PARENT INVOLVEMENT ACTIVITIES THAT LEAD TO INCREASED PARENT

PARTICIPATION: A CASE STUDY

by

Sandra Fernandez

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Abstract

There is sufficient evidence to suggest that parent involvement increases student success. Connecting the home to the school can offer a bridge that will lead to academic success for students. Parent involvement can lead to increased school success in terms of test scores. Research shows that parents are involved in many ways at the schools but when asked, they have varying definitions of what parent involvement means to them. The major hypothesis of this study is that when parents are offered more ways to participate at various times of the day, they are more inclined to be more involved in school and in turn will feel more valued as a partner in their child's education. Interviews were conducted with parents of six different schools in the Dallas, Texas area. Interviews were in both Spanish and English with parents of children at elementary and middle schools. The literature suggests that parents feel uncomfortable participating in school activities if they feel no one speaks their native language. The literature also suggests that parents who do want to participate often do not because of scheduling conflicts. The interview questions were constructed in order to determine parents' definition of parent involvement, when and how often they participate and what they would like to see schools offer to possibly increase their participation. This study presented the application of the Theory of Planned Behavior to predict and explain increased parent involvement in schools. This study also found three common themes as explanations of why and how parents participate in schools: relationships, variety of activities and time. This study serves as a call to educators and stakeholders to work together to increase parent involvement while giving the parents a voice as to what they want to see in their schools as opportunities to participate.

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Chapter 1: Introduction

The achievement gap is only getting wider between underprivileged children and middle-class children. "The achievement gap refers to the large disparity in academic achievement between specific demographics of students, for example, the performance gap between African-American and Latino students, as compared to their White and Asian peers" (National Assessment of Educational Progress, 1999). Student progress reports, standardized test scores, dropout rates, and college completion requirements indicate the numerous factors causing disparities in the achievement gap.

Gaynor (2012) posits that students who enter school at a disadvantage continue to lag in skills in comparison to their more affluent peers. Across the United States, there is an achievement gap between students who are economically disadvantaged and their more affluent peers (Morgan, 2012). An economically disadvantaged student is a member of a family that meets the federal guidelines for free or reduced-price school meals. According to the Square Meals (2018) website, the income eligibility guideline for a family of four cannot exceed $31,980 per year. These economically disadvantaged students fail to make the same rate of progress throughout their years of school, and the gap often tends to widen rather than to close (Morgan, 2012). Achievement disparities are often attributed to poverty. Children living in poverty often have smaller vocabularies and lower language skills than middle-class children (Morgan, 2012).

"Achievement gaps occur when one group of students outperforms another group and the difference in average scores for the two groups is statistically significant" (National Center for Education Statistics, 2018). According to the National Center of Education Statistics (NCES), underprivileged students of all races score up to two grade

levels below middle-class students. A Hispanic or Black eighth grade student performing at a sixth-grade reading level when compared to a White eighth grade student performing on level on a national reading test is an example of this achievement gap.

Many studies have linked parent involvement to student achievement. Fehrman, Keith, and Reimers (1987) find that parents who talk to their children about their grades and school will have a positive effect on their child's overall student achievement. Pena (2000) agrees that schools with higher parent involvement score higher on standardized tests than schools with low parent involvement. Furthermore, parent involvement has been found to positively affect student achievement. Epstein (1991) found that parent involvement is a good predictor of higher reading scores, higher writing achievement scores, and higher report card grades.

According to Pomerantz, Moorman, and Litwack (2007), bridging the gap between the schools and the home has been a long-term objective of many policymakers both at the federal and local level. "Many teachers and parents are uniting at the local level to develop programs to increase parents' involvement in their schools" (Pomerantz et al., 2007, p. 373). Research suggests that based on studies conducted nationwide there is a strong correlation between specific components of parent involvement and student academic achievement; however, even with this knowledge, there are few schools and districts that have a strong established parental involvement program in place (Epstein, 1992).

Three factors impede a better understanding of parent involvement. The first factor is how parental involvement is defined. Second is how parent involvement is measured. And the third factor that impedes understanding of parent involvement is the

question of whether it leads to enhanced student learning outcomes. A possible barrier to adequately researching the topic of parent involvement is the inconsistency of its meaning in its definition. Ramirez (2001) states that in the past the parent's role was to choose a school, establish a home environment for emotional and social development and to teach their children morals and values. Epstein defines parent involvement as a six-part framework (Epstein, 1984). These components are 1) parenting, 2) communicating, 3) volunteering, 4) learning at home, 5) decision making and 6) collaborating with the community. Epstein asserts that parents who practice all six components of this framework are considered involved parents (Epstein, 1984). This framework has been used by educators to develop school and family partnership programs.

Definitions of Parent Involvement

Pena (2000) argues that parents are more often seen as chaperones and fundraisers, given that most schools do not encourage parent involvement in the decision-making process. In defense of school administration, some parents think that involvement only means attending the social gatherings at the school (Pena, 2000). Anfara and Mertens (2008) state that parent involvement is often seen as helping with bake sales, fundraisers, attending musical performances and supporting athletic events. Lee and Bowen (2006) define parent involvement as attending parent-teacher conferences, attending performances and volunteering. It can also include helping with homework at home, structuring the home to maximize learning and asking their children about their day at school (Lee & Bowen, 2006). Zellman and Waterman (1998) state it is difficult to promote parent involvement because it can be viewed through many lenses. Carreon, Drake, and Barton (2005) agree that there is a lack of cohesion within the parent

involvement literature as it relates to the definition. Carreon et al. (2005) claim that parent involvement cannot be examined without addressing the 'what,' such as activities, as well as the 'how', such as place or time. Researchers have, however, found that parents are more involved with their child's education at home than at school. Grolnick, Benjet, Kurowski, and Apostoleris (1997) describe parent involvement in terms of parental behaviors such as giving their child breakfast, helping with homework and even holding a district board position. Jeynes (2012) says parent involvement can take many different forms. Any form of parent involvement is positive. Jeynes (2012) also suggests being a parent at home by helping with homework and ensuring a study space is also an effective form of parent involvement. Ensuring their children get to school every day is another form (Jeynes, 2012).

If schools expect that parent involvement will be greater than it is and value it (Brown & Roloff, 2015), then it can occur, but not in isolation. Accompanied with that, is the expectation that there is a viable way for it to happen. In addition, is the expectation that there is a practical way for it to happen. It is also important whether the belief exists that it can be done. Specifically, if the goal is to have one parent volunteer in the classrooms once a week, the goal is specific enough to accomplish. However, there needs to be ways to help this happen. Some can be a well-defined plan like a list of ways to first inform the parents of what the school wants. School personnel must believe that one parent a day will volunteer in each classroom for the week.

Epstein, Sanders, Simon, Salinas, Jansorn and Van Voorhis (2002) define parent engagement as parents working with schools in an effort to improve the development of their children. Engagement or involvement implies shared responsibility that links

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community agencies and schools to include parents in meaningful ways to actively support their children's learning and development. Walker, Ice, Hoover-Dempsey, and Sandler (2011) focuses on Hispanic parents and suggest that while most parents in this population value education, hold high educational aspirations for their children and believe that supporting their children's education is very important, the forms of involvement they choose may not be among those typically expected or observed by schools and teachers in many communities. If the school starts building barriers like no transportation for parents or the parents are not literate, then in all likelihood, the goal will not be accomplished (Conway, 2015). Ritblatt, Beatty, Cronan, and Ochoa (2002) conducted a study of 357 parents in the San Diego area. This study found parents considered parent involvement as meeting with other parents, attending parent-teacher conferences and attending extracurricular activities. This study also concluded that strong parent involvement in education is one of the essential factors for cognitive, social-emotional development and success of children in education (Ritblat et al., 2002).

While the definition of parent involvement is difficult to pinpoint, there is no question that challenges and barriers exist for parents to be fully involved. Currently, available literature has yet to combine parent perspectives with activities offered. Thus, the purpose of this qualitative case study is to understand how parent perspectives can change as the school offers more opportunities for the parents to participate.

Epstein's Model of Six Types of Involvement

Epstein (1984) defines parent involvement as a six-part framework. These components are parenting, communicating, volunteering, learning at home, decision making, and collaborating with the community. Epstein (1984) concluded that parenting

is strengthened when the school assists all families establish home environments to support children as students. Communicating, per Epstein (1984) is designing effective forms of school-to-home and home-to-school communications about academic programs and children's progress. Volunteering means recruiting and organizing parent help and support. Epstein (1984) suggests that learning at home happens when information and ideas are given to families about how to help students at home with homework and other curriculum-related activities, decisions and planning. Decision-making includes families as participants in school decisions which develops parent leaders and representatives. Finally, collaborating with the community is accomplished by coordinating resources and services from the community for families, students, and the school to provide services to the community.

Parent involvement has been studied and evaluated through Epstein's lens and definition by many researchers such as Baker (1998), Barnard (2004), Galindo & Sheldon (2012), Garcia-Coll (2002), Henderson & Mapp (2002), Hoover-Dempsey (1997), Jeynes (2007), Lee & Bowen (2006), Lopez & Scribner (2001), and Wilder (2014). Such a definition implies that increased parent involvement requires a change in behavior from both parents and school officials. Epstein and Dauber (1991) further argue that schools, parents and the community all work together to influence student achievement and social development. This supports a holistic approach to child development.

6 Types of Parental Involvement

Parenting	Communicating	Learning at Home

Six Types of Parental Involvement

Volunteering	Decision Making	Collaborating With Community
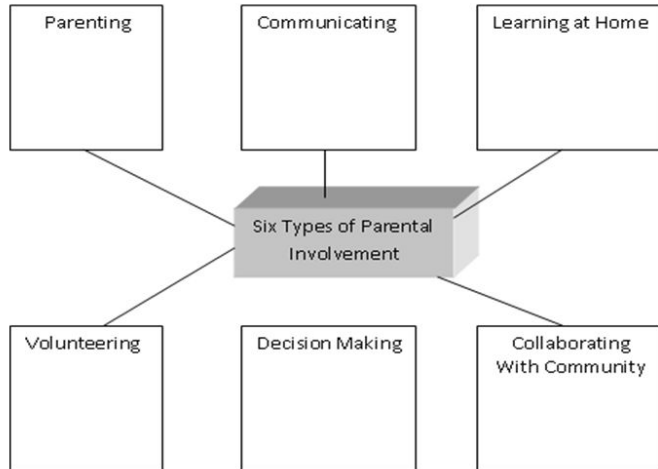
Figure 1. Epstein's (2002) Model of Parent Involvement

Rationale for Study

The available literature has focused on challenges and barriers to parent involvement as well as ideas to improve parent involvement in schools. This study is important and necessary for several reasons. First, a gap exists in the parent involvement literature where the perspectives of parents and opportunities offered are integrated. The second goal of this study is to gain an in-depth understanding from the parent's perspective of what a school can do specifically to help them feel welcome. Third, this study can help inform school administrators and site-based decision-making committees on practical ways to improve parent involvement. Finally, the study will add new knowledge to the area of parent involvement by providing a better understanding of parent feelings and perceptions based on opportunities offered or not offered.

This study will be able to be used directly by school administrators as a starting point in finding out what parent involvement activities to offer and when to offer them to maximize parent involvement on their individual campuses. This study will be useful to both elementary and middle school principals. Principals will be able to identify clear and specific strategies to address parent involvement on their campuses.

Rationale for Qualitative Methods

Qualitative research is used to understand and explain through an inquiry process. Qualitative researchers use a variety of inquiry techniques and approaches to explore a social or human problem in its natural setting (Creswell, 2012). Data gleaned from qualitative research is descriptive and detailed. The researcher can ask open-ended questions to explore and explain (Creswell, 2012). This method acknowledges the researcher as part of the process since the researcher conducts all the questions. Thus, using a qualitative methodology will allow the researcher to use interviews in a natural setting to better understand the parents' perceptions of parent involvement in their schools.

Theoretical Framework

Parental involvement in schools is an essential component of ensuring parents engage meaningfully in school programs. Schools are challenged to develop more effective ways of reaching out to parents and communicating to them the importance of being involved in their child's education. Since this research is about parent involvement in schools, this study applies Ajzen's Theory of Planned Behavior (1991). This theoretical framework shows the effects of attitudes and beliefs, norms and perceived control on certain behaviors. This model can be used, in essence, to explain and even

predict parent involvement in schools. This study will apply this theory by demonstrating ways to use the theory to develop a parent involvement plan to increase parent participation.

Statement of the Problem

Research has shown that parent involvement is important to schools. Parent involvement has been positively correlated with higher student self-esteem and better test scores (Barnard, 2004). Berger (1995) stated the main factor for success or failure in children's education is parent support. However, schools continue to struggle in the area of parent involvement. So much so that the federal government requires schools that receive Title I aid monies to have a Parent/School Compact. A Parent/School Compact is a document that explains what the school and parents can and will do to support students in their pursuit of academic achievement. There is little evidence that research has been done to integrate parent perceptions of parent involvement based on opportunities offered by the school. It is necessary to dig deeper with the parents to go beyond challenges and barriers, such as work schedules and differences of language to increase parent involvement. It is necessary to conduct a study that explores parent responses to the parent involvement phenomenon.

Research Questions

The main questions that this study aims to answer is how parent perceptions change as more opportunities to participate are offered. The study will address the questions below:

Research Question 1. How do parent perceptions about the school evolve as more parent involvement activities are offered?

Research Question 2. What types of parent involvement activities decide or inform positive parent participation such as helping with homework, volunteering and participating in local-level decision-making?

Research Question 3. What factors are associated with increased parent involvement?

Research Question 4. Why is parent involvement important?

Remainder of the Dissertation

This dissertation will be composed of five chapters. The first chapter introduced parent involvement, the rationale for the study, the rationale for selecting a qualitative method, the problem statement and the research questions. The second chapter will provide a review of the literature. Chapter Three will describe the research methods to include data collection, subsequent data analysis, potential ethical issues, limitations and the role and background of the researcher. The Chapter Four will include the results of the interviews in a descriptive rich format using emerged themes as a guide. Chapter Five will discuss the results in terms of future research, implications for practice, conclusions drawn and references.

Chapter 2: Review of the Literature

Chapter Two discusses the previous literature and theoretical framework used as the lens for explaining parent involvement. It explores the literature on the topic of parent involvement in terms of barriers and challenges both internal and external to the school setting. It highlights research on strategies that have been attempted in improving parent involvement. The literature also addresses contradictory opinions about parent involvement.

Schools often seek ways to improve student achievement. It is crucial to have a team of champions that can work together to make success possible. Ajzen's Theory of Planned Behavior asserts that these teams of champions for change can engage each other to produce better results and build a support system to on-going success (Paine & McCann, 2009). These stakeholders must be aware of the school's mission and vision and have a personal stake in the success of the school. They are comprised of the school stakeholders.

According to Paine and McCann (2009), a stakeholder is an individual or group with an interest in the success of an organization and interested in fulfilling the mission. Freeman (1984) describes a stakeholder as an individual or group of individuals that can directly influence the objectives of an organization. Stakeholders are concerned about the well-being of the school and the improvement of the school.

These individuals or groups can consist of school personnel, parents and community members. Figure 2 identifies key stakeholders in a school. According to Paine and McCann (2009), there can be internal and external stakeholders.
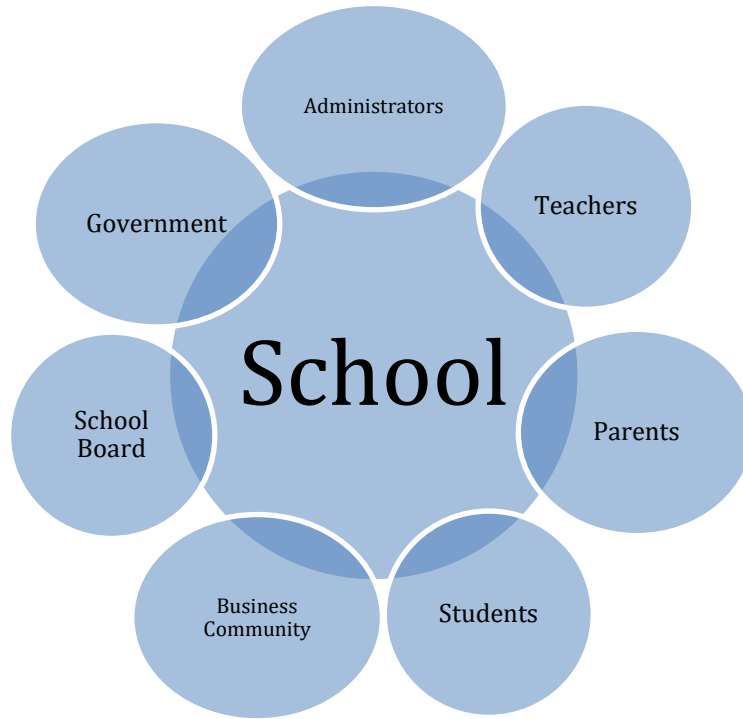
Figure 2 School Stakeholders

Internal stakeholders work within the school system like administrators, teachers, students, and school boards. Administrators within a school can be a principal, assistant principal, counselor, instructional coach or other faculty member that can make decisions on behalf of the school. Teachers include those directly in the classroom as well as teachers who provide special services such as speech and special education classes. Students include all enrolled students on a campus. The school board consists of the elected officials who have been charged with managing education services for a school district. External stakeholders work outside of the school like parents, community partners and government officials. Parents are those who have guardianship of any enrolled students in a school; including birth parents, grandparents, and legal guardians. Community partners are defined as a business or private sector organization that lends support to the school via funds, supplies, tutors or other services. Government officials

include city council members, the mayor and representatives. The collaboration between the two types of stakeholders is paramount to a successful partnership (Henderson & Mapp, 2002). Transparency of information between all stakeholders should be communicated. When all stakeholders work together, everyone benefits. Teachers have higher job satisfaction, school administrators meet district expectations, the school board fulfills its mission, students achieve, parents have pride and the community's real estate values and economic power increases (Paine & McCann, 2009).

Definition of Parent Involvement

There is a lack of cohesion as it relates to the definition of parent involvement (Carreon et al., 2005). Jeynes (2012) agreed that parent involvement can take many forms but that any form of parent involvement is positive. Helping with homework, ensuring their children get to school every day and there is a good study space should be considered parent involvement. Ritblatt, Beatty, Cronan, and Ochoa (2002) consider parent involvement as meeting with teachers, meeting with other parents and attending extra-curricular activities. Epstein et al. (2002) define parent engagement as parents being partners with school personnel to improve student achievement and overall child development. Participants in this study responded that parent involvement means being involved in their child's life or attending school activities. The participants also defined parent involvement as helping with homework, attending Parent Teacher Organization (PTO) meetings and being involved both in and out of school. These findings are consistent with the literature that parent involvement can be defined in many ways.

Ayeni (2014) and Kufi (2013) established that education is a collective task which requires the collaboration of stakeholders. Charles and Sunday (2014) found that

stakeholder participation in education-related issues led to increased accountability. Henderson, Jacob, Kernan-Schloss, and Raimondo (2004) established a link between parent involvement and children' learning. Henderson et al. (2004) argue that parent engagement can lead to increased accountability for schools. When parents work together for systemic changes, schools are more likely to focus on changes that will improve student achievement (Henderson & Mapp, 2002).

According to Berger (1991), parents have always been considered a child's first teacher. The home was a child's first classroom. As early as 1000 B.C., ancient civilizations saw the children as the future. Berger (1991) wrote that parents imparted morals and values onto their children and that all adults who touched a child's life had an impact on the child. When parents impart morals and values on their children, they expect their children will follow that example.

As early as the 19th century, parents were involved in the schools. According to the National PTA website, in the mid-1800s, the very first Parent Teacher Association (PTA) was established. The PTA was established to promote a healthy relationship between teachers and parents. According to Anfara and Mertens (2008), parents helped in the employment and dismissal of teachers and even helped prepare the school calendar. Green et al. (2007) collected information from 853 parents about parent participation to analyze the most common ways they were involved in their child's school. They found that parents were involved in PTA meetings and other school events if they had the time and when teachers and administrators invited them. The study also showed that even though time was a factor, invitations to attend increased the probability of them attending.

However, in the late 19th century, clear roles were better defined. There was a separation of duties between the home and the schools. Anfara and Mertens (2007) state that schools began to distance themselves from parents because parents did not have experience with curriculum or expertise with instruction. In the 1950s, parents were not very involved in their children's education (Anfara & Mertens, 2007). Education was left to the schools. According to Anfara and Mertens (2007), teachers taught, and they just wanted parents to be supportive of what was happening in the classroom by ensuring homework was completed and addressing conduct concerns. As the 1960s approached, the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965 was passed. This act mandated parent involvement. Title I, part of ESEA, required that parents serve on school advisory boards and participate in classroom activities. Gbadamosi and Lin (2003) found that parents wanted to be involved but did not know how to communicate their participation preferences with school personnel. Berger (1991) also found that schools struggled to engage parents. This study showed that schools worked diligently in their efforts to engage parents. Each school in the study had strategies that they employed to keep parents involved.

In the 1980s, suggestions to improve parent involvement were placed in various publications (Berger, 1991). Parents were reminded that reading begins at home. In 1994, Congress passed Goals 2000, which challenged schools to establish partnerships with parents to increase involvement in schools with decision-making as well as involving parents in support of the education process at home. With the passing of the No Child Left Behind (NCLB) Act of 2001, parent involvement is one of the six targeted areas of school improvement (NCLB Act of 2001). NCLB defines parent involvement as

"participation of parents in regular, two-way and meaningful communication involving student academic learning and other school activities" (NCLB Act of 2001). Ramirez (2001) states that presidential administrations in the late 1990s and early 2000s encouraged governmental agencies to promote and encourage parent involvement.

Currently, all schools have a parent involvement policy developed locally at their schools resulting from governmental mandates. The idea behind developing such policies is that if a school increases parent involvement then increased student achievement will follow. Schools receiving Title I funding are mandated to spend a percentage of those funds on parent involvement programs and efforts. Schools have to develop a parent involvement policy jointly with parents (NCLB Act of 2001). This policy has to describe how the school will involve parents including the development of the school-parent compact. It has very specific requirements on parental involvement that include state agencies supporting the collection and dissemination of information on effective parental involvement methods to local educational agencies and schools. Title I schools have specific measures that a school must follow. To receive Title I funds, a school must involve parents in the overall planning at the district and school levels, coordinate parent workshops, provide parental training and coordinate annual meetings for federal education programs (e.g., Head Start and Reading First). The school district must distribute an annual report card specifying how the school and district are performing as a whole. The district must also allow parents the choice to change schools if the school is not performing at an adequate level. School districts and schools must involve parents in the annual evaluation of the school and the design of parental involvement programs for parents. Schools need to have a strategy for two-way communication between the school

and the parent keeping them informed of their students' learning progress and other school activities. In addition, districts must ensure that there are opportunities for the parents to contact the school and discuss any concerns with the administration of the school site, as well (NCLB Act of 2001).

Importance of Parental Involvement

Developing parent involvement policies may be challenging if a clear definition of parent involvement has not been agreed upon. Researchers agree that parent involvement is essential in education (Baker & Soden, 1998). Children from low-income families face a higher likelihood of confronting multiple development risk factors across contexts so a positive factor, like parent involvement, is proactive (El Nokali et al., 2010).

Studies have shown that parent involvement increases student achievement and in turn increases the overall achievement of a school (Barnard, 2004). Epstein (2004) argues that parent involvement activities result in higher academic achievement by bringing all parents together, regardless of race or income. When parents are actively involved, students perform better in school, are absent less, use fewer drugs and alcohol, have higher self-esteem and have less disciplinary referrals to the school office (Henderson, 1987).

The more parents are involved, the higher the chance a student has at being successful in school. Jeynes (2007) research, which included 52 empirical studies with 300,000 participants, found a positive correlation between parent involvement and student achievement. Henderson and Berla (1994) analyzed metanalysis that showed a positive correlation between parent engagement and education exists. This analysis found

that when engagement is planned and implemented effectively, there are benefits for all involved, children, parents and school personnel. Parent's expectations for their child's academic achievement influence their involvement (Pomerantz, Moorman & Litwack, 2007).

Griffith (1998) surveyed 30,000 parents in 122 elementary schools that studied factors that predict parent involvement. This study parallels Pomerantz et al. (2007) findings as it too found that parents who had high aspirations for their children, were more involved. McWayne, Hampton, Fantuzzo, Cohen, and Sekino (2004) conducted a study on 307 low-income kindergartners and found a positive relationship between their self-reported involvement and their children's academic performance. Similarly, in a study of 281 low-income children who were followed from kindergarten through 5th grade, Dearing, Kreider, Simpkims, and Weiss (2006) found a positive correlation between the children's literacy performance and the parent's involvement in school.

Similarly, Castro et al. (2015), from a meta-analysis of 37 studies of primary and secondary schools, found that there is a strong association between families who have high expectations for their children and their children's better reading habits. Similarly, Keith et al. (1998) found that parent involvement was a strong predictor of a student's grade point average. This finding was based on the NELS (National Education Longitudinal Study) of 11,000 Latino high school students. In a study of 700 African American pre-school students in Washington D.C., Marcon (1999) found that those students whose parents were highly engaged in their education had higher scores and grades compared to students whose parents were only minimally involved or not involved at all.

Hill and Tyson (2009) conducted a meta-analysis of existing literature across 50 studies. They found that parent involvement was positively associated with parent involvement except for homework help (Tyson & Hill, 2009). Wilder (2014) also conducted a meta-synthesis across nine meta-analysis studies. The results indicated that there was a positive relationship between parent involvement and academic achievement and that this relationship was strongest if parent involvement was defined as parental expectations for academic achievement of their children (Wilder, 2009). This relationship was also found to be consistent across grade levels and ethnic groups.

Overall, the literature finds a positive correlation between parent involvement and academic achievement. Parent involvement can occur at school or at home. Even though parent involvement has been seen to be a strong predictor of student achievement, many schools still struggle to engage the parents in a positive way (Berger, 1991). The lack of parent involvement continues to be a significant concern for public schools. Parents want to be more involved in their child's education, but most do not know how (Gbadamosi & Lin, 2003).

Theoretical Framework

Ajzen developed the Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB) in 1985. This theory is the upgraded version of the Theory of Reasoned Action developed by Ajzen and Fishbein in 1980. Ajzen's Theory of Planned Behavior (1991) is a decision-making model. This model claims that behaviors depend on beliefs and attitudes, subjective norms and perceived controls. According to Ajzen, these three factors determine an intention which leads to a behavior (Figure 3). Individuals make decisions about their behavior by evaluating all three factors, and these three factors help frame the current study.
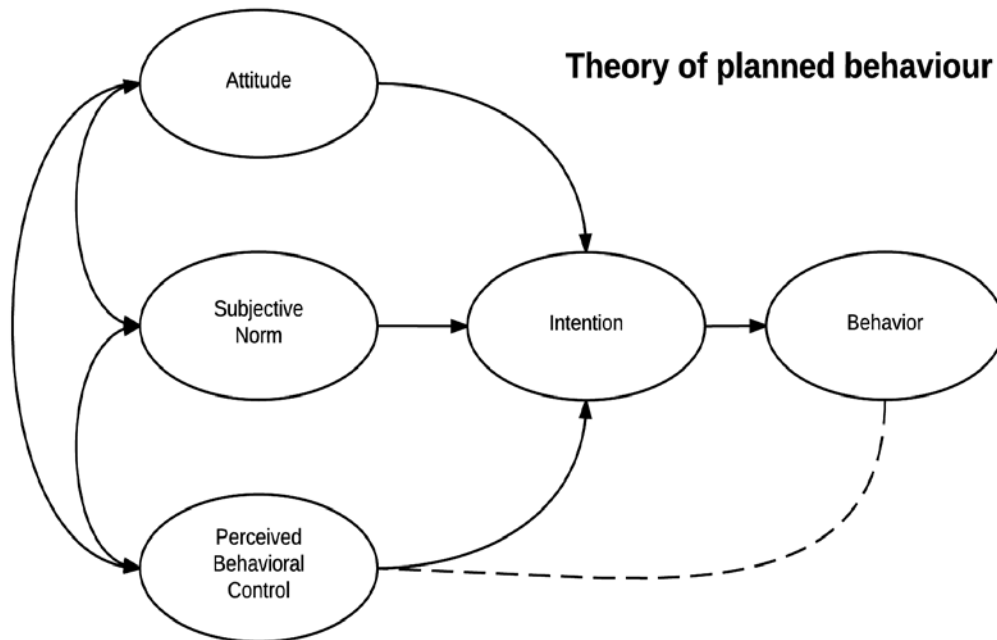
Figure 3. Ajzen's (1991) Theory of Planned Behavior

Attitudes and beliefs involve how favorable the outcome of the behavior is. Attitudes and beliefs about the importance of parent involvement or the significance of the role of parents in their child's education drive this factor. Some parents may believe that it is the school's ultimate responsibility to educate the child or that they are not educated enough to assist with their child's schooling. Other parents may feel that education is the key to success and feel that the more they are involved in all aspects of their child's life, the more successful the child will be.

Subjective norms rely on key people around an individual. The individual making the decision will decide and perform based on what these other people do and what their expectations are. In parent involvement, some parents may not know precisely what it means to be involved as a parent. Some parents may have had uninvolved parents

themselves, so they lack a model of what it looks like. Other parents may come from a culture where parent involvement in the schools is not allowed or even expected.

Perceived behavioral control involves the individual's perception of his or her ability to perform the behavior. Perceived behavioral control with the level of involvement will help determine participation in parent involvement activities. Parents identify factors that allow them to participate more like flexible work schedules or being a stay at home parent. On the other hand, parents could see time and transportation issues as barriers to their involvement.

In essence, if a parent has a positive attitude toward participating in a parent involvement event and see other parents participating, then they will be more likely to participate. This involvement is conceptualized as a form of social capital which consists of networks and connections (Turney & Kao, 2009). Social capital is the idea that involvement or participation in social groups has positive consequences for the individual and the group or community (Portes, 1998). Social capital can also be described as forming relationships which help families gain access to resources (Coleman, 1988). It is defined as the networks (friendships), norms (nodding your head to a neighbor) and trust (feeling safe) that are established through social organizations, and how these lead to civic engagement (Putnam, 1995). When parents are involved in school organizations such as the PTO, it both helps the parent navigate the school culture and supports the school. This involvement can be considered social capital and can be used to strengthen schools and communities.

External Barriers and Challenges

Some factors can impede parents from participating in parent involvement activities. Parents often claim that transportation, work schedules and a lack of daycare are issues. Ramirez (2001) explains these factors are social class factors and that parents were not able to attend functions due to having to work or not having a car. Anfara and Mertens (2008) agree with these social class factors and add that language skills, lack of knowledge and educational levels can affect parent involvement. Parents' income and education levels are positively correlated to their involvement; more education and income resulted in more participation (Eccles and Harold, 1996). "Studies show that parents' education level and availability are unrelated to their interest in participating in their child's education" (Johnson, 1997, p. 1761). Factors such as single-parent home and minority status, which are often linked to income and education level, also negatively impact parent involvement (Griffith, 1998). Sheldon (2002) agrees and adds that parental beliefs also affects parent involvement.

Teachers, parents and school administrators should unite and develop programs to increase parent involvement. The programs should address both the external and internal challenges and barriers. No one involved should expect the other to accomplish the task of increasing parent involvement alone; it needs to be a collaborative effort (Berger, 1991). Galindo and Sheldon (2012) studied a sample of over 16,000 kindergarten students from 864 schools and found that schools who try to communicate and engage families predicted higher involvement and thus, higher student achievement in reading and math. A similar study of 431 kindergarten students in China also found that parental

involvement was highly correlated with overall readiness in school (Lau, Li, & Rao, 2011) when they practiced home-based involvement.

External factors that affect parent involvement in schools are language, social networks, parents' own negative experiences, ethnicity and culture, and time.

Language. Language is a major factor in parent involvement (Anfara et al., 2008; Pena, 2000). Parents feel uncomfortable in places where their native language is not spoken or acknowledged. Pena (2000) stated that parents did not think they had to attend meetings that were not in their language as they would not be able to understand what was being discussed. In addition, Pena (2000) points out that some cultures, specifically Mexican, believe it is the teacher's responsibility to educate the child and for the parent not to intervene. In this same study of 28 Mexican American parents in a Texas elementary school, Pena (2000) found that language is a determining factor on whether parents participate in school events. Delgado-Gaitan (1991) also agrees that Spanish speaking families tend to feel isolated from school events because of language. Banks (2001) found that a language barrier can make parents feel alienated from their children's education and reduces the belief that they can help. Though schools may not intentionally isolate these families, their ill-planned activities do just that (Delgado-Gaitan, 2000). Banks (2001) states that schools must do something not to marginalize parents. In a study of 28 Mexican American parents in a Texas elementary school, Pena (2000) found that language is a determining factor on whether parents participate in school events. Parents felt that if meetings were held only in English then why attend if they cannot fully participate by asking a question or voicing concerns. Garcia-Coll et al. (2002) study on 101 low-income Dominican parents found a positive correlation between language

comfort level and parent participation in the schools. These same parents also reported that their lack of education and time due to work schedules kept them from participating more.

Language plays a major role in parent involvement (Anfara et al., 2008; Pena, 2000). Banks (2001) found that parents do not feel welcomed in schools where their primary language was not spoken. This feeling of not being welcomed led to them not feeling they could help the school or their child. Pena (2000) found that parents would not attend parent engagement activities since they would not understand the information shared at the meeting. Therefore, schools should make efforts to hire a bilingual staff. The results of this study were consistent with this literature. Participants in this study also agreed that language plays an important role in their decision to participate in parent engagement activities. In this study, however, language was not a barrier to their participation. Participants reported that school personnel spoke Spanish and English and if needed, they would be provided a translator.

Lopez et al. (2001), say that a parent involvement liaison could also be hired to build those relationships with the schools. Ferlazzo (2011) conducted a study in California that explored home visits as a part of a parent involvement program. This project allowed both parents and teachers to talk to each other about what was important in the child's education. The school personnel were able to learn about the parent's goals and expectations for their child (Ferlazzo, 2011). Home visits should be conducted to meet the parents and build relationships. It is important that schools do not take a standardized approach to parent involvement (Robinson & Harris, 2014). Different cultures have different experiences. Parents approach their role in schooling according to

their ethnicity, language, and education (Cardona, Jain, & Canfield-Davis, 2012).

Educational policymakers should be cognizant of how members of various ethnic groups conceptualize parental involvement (Tviet, 2009).

Social networks. Social networks have also been studied as a means to increased parent involvement. Social networks can provide a means for information to be shared among parents in both a formal and informal way. According to Sheldon (2002), parent social networks can be viewed as social capital and as a resource to encourage social relationships among parents. These relationships can encourage the exchange of information and set norms for parent participation (Sheldon, 2002). Parents influence other parents to participate. Sheldon explored the relationship between parent networks and parent involvement and suggested the study of parents as social actors. Therefore, the information gained within these networks and the connections made will positively affect their involvement in their child's school. Sheldon (2002) suggested that those with access to more social capital are more likely to be involved in their child's education. Sheldon's study, however, did not address whether the number of members of a social network predicted the number of hours spent volunteering or being involved in school activities. A further limitation of his study is that a vast majority of parents in this study were Caucasian and a diverse sampling was not used.

Negative experiences. Previous literature cited parents' negative experiences in schools, social class, school choice, education levels and teacher attitudes as having a negative impact on parent engagement (Anfara & Mertens, 2008; Bauch & Goldring, 1995; Pena, 2000). Parents are uncomfortable leaving behind the traditional supportive role and moving toward an academic planning role (Johnson, 1997). Some parents do not

assist with homework because they have limited literacy skills themselves (Pena, 2000). Lopez, Scribner, and Mahitivanichcha (2001) agree that parents frequently are perceived as lacking the resources (i.e., experiences, know-how, etc.) to provide meaningful home educational experiences for their children. According to Anfara et al. (2008), parents are often perceived as incapable of anything that would make a difference in their child's education. Pena (2000) credits lack of involvement to parent's negative experiences in school. If parents had a negative experience as students themselves or as a parent in another school, this tends to affect their current level of involvement. Parents want to be successful and will participate if it is something they feel they will be successful in.

Ethnicity. Walker et al. (2011) agree with this position stating that parental role construction is prominent in the Latino community. Latinos believe it is the school's job to educate their children (Smith, Stern, & Shatrova, 2008). These parents believe that if they become part of the responsibility of the school, then they are doing more than they should. This belief leads parents to separate themselves from being partners with the teachers because they believe it will show a sign of disrespect and questioning the teacher's expertise (Walker et al., 2011). Latino parents rather play a home role by supporting homework time, encouraging their child to be polite at school, monitoring their friendships and talking about their day at school (Walker et al., 2011). Parents encounter all of these external factors. Those parents who make it into the schools then encounter internal barriers and challenges and are further discouraged from participating.

Time. Grolnick et al. (1997) analyzed factors that predicted parent involvement. This study included 209 parents and 28 teachers in an urban school and showed that parents were less likely to attend school functions such as volunteer events or parent-

teacher conferences if they had less family support. This study concluded that parents' time and family resources impacted their ability to participate.

Internal Barriers and Challenges

Internal challenges that can impede parent involvement are communication, atmosphere, parent beliefs and teachers.

Communication. The literature also emphasized that a positive level of parent involvement was strongly correlated to the invitations they received from school personnel, specifically the teachers. Green et al. (2007) found that parents would participate in school events when they were invited by teachers and administrators. Invitations increased the probability of their attendance. Drummond and Stipeck (2004) also agreed that parent involvement was directly related to the teacher's level of expected engagement.

Similarly, Lopez et al. (2000) concluded that parents appreciated a welcoming atmosphere and looked forward to receiving an invitation to school events. Walker et al. (2007) found invitations to school events were strong indicators for increased parent involvement. This study was consistent with the literature. This study found that participants said invitations were important in their decision to participate. Teacher invitations were important because they had the most daily contact with their child. Not mentioned in the literature was the importance of the child's invitation as this was emphasized by this study's participants. The participants in this study said their child's invitation played the most important role in their participation. If it made their child happy, they would make every effort to participate in school events.

Sheldon's (2002) study acknowledged that parents are social actors and maintain social networks that affect the role they play in their children's education. Sheldon surveyed 195 elementary school mothers to analyze the degree to which parent's social networks predicted parent involvement (2002). Sheldon found that there was a positive correlation between the size of the parent network and the degree of parent engagement at school and at home.

According to the study, parents would exercise their voice more often and suggest ways for the school to meet their expectations. The school would then meet that expectation by offering more ways and venues to express their voice, hence, increasing parent involvement. According to Bauch and Goldring (1995), parents who choose their schools, perceive them to be more responsive, are more informed of daily activities and keep up with their children's schoolwork. A limitation found in this study is that it concentrated on choosing Catholic schools over public schools. Urban public school parents may not have this type of option. However, school choice within an urban school district may yield similar results. Further research on school choice and its impact on parental involvement are needed.

Atmosphere. Pena (2000) says parents should be trained to work with students. Train parents to have high aspirations for their children (Pena, 2000). Schools should try to have a welcoming atmosphere and even consider having bilingual staff to address language concerns (Pena, 2000). The quality of the parent involvement should be highlighted, not the quantity (Pomerantz et al., 2007). Pomerantz et al. (2007), also stress that parents should be empowered and not be made to feel like their child's lack of academic achievement is directly related to their parenting style. Lopez et al. (2001),

stress the importance of getting to know the parents and meeting their needs before

expecting their involvement. This study also addressed and explored peer pressure as a

factor of parent involvement. Parent perceptions of other parents play a crucial role in

parent involvement. Sheldon (2002) found that the understanding of other parents'

expectations predicted parent involvement at school. This finding suggests that social

pressures from other parents and other parent groups may influence some individuals to

be more involved in their child's school. This type of peer pressure can serve as an

unofficial norm for parent involvement.

Parents need to feel welcomed at the school. According to Walker et al., (2007), a

positive and encouraging school personnel can foster increased parent involvement by

helping parents feel supported and valued. The Lopez, Sanchez, and Hamilton (2000)

study also conclude that Hispanic parents respond positively to a welcoming atmosphere

and look forward to school invitations to be more involved. Walker et al. (2007), extends

the Lopez et al. (2000) study by examining invitations from the school, the teachers and

the children themselves. All three types of invitations were found to be powerful

indicators of increased parent involvement (Walker et al., 2007). This study also cautions

that a school must have a willing teacher pool who are trained in effective

communication and relationship–building to increase such invitations. Schools can try to

communicate more with parents through emails or written notes. In a nationwide study of

parents whose children attend kindergarten through 12th grade, Noel, Stark & Redford

(2013), found that 87 percent of parents said they receive emails and notes. Boulton

(2008) argued that it is essential for schools to communicate with parents, so they know

how to help their children. Parents are appreciative of consistent communication with

school personnel (Borup, Stevens & Waters, 2015). Similarly, schools who hire translators to better communicate with parents who do not speak English, have more success with increasing parent involvement (Smith, Wohlstetter, Kuzin & De Pedro, 2011).

In addition to better communicating, schools should try to build trust and respect for different cultures and ethnic groups within the school (Rapp & Duncan, 2011). School personnel should be aware of how each ethnic group portrays their role in education to avoid assumptions. Take time to meet the families and have them share stories of their education (Rapp & Duncan, 2011).

Parent beliefs. Parents claim that they run into school barriers and challenges when trying to be involved in school affairs. Parents in low-income areas are often unsure on how to participate and feel intimated by the school administrators and teachers (Graves-Smith, 2006). Chavkin (1989) agrees that parents are intimidated by both teachers and administrators. This feeling of intimidation leads to their lack of parent involvement. The most common factor is teacher attitudes. Parents feel that teachers do not feel comfortable with them being in the classroom (Pena, 2000). Dempsey and Sandler (1997) agree that parents do not feel welcomed or invited. According to Pena (2000), teachers sometimes see parent involvement as an invasion of their professional territory. Lopez et al. (2001) claim that teachers do not understand parents as partners and are uncertain of how to turn over their control.

Teachers. Studies find that teachers are often suspicious or resentful of parents who want to be involved and fear parents who seem to question their competence as a professional (Johnson, 1997). Delgado-Gaitan (1991) claims teachers only want parent

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support when it is convenient instead of recognizing that involving parents early on can aid in preventing future problems or conflicts with the student. Ramirez (2001) also points out that teachers would rather have the parents be limited to school events and stay out of the classroom. According to Epstein (1991), as many as 12 percent of elementary parents, in her studies, have never been asked to be a partner with a classroom teacher. Teachers want parents to be parents; sticking to discipline and character education and leave the teaching to the teacher. Indifference to participation is also a school factor. According to Pena (2000), indifference leads to mistrust. Teachers do not care if parents participate and parents feel awkward approaching school personnel (Pena, 2000). Teachers are quick to say parents do not care (Ramirez, 2001).

Drummond and Stipeck (2004) interviewed and surveyed 234 parents and found that their level of parent involvement was directly related to the teacher's expectation of involvement. Parents report increased parent involvement when teachers have positive attitudes, communicate regularly and provide opportunities for parents to be a partner in their child's education (Griffith, 1998). Teacher attitudes and willingness to collaborate with parents is a stronger predictor of parent involvement than SES status (Green et al., 2007).

Turney and Kao (2009) found that Hispanics and Asians were 2.5 and 2.8 times more likely than Whites to report that they felt unwelcome at their child's school. Minority immigrant parents perceived a higher number of barriers to getting involved in their children's school. This study was consistent with Carreon et al.'s (2005) which also examined Hispanic immigrant family challenges.

LaRoque, Kleiman, and Darling (2011), claim that a barrier to language is not limited to the spoken language but also to the professional and educational language used in a school. Pena (2000, p. 44) claims that teachers use too much "teacher talk." Teacher talk is defined as words and expressions that are used in education that have no real meaning to the common person. Teacher talk can include various acronyms, research, education vocabulary and long-winded speeches about data. Parents sometimes equate this to teachers being "above" them in social class. Teachers should also help parents understand information received from the school (LaRoque et al., 2011).

Pena (2000), also cites parent cliques as a challenge to parent involvement. Parent cliques tend to dominate the school culture, and the same cliques make most decisions for all the parents (Pena, 2000). Teachers also feel that involving more parents may mean more work for them and an added burden (Pena, 2000). This negative attitude can carry over to parents. Sheldon (2005), conducted a study in 565 low SES schools. Although this study found parents of low SES students were less involved, it also found that the schools who responded to barriers such as language had more participation than those who did not. Hoover-Dempsey et al. (2007) state that parent involvement increases when schools intentionally address barriers.

Anfara et al. (2008), adds unclear definitions of parent involvement, the unwelcoming atmosphere at the school and minimal opportunities to participate as even more challenges to parent involvement. The schools must develop strategies to work with parents and increase parent involvement to overcome both internal and external challenges and barriers.

Other Strategies to Increase and Improve Parent Involvement

Sheldon's (2002) study spoke of peer pressure, such as social networks, as the unofficial norm and found that a team effort should be emphasized. Social networks, defined as social relationships and linkages one person has with other individuals, should be used to help parents identify material and human resources needed to meet a goal (Sheldon, 2002). Parents, as stakeholders within a social network, must commit to the children's future by working together on school improvement through parent involvement (Lopez et al., 2001). Lopez et al. (2001), state this commitment to school improvement by increasing parent involvement should not be a commitment to a task, but a commitment to people. Epstein's six types of parent involvement embody most of these strategies. Within Epstein's framework, home visits, translators, communication, training for parents, inclusion in decision-making and community collaboration can be found (1984).

An unconventional solution to the parent involvement concern is offered by Bauch and Goldring (1995). Bauch and Goldring (1995) propose that if parents have the opportunity to choose their school, they will participate more. Grady, Bielick, and Aud (2010) found that more parents were choosing charter schools over public schools. Wills (2008) found that parents were becoming dissatisfied with the traditional public school. Some parents opted for charter schools or a voucher program school (VanderHoff, 2008). School choice improves schools through parent participation. Market theory assumes that parents who actively choose their children's school will be more involved in their education than those who do not choose because they make a greater investment of time, energy, and fees usually associated with making a choice (Bauch & Goldring, 1995).

The development of intentional programs that promote parent involvement strategies has a positive impact on participation (Graves-Smith, 2006).

Conclusion

Some barriers to parent involvement have been identified, including school and community characteristics, parent and teacher attitudes and beliefs and parent and teacher practices (Eccles & Harold, 1996). Students will work harder when they know their parents care. Parent involvement both in and out of school is essential and has been positively linked to increased student achievement. The literature concurs that parent involvement is important and that more needs to be done to get parents involved in their children's education. Studies show that when schools solicit the involvement of the parents, parents will respond, and achievement will increase (Sheldon & Epstein, 2005). Finding creative ways to solicit parent participation and being flexible with the time of events was important (Flynn & Nolan, 2008). It should be noted that schools should not assume that parents are uninterested because they are not at the school on a daily basis. Many parents provide more support for their children's schooling than school personnel perceive based on the visibility of the parents (Walker et al., 2007). Just because parents are not at the school every day volunteering and attending school functions, does not mean that they are not involved in their child's education.

Historical perspectives were addressed and concluded that when parents were involved more, like in the early 19th century, students performed better, and schools ranked higher. External and internal factors were similar across the studies. Ramirez (2001) conducted a study across two states and in the high school setting, and the results

were similar. Lopez et al. (2001) targeted migrant students, but the challenges and barriers are the same for low-income students regardless of race.

In summary, there is still an opportunity for further research in the area of parent involvement. The studies in this literature review focused on parent involvement's positive impact on student achievement, strategies implemented at various grade levels, challenges faced by both parents and the school and perceptions of what parent involvement is and is not. These themes will more than likely emerge in this current study as well.

Chapter Three will include the study's methodology and reiterate the research questions. Furthermore, the research design will be explained, and selection procedures will be articulated. The interview questions, data collection procedures, and data analysis process will be described. Chapter Three will conclude with a summary of the methodological process.

Chapter 3: Research Methods

The purpose of this study was to investigate the types of parent involvement

activities that lead to increased parent participation and what schools can do to increase

such participation. This study also aimed to discover factors that are associated with

increased parent involvement. A qualitative research approach was used because

qualitative research seeks to answer a question, collects evidence and it produces findings

that were not determined in advance (Yin, 2018). One of the most common qualitative

methods is the case study research design (Creswell & Poth, 2018).

This study utilized a case study design. A case study is used to understand a real-

world case in an in-depth fashion (Yin, 2018). A case study involves collecting primary

and secondary data from individuals, groups or organizations (Creswell & Poth, 2018).
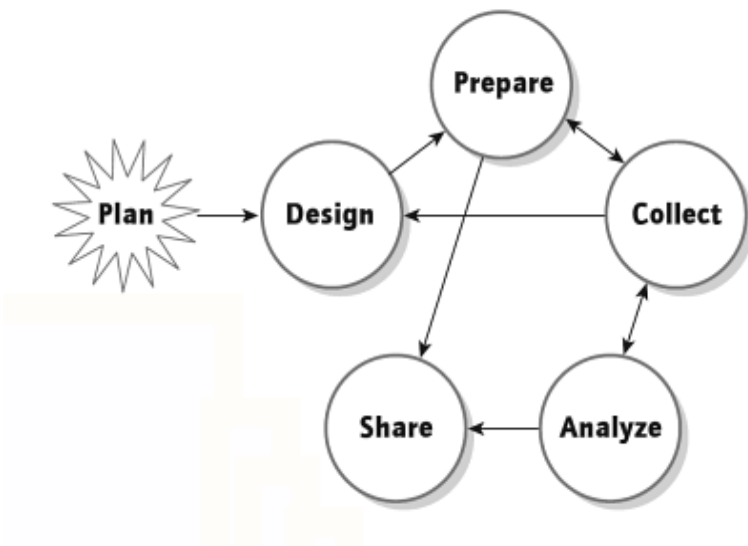
Figure 4. Case Study Design (Yin, 2018)

Case studies are used to give an in-depth description of a social phenomenon (Yin, 2018).

Case studies are also used when a researcher has little to no control over behavioral

events. The intent of a case study is to understand a specific issue or concern. Case studies are most commonly used to answer research questions that are 'how' and 'why' (Yin, 2018). They are carefully planned to include data collection in a natural setting, then analyzing and sharing the findings. Please refer to Figure 4 for a graphical view of the process of case study research design. Data collection can include interviews of persons who are still involved in that setting (Yin, 2018). The data is presented as a narrative with rich descriptions, participant quotes, and common themes generated from the data (Creswell & Poth, 2018). According to Creswell and Poth (2018), qualitative research, specifically case study research, is a situated activity that locates the observer in the world to include conversations, interviews, notes, recordings, and photographs.

Participant Selection

After receiving Institutional Review Board (IRB) approval from the University of Texas at Arlington and Research Review Board (RRB) approval from the Dallas Independent School District, school principals were contacted via email and phoned about their interest in participating in this study (Please refer to Appendix A for the IRB and RRB approvals). Specifically, they were asked permission for the researcher to hand out fliers to the students with the assistance of their school liaison or parent instructor. Eight school principals were contacted, and six agreed to allow participation on their campus. An informed consent was signed (Please refer to Appendices B, C, and D for the consent form).

This study was conducted at six schools at both the elementary or middle school level. The schools varied in demographics to gain multiple perspectives in parent involvement within the school setting. All six schools are located in the Pleasant Grove

area of Dallas, Texas. All six schools are considered Title I schools which serve children in poverty. Greater than 90 percent of the students in the six participating schools qualified for the free or reduced meal program. Four of the six schools serve large apartment complexes, considered subsidized housing. The choice to use these schools was based on the convenience of proximity to the researcher's school.

While all six schools have a Hispanic majority enrolled, a strong attempt was made to ensure that African American families were also included in the study. In addition to approaching Hispanic parents, a gatekeeper made sure to send the interest fliers home with students in the general education classes, which usually have English-speaking Hispanic students, White students, and African American students. A gatekeeper is defined as a person who stands between the data collector and potential respondents. The gatekeeper usually has a relationship with the desired respondents.

Data Collection

The participants were identified through a gatekeeper. In qualitative research, gatekeepers assist researchers in gaining trust within a studied group or community. Gatekeepers are vital informants that allow the researcher access to the participants and are usually part of the participant group (Creswell & Poth, 2018). The gatekeeper in this study in the elementary school was the Parent Instructor or Community Liaison. This identified person was a paid district employee who worked with parents to be actively engaged in students' academic lives. This person also encouraged volunteering within a school. Sometimes, a teacher assistant or an office clerk served in this capacity if the school did not have a designated Parent Instructor or Community Liaison.

The gatekeeper contacted parents through phone, email, parent portal (Dallas ISD's online parent information center) and/or fliers and asked if they wished to participate. The gatekeeper set up a meeting with those interested where the researcher made a presentation on the purpose of the study and what participating in the study would involve. The gatekeeper was asked to stay during the meeting to ensure trust and comfort. The study included a series of demographic questions as well as twelve interview questions (Please refer to Appendix G and H for the questions). The gatekeeper was not involved in this stage of the study. The data collection stage took between six to eight weeks, during April and May 2017.

Before the interview, each parent was given a consent form to sign (Please refer to Appendix B-E). The consent form was written in the parent's preferred language. It was also explained that they could withdraw at any time from the study. Each parent was interviewed separately, and the interview lasted no more than an hour. The interviews were conducted at the student's home school or the parent's home, depending on the participant's comfort level.

The interview began with demographic questions (Please refer to Appendix G) that included the number of children, number of experiences with different school districts, levels of education, income, country of birth and language spoken at home. Participants then answered a series of eighteen pre-selected questions (Please refer to Appendix H). These questions were generated from a pilot study conducted in 2012 at the researcher's school. The pilot study is discussed in greater detail later in this chapter. The researcher allowed the participants to control the pacing of the interview and allowed them the freedom to answer the questions as they wanted. The interviews were semi-

structured and informal. The researcher provided clarification of the questions when needed (Please refer to Appendices I-R).

This research was conducted at a specific place such as the participants home school and there was a specific timeframe in which the interviews were conducted. According to Creswell and Poth (2018), identifying a case within bounded parameters such as location and timeframe of research is a key feature of case studies. Interviews were conducted from April 2017 through May 2017. Participants were interviewed on their campuses to allow the researcher to lessen the distance between herself and the participants (Creswell & Poth, 2018). "With an epistemological assumption, conducting a qualitative study means that researchers try to get as close as possible to the participants being studied" (Creswell & Poth, 2018, pg. 21). Interviews varied from 30 minutes to one hour and were conducted in either Spanish or English. Participants chose their preferred language. According to Creswell and Poth (2018), when researchers conduct interviews in the field, they get first-hand information from their participants. Each interview question corresponded to a research question as shown in Table 1 below.

Table 1 Research Question and Its Corresponding Interview Questions

Research Question	Interview Questions
How do parent perceptions about the school evolve as more parent involvement activities are offered?	Q1: …definition of parent involvement
	Q3: …feel comfortable attending
	Q4: …satisfied with school activities
	Q5: …feelings about how treated at schools
	Q14: …what else can a school do
	Q17: …ask you what you would like to do
	Q18: …feel you are important
What types of parent involvement activities decide or inform positive parent participation such as helping with homework, volunteering and participating in local-level decision-making?	Q8: …how many activities do you attend
	Q9: …motivated you to attend activities
	Q12: …social or academic activities
	Q15: …motivated to attend other activities
	Q16: …types of event…most likely attend
	Q2: …do as a parent to stay involved
	Q5: …feelings about how treated
	Q6: …need a translator
	Q7: …role do the teacher or admin play
What factors are associated with increased parental involvement?	Q9: …motivated you to attend
	Q10: …receive notifications of activities
	Q11: …internet access
	Q12: …social or academic activities
	Q13: …activity time play a role

Q14: …what else can a school do

Q17: …ask you what you would like to do

Q18: …feel you are important

Why is parent involvement important?   (Chapter 5 shows the results.)

Data Analysis and Validation Strategies

 To analyze the data, the researcher organized all interviews in numbered order and entered all answers into an excel spreadsheet. Using an excel spreadsheet is both organized and cost-effective. De Felice and Janesick (2015), recommend using Excel because the format mirrors many phenomenological methods. They recommend using Excel because it handles large amounts of data (numeric and text). It provides the researcher with ways of adding multiple attributes during the analysis process and it allows for a variety of display techniques that include various ways of filtering, organizing and sorting. Although computer programs may be helpful to organize and examine large amounts of data, none are capable of the intellectual and conceptualizing processes required to transform data, nor can they make any kind of judgment so using a spreadsheet to analyze data is acceptable (King, 2004; Thorne, 2000).

All notes were saved in a password-protected file. A row represented each interview in the spreadsheet while a column represented each question. An additional row was then added after each interview where phrases and words were extracted. These words and phrases were used to code the data and later sorted. "The purpose of the

method is not to quantify qualitative data but only to sort and structure large amounts of unstructured data" (Ose, 2016, p. 147).

Codes are used to summarize or condense data (Saldana, 2016). Codes are researcher-generated and symbolize data as it is interpreted to find patterns (Saldana, 2016) later. All data were grouped by themes, found through inductive analysis, and coded with a color-coded system. Raw data was coded in one color while subsequent data, formed from queries, was coded in a different color. Data was sorted in a variety of ways in search of patterns within the date. "To codify is to arrange things in a systemic order to classify or categorize" (Saldana, 2016, p.9). Significant statements or phrases were extracted from the interviews and used to find patterns and develop common themes. "A pattern is repetitive, regular or consistent occurrences of action/data that appear more than twice" (Saldana, 2016, p.5). Examples of codes found in this study were *time*, *activities*, *feelings*, *relationships*, *feel welcome*, *involved in activities* and *feel comfortable*.

Triangulation from the different case sites was used to build these themes to enhance the accuracy of the study. Yin (2018) states a case study relies on multiple sources of evidence with data needing to converge in a triangulating fashion. By drawing on various viewpoints, the researcher felt confident that they were moving towards accuracy and credibility as they tapped into a variety of sources of information, confirmation, individuals, and processes of the data collection (Creswell, 2008).

The cases were further studied by a cross-case analysis to generalize about them. The data was presented in a descriptive mode with some data represented in tables.

Ethical Considerations

All participants were treated with respect and in accordance with the ethical guidelines of the American Psychological Association (APA). IRB approval was received from the university prior to beginning the study. A proposal was submitted to the Research Review Board (RRB) of the Dallas Independent School District for review and approval. The researcher respected the rights, needs, and values of the participants through trust and integrity during the interview process. All precautions were taken to ensure the participants felt safe and comfortable. Participants were informed of their freedom to withdraw from the study at any time for any reason.

Limitations

The scope of this study was limited. One study limitation included generalizability. The sample size may not have ensured a representative distribution and therefore may not be generalizable aside from the studied schools in a particular area of Dallas. A gap in knowledge was filled by focusing on the student populations that had the least attention in past literature. Other limitations included the participant's time constraints if their children or family were not in agreement with the hour interview process and participant honesty during the interview process.

Researcher Access and Bias

Researcher limitations included access and researcher bias. The researcher depended on the gatekeeper to assist with access to the participants. If the gatekeeper did not fully cooperate with the researcher or if the gatekeeper could not work the same hours as the researcher a problem could have resulted. It was possible that the researcher was biased if a natural relationship/bond was not created with the interviewee. For example,

the researcher is female, bilingual and Hispanic. This may encourage a personal conversation between the researcher and the interviewee that could possibly lead to a biased direction of the answers to the questions.

Researcher Role and Relationship

Using interviews in a qualitative study can present ethical considerations. Whose truth, the participant's or the researcher's, is represented can affect data collection and data analysis (Bresler, 1995). Shein (1987) has argued that the depth of disclosure reached in an interview is a function of the relationship between the researcher and the participant.

The researcher was also a principal at a nearby elementary school. This could present with advantages and disadvantages. Advantages included knowledge of the schools, their location and familiarity with the school culture gained through conversations with the school principals of the targeted schools. The gatekeeper was able to introduce the researcher as a principal of a neighboring school to gain trust and cooperation. The researcher used the relationship with the campus principal as a way in to begin the research with the identified parents. Trying to include or guard against personal biases is tied to one's own way of thinking and is linked to the researcher's purpose for the study (Rosen, 1991). There were also disadvantages of the researcher being a principal at a nearby school. It is likely that the parents who agreed to participate in the study are those parents who saw their participation as a way to help their school because of their relationship with their own principal or gatekeeper. There was also a strong possibility that the participants were not completely honest. Private conversations between the researcher and the participant can become uncomfortable and difficult for the

participant to disengage (Liedtka, 1992). There was thought and/or fear that the information would reach their school principal if their feedback was not positive. The participants who agreed to be part of the study could have wanted their school to look like a model school in the area of parent involvement and answered in that way. The responses obtained from the participants could have differed greatly if the researcher was not a principal at a nearby school and/or if the schools selected had been those in another part of the Dallas ISD.

The researcher tried to ensure validity of the data by having previous conversations with the gatekeeper to encourage parents, both currently active and those not currently active, to participate in the study. The gatekeeper and the school administration offered incentives to participate; not the researcher. The researcher also encouraged the gatekeeper to assist with ensuring participation of differing ethnicities. Also, the researcher and the gatekeeper worked closely on ensuring parents of different age group of students participated.

In addition to trying to acquire a mixed sample of participants, the researcher assured the participants that their responses were confidential and that their responses were only recorded by a participant number. The participants were informed that results would not be shared specific to a school but in a broad sense. Liedtka (1992) states that informed consent is often not truly informed as neither the participant or the researcher is truly aware of the level of disclosure in an interview. The researcher also assured the participants that their school principals would not know who signed consent for participation. The researcher took precautions to ensure data collection and reporting would be unbiased. Coghlan (2001), suggests that if such a role is not handled correctly,

could cause ambiguity in the research results. But once the parameters of the relationship are established and made clear to the participants, insider research can be authentic, knowledgeable and lead to rich data (Arksey & Knight, 1999).

Pilot Study

A pilot study was conducted at the researcher's assigned school during the 2012-2013 school year. Five parents were interviewed using the proposed interview questions. These five parents were interviewed at various locations including the school, local restaurants, and their homes. The interviews were recorded with their permission and each interview lasted about 30 minutes. Some interviews were more productive than others due to various factors such as small children interrupting, the noise level in restaurants and parents' willingness to talk to someone they did not know.

Transcribing and coding techniques were used to disaggregate the information and identify recurring themes. The parent instructor and liaison were able to develop a series of workshops, activities, and events that were important to this population of students and parents using the information gleaned from these interviews.

Parent involvement quadrupled in a year. The school now has a functioning Parent Teacher Organization (PTO), regular parent volunteers in the cafeteria, consistent attendance at the monthly Coffee with the Principal meetings, a Facebook Page, parents assisting with morning and afternoon duty and helping supervise students throughout the school to ensure student safety. They continued to ask the parents and used their answers to provide resources and activities that were tailored for them.

The pilot study improved the interview questions and research design of this study. More probing questions were added to the original list of questions (Please refer to

Appendices I-R). Also, it was decided all interviews would be conducted at the home school of the student or the parent's home. If conducted at the home school, a sitter will be provided for younger children, so they could talk freely. The pilot study also guided further thinking in how to find common themes and using the recurring themes to ask probing questions. Instead of asking yes/no questions, questions were more in depth and were geared toward answering key research questions.

The current study was more in-depth and more probing. The researcher desired to use the results of this pilot study from six schools to assist in the improvement of parental involvement strategies at various school levels. This knowledge can be shared with other school administrators who currently have difficulty in this area.

Chapter Four provides a detailed analysis of the results. The conclusion will connect the results to the existing literature.

Chapter 4: Findings and Results

The purpose of this study was to examine the relationship between the level of parent involvement and the activities offered by a school. More specifically, this study attempted to explore factors that positively influenced and increased parent involvement in schools. Interview questions were designed to help answer one or more of the research questions.

Research Questions

Research Question 1. How do parent perceptions about the school evolve as more parent involvement activities are offered?

Research Question 2. What types of parent involvement activities decide or inform positive parent participation such as helping with homework, volunteering and participating in local-level decision-making?

Research Question 3. What factors are associated with increased parent involvement?

Research Question 4. Why is parent involvement important?

The subjects included in this research were all parents of Dallas ISD elementary or middle school students. Interviews were conducted on six campuses in the Pleasant Grove area of Dallas, Texas (Please refer to Table 2). Five campuses were elementary schools, and one campus was a middle school.

Table 2 *Demographics of Participating Schools*

School Type	Enrollment	% Hispanic	% African American	% ELL	% Low SES
PK - 5	663	82	16	58	96
PK – 5	596	97	2	73	97
PK - 5	783	94	4	70	94
PK - 5	501	67	28	50	91
K - 5	503	58	41	45	95
6-8 Middle	1314	80	19	55	96

NOTE: ELL: English Language Learner; Low SES: Low Socio-Economic Status

Participant Demographics

A total of 132 interviews were conducted on the six campuses. Originally, 200 invitations to participate were sent out to the different schools, and 132 responded for a 66 percent response rate. They were asked 18 questions about parent involvement and seven demographic questions. Participation was voluntary, and they were not obligated to answer any question they did not want to answer.

The six campuses are considered Title I schools which means they receive federal monies. Part of the Title I plan includes money set aside for parent involvement. Local campuses must reserve Title I funds equal to 3 percent of its total allotment.

Of the 132 interviews, 73 were conducted in Spanish and 59 were conducted in English (Please refer to Table 3).

Table 3 *Interview Language*

	Interview Language	
English	Spanish	Total
73	59	132

All 132 participants were asked seven demographic questions to get an understanding of their background. Fifty-one percent of the participants reported that only Spanish was spoken at home while 23 percent of the participants indicated only English was spoken at home. Twenty-six percent of the participants reported that both Spanish and English were spoken in their home (Please refer to Table 4).

Table 4 *Language Spoken at Home*

Language Spoken at Home		
English ONLY	30	23%
Spanish ONLY	67	51%
Both	35	26%
Total	132	100%

Of the 132 participants, 36 percent reported they were born in the United States, 51 percent reported they were born in Mexico, 4 percent reported they were born in El Salvador, one was born in Venezuela, one was born in Cameroon, Africa, and one was born in Guatemala. Seven percent chose not to respond (Please refer to Table 5). Although the participants were not asked to self-identify their ethnicity, the researcher

used observer identification. Based on observer identification, 91percent were of Latino/Hispanic descent while 9 percent were African American. Seventy-three percent of the participants had one to three children while percent of the participants reported four or more children (Please refer to Table 6).

Table 5 *Birth Country of Participant*

Birth Country		
United States	48	36%
Mexico	67	51%
El Salvador	5	4%
Venezuela	1	1%
Guatemala	1	1%
Africa	1	1%
No Response	9	7%
TOTAL	132	100%

Table 6 *Reported Number of Children of Each Participant*

Number of Children		
1 - 3	97	73%
4 or More	35	27%
Total	132	100%

Of the 132 participants, 24 percent reported incomes between $10,000 and

$30,000. Fourteen percent of the participants reported incomes between $31,000 and

$50,000. Thirteen percent of the participants reported incomes of $51,000 or more. Forty-

eight percent of the participants chose not to answer the question as shown in Table 7.

Table 7 *Participant Reported Income*

Participant Income		
$10,000 - $30,0000	32	24%
$31,000 - $50,000	19	14%
$51,000 or more	17	13%
Chose not to Answer	64	48%
TOTAL	132	100%

Eight percent of the participants reported only having an elementary education, 3

percent only had a middle school education, and 12 percent had some high school

education. Thirty-nine percent of the participants reported they had a high school diploma

or GED while 18 percent of the participants reported some college. Two percent of the

participants held an Associate's Degree, and 6 percent reported they held a Bachelor's

Degree. Twelve percent of the participants chose not to respond (Please refer to Table 8).

Table 8 *Education Level Reported by Each Participant*

Participant Education		
Elementary	11	8%
Middle School	4	3%
Some High School	15	12%
High School/ Diploma/GED	52	39%
Some College	24	18%
Associates Degree	3	2%
Bachelor's Degree	8	6%
Chose not to Answer	15	12%
TOTAL	132	100%

Of the 132 participants, 43 percent reported that they only had experience with one Dallas ISD school. Thirty-seven percent of the participants had experience in two or three Dallas ISD schools while 12 percent of the participants had experiences in four or more Dallas ISD schools. Eight percent chose not to respond or could not remember (Please refer to Table 9).

Table 9 *Number of School Experiences Within Dallas ISD*

Experience with Dallas ISD Schools		
Only ONE Dallas ISD School	56	43%
2-3 Dallas ISD Schools	49	37%
4 or more Dallas ISD Schools	16	12%
Could not remember	11	8%
TOTAL	132	100%

When asked about their experiences with districts other than Dallas ISD, 34 percent reported only having attended Dallas ISD schools. Thirty percent of the participants have had experiences with one other district while 15 percent reported having had experiences with two or more different districts other than Dallas ISD. Twenty-one percent of the participants chose not to answer or could not remember (Please refer to Table 10).

Table 10 *Number of Experiences with Other School Districts*

Experience with Other School Districts		
Only Dallas ISD	45	34%
One other District	40	30%
2 or More Districts	20	15%
Chose not to Answer	27	21%
TOTAL	132	100%

Definition of Parent Involvement

A common understanding of what parent involvement meant to the participants was established at the beginning of this research. The majority of the participants answered in a broad sense by responding what it meant to be involved in their child's life and/or education to include attending school events and/or helping with homework. One participant responded, "I think parent involvement means making sure that your kids know the importance of an education by supporting their school activities like homework or attending PTO meetings." Another participant said, "Parent involvement to me means to help our children by staying informed on school events and talking to teachers and other school personnel." Another participant said, "Being involved in schoolwork, after school activities and being a positive influence for my child." A fourth participant responded, "Parent involvement means being involved in the education of my child by asking how she is doing, talking to teachers about her schoolwork and behavior and making sure she goes to school clean every day and on time." Only 8 percent responded with a more detailed response that included helping with homework, staying informed on school events, being involved with activities, and talking to their child about school in addition to talking to teachers often and volunteering (Please refer to Appendix I).

Activities Parents Reported Being Involved In

The participants were then asked how they stayed involved in their child's school. This question can contribute to the participant's viewpoint of parent involvement without asking for a definition. Answers included attending parent conference night, asking their child questions, attending class parties, attending field trips, volunteering, attending

Parent Teacher Organization (PTO) evenings, reading to their child, talking to their

child's teacher, checking the school's social media and checking their child's backpack.

Even though both questions were similar, the participants found it much easier to

answer the question when not asking for a definition. Twenty-nine percent of the

participants responded that they participated in their child's school by attending school

activities and accompanying their child on field trips. Another 29 percent of the

participants responded that they volunteer with the PTO (Please refer to Appendix J). A

participant responded, "I am a volunteer and I also attend Coffee with the Principal. I also

go on field trips." Another participant said, "I volunteer from time to time. I make sure to

attend all meetings and I also have the teacher's phone number and email address, in case

I have a question." Another participant said, "I stay involved by talking to teachers,

helping with homework, volunteering when I can, and staying current with the parent

portal." When parents are asked how they participate, it is easier for them to answer that

question than to give a definition of parent involvement. They were eager to share all the

different things they do with their children in and out of school and all the activities they

are involved in with their children.

Language Barriers

Previous research indicated that methods of communication are a barrier to parent

involvement and that some parents do not feel they can participate because of a

difference in language (Bauch and Goldring, 1995; Drummond and Stipeck, 2004; Green

et al., 2007; Lopez et al., 2000; Sheldon, 2002). The participants were asked if they

needed a translator when they went to the school, how they received invitations to events

and whether they had internet access to establish what kind of communication

experiences the participants had at their current school on the basis of access. The majority of the participants reported that they either did not need a translator because they spoke English or that they did not need one because the front office staff at their campus was bilingual. Some noted that even though they did not need a translator, they were aware that the office staff spoke Spanish and that translators were offered to parents. Only two participants responded that they needed a translator and were not provided one.

Forms of Communication

Ninety-three percent of the participants responded that they received notifications and/or invitations of offered activities. Notifications were distributed via fliers, newsletters, social media, email, School Messenger Phone System and calendars. The majority of the participants also responded that they had access to the Internet. Only 4 percent of them reported they had no Internet access. For this research project, communication from school to home was not an area of concern for these participants. The participants reported they were able to communicate with school staff by phone or through social media, reported that they received notifications of activities in a variety of ways and that they had access to the Internet.

<p align="center">Emerging Themes</p>

After excluding access, three major themes emerged during this research project: interpersonal values, variety of activities and time. These themes were identified from the color-coded spreadsheet after using an inductive approach to analyzing the inputted data.

Interpersonal Values

Participants were directly asked if they felt comfortable attending parent involvement activities at their children's school(s). Almost 90 percent of the participants

responded positively. Only 5 percent of the participants responded negatively. Of those that responded positively, participants explained that they felt welcome at their campuses. They mentioned that the school staff was friendly and were bilingual and could respond to questions and concerns. Participants enjoyed opportunities to socialize with school staff as well as other parents in the school. Participants also mentioned that it was vital to them that their child felt important and that their child knew that education was essential. Participants wanted to ensure their children knew that they were taking an interest in their school by participating in school activities. One-third of the participants who answered positively mentioned that if it were important to their child for him/her to attend, they would go to the school activity. One participant said, "Yes, I feel comfortable attending school activities because it helps for me to see what my child is involved in." Another participant also said, "Yes, because everyone is friendly, and the school staff lets me know how I can help." Participants felt welcomed and comfortable attending school activities.

Participants also took the opportunity within this question to say that they felt comfortable attending parent involvement activities, but they felt the timing of the events were sometimes difficult to make or that childcare for their younger children was hard to secure to be able to attend (Please refer to Appendix K for additional comments). A participant mentioned, "I try to stay involved but sometimes my work schedule does not permit it." Another participant also said, "I would love to be more involved, but it is hard when both parents work." Work schedules of parents and caregivers prevented greater participation.

Participants in this research project were also asked how they felt they were treated at their child's school (Please refer to Appendix L). One participant said, "I love this school for my child because they are so nice, and they make school fun." Another participant said, "I am always greeted with a smile and I feel respected as a partner in my child's education." Another participant agreed by stating, "The staff is very nice and always welcomes me like family and resolves my concerns." Ninety-one percent of the participants responded favorably to this question. Descriptive words used by the participants included: welcome, friendly, kind, nice, well-treated, respected, attentive, accommodating, like family, happy, satisfied and appreciated (Please refer to Table 11). The nine participants who did not answer favorably chose not to answer the question.

Table 11. *How Participants Felt They Were Treated When Visiting the School*

How Participants Feel They are Treated at Their Child's School		
Welcome	Nice	Attentive
Friendly	Well-Treated	Accommodating
Kind	Respected	Satisfied
Like Family	Happy	Appreciated

When planning school activities, the school sent out notices in the form of fliers, social media posts and school messenger call out blasts. Parents were invited to attend the activities. Participants were asked if their decision to participate depended on whether they received a personal invitation from the teacher or an administrator and whose invitation they value most. Overwhelmingly, the participants said that an invitation from

either of the two played an essential role in their decision making to attend an activity. The Theory of Planned Behavior (Ajzen, 1991) can be applied here by assuming invitations to attend are a subjective norm. The subjective norm is what is expected as a behavior. About one-half of the participants stated invitations from a teacher or an administrator were equally crucial while 31percent said they valued the teacher invitation more. Eight participants mentioned that even though those two invitations were important, they valued their child's invitation over those of the teacher or administrator. Only four participants said they felt no importance of either invitation (Please refer to Appendix M). One participant said, "The teacher plays a big role in my participation and her invitation means more to me." Another participant said, "Both invitations are welcome, but the one from the teacher plays a bigger role for me." Another participation also said, "My child's invitation means the most to me because if he wants me to attend something, I will go for him." Another participant responded, "The principal and teacher invitation are both important for different reasons. If the teacher invites me then I know my child is involved and if the principal invites me, then I know it is important to the school. "

It was essential to find out why the participants chose the activities that they did. They were asked what motivated them to attend the parent involvement activities. Participants mentioned many reasons they chose to attend various school activities. Among those reasons were: to talk to the teacher, because the activity was important, to socialize, to support the school, to check on their child's progress or behavior and/or it was related to a sports or Parent Teacher Organization (PTO) activity. However, the most popular response was related to their child. Forty-one percent of the participants

responded that attending a school activity was important to their child; it made him/her happy. Another 14 percent of the participants responded that attending the school activity helped their child in some way. Table 12 shows motivators for attending school activities. One participant said, "I participate because I like to see my child's face when she sees me at school." Another participant said, "A big factor for my participation is whether my schedule allows it. If I can, I will be there." Another participant said, "I want my child to see what commitment looks like and that I fully support his education." Another participant responded, "Seeing the joy in my child's face is what make me participate more." Please refer to Appendix N for more sample responses. Again, the Theory of Planned Behavior (Ajzen, 1991) can be applied to this part of the study. If support of the school, socialization and good communication with the teacher are subjective norms, another component of the theory would be satisfied. Subjective norm is one of the 3 factors of Ajzen's model, Theory of Planned Behavior. As parents make their positive school interactions a norm instead of the exception, a change in behavior, such as increased parent participation, can be expected.

Table 12 *Motivators for Attending School Activities*

Motivators for Attending School Activities	
Response	# of Responses
It was important to their child	54
Attending helps their child in some way	18
Have never attended/no Answer	13
Check on their child's progress	12
Activity was important	11
Like to attend/volunteer	11
Show support for the school	5
Wanted to talk to the teacher	4
Wanted to socialize	4
It was a sports activity	3
It was a PTO activity	3
Off work	3
To check on their child's behavior	2

The participants interviewed had many positive responses to this research project. The question that received the most positive responses were the questions that asked them if they felt they made a difference in their child's education. This question also resulted in various facial expressions. Ajzen's (1991) Theory of Planned Behavior touts that there are three parts to perceived control. The first is expectations about whether or not something can be done influences the outcome of that belief (Ajzen, 1991). The second is expectations about how to accomplish the goal influence the outcome of the

action (Ajzen, 1991). The third is what individuals believe about their capabilities makes

a difference in how the goal is executed (Ajzen, 1991). Another component of Ajzen's

(1991) model is attitude. The right attitude to change a behavior must be present. When

parents feel they are important, it will have a positive influence on the outcome. In this

case, the outcome is increased parent involvement.

One hundred twenty-eight participants responded affirmatively that they make a

difference in the life of their child and that they are important to their child's success.

Four of the participants chose not to answer but were pensive during the question. Please

refer to Table 13 for the responses to this question).

Table 13 *Do Parents Feel They Are Important*

Response	# of Responses	% of Responses
Yes	128	97%
No Response	4	3%
Total	132	100%

Verbal and non-verbal cues were observed during this question. Non-verbal

communication has been accepted as a source of information as well as the complement

to the study of verbal behaviors of humans (Bull, 2002). Facial expressions can

communicate 93 percent of people's feelings and attitudes (Kelly et al., 1999).

Participants smiled, sat up straight and spoke clearly when answering affirmatively. This

signified confidence and pride. The participants added that they encouraged their children

always to do their best, encouraged them to be respectful, reminded them that education

is the future. The more involved they are as parents, the better their children would perform in school. Attitudes and beliefs are a component of Ajzen's Theory of Planned Behavior (Ajzen, 1991). These positive attitudes about their importance to their child's future will help produce a positive outcome - parent involvement which in turns leads to student achievement. Three participants added that teaching/education begins at home. Of those who did not answer, the participants were quiet, looked down and shrugged. According to Ekman (1997), these non-verbal cues signified sadness, inadequacy, and uncertainty (Please refer to Appendix O). A participant said, "Yes, I believe teaching starts at home." Another participant said, "Yes, I want my child to have what I never had, a great education." Another participant also said, "Yes, I consider myself a support system for my child and I need to motivate her to be her best." Similarly, another participant responded, "Absolutely, I can see my work within my children in how hard they work." Parents believe in themselves as parents and believe that what they are doing to support their child in school will have positive effects for their child's future.

Variety of Activities

Throughout the interviews, the participants mentioned different activities that the school offered and whether they were satisfied with the opportunities to participate. The majority of the participants were very satisfied with the opportunities to participate. Only 11 participants responded that they were not satisfied and would like to see more activities. Table 14 shows whether participants were satisfied with opportunities to participate. However, these participants did not give examples of what they would like to see in their schools.

Table 14 *Are Participants Satisfied with Activities Offered at School*

Satisfied with the Activities Offered		
Response	# of Responses	Percentage
Yes	121	92%
No	11	8%
Total	132	100%

When asked how many activities they attend per month, the participants responded with some hard numbers but added in clarifications. Table 15 indicates the number of activities participants engaged in per month. Seventy-two participants responded that they attended one-two activities per month while 26 participants responded with three or more. Of the 132 participants, 12 of them responded that they do not attend any activities. Clarifications that were important for the participants to share included that transportation could be problematic, work schedules determined the number of activities and the child's actual participation in the activity increased the number of times they participated.

Table 15 *Number of Activities Attended per Month by Participant*

Number of Activities Attended per Month	
# of Activities	# of Responses
0	12
1 - 2	72
3 or more	26

Participation by Birth Country

Monthly participation in school activities was analyzed by US born participants versus non-US born participants. Forty-eight percent of US born participants participated once or twice a month compared to 58 percent of non-US born participants. Twenty-five percent of non-US born participants participate in 3 or more activities compared to 10 percent of US born participants. US born participants responded with "it depends" more often than non-US born participants, 27 percent and 10 percent, respectively. The results indicate non-US born parents in this study participate more than US born parents. In this case, the results could be attributed to more non-US born parents are stay at home parents and have more time to participate. It could also indicate that non-US born parents place a high value on education which is usually a reason they have emigrated from their country to the United States.

Participation by Income

Monthly participation was also analyzed by participant income. Participation in three or more activities was more common in participants who earned less than $30,000. Thirty-four percent of the participants who earn less than $30,000 responded they participate in 3 or more activities. Forty-seven percent of those who earn $51,000 or more participate in 1-2 activities per month with 29 percent of this same group responding that their participation depends on work schedules, timing of events or type of event. It can be concluded that the participants who have a higher income possibly work more hours and as indicated by their responses, time and schedule are a factor.

Participation by Education Level

Sixty-three percent of participants who did not graduate from high school participate in 1-2 activities per month compared to 54 percent of high school graduates and 57 percent of those with schooling beyond high school. Participants, in this study, with less than a high school diploma or GED, participate more than participants with more schooling, 90 percent versus 75 percent.

The participants were also asked if the activities they participated in were of a social or academic nature. Sixty-three participants responded that they attended both kinds of activities. Some participants remembered more academic than social opportunities to participate in school activities. Additionally, when asked about whether they would be motivated to attend more events, the majority responded affirmatively. Only seven participants responded negatively. The participants had a variety of ideas and responses in regard to suggestions for school activities that they would like to see offered (Please refer to Appendix P). One participant responded, "I like to go to parent nights, carnivals, awards ceremonies and class parties." Another participant said, "I would attend anything that benefits my child or me." Another participant also said, "I would attend health fairs, game nights, field trips, student performances and field days."

With all these ideas, the participants were asked if the school ever asked them what they wanted to see in their schools to increase parent involvement in school activities. Twenty-six percent of the participants responded that they had never been asked. Ten percent of the participants chose not to answer and only nodded and shrugged. Fifty-five percent of the participants responded that they had been asked by their school in what type of activities they would like to participate. In addition to suggesting specific

activities, the participants also had suggestions on the how, even though some felt that the schools did enough.

Time

The third recurring theme that emerged during this research project was the issue of time. There was a very specific question in the interview that asked whether the time of the activity played a role in their decision to participate. Ninety-five participants responded that time played a role. Twenty-two participants responded that time did not affect their decision to participate in school activities. One participant said, "Time does affect my participation because if it is too early, I can't ever attend." Another participant said, "I try to participate regardless of the time." Another participant also said, "Yes, because I work full-time and I can only go to the school in the evenings or on weekends." Some participants added that they did not have access to transportation, events were too early, and/or they preferred events after school (Please refer to Appendix R). When asked what else a school could do to get them to participate, seventeen percent of the participants responded with being flexible with time, changing the time, starting later and even suggested more weekend activities (Please refer to Appendix Q). One participant said, "I would like to see more ESL classes or nutrition classes." Another participant said, "The activities offered are good, but in this country, everyone has to work to pay their bills so maybe it is not because we do not want to participate." Another participant also said, "Keep the lines of communication open and continue to send the parents invitations to different activities."

Summary

Qualitative data in this chapter was analyzed by coding interviews and finding emerging themes. Demographic data was taken and presented on 132 participants. The interview was composed of eighteen questions. Each question was designed to address one or more of the research questions.

The first research question is how do parent perceptions about the school evolve as more parent involvement activities are offered? There were seven questions in the interview that addressed this research question. The participants in this study had an idea of what parent involvement meant to them. They responded with being involved in their child's life and education. Participants felt comfortable attending events and looked forward to socializing at events. It was important to them to show their children that education is important. Participants felt welcomed and well-treated when attending activities. Participants stated that they would like to see more school performances, more advanced notice for events, the offering of food at events, offering a calendar of events and consideration given to parents of special needs children. Participants stated they would be willing to attend more events. They also liked being asked by the school about activities in which they would like to participate. Participants would participate more in school activities if they felt welcomed, were included in deciding school activities and if the school offered a variety of activities at various times.

The second research question is what types of parent involvement activities decide or inform positive parent participation such as helping with homework, volunteering and participating in local-level decision-making? Five questions from the interview addressed this research question. More than half of those participants stated they would attend one to two events per month and 20 percent of the participants would attend three or more activities. If activities were important to the participants' children, they were most likely attended. If the participant felt the activity helped their child in some way, they were also likely to attend. Although the schools offered both academic and social activities, participants stated they attended both but recalled most activities were academic. Participants stated they would like more Parent Teacher Organization (PTO) meetings, school carnivals, awards ceremonies, field days, student performances, college tours, motivational speakers, field trips, sports-related events, parent classes and family nights.

The third research question is what factors are associated with increased parent involvement? Twelve questions from the interview addressed this research question. Participants stayed involved in their child's school by joining PTO, volunteering, attending parent conferences, asking their child questions, attending field trips, helping with class parties and reading to their child. The language was not an issue to increased participation. Participants said the school office personnel spoke both English and Spanish and communications were sent home in both languages. Participants responded that they received invitations from the school in a variety of ways such as fliers, school messenger system, and social media. Internet access was not a concern. Participants also stated they preferred personal invitations to school events from either a teacher or an

administrator. However, their child's desire to attend an activity was the most important. Participants often mentioned time as a factor. They appreciated advance noticed and several times of the day as options to attend.

Finally, the fourth research question is why is parent involvement important? Through the analysis of the interviews, emerging themes were found. The themes provide insight into what parents' value in regard to parent involvement and also provide insight into areas that can be addressed to increase parent participation. Parent involvement can be positively impacted by addressing the variety of activities and scheduling the activities at a more convenient time. Parent involvement can also be positively impacted by ensuring parents feel comfortable participating at the school by improving communication and asking them what they want to see in parent involvement opportunities.

Chapter Five will present a summary of the study, connections to the literature, conclusions based on the results and policy implications.

Chapter 5: Discussion

This chapter will begin with a summary of the results of the study. It also includes a discussion of the findings as related to the literature on parent involvement. Also included in this chapter is a discussion on the connection between parent involvement and the Theory of Planned Behavior (Ajzen, 1991). This chapter concludes with a discussion on policy implications and areas for future research.

The purpose of this research was to determine if the types of activities offered to parents at schools made a difference when parents were deciding to be involved. In Dallas ISD, schools are given funds to target parent involvement activities specifically. Schools decide at the local level their school plan to fund parent involvement activities. The plan must include what activities will be funded and their corresponding costs. School leaders struggle to develop their parent involvement plan because they are always trying to think of creative and innovative ways to involve parents. The most popular ways to engage parents are to invite them to PTA/PTO meetings, lead parent workshops and school performances (NEA, 2008). Many school leaders in Dallas ISD reported that parent conference at night only yielded about 30 percent of the parents. Most research (Brown & Roloff, 2015; Epstein, 1991; Ferhman, Keith and Reimers, 1987; Jeynes, 2012; Pena, 2000; Pomerantz, Moorman and Litwack, 2007; Ramirez, 2001) concentrated on the correlation between parent involvement and student achievement while this study focuses on the actual activities offered. The results of this study indicate parents would participate more if the activities were varied. Parent perceptions change when more activities are offered. Parents feel closer to the school and school personnel when they have more opportunities to be involved.

This study focused on four research questions to explore parent responses to the parent involvement phenomenon to answer if parent perceptions change as more opportunities are offered.

Research Question 1 How do parent perceptions about the school evolve as more parent involvement activities are offered?

Research Question 2 What types of parent involvement activities decide or inform positive parent participation such as helping with homework, volunteering and participating in local-level decision-making?

Research Question 3 What factors are associated with increased parent involvement?

Research Question 4 Why is parent involvement important?

The Theory of Planned Behavior

This study applied Ajzen's Theory of Planned Behavior (Ajzen, 1991). The theory can be applied to understand the reasons that lead to the intention of a behavior. The Theory of Planned Behavior Model can be used to explain a particular behavior based on attitudes and beliefs, subjective norms and perceived control. Parent involvement would be the "desired behavior" in this model. The attitude or belief that increasing their participation leads to a positive feeling would encourage them to participate. The subjective norm in the model can be equated to the school's efforts to get the parents involved or what the parents perceive is the expectation based on what others are doing. The perceived control was the parent's contribution to the school and whether they believed or not if they made a difference when they participated in parent involvement activities. This theory could be used to explain an increase in parent involvement if one or more of the three components were addressed. By ensuring parents

felt they made a difference, by demonstrating that others were participating, and their participation had a positive outcome for their child, overall parent involvement would increase.

In the literature, it was found that this theory could help examine parent involvement. Sheldon (2002) found that parents created social networks and used these networks to encourage social relationships. Parents then influenced each other to participate thus creating a positive network of parent engagement. Sheldon (2002) also addressed peer pressure as a form of increasing parent involvement. Parents wanted to be perceived as active parents, so social pressures from other parents influenced their decision to participate. McCurdy & Daro (2001) found parents' internal beliefs, attitudes and perceptions will directly influence their behavior. Perception of benefits of a behavior guide one's decision-making process (Fishbein & Ajzen, 1975). Fishbein et al. (1997) found that parents evaluate the need and benefit of their involvement to determine their positive or negative behavior.

Alghazo and Alghazo (2015) conducted studies in Jordan and the United States to compare reasons for parent involvement and applied Ajzen's Theory of Planned Behavior (1991). They found that parent involvement increases social capital and provides additional resources to students, which increases their academic success. Alghazo and Alghazo (2015) recommend parent involvement be emphasized as a tool to counterpart the effect of socioeconomic status on student achievement. Bracke and Corts (2012) found that the role of parents in education as 'subjective norms' of this theory is having role models of what parent involvement looks like and having neighbors that also

participate. The Theory of Planned Behavior (1991) is versatile enough to account for the dynamic and complex nature of parental engagement (Perry & Langley, 2013).

Summary of Results

This research attempted to determine how the types of parent involvement activities can affect how often parents participated in school activities. Parent participants had a general idea of what parent involvement meant to them, and they answered all questions based on their definition. The parents who considered parent involvement to be monitoring homework, attending class parties and attending field trips answered the questions from that perspective. However, the parents who defined parent involvement as being a partner in their child's education, attending parent conferences, being an active volunteer and a member of the PTO answered the questions from that perspective. Through the interviews, it was discovered that parents did attend some activities at the school and some would even like to participate more. It was much easier for the participants to list what they do than it was for them to define parent involvement. The schools chosen for this research provided adequate access for their parents by having a bilingual office staff. The schools also communicated with their parents through social media and most of the participants reported they had access to the Internet. It was discovered that the schools were doing a good job of sending out invitations and fliers to their respective events.

This research found common themes within the participants' responses. This study found that parents valued the relationships they built at the school and that parents enjoyed speaking to teachers about their child's progress and felt comfortable interacting with school staff. This study also found parents want their children to know that they are

important to them and that their education is essential. The study also concluded that parents participated more when attendance at an activity was important to their child.

Theme One - Relationships. Results from the survey suggest that parents appreciated an invitation from the teacher or the building leader. When they receive a personal invitation, they were more apt to participate in an activity than when they receive a flier. In addition to the personal invitation, the parent was more likely to participate if the invitation came from their child. If attending made their child happy, then they were more likely to attend. Parent participants strongly believed that they make a difference in their child's life and that teaching begins at home. According to Ajzen's Theory of Planned Behavior, perceived control affects the outcome (Ajzen, 1991). Increased parent participation is the expected outcome when parents believe their participation makes difference.

Theme Two – Variety of Activities. The second theme found was the variety of activities offered. This study found parent participants were very satisfied with the activities and opportunities offered by their schools. The few who did not feel they were satisfied did not expound on their answer. During this part of the research, participants mentioned that transportation could be a struggle and that sometimes their work hours did not allow them to participate as often as they would have liked. Parent participants wanted to be asked what they wanted to see in their schools. They had ideas that they would be willing to share with building leaders.

Theme Three - Time. Lastly, time was the third theme that emerged in the research. Results from the interviews suggests time plays an important role in whether parents participated in parent involvement activities. Participants would like to see a

variety of options on when they could participate such as evenings, weekends and possible choices like a parent class offered in the morning and in the afternoon. Parents then could choose which worked best for them.

The literature emphasized that parent involvement, when planned effectively and implemented with fidelity, had positive benefits for students, parents and the school (Henderson and Berla, 1994). Pomerantz et al. (2007) found parents who had high aspirations and expectations for their children and participated more in parent engagement activities at the school. This study's results agree with the literature. Participants in this study believed they were important in their child's education and they believed they made a difference in their child's future. These same participants in this study were active parents in school-related activities. The study showed parents wanted to participate and have specific ideas to what activities they would like to see offered. This study, like the literature, also showed that parents felt more connected with the school when they were involved. When parents are involved, it shows the child that they believe by participating in school activities, they are contributing to the happiness of the child. They liked for their children to be happy and their children liked that their parents were active.

Limitations of the Study

While the researcher still agrees that a case study design was the best approach for this study, interviews were not designed to capture hard data. Rather this study identified the perceptions of a critical stakeholder by using interviews to gather information from parents and gain an in-depth understanding of parent engagement. This study, however, could be strengthened by adding a quantitative research component. For example, a

survey instrument could have been added to this study and the statistical analysis of the survey data could offer more evidence in supporting the results. The quantitative data could strengthen the insights provided by the interviews.

Policy Implications

Numerous federal and state level policies have been implemented to increase parent involvement (O'Bryan, Braddock, & Dawkins, 2006). McLaughlin and Shields (1987) stated that rules and mandates cannot bring about the changes that are necessary to encourage parent involvement. Kessler-Sklar and Baker (2000) agreed that parent involvement programs and initiatives need to be re-examined for innovative strategies. Teachers and school administrators must be motivated to try new strategies. McLaughlin and Shields (1987) stated that for the past 20 years, parent involvement strategies had not been carried out as they were intended. "Parents express less interest in school policymaking than in helping their own children's success" (Johnson, 1997, p. 24). Parent advisory groups have been formed for compliance more than for intentional decision making. Also, most of these efforts had only targeted the middle or higher-class parent and had completely left out the low-income parent. "School-based strategies tend not to engage the participation of low-income parents" (McLaughlin & Shields, 1987, p.157). O'Bryan, Braddock, and Dawkins (2006) added that participation of African American parents was also low, and current strategies did not do enough to engage them.

Latino parents played a home role rather than a school role (Walker et al., 2011). This study, which consisted of predominately Hispanic parents, found that parents do participate in school events, just at varying levels. Also inconsistent with the literature was the finding that low-income parents were unsure of how to participate and feel

intimidated (Graves-Smith, 2006). While this finding generally may be true, this study consisted of mostly low-income parents, and they did not report feeling inadequate or intimidated. This, however, could be as a result of willing participation in the study.

McLaughlin and Shields (1987) suggested that when administrators and teachers at the local level were the ones who designed the parent involvement activities and schedules the low-income parents were more likely to participate. It was up to the beliefs and attitudes of those in charge. Actual change will take place at the local level (Kessler-Sklar & Baker, 2000). "There is a strong case for parent involvement as a policy priority" (McLaughlin and Shields, 1987, p. 8). However, without the support of the local decision-makers, like school administrators and teachers, it would be a waste of time and resources (McLaughlin & Shields, 1987). Policymakers will have to sell the importance of parent involvement programs to local decision makers. Training the local leaders, school administrators and teachers would be a start. A local building policy could be in place that states the particulars of this.

"The most frequently adopted policies are communicating with parents about school programs and their child's progress and supporting the participation of parents in making decisions regarding school policies and practices" (Kessler-Sklar & Baker, 2000, p 3). McLaughlin and Shields (1987) believed that parent involvement merits significant policy attention and public resources. Most school children now are part of unconventional households that could benefit from education programs, including parent involvement strategies for parents. Comer and Haynes (1991) noted that parental participation in all aspects of school functioning resulted in a positive school environment where all stakeholders shared in a vision of student achievement.

This has meaning for Dallas ISD school leaders and policymakers. If parent involvement has been important for so long and the positive effects it has on student achievement has been established, why is it still a struggle to get parents to be involved even when it is funded at the school level? The current strategies implemented to increase parent involvement are not working.

Schools should be keenly aware of their constituents and their respective cultures. Various cultures view their participation in schools differently. Some cultures are more active than others in schools based on their belief systems. Immigrant parents are typically less involved in the school setting but participate as parents in the home by providing a homework area and ensuring their child has what they need for school. It is important for school administrators to understand their parents as stakeholders. Parent involvement strategies are standardized for all parents at the school. Standardization is not always the most effective. Knowledge of the parents and their culture will allow for programs to be designed with various cultures in mind. It is essential to be sensitive to cultural differences in parents' behaviors and expectations. Parenting can differ vastly across diverse ethnic groups. According to the Dallas ISD ethnicity enrollment statistics, student enrollment is 62 percent Hispanic, 18 percent African American, 4 percent White, 1 percent Asian, 1 percent multi-race and 14 percent were not reported.

The funding provided to the schools should be given based on a submitted plan with documented follow-up. The plan needs to be data-driven to ensure that the building leaders are holding themselves and their school staff accountable for increasing parent involvement. Currently, building leaders/principals use the money for operational items while others use it to fund a liaison to assist in making connections with parents.

However, there is not a strong accountability feature tied to the established plans. It is more of a checklist and compliance piece. Schools and their principals are not reprimanded in any way if they lack parental involvement. They only need to demonstrate that improvement is required. Therefore, school leaders should be required to prove documented increases in parent involvement.

Local decision makers, like school administrators and teachers, should be trained to ensure parent involvement programs are effective. Teachers should be trained in how to engage parents in the classroom effectively. Teachers should also be trained to communicate with parents to ensure the parents feel welcome and a part of the educational process. Policies should be in place for school administrators to be trained in high-leverage parent involvement and communication strategies. Strategies for school administrators could include how to welcome families as partners, use multiple methods of communication, share information about student learning and empower families to participate as partners in learning. Strategies for teachers could be how to include parents in classroom observations, conduct a home visit, communicate regularly with parents through data, and model what is going on in the classroom, so it can be supported at home. These two groups of individuals, teachers and school administrators are the key to engaging parents.

All schools should fund a community liaison that would assist with increasing parent involvement. This liaison would be responsible for documenting and evaluating parent involvement strategies and successes and failures attempted by the school. This liaison would be able to ask all the questions that were asked in this research project on a more consistent basis. Adjustments to activities would be made immediately; suggestions

for activities would be taken more often, and parents would have an opportunity to participate more based on their feedback. This liaison would also work full time to make parents felt welcomed and would reach out to parents that were not participating to ensure their reason was not a school-level reason which could be adjusted.

With a focused data-driven plan, training for local decision-makers and a liaison, parent involvement could be monitored and adjusted to ensure an increase in parent involvement was occurring.

Recommendations for Future Research

All Title I schools in Dallas ISD have a parent involvement plan. Smaller schools may have higher parent involvement. Research in other schools, small and large, could be beneficial to see if those school had similar results as this research project. In addition to the recommendations found under the limitations section, it would be interesting to find out if the schools that do fund the community liaison position have better parent involvement than those who do not fund the position. Furthermore, research on funding, spending and its impact on parent involvement would be beneficial to learn whether the money is being used effectively.

Implications for Practice

There are implications when initiating new activities in the school. Professional development for administrators, teachers and other school personnel on cultural sensitivity to understand parents as valuable stakeholders and engage them in school activities needs to be provided (Cardona, Jain, & Canfield-Davis, 2012). Parents can be given a questionnaire or survey at the beginning of each school year to ask what activities are most important to them and what times are best for them to best tailor activities to

their wants and needs. English as a Second Language (ESL) classes should be provided to immigrant parents to empower them to be more active (Pena, 2000). Parents should be actively recruited to be part of the School-Based Decision Making Committee to engage parents in local decision making and not just volunteering for activities (Anderson & Minke, 2007).

Implications for Policy

Policy implications are not always simple. This becomes a challenge when a school district has a large, diverse population. Implementing a policy for a school in the inner-city and the same one in an affluent neighborhood would not work. But policies are important even if they do not presently exist. People may differ in what they see are the policy implications of a particular finding or observation. There is also scope for creativity in coming up with policy ideas in order to address the findings or observations.

Schools. Implementing policies such as using various methods of communication to encourage parent participation could be valuable at the school level. Defining what a welcoming atmosphere to parents when they enter a school is could also become a policy. While this seems nebulous, it can be done. Training for school administrators on culturally responsive leadership should be required.

A school cannot automatically mandate that parents attend monthly meetings to learn how to help their child at home and school. However, this practice would increase their social capital and would allow parents to feel their voices are heard.

Implications for Research

The research could have also included more schools to increase the number of participants. The study could have been expanded to include schools in other areas of

Dallas, not just the Pleasant Grove area. The research could also be conducted in predominately African American schools to see if similar results were achieved. A broader demographics of participants could give more insight into the perspectives of various groups of parents.

This study could also be expanded and strengthened by adding an administrative component. School administrators could be interviewed on their current practices with parent involvement. School administrators could offer events and activities as requested by parents. Then parents could be interviewed again after the events and activities were offered. These findings could be added as a form of data triangulation.

Adding additional stakeholders to future research can provide insight into how to promote parent involvement to increase student achievement.

Parents. Parents come from different demographics. Additional studies could be on specific stakeholder demographics like single-parent households, or another would be to determine if the schools with a designated parent engagement person have more and/or better parent involvement than those schools. One policy that could be implemented at the local building level would be to incentivize parents to participate by offering 'parent passes' to visit their child during lunch or in the classroom.

Stakeholders. Knowing what role small business owners in the community and in the schools play, would lead to more cooperation between the stakeholders. How physically involved stakeholders are rather than only monetarily is another avenue for exploration. A certified community liaison at every school who understands the various cultures and needs of that school's student body and community would help alleviate the problems associated with Spanish speaking parents. This person could come from a local

business or government entity. This could be done in conjunction with someone from the central administration that can help build community partnerships.

Schools. Research could be conducted in different types of schools with different demographics, like rural schools or high socio-economic schools. An interesting study would be to compare parent involvement in a single-gender school with one which is not. Looking at parent involvement at the PreK, elementary, middle and high schools to find how much parent involvement already exists and what would be needed, if any might produce different results.

Conclusion

This study explored parent involvement activities that led to increased participation in schools and how this increased participation could result in a positive impact on student achievement. The results of this study serve as a call to educators and other stakeholders to work collaboratively in their efforts to increase parent involvement. Giving parents a voice empowers them to feel like they serve an essential role in the academic success of their child. Improved communication between teachers, parents and school personnel to create a common vision for parent involvement is necessary to see a positive increase in engagement. With increased accountability in standardized testing for students and teachers, there is a need to engage parents and families and empower them to help their children both at school and at home.

The use of a Community Liaison position in Title I schools is critical. The Community Liaison serves as the "gatekeeper" into the school community; serving as a bridge between parents and the school administration. The Community Liaison assists students, staff and parents by conveying information and services offered by the school.

They communicate with parents on behalf of the school to ensure an ongoing partnership between the home and school. The can also conduct parent meetings to discuss wants and needs from the parent perspective. The Community Liaison can also conduct home visits to discuss needs and concerns involving students and their families. Information gleaned from parents can lead to organizing a variety of school activities for the purpose of providing support to families. These activities can assist in celebrating diversity among parent groups. The Community Liaison can also be used to refer families in need to outside agencies to ensure their needs are met. The Community Liaison as a "gatekeeper" is crucial to the success of Title I schools. They can be used to foster positive relationships between the school and home and influence positive parent behaviors.

Using Ajzen's Theory of Planned Behavior (1991) as a model, one or more of the framework's factors can be used to intentionally influence parent behavior and in turn increase parent involvement. Consistently applying a feedback loop between all involved stakeholders, especially parents and school administrators, can strongly encourage that parents be heard and be empowered so they can be actively engaged in their children's academic life. This study served as a validation that parent involvement is important and can be encouraged if the school offers carefully planned activities that interest the parents and their children.

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Appendices

Appendix A: Recruitment Script for Investigator Initiated In-person Contact

1. Introduction of Investigator

Excuse me, sir/ madam OR Perdon, senora/senor

Excuse me, Mrs. Smith ?

(Confirm that you have the correct person if you are contacting a specific parent)

Do you have a minute? My name is Sandra Fernandez. I am a student at the University

of Texas at Arlington and I am working on a research study about parents and parent

involvement.

Tiene un minuto? Mi nombre es Sandra Fernandez y soy un estudiante de la Universidad

de Texas en Arlington. Estoy trabajando en un studio acerca de participacion de padres

en la escuela.

2. Immediate opportunity to opt-out

Can I talk to you more about the study and to see if you might be interested in

participating?

Puedo hablar con usted acerca del estudio para haber si posiblemente esta interesada/o

en participar?

If individual says "no, not interested" = stop, say thank you but do not continue.

If he/she says yes, then continue or make plans to revisit at a more convenient time.

3. BRIEF statement about the study.

I'm approaching you to see if you'd like to be in the study. This research study is to help

me gain an understanding of how parent's perceptions change when offered more

opportunities to participate in school activities. Your participation will involve answering 18 interview questions and should take about 30 minutes.

Este estudio es para que me ayude a obtener una comprension de como las percepciones de los padres cambian cuando se les ofrece mas oportunidades de participar en actividades escolares. Su participacion sera contestar 18 preguntas and tomara aproximadamente 30 minutos.

4. Ask if he/she is interested in hearing more details.

So, are you interested in hearing some details about the research study

Pues, esta interesada/o en escuchar un poco mas del studio?

If not interested, thank the individual for his/ her time.

If interested, then move to the consent form.

Appendix B: Informed Consent Document

PRINCIPAL INVESTIGATOR NAME:

Sandra Fernandez

601 Aspen Ct

Red Oak, Texas 75154

(214) 729-4412

Sandra.fernandez@mavs.uta.edu

FACULTY ADVISOR

Maria Martinez-Cosio, Associate Professor

UT-Arlington: School of Urban and Public Affairs

(817) 272-3302

mcosio@uta.edu

TITLE OF PROJECT

Parent Involvement Activities that Lead to Increased Parent Participation

INTRODUCTION

You are being asked to participate in a research study. Your participation is voluntary.

Refusal to participate or discontinuing your participation at any time will involve no

penalty or loss of benefits to which you are otherwise entitled. Please ask questions if

there is anything you do not understand.

PURPOSE

The purpose of this research study is to help me gain an understanding of how parent's

perceptions change when offered more opportunities to participate in school activities;

specifically, the types of parent involvement activities that cause an increase in attendance of those activities.

DURATION

Participation in this study will last between 30 minutes and 1 hour per participant.

NUMBER OF PARTICIPANTS

The number of participants in this research study is up to 300.

PROCEDURES

During this interview, you will be asked 6 demographic questions and a set of 15 questions specifically targeting parent involvement. A recording device may be used. The interview may be audio-recorded. After the interview, the tape will be transcribed, which means they will be typed exactly as they were recorded, word-for-word, by the researcher. The tape will be kept with the transcription for potential future research regarding parent involvement. The tape and transcription will not be used for any future research purposes not described here.

EXPERIMENTAL PROCEDURES

Once you have completed reviewing and accepting this form, you will be interviewed for this study.

POSSIBLE BENEFITS

You understand that you will receive no direct benefit other than knowledge that participation in this study will aid efforts to improve parent involvement in the school setting

COMPENSATION

There is no compensation for participating in this study.

POSSIBLE RISKS/DISCOMFORTS

There are no known risks associated with participating in this research study, however

should you feel uncomfortable you have the option to quit any time with no consequence.

ALTERNATIVE PROCEDURES/TREATMENTS

There are no alternative procedures/treatments for this study.

VOLUNTARY PARTICIPATION

Participation in this study is voluntary. You have the right to decline participation in any

and all study procedures or quit at any time at no consequence. You may refuse to

participate or withdraw at any time during the study.

Furthermore, please note that you are not required to answer any questions that you do

not feel comfortable answering during the interview. If any questions are not clear, please

ask for clarification from the researcher.

CONFIDENTIALITY

Your identity will be kept confidential. Your confidentiality during the study will be

ensured by assigning you a coded identification number during the data collection

process. The list connecting your name to this number will be kept in a locked file, with

only Sandra Fernandez (the lead graduate student for this study) having access to this

information. Your name will not be directly associated with any data. The confidentiality

of the information related to your participation in this research will be ensured by

maintaining records only coded by identification numbers. Copies of electronic data will

be kept under lock and key. Data will be mantained for three years after study procedures

are complete and will be stored in the graduate office at The University of Texas at

Arlington – School of Urban Public Affairs. If the results of this research are published or presented at scientific meetings, your identity will not be disclosed.

If in the unlikely event it becomes necessary for the Institutional Review Board to review your research records, then The University of Texas at Arlington will protect the confidentiality of those records to the extent permitted by law. Your research records will not be released without your consent unless required by law or a court order. The data resulting from your participation may be made available to other researchers in the future for research purposes not detailed within this consent form. In these cases, the data will contain no identifying information that could associate you with it, or with your participation in any study.

CONTACT FOR QUESTIONS

You are encouraged to contact me with any questions or concerns that you might have.

Questions about this research or your rights as a research subject may be directed to:

Sandra Fernandez

(214) 729-4412 (cell)

Sandrafernandez26@yahoo.com

Sandra.fernandez@mavs.uta.edu

If you have any questions about your rights as a research subject, you can contact the Regulatory Services in the Office of Research Administration at 817-272-2105 or regulatoryservices@uta.edu.

By accepting and submitting your response below, you confirm that you have carefully read and understand this document. If you do not understand, please contact the reseacher and we will be glad to go through the document with you.

You have been informed about this study's purpose, procedures, possible benefits and risks, and you have received a copy of this form. You have been given the opportunity to ask questions before you sign, and you have been told that you can ask other questions at any time

You voluntarily agree to participate in this study. By accepting, you are not waiving any of your legal rights. Refusal to participate will involve no penalty or loss of benefits to which you are otherwise entitled, and the you may discontinue participation at any time without penalty or loss of benefits, to which you are otherwise entitled.

Finally, if you are unclear about any information on this form, or have any concerns about the research, please contact us. We will gladly to set up an in-person explanation of this informed consent form for you if desired.

Appendix C: Informed Consent Document

Title of Project: *Parent Involvement: Do parent perceptions about the school change*

when they are offered more opportunities to participate?

By signing below, you confirm that you have read or had this document read to you. You

also confim you are 18 years of age or older.

You will be given a signed copy of this informed consent document. You have

been and will continue to be given the chance to ask questions and to discuss your

participation with the researcher.

SIGANTURE OF RESEARCHER:_____

SIGNATURE OF PARTICIPANT: _____

NOMBRE PRINCIPAL DE INVESTIGADOR

Sandra Fernandez

601 Aspen Ct

Red Oak, Texas 75154

(214) 729-4412

Sandra.fernandez@mavs.uta.edu

ASESOR DE PERSONAL

Maria Martinez-Cosio, Associate Professor

UT-Arlington: School of Urban and Public Affairs

(817) 272-3302

mcosio@uta.edu

TITULO DE PROYECTO:

Participación de Padres: ¿Cambian las percepciones de padres sobre la escuela cuando se les ofrecen mas oportunidades de participar entre la escuela?

INTRODUCCION

Se le pide participar en un estudio de investigacion. Su participacion es voluntaria. Negando su participacion o descontinuando su participacion a cualquier momento no implicara ninguna sancion o la perdida de beneficios a los que tiene derecho. Favor de hacer preguntas si hay algo que no entiende.

PROPOSITO: El proposito de este estudio es para que me ayude a obtener una comprension de como las percepciones de los padres cambian cuando se les ofrece mas

oportunidades de participar en actividades escolares. En concreto, los tipos de actividades de participación de padres que causan un aumento en la asistencia de aquellas actividades.

DURACION: Participacion en este estudio durara entre 30 minutos y 1 hora por cada participante.

NUMERO DE PARTICIPANTES: El numero de participantes en este estudio de investigacion es hasta 300.

PROCEDIMIENTOS: Se le preguntara 6 preguntas demograficas y 15 preguntas especificamente sobre la participacion de padres durante esta entrevista. Se podra usar un aparato de grabar. Podra ser grabada la entrevista. Despues de la entrevista la grabacion sera transcrita significando que sus respuestas seran anotadas por el investigador exactamente como fueron grabadas, palabra por palabra. Se guardara la grabacion con la transcipcion por estudios de la participacion de padres. Las grabacion y transcripciones no seran usadas para razones no descritas en este documento.

PROCEDIMIENTOS EXPERIMENTARIOS: Usted sera entrevistado al revisar y aceptar esta forma.

BENEFICIOS POSIBLES: Usted entiende que no recibira beneficios directos mas que:

•   El saber que este estudio ayudara a las esfuerzos para mejorar la participacion de padres en las escuelas primarias.

COMPENSACION: No habra compensacion por participar en este estudio.

POSIBLES RIESGOS O MOLESTIAS: No existen riesgos conocidos asociados con la participacion en este estudio de investigacion, sin embargo si usted se siente incomodo por cualquiera razon usted tiene la ocion de dejar cualquier momento sin consecuencia.

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PROCEDIMIENTOS O TRATAMIENTOS ALTERNATIVOS: No existen

procedimientos o tratamientos alternativos para este estudio

PARTICIPACION VOLUNTARIA: La participacion en este estudio es voluntaria.

Usted tiene el derecho de rechazar la participacion en esta y cualquier estudio en

cualquier momento sin consecuencia. Usted puede negar su participacion o retirarse del

estudio en cualquier momento durante el estudio.

Ademas, tenga en cuanta que usted no esta obligado a responder a cualquier

pregunta que usted no se siente comodo respondiendo durante la entrevista. Si no esta

clara alguna pregunta, por favor pida un aclaracion por parte del investigador.

CONFIDENCIALIDAD: Su identidad se mantendra confidencial. Su confidencialidad

durante el estudia se mantendra por asignandole un numero codificado de identificacion

durante el proceso de recoleccion de datos. La lista de conectar su nombre a este numero

se guardara en un archivo bajo llave y solamente Sandra Fernandez (el estudiante de

graduo principal de este estudio) tendra acceso a esta informacion. Su nombre no se

asocia directamente con el dato. La confidencialidad de la informacion relacionada con

su participacion en esta investigacion se mantendra por manera de que solamente los

archivos con un numero codificado de identificacion se usaran. Las copias de los datos

electronicos se guardaran bajo llave. Los datos seran mantenidos durante 3 anos despues

de que se completen los procedimientos del estudio y se guardaran en la oficina de

postgrado de The University of Texas at Arlington – School of Urban Public Affairs. Si

los resultado de esta investigacion son publicados o presentatos en reuniones cientificas,

su identidad no sera revelada.

Si en el improbable caso de que sea necesario que la Comision Institucional de Revision revise los registros de la investigacion, The University of Texas at Arlington protegera la confidencialidad de los registros en la medida permitada por la ley. Sus expedientes de investigavion no se dara a conocer sin su consentimiento a menos que es requerido por la ley o una order judicial. Los datos resultantes de su participacion se pueden hacer disponibles a otro investigadores en el futuro con fines de investigacion que no se detallan en este formulario de consentimiento. En estos casos, los datos no contienen informacion de identificacion que podrian asociar a used con los datos o con su participacion en cualquier estudio.

CONTACTO PARA PREGUNTAS: Les animamos a contactarme con cualquier pregunta o preocupacion que usted pueda tener.

Sandra Fernandez

(214) 729-4412 (cell)

Sandrafernandez26@yahoo.com

Sandra.fernandez@mavs.uta.edu

Preguntas acerca de esta investigacion o de sus derechos cmo sujeto de investigacion se pueden dirigir a Sandra Fernandez, (214) 729-4412 (cell)

Sandrafernandez26@yahoo.com o Sandra.fernandez@mavs.uta.edu.

Si tiene alguna pregunta sobre sus derechos como sujeto de investigación puede comunicarse con "Regulatory Services in the Office of Research Administration at 817-272-2105 or regulatoryservices@uta.edu."

Al aceptar y enviar su respuesta abajo usted confirma que ha leido y entendido este documento. Si usted no entiende, por favor pongase en contacto con el investigador y estaremos encantados de pasar por el documento con usted.

Se le ha informado sobre el proposito de este estudio, los procedimientos, los riesgos y beneficios posibles y ha recibido una copia de este formulario. Se le ha dado la oportunidad de hacer preguntas antes de firmar, y le han dicho que usted puede hacer otras preguntas en cualquier momento.

Usted acepta voluntariamente participar en este estudio. Al aceptar, usted no renuncia a ninguno de sus derechos legales. Negarse a participar implicara ninguna sancion o perdida de beneficios a los cuales usted tiene derecho, y el que puede interrumpir su participacion en cualquier momento sin sancion o perdida de beneficios, a la que tiene derecho.

Por ultimo, si tiene dudas sobre cualquier infomacion en este formulario, o si tiene alguna preocupacion acerca de la investigacion, por favor pongase en contacto con nosotros. Estaremos encantados de establecer una explicacion en persona de este formulario de consentimiento informado para usted si lo desea.

Appendix E: Documento de Consentimiento Informado

UT Arlington

Titulo de Proyecto: *Participación de Padres: ¿Cambian las percepciones de padres sobre la escuela cuando se les ofrecen mas oportunidades de participar entre la escuela*

Al firmar abajo, usted confirma que ha leido o que le han leido este documento. Tambien confirman que tienen por lo menos 18 anos de edad.

Se le entregara una copia firmadad de este documento de consentimiento informado. Se le ha dado y continuara de tener la oportunidad de hacer preguntas y discutir su participacion con el investigador.

FIRMA DEL INVESTIGADOR:_____

FIRMA DEL PARTICIPANTE: _____

Appendix F: Attestation for Translated Material

Title of translated document(s)/project(s): Informed Consent

Language(s): English to Spanish

I, Sandra Fernandez, to the best of my knowledge, declare that the document listed above, is a true, accurate and a complete translation of the original text. I, as a native speaker, translated the document to the best of my abilities and presents the information exactly as is in the English document.

Appendix G: Demographic Questions

1. Language spoken at home

2. Country of birth (Nationality)

3. Number of children

4. Income ranges

5. Level of education

6. Number of schools in Dallas ISD their children have attended

7. Number of experiences with different school districts

Appendix H: Interview Questions

1. What is your definition of parent involvement?

2. What do you do as a parent to stay involved in your child's school?

3. Do you feel comfortable attending school parent involvement activities? Why or why not?

4. Are you satisfied with the number of parent involvement activities offered at your school?

5. When you think of your child's school, what are your feelings about how you are welcomed or treated?

6. Do you need a translator when you visit the school? Are you offered one?

7. What role do the teacher or administrator play in your decision to participate? Which invitation means more to you; that of your child's teacher or one from the principal?

8. On an average, how many activities do you attend at your child's school?

9. What motivated you to attend these specific activities?

10. Do you receive notifications of activities? How are these notifications sent?

11. Do you have internet access?

12. Are activities academic or social?

13. Does the activity time play a role in your decision to participate?

14. In your opinion, what else can a school do or offer to get you to participate in parent activities at your child's school?

15.   Would you be motivated to attend other kinds of events?

16.   What types of events would you most likely attend?

17.   Does your school ask you about what you would like to do to be involved?

18.   Do you feel you are important to your child's education? (make a difference)

Appendix I: Definition of Parent Involvement

Question: What is your definition of parent involvement?

1. Being involved with your child's school and events or whatever is needed.

2. Ask my child what he did in school and help him with reading.

3. Attend PTO and attend field trips.

4. Parent's participation in their children's education and school activities such as homework, events or extra-curricular activities.

5. Parents who are actively engaged in student academics, school activities, ensuring child is given tools at home to be successful.

6. Being involved in schoolwork, after school activities and being a positive influence.

7. Para mi significa ayudar a nuestros hijos en actividades de la escuela como las tareas o paseos. (For me it means helping our kids with their school activities like homework or field trips.)

8. Le ponemos atencion a nuestro hijo que haga las tareas, actividades, checamos su folder, preguntamos a los maestros por el comportamiento. (We ensure our son does his homework, activities, check his folder, ask the teachers about the behavior.)

Appendix J: How Parents Stay Involved

Question: What do you do as a parent to stay involved in your child's school?

1. I joined PTO and try to volunteer when I can.

2. I get involved with as much as possible like volunteering for field trips, any activities that need a chaperone. Eating lunch, contacting teachers, office staff, etc.

3. Help her with homework. Go to parent conferences, go to her games and extra-curricular activities.

4. Ayudar en las tareas, tener comunicacion con los maestros, ayudar lo mas posible en la escuela. (Assist with homework, have communication with the teachers, helps as much as possible in the school).

5. Asistir a las reuniones escolares, asistir a los eventos, informarse sobre los programas que ofrece la escuela, ser voluntario. (Attend school meetings, attend the events, be informed on programs offered by the school, be a volunteer.)

6. I volunteer from time to time. I make sure to attend all meetings, (Home & school, PTO, and athletic events) and have all of their teacher's phone numbers and email addresses to ensure constant and smooth communication.

Appendix K: Comfort Level

Question: Do you feel comfortable attending school parent involvement activities?

1. The times I have attended, I do feel comfortable. However, I am a very quiet person so I focus all my attention on my child.

2. Yes, I do feel comfortable attending school activities because it involves my child's education.

3. Yes, I do feel comfortable because it helps for me to see what my child is involved in.

4. Yes, because everyone is friendly.

5. Si, porque hay un ambiente amigable. (Yes, because the climate is friendly.)

6. Si, me hacen sentir como si en verdad nos tienen importancia (Yes, they make me feel like we are really important.

7. Si porque asi me involucro mas en la educacion de mis hijos. (Yes, because I am able to be more involved in my children's education).

8. Si porque las actividades son amigables y te hacen sentir en familia. (Yes, because the activities are friendly and they make you feel like family).

9. Si porque hablan espanol en la escuela y nos tratan muy bien. (Yes, because they speak Spanish and they treat us well).

10. Yes, it's almost like my family I can voice my likes and dislikes.

11. Yes, because it is important for my kids to see me in school taking interest in school life.

12. Yes, anything involving my child is very important and it's a way for my child to see I'm committed as a mom and I want her committed in school.

13. Si. Porque veo a mis hijos contentos que me vean en su escuela y convivio con maestros, directores y con todo el personal de la escuela. (Yes, because I see kids are happy when they see me at school and I socialize/interact with teacher, administrators and other school staff).

Appendix L: How Are Parents Treated or Welcomed

Question: When you think of your child's school, what are your feelings about how you are welcomed or treated?

1. I love this school for my child. They focus so much on the kids' education and making it fun for them at the same time.

2. I feel respected and good to know that my child is around those kinds of people.

3. I love the staff they greet me as family not just an outsider.

4. I feel comfortable because I always meet smiling faces and people ready to answer questions and assist.

5. Me siento bien, los maestros y directora siempre hacen que uno se sienta agusto y hacen tiempo para hablar/platicar de lo que me concierne. (I feel good. The teachers and principal always make sure we feel comfortable and they make time to talk to me about concerns.

6. Bueno yo les agradesco al personal de la escuela porque siempre han sido muy buenas personas y cuando los he necesitado me han ayudado y les agradesco mucho y como madre estoy contenta de ser parte de esta escuela. (Well I am grateful to the school staff because they have always been nice. When I need something, they help me and as a mom, I am very happy to be part of this school).

Appendix M: School Invitations

Question: What role do the teacher or administrator play in your decision to participate? Which invitation means more to you; that of the teacher or the principal?

1. The teacher plays a big role in my participation. The teacher's invitation means more to me.

2. Both invitations are welcome, however the invitation from the teacher plays a bigger role.

3. My child plays the biggest role if they want to attend, I'll go.

4. A big role. The teacher because that's who is up close contact every day in the classroom with my kids.

5. It is important. Teachers spend more time with my child than me. So if we are needed or invited to the school, it shouldn't be a problem to go. Teacher and principal invitations are important for different reasons.

6. Los maestros son importantes. Es mas importante que el maestro me diga que vaya. Creo que el sabe mucho de los ninos y tambien en lo que se necesita para ayudar en la escuela. (The teachers are important. It is more important for the teacher to tell me to go. I think they know a lot about the kids and they know what is needed so we can help in the school).

7. Con todo respeto el del maestro por que siento que ella esta con mi hijo en cada momento. Claro la directora tiene un papel muy importante. With all due respect, the

teacher's because I feel that she is with my son all day. Sure, the principal also plays an important role).

8. Cada uno tiene significado importante pero la maestra(o) es decisivo para mi participacion en la escuela. Each has an important significance but that of the teacher is my deciding point whether I participate).

Question: What motivated you to attend specific activities?

1. A significant one, because it teacher/administrator are inviting you to be apart at what they are doing and be involved with your students success why not be there?

2. I know it helps with my child's education. That to me is very important.

3. To see my child smile and participate.

4. We have attended dances, science fair and carnivals because it makes our daughter happy and we want the best experience she can have as a young girl.

5. My child asked and the enjoyment of me being there for him.

6. My child. I want my child to know commitment I have toward his future and how much I support and care about these things.

7. Me gusta asistir para pasar tiempo con mis hijos. (I like to attend and spend time with my kids.)

8. Estar cerca de mi hijo y conocer los educadores para tener una mejor relacion con la escuela. (To be close to my son y meet the teachers to have a better relationship with the school.)

9. Quiero saber en lo que esta mi hija Al igual aprender mas por mi misma, si es posible. Y asi tener informacion para ellos (estudiantes) si es necesario. Tambien asi les demostramos a nuestros hijos que nos importan y nos importa lo que hacen. (I want to know in what my child in involved in and maybe learn something about myself along the way and that way we can have more

information for them if they need help. This way we can show our kids that they are important to us and what they do is important to us.) (P88)

10. Both of my boys are my motivation. They want me to attend so I try to attend whenever I'm able to.

Appendix O: Do Parents Make a Difference

Question. Do you feel you are important to your child's education? Do you make a difference?

1. Yes, I believe teaching starts at home.

2. Si. Es mi hijo y hago mucha diferencia. (Yes, he is my son and I make a difference.)

3. Si porque con los hijos la educacion enpiesa con los padres. (Yes because with kids, education begins with the parents.)

4. Claro que si porque estamos alli para que todos los dias le valla bien y apollarlo al 100%. (Of course because we are there so they will have a good day every day and we can support them 100%.)

5. Yes, I do feel like I'm important in my child's life and education. She's autistic and she needs the best she can learn from and school has helped a lot and the many informal programs that they brought in to inform parents.

9. Of course, it all starts at home.

10. Yes, if we stay involved in any way in their education. This stimulates the student to do even better in school.

11. I am the most important person in my child's education and I play the biggest role.

Appendix P: Parent Suggestions for School Activities

Question. What types of events would you most likely attend?

1.   More PTO Meetings

2.   More carnivals

3.   Awards ceremonies

4.   Field day

5.   Student performances

6.   College tours

7.   Motivational speakers

8.   More field trips

9.   Sports related activities

10.   Parent classes or workshops

11.   Health fairs, exercises or cooking demonstrations

12.   Book clubs for parents

13.   More social events like concerts or family game night

Appendix Q: What Else Can Schools Do?

Question. What else can a school do or offer to get you to participate in parent activities at your child's school?

1. More fliers sent home

2. More advanced notice for activities

3. Offer coffee at meetings

4. Give a calendar with all events

5. Update Social Media Often

6. More Performances

7. Offer food

8. Consider the parents of special needs children

Appendix R: Time Is a Concern

Question. Does the activity time play a role in your decision to participate?

1. Yes, some activities are done at a very early time and I work so I can never attend them.

2. More advance notice so I can request a day off.

3. … we work and are unable to attend most of the activities.

4. Change the time.

5. They are good at trying to involve parents, but sometimes work schedule & activities occur at the same time.

6. …depending on what time it is it's how I will know if I can participate.

Appendix S: Biographical Information

Sandra Fernandez was born in Dallas, Texas. After completing high school at Skyline High School in Dallas in 1991, Sandra attended Southern Methodist University in Dallas, Texas where she majored in Economics and minored in Italian. She received a Bachelor of Science degree from SMU in 1995. She then attended Texas A&M University – Commerce and received a Master of Science degree in Educational Leadership in 2001. She is currently employed with the Dallas Independent School District as an Elementary Principal. She has been an elementary campus administrator for 12 years. Sandra is married and has two daughters.