

A View from home:
Parent involvement in schools and
perceptions of education quality

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Why the difference?

- Research on standardised tests say SA learners are doing very poorly by international comparisons
- Parents have very positive views of SA educators and schools
- Why the disparity?



Some possible explanations:

1. SA parents don't know the truth about school quality
2. SA parents do not judge school quality in the same way as international tests
3. Some combination of these
4. ???????



Parent involvement in schools and perceptions of education quality

- Quantitative study: n= 1705

Stratified for province, geographic type, majority population group

Survey with 136 items; Demographics, Experiences of schools, perceptions of school quality, participation in schools

- Qualitative study: n=39

Approximately 1 hour telephonic interview

4 groups: high involvement, low involvement, high quality, low quality



Survey method

Approach a PSU (house):

- Is there a grade 0-12 learner here?
- Who is the parent?
- How many children grade 0-12? If more than one:
focal child chosen electronically



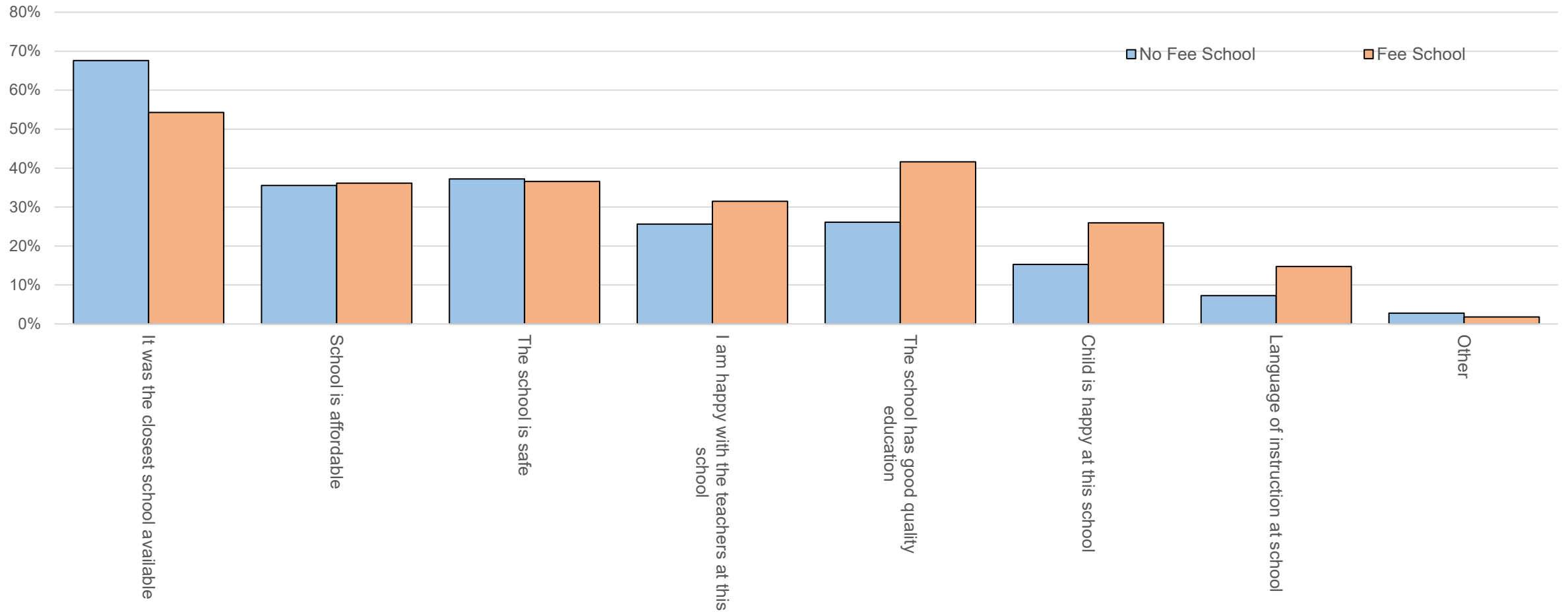
Demographic results: Who are SA parents?

- Less than 20% of parents = male
- 30% lived with romantic partner
- 21% live with their own parents; 23% live with siblings

Main source of income:

- wages and salaries (45%)
- social grants (40%).
- 78% lived in a household that received at least one social grant.

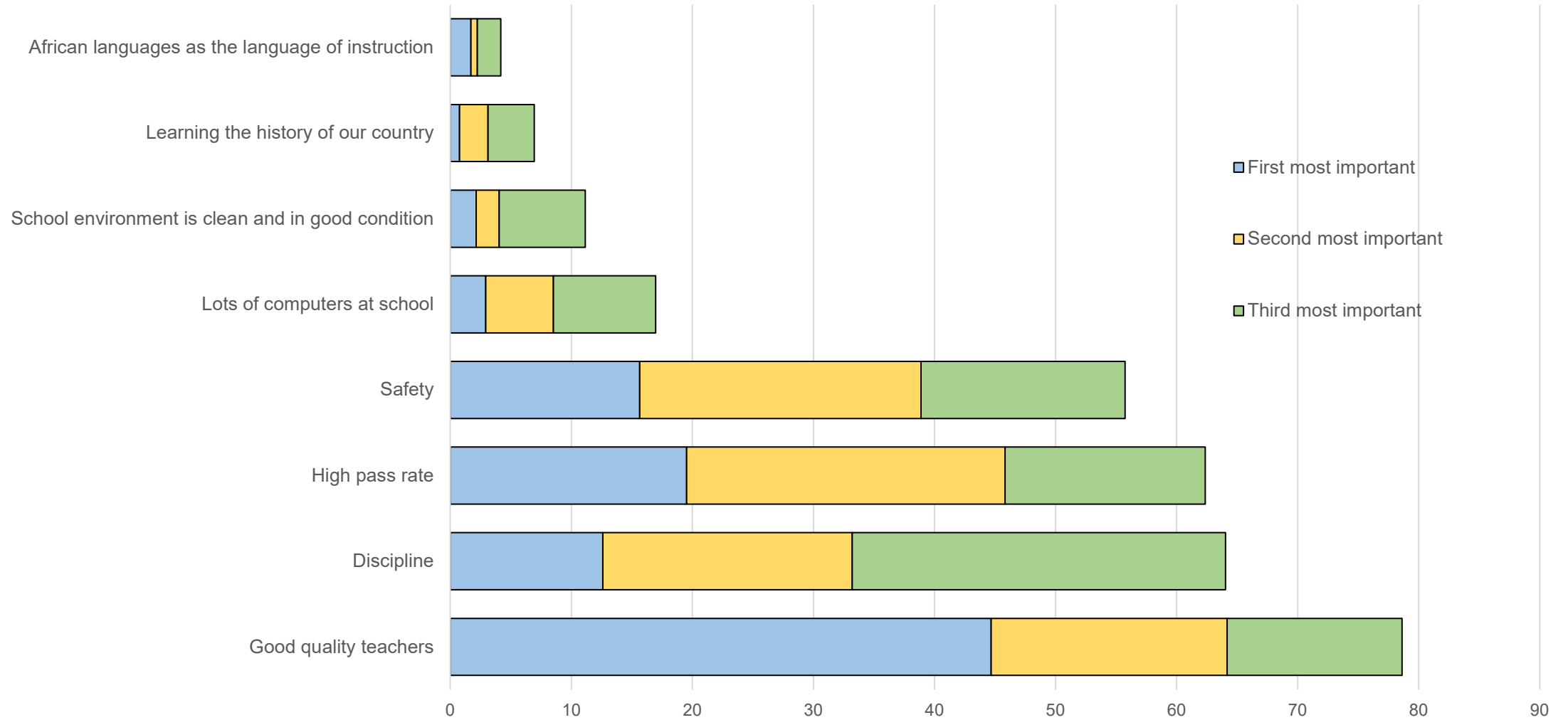
School choice



“Raising children without romantic partners, but with the help of other family members- particularly siblings- and that they have lived in their current residential neighbourhoods for extended periods, has important implications for the kinds of networks and socially supportive relationships available to parents to help with schooling.”

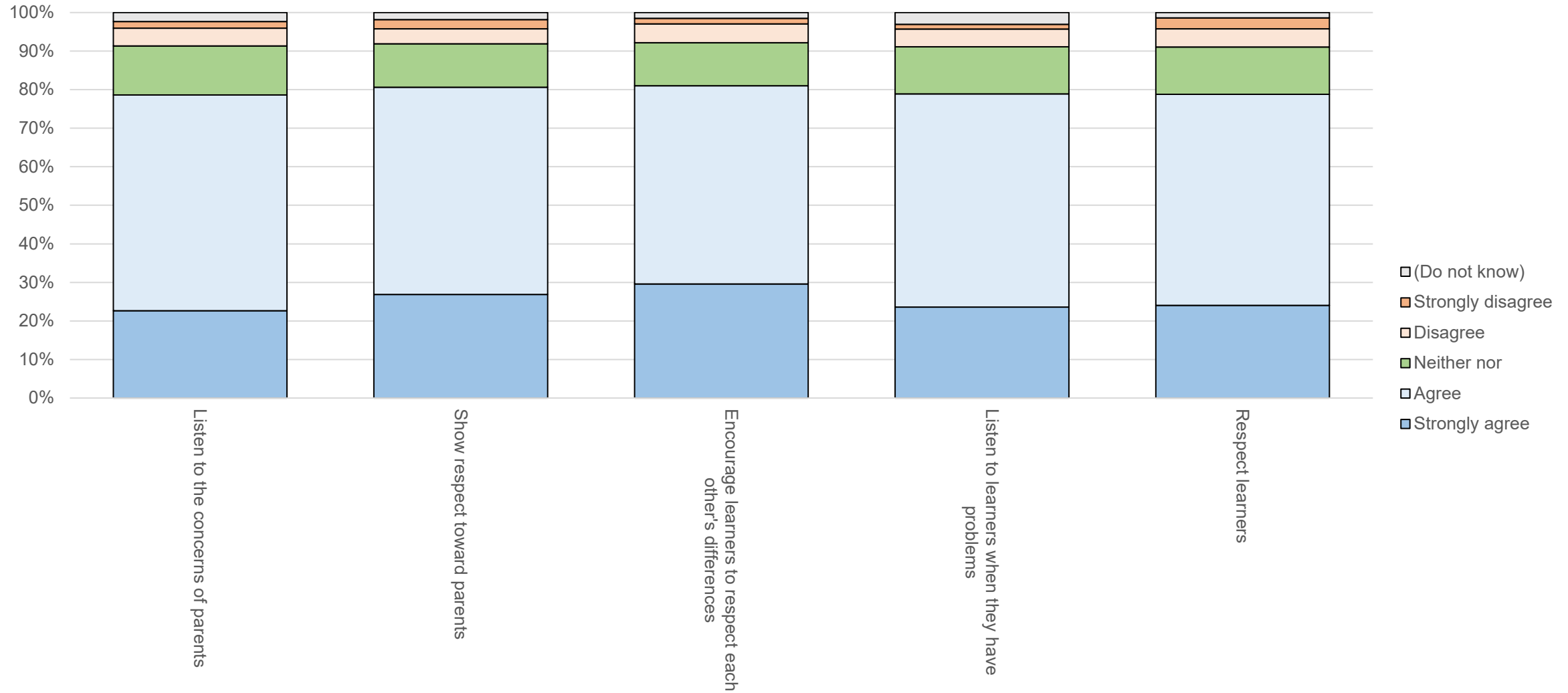
Perceptions of Quality education

What makes good quality education?

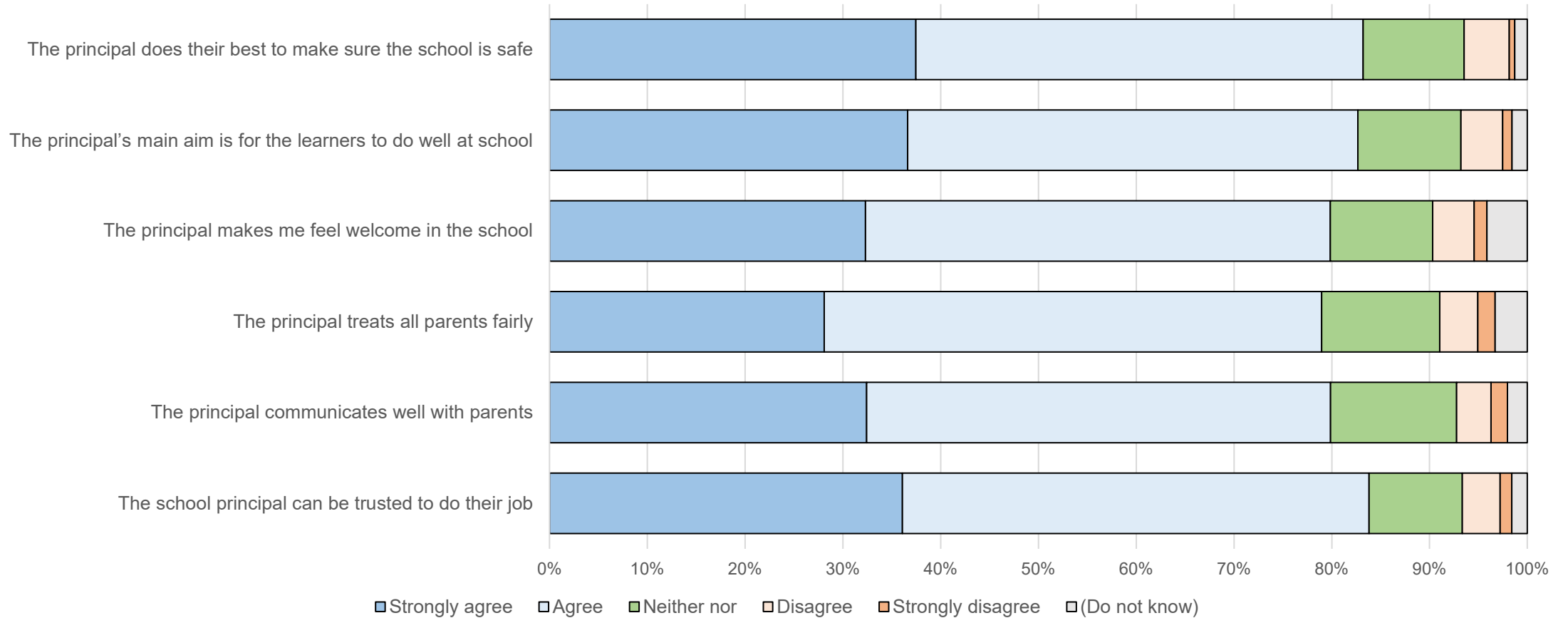


How good are principals
and teachers?

Perceptions of “Teachers at my child’s school”

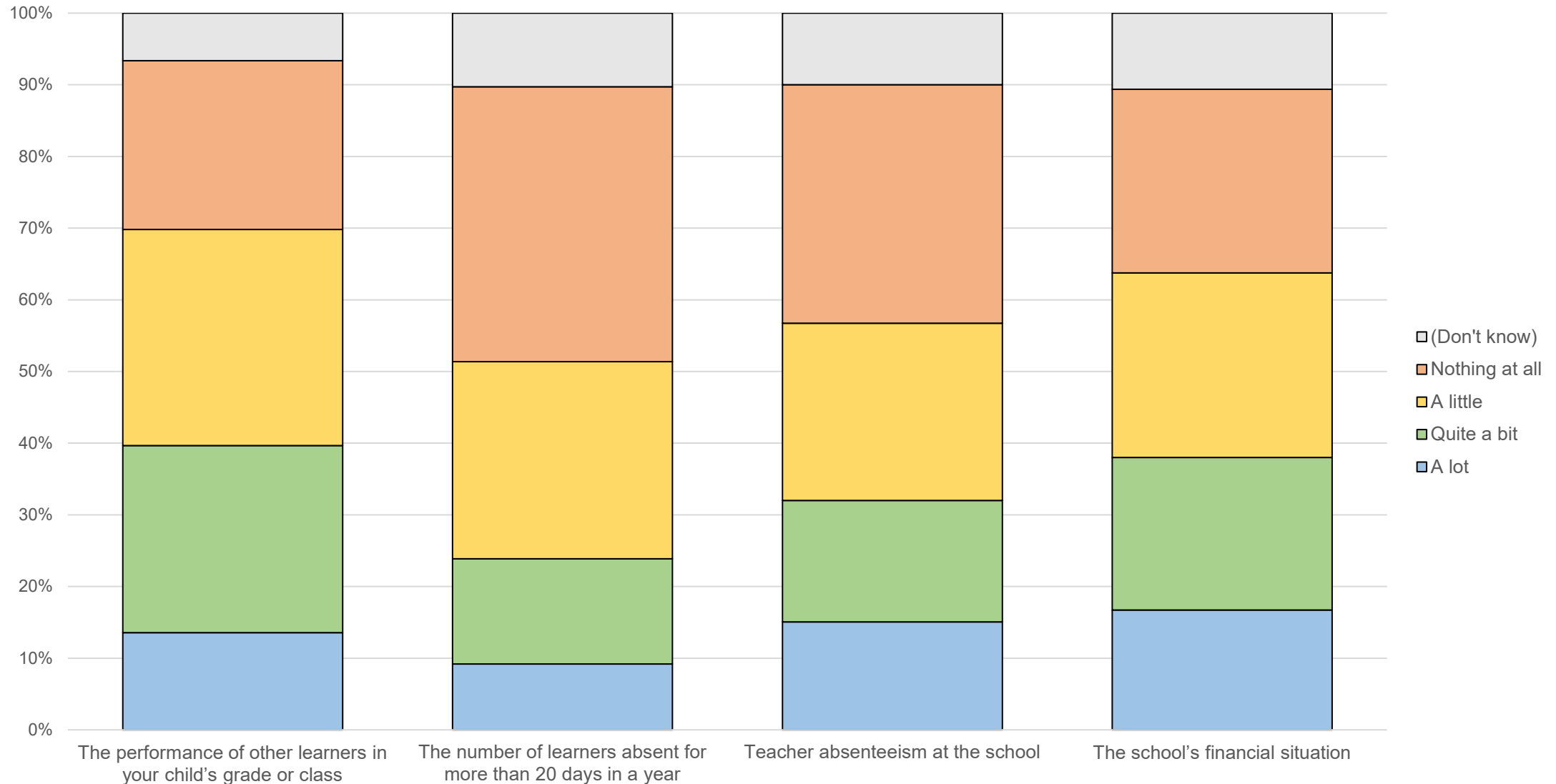


Perceptions of school principals

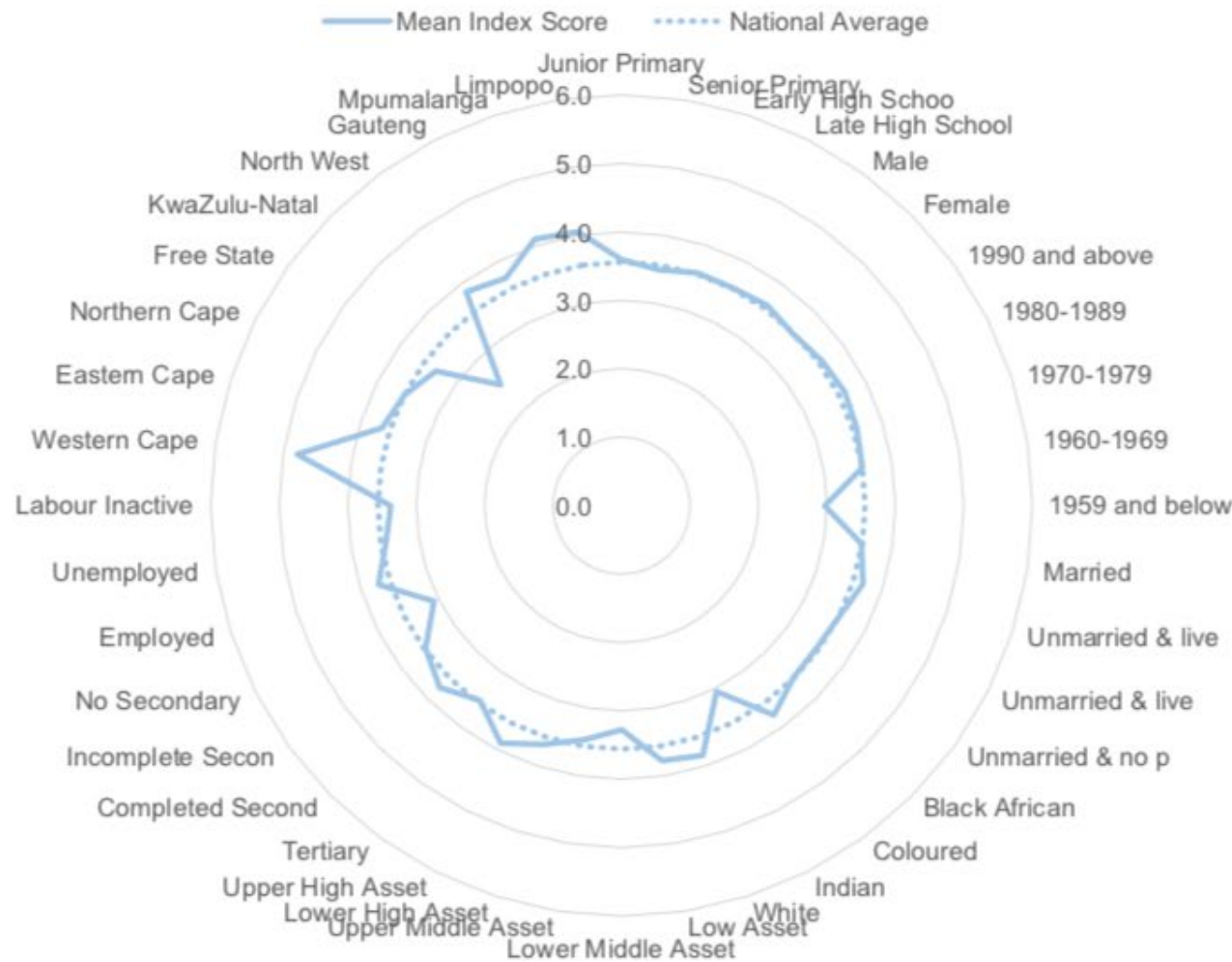


- How much do parents believe they know about their child's school?

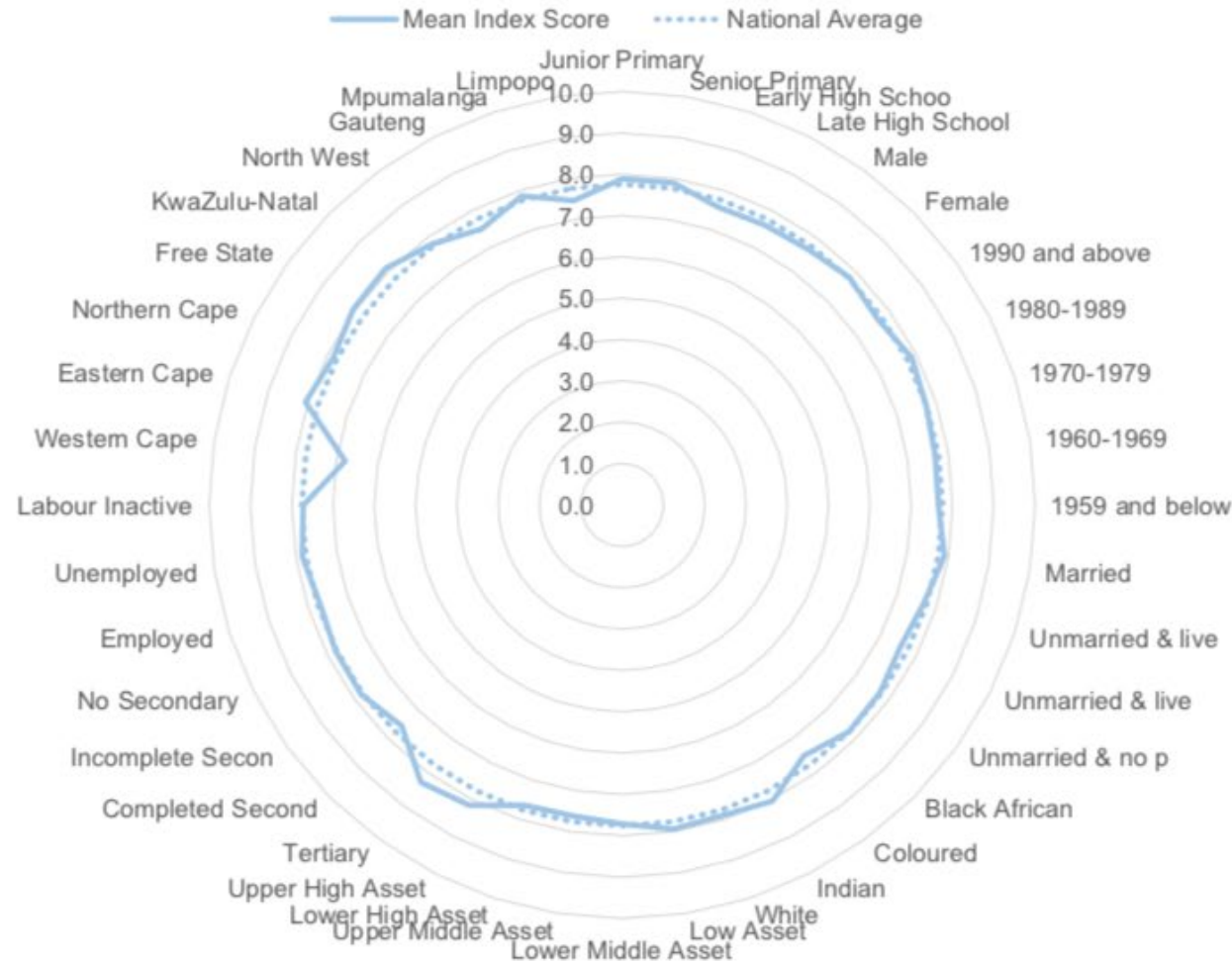
How much do you know about...?



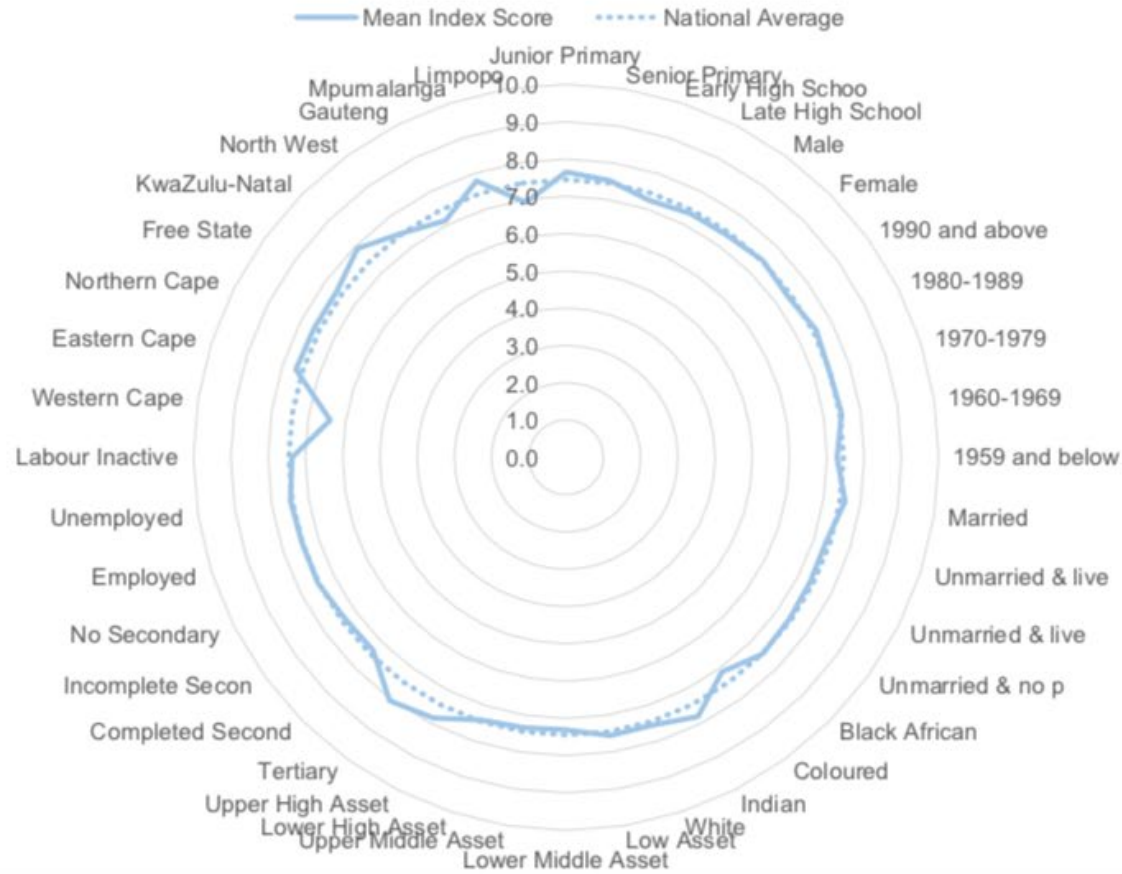
Mean School Knowledge Index (0-10), by socio-demographic attributes



Mean Principal Evaluation Index (0-10), by socio-demographic attributes



Mean Teacher Evaluation Index (0-10), by socio-demographic attributes





Survey results summary

- Good quality teachers most important for education quality
- Parents very positive about the quality of education: teachers, principals and SGBs were performing well.
- Parents admitted that their knowledge of the school was generally poor.
- If parents admit that they do not have good knowledge about their child's school, how can they know if the teachers, principal and SGB are doing a good job?
- Parents want more information about their children's school
- Parents not very interested in the performance of other learners: yet how well learners in general are doing is clearly an indicator of how good teaching and learning is and school quality more broadly.


How did the Qualitative study illuminate further?

Good Principals and teachers care for learners' well-being: not necessarily learn at all costs

- Respect and communication vital for school community inclusiveness, understanding and problem-solving through dialogue rather than violence.
- Educators that listen to problems, act like a parent, carefully explaining shortcomings, and maintain emotional composure= good educators, high-quality education.
- Parents aware of social challenges educators face, making their jobs difficult



Quality
education:
resource
provision

- Appreciation of resources: SGBs act as a social welfare organisation- uniforms, books, food
 - Resources linked to the appearance of the school and learners' comfort. Quality education: clean school, "basic" resources, and learner comfort
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Tentative conclusions

- Parents judge education quality as more than how much learnt: schools are social institutions that care for learners
- Parents believe educators are good but admit they do not know a lot about their children's schools
- Parents want more knowledge about their children's schools