parents, creating a positive classroom climate, teaching to involve parents, and making the community school connection" (Lewis, Kim, & Bey, 2011, p. 226).

The research model of this study can be mapped on *SARANA* toolkits and MEB by working alongside on how principals' creativity competencies manage the challenges and transitions associated with the stages of the creative process in a collaborative context especially on ways to approach parents through school-initiated programmes and fostering welcoming atmosphere. In contrasting *SARANA Sekolah* (2013) toolkits with the categories of collaborative school practices derived from Epstein's typology, *SARANA Sekolah* toolkits concealed prominent school-identified areas of need to formulate good relationships with parents. The welfare and basic parenting skills, for instance, were subsumed under *SARANA Sekolah*'s relatively vague category. Scholars have also identified the need to redefine how school-initiated effort is understood by placing greater emphasis on aspects of parenting (Jeynes, 2012; Mohd Satar et al., 2020). Therefore, the findings of this study can be used to help and support parents implement positive behaviour management strategies within the home (e.g., spending quality with

their children on home-based learning), as well as parenting groups through multiagency interaction which are the focal points highlighted in Shift 9 of MEB.

Apart from highlighting the essential roles of school principals in involving parents, this study may assist school principals to embrace creativity competencies in their leadership approach. It is indeed an eye opener for school leaders to cultivate their leadership practices in their daily role to direct changes, cultivate problem skills, and execute them. Within the present school settings, conflict is a potential catalyst for organisations to improve as the underlying stress demands in favour of change more palatable for many stakeholders in school (Jones et al., 2015). Therefore, it is important for principals to navigate as a push factor between school and parents, especially in planning, developing, monitoring, and evaluating both initiatives and strategies taken by schools to enhance parental involvement and to maintain unity between school community and stakeholders.

The relations between school administrators, teachers, parents, and students, school rules, school safety, and expectations are central to the realisation of a positive climate (Grazia & Molinari, 2020). School community relations may suit accordingly and understand better on the school operations especially towards establishing school-home partnerships, besides valuing both the quality and the characters of school life. Teachers, school personnel, and parents are all well prepared in assisting each other on issues related to students' academic, disciplinary issues, volunteerism, school governance, and opportunities provided by the community. This study paves a clear path to schools, teachers, and parents on ways to augment the partnership for the benefit of the children, thus directing the way towards a collaborative culture. This may be realised by giving importance to school climate, mainly because poor school climate is unable to aid schools in achieving their goals. This fosters and facilitates meaningful involvement for parents in Malaysian secondary schools based on the study outcomes, especially to enhance their practices or norms without neglecting other related factors in facilitating parental involvement.

Accordingly, this study adds value for future researchers. This study provides empirical support on the determinants that influence parental involvement in secondary schools based on teachers' perceptions. The research output serves as an evidential base by placing the relevant policies (e.g., MEB 2013-2015 and SARANA toolkits) into practice and by ensuring that the implementation of these policies goes as planned. The framework of this study sheds light on the problems faced by practitioners and educationists to enhance the present practices in secondary schools. The study outcomes may generate further discussion on the reform taken and updates on the extent of practices implied by the secondary schools to improve the existing policies or practices in amplifying the involvement of parents in secondary schools. This study provides an exposure to future researchers to weigh in the creativity element in leadership practices, the importance of collaborative school practices as an intervening variable and engaging school climate to tackle uprising issues intended for planning, preparing, and implementing

programmes to enhance the participation of parents as school partners in future.

1.6.3 Methodological Significance

From the methodology perspective, the Structural Equation Modelling (SEM) analysis was employed to confirm the existing relationships of the determinants. This study validated and explored the existing correlations among principals' creativity competencies, collaborative school practices and school climate towards parental involvement. However, some conformity of parental involvement may increase in three ways. First, principals' creativity competencies set the tone for connecting parents with support and resources, besides enlisting the effort taken by the school in creative and meaningful ways to bridge the school-home relationship (e.g. Botha, 2013; Mohd Dom et al., 2019; Thompson et al., 2014). Second, collaborative school practices are an important factor in ascertaining that the efforts or approaches taken by schools to engage parents in school (Gálvez & Tarrés, 2017), whereby collaborative school practices serve as a mediator between principals' creativity competencies and parental involvement (Saltmarsh, Barr, & Chapman, 2015; Lazaridou & Kassida, 2015; Lloyd-Smith & Baron, 2010). Lastly, in order for school leaders to successfully involve parents in school activities, school climate has a crucial role in creating desirable environment (Pourrajab, Roustae, Talebloo, Kasmaienezhadfar, & Ghani, 2015) to foster parental involvement in secondary schools. This strengthens the methodology of past study with a more comprehensive procedure by acknowledging the significance of parents as part of the school community, as well as the need to establish and sustain a positive parents-school correlation.

As a conclusion, this study determined the contribution of principals' creativity competencies, collaborative school practices and school climate as potent determinants that influence parental involvement in secondary schools based on teachers' perceptions. Thus, the proposed model offers an important opportunity to advance the understanding of generating the suitable factors that can enhance the role of parental involvement, as stipulated by the MoE.

1.7 Scope of the Study

The unit of analysis for this study refers to regular secondary school teachers located in Peninsular Malaysia. Regular secondary schools, which are also known as national secondary schools, refer to government-owned public schools in Malaysia, with enrolment of students from Form One to Six.

1.8 Delimitations and Limitations of the Study

This study has some delimitation that must be acknowledged by the fact that the population of this study is only composed of teachers teaching in regular secondary schools located in four states across Peninsular Malaysia. This means; teachers from Boarding Schools, Special Education Secondary Schools, Vocational Secondary Schools, Religious Secondary Schools, and Private Secondary Schools were omitted from the population list. The sample of this study was randomly selected from schools located in the four main regions in Peninsular Malaysia – Perak (North region), Selangor (East region), Pahang (West region), and Johor (South region). Thus, the outcomes cannot be applied to all secondary schools in Malaysia. This is because the results may vary in terms of other external factors, such as location of schools, school resources, practices, and perceptions.

According to Henderson and Berla (1994), the most accurate determinant that influences parental involvement in school is neither income, social status of parents nor school location, but the extent to which the parents put in the effort to reach out the opportunities provided by schools and become involved as a part of the school community. This notion is supported by several scholars, including Epstein and Sheldon (2016), Ma, Shen, and Krenn (2014), as well as Semke and Sheridan (2011), in which they found no relationship between parental involvement and school locations. As such, this study had focused on the overall regular secondary schools, instead of specifying schools based on preferences area. Therefore, the study findings cannot be generalised to all schools in Malaysia.

This study employed the postal survey method for data collection. Despite assuring the credibility of data collection using a liaison person, the actual characteristics and profile of the respondents could not be validated. It is noteworthy to highlight that this study is subject to socially desirable responses due to the probability of inconsistent responses. Nevertheless, a few preventative measures were taken in adherence to the guidelines prescribed by Podsakoff, MacKenzie, Lee, and Podsakoff (2003), such as guaranteed anonymity and confidentiality of individual responses, as well as the use of different types of Likert scale to mitigate the issues of social desirability bias.

The literature depicts that school leadership is a factor that contributes towards parental involvement (Kowalski, 2010; Lazaridau & Kassida, 2015; Povey et al., 2016; Yulianti et al., 2019). Nevertheless, this study blankets a range of topics related to principals' creativity competencies to assess its relationship with parental involvement. This study does not intend to develop a theory of principals' creativity competencies but aimed at providing a new paradigm in school leadership. To do so, this study focused on Generativity Theory and had limited the depth of reviews for each specific area.

1.9 Assumptions of the Study

Several primary assumptions were weighed in. Based on the MEB 2013-2025 roadmap and SARANA toolkits (e.g., *SARANA Sekolah* (2013) and *SARANA Ibu Bapa* (2013)), this study is aware that parental involvement plays an important role in secondary schools. The independent variables selected for this study appear to be essential based on the literature review, which can contribute to parental involvement and are applicable to secondary schools in Peninsular Malaysia. This study assumed that the examination of the relationships among principals' creativity competencies, collaborative school practices and school climate would enhance parental involvement in secondary schools. It was assumed that the selected respondents fulfilled the four criteria as listed in the sampling frame prior to distribution of questionnaires and were willing to provide meaningful information accurately based on their understanding of school setting and experiences.

Henderson and Berla (1994), as well as Epstein and Sheldon (2016) asserted that the determinant factors that influence parental involvement in school is not influenced by income, social status of parents or school location, but the extent to which schools and parents put in the effort to improve the family-school connections which significantly influenced student achievement in schools. Hence, the location of school, regardless of urban or rural area, did not affect the study outcomes and it was assumed that respondents from the selected secondary schools demonstrated similar perceptions on the determinant factors that influence parental involvement.

1.10 Definitions of Terms

Several key terms related to this study are defined conceptually and operationally to elaborate on the interpretation of the constructs used within the context of this study.

1.10.1 Parental Involvement (PI)

Parental involvement refers to the extent and the nature of parental involvement in both formal and informal educational experiences of their children (Fantuzzo, McWayne, & Perry, 2004).

In this study, parental involvement was operationalised to measure the extent and the nature of parents' participation in supporting students' success, collaboration actions (e.g., providing structure at home), and displaying interest in school activities, as described in the following.

- **School-Home Interaction** dimension measures “communication behaviour between parents and school personnel about a child’s educational experiences and progress” (Fantuzzo, McWayne, & Perry, 2004, p. 467).
- **Home-based Activities** dimension measures “behaviour reflecting active promotion of a learning environment at home for children” (Fantuzzo, McWayne, & Perry, 2004, p. 467).
- **School-based Activities** dimension measures “activities and behaviours that parents engage in at school to benefit their children” (Fantuzzo, McWayne, & Perry, 2004, p. 467).

1.10.2 Principals’ Creativity Competencies (PCC)

Creativity denotes “finding innovative ways of solving problems, making novel associations between existing ideas, and producing original contributions of music, art, or literature, among other things” (Byron & Khazanchi, 2012, p. 810). Next, leadership is the reciprocal bonding shared between leaders and followers (Sharma, 2010), including the ability of inspiring team members towards their accomplishment by setting a clear vision or goals (Robbins & Judge, 2013) through refinement of human resources (Pradeep & Prabhu, 2011). Principals’ creativity competencies, also known as creative leadership behaviour, are delineated as “leading others towards the attainment of a creative outcome” (Mainemelis, Kark, & Epitropaki, 2015, p. 393). Principals’ creativity competencies are not solely about demonstrating ideas, but also the ability to create a culture where everyone can contribute ideas and feel valued (Amabile, 2017).

In this study, principals’ creativity competencies signify school principals, who encourage and implement creative solutions and strategies by ensuring that teachers work towards the goal in establishing effective parental programmes and fostering parental involvement in secondary schools. This present study measured principals’ creativity competencies by adopting the Epstein Creativity Competencies Inventory for Manager (ECCi-m) (Epstein, Kaminaka, Phan, & Uda, 2013), which contains the following eight dimensions.

- **Provide resources** - School leader provides teachers adequate resources to allow the latter to develop novel ideas.
- **Provide feedback and recognitions** - School leader provides feedback and rewards teachers for contributing to new and valuable ideas.
- **Manage Surroundings** - School leader changes the physical and social environments of teachers in school.
- **Challenge Subordinates** - School leader sets difficult and challenging tasks for teachers through the school vision without stating the conditions and boundaries.
- **Model core competencies of Creative Expressions** - School leader sets a good exemplar by managing own creativity skillfully.

- **Encourage Broadening** - School leader provides opportunities for teachers to obtain training, experience, and knowledge outside of their areas of expertise.
- **Encourage Capturing** - School leader provides opportunities, support, and training that enable teachers to preserve new ideas as they occur with appropriate resources by establishing a variety of methods and welcoming anonymous suggestion.
- **Manage teams** - School leader manages the teams by optimising creative output.

1.10.3 Collaborative School Practices (CSP)

Collaborative school practices reflect strategies, approaches, and techniques taken by schools to solicit and involve parents in children's education via school-based or home-based learning activities (Epstein & Dauber, 1991; Epstein, Sander, Simon, Salinas, Janson, & Voorhis, 2009; Gálvez & Tarrés, 2017).

In this study, collaborative school practices referred to the effort taken by schools in addressing a meaningful parental engagement in the school system with mutual benefits by educating parents, communicating school programmes, assisting and supporting parents at home, providing information volunteering activities at school, including parents as school representatives, and collaborating with the school community to assist parents in their children's education. The six types of parental involvement practices developed by Epstein et al. (2009) had been employed to tap into various activities to mobilise resources, as well as to provide parents the opportunities to involve in school. The six types of parental involvement practices are described as follows.

- **Parenting** - School assists parents with their parenting skills to establish supportive learning environment at home for children as student.
- **Communicating** - School establishes effective two-way communication platform about school programmes and progress of students.
- **Volunteering** - School identifies and involves parents as a supportive volunteer system in school.
- **Learning at home** - School creates awareness by providing adequate information and ideas for parents to assist their children with their school assignments at home.
- **Decision making** - School engages parents in decision-making, besides developing parents' leaders and representatives.
- **Collaboration with community** - School recognises and incorporates community support to reinforce school events, parental involvement practices, and student achievement.

1.10.4 School Climate (SC)

Cohen and his research teammates (2009) described school climate as an effective institution with on-going goal settings and good values that maintains interpersonal relationship, apart from aligning pedagogy practices, safety surrounding, active organisational structures, physical environment, and collaboration among stakeholders. They added that school climate is the level of satisfaction that a school provides. The internal uniqueness and actions of school personnel, teachers, parents, students, community, and stakeholders in the school organisational climate differ from one school to another.

In this study, school climate is denoted as teachers' perceptions on the quality, the flexibility, the challenges, and the uniqueness of the school environment tailored to school affairs and the community. The school climate survey was modified in the Malaysian secondary school context with permission based on the Delaware School Climate Survey for Teachers (DSCS-T) developed by Bear, Pell, Yang, & Gaskin (2014) and Bear et al. (2016). The survey, which is composed of six dimensions of school climate, is described below:

- **Teacher-Student Relations** - Assess the extent to teachers' responsiveness to the need of student support and emotional development.
- **Teacher-Staff Relations** - Assess the quality of teachers' relationships among teachers, staff, and administrators as team members in school.
- **Teacher-Parent Relations** - Assess the quality of teachers' relationships between parents' concern about their children's academic attainment and social development.
- **School Safety** - Assess the degree of teachers' views on the safety of school compound.
- **Fairness of Rules** - Assess the degree of teachers' views on the equality in school rules for all students.
- **Clarity of Expectations** - Assess the extent to school behavioural expectations and rules are made clear to students.

1.11 Summary

This chapter presents the structure of this thesis and the theme of this study. The background of research is presented, and the research problem is described. The formulated research hypotheses that incorporate research objectives are articulated. Finally, the anticipated benefits that derive from this study, the scope of study, and the inherent limitations of this study are elaborated. The next chapter takes a brief look into the literature to explore the nature of development of parental involvement within Malaysia's secondary schools, which is the primary focus of this study. The chapter depicts the literature review related to concepts embedded into the research framework and the hypotheses developed. It includes discussion on the underpinning theories of the research, as well as concepts that revolve around the relationships among parental involvement, principals' creativity competencies, collaborative school practices and school climate.

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