

PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT IN CHILDREN'S EDUCATION AT A CHRISTIAN SCHOOL:
A TRANSCENDENTAL PHENOMENOLOGICAL APPROACH

Deborah A. Minix-Fuller

Liberty University

A Dissertation Presented in Partial Fulfillment

Of the Requirements for the Degree

Doctor of Education

Liberty University

2020

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ABSTRACT

Parents share collective experiences of either involving themselves or not in their child's education. This transcendental phenomenological study's rationale was to explore the views, experiences, beliefs, and motivations of parents who are involved in their children's education. Eleven participants who engaged in this research are from a small-sized Christian school in Kentucky. The theory guiding this study is Urie Bronfenbrenner's theory (1979), the Ecological System (microsystem, mesosystem, exosystem, macrosystem, and chronosystem). The data collected from interviews, a focus group, and two surveys. NVivo12 plus Qualitative Data Analysis Software (Q-DAS) implemented to analyze the qualitative data collected. Moustakas' (1994) phenomenological seven steps guided the data analysis. The phenomenological analysis identified common themes in this research. The results of the study identified several themes from a central research question: What are the experiences of parents who are involved in their children's education? The three subsequent research questions are: (a) How are parents encouraged to move from merely monitoring to becoming more actively involved in their children's education? (b) What do parents perceive to be obstacles that hinder their active involvement with children's school activities? (c) What roles do the administration and teachers occupy in parental involvement? These questions drew attention to the gaps in parental involvement through literature by the investigation. More research regarding diverse parental involvement needs addressing outside of the teachers who were involved in this research. The administration needs to reach out to parents, which could significantly influence parents' experiences.

Keywords: parental-involvement, Christian school, academic achievement, teacher, community.

Dedication

I dedicate this writing to my loudest and biggest cheerleader, GOD! I want to thank GOD, my LORD and SAVIOR JESUS CHRIST for HIS undying love for me, HIS never-ending mercy and grace, and for never giving up on me. HIS relentless gentleness as HE moves me forward every step of the way in this journey never ceased. “Be strong and let not your hand be weak; for your work shall be rewarded” (I Chronicles 15:7 The New King James Version). Simple, mere words of gratitude only scratch the surface of the love and adoration I have for JESUS. Only God and HIS unmerited favor toward humanity can look beyond my every fault and see my deepest need. HE is my GOD, my LORD, my SAVIOR, and my EVERYTHING!

Acknowledgments

I dedicate this to my wonderful husband, Mick, my second biggest cheerleader. God has put a special compassionate, loving, and patience spirit in this man that a wife always appreciates. His strength continued to point me to the cross and to remember that God called me to walk this path a long time ago. Thank you, Honey! I appreciate my big sister and closest friend Yvonne, who told me from the beginning of this journey that I could do this because it is her “learning Greek” and passing. I also that my oldest and dearest best friend, Laura, who always told me that I was organized enough to get the writing job done. Thanks to Dr. Russell Yocum, a man of good character and love for teaching. The moment that I met him face to face, I knew that he loved God and Jesus. I knew that God put him in my life to nurture my writing. Dr. Yocum is the epitome of showing gracefulness, selflessness, and kindheartedness. Dr. Daniele Bradshaw, a woman who sensed my heart through this writing and she took me on and trusted the work that I wrote, and she believed in me. Dr. Bradshaw, for this I am eternally grateful. Dr. James Swezey pushed me harder than any professor I know. Thank you, Dr. Swezey, for letting me know that I cannot write, but I must really learn how to write. I just love you! Dr. Lee Sebastiani, my mentor and friend, always encouraged me to do my best, she read and edited every paper, and she took time out to listen to my arguments. Dr. Sebastiani always told me that I was a great asset to teaching. Dr. Kathie Carwile, Dr. Tracey Pritchard, all of my professors who undeniably prayed for me. I have learned the value of a spiritual connection that is unwavering and unconformable through family and friends.

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List of Abbreviations

Education and Secondary Education Act (ESEA)

Institutional Review Board (IRB)

No Child Left Behind (NCLB)

Parental Involvement (PI)

Parent-Teacher Associations (PTAs)

Qualitative Data Analysis Software (Q-DAS)

Socioeconomic Status (SES)

CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

Overview

Christian schools have been the object of little research concerning the experiences of parental involvement (PI) in children's education. According to research conducted by Shuffelton (2017), parents' involvement in their children's education is a form of politics in public and private schools, which brings about various effects on both student and parent. PI can support or hinder parity and student academic success. Children may display aggression at school due to a lack of PI (Gibbs, 2013). A variation of this behavior is a concern for all stakeholders. The issue of PI in education (public or private schools) is noteworthy for much rhetoric associated with a substantial discrepancy in the observed benefits of its practices. No child ever wants to fail but needs the direct help of stakeholders to affirm and confirm his or her success, which ties to a family's aspirations (Connell, 2018). Chapter One will discuss the background of parental involvement in children's education, how parental involvement affects me personally, the research problem, the purpose statement, the significance of the study, research questions, definitions relative to this study, and the summary.

Background

Historical

Historically and culturally, parental involvement (PI) comprised of developed ideas about home-life, education, and community service (Schneider & Coleman, 2018). In a meaningful way, parents are considered participants in school and at home when they are involved in students' academic learning and other activities affecting the child's progression. Parent participation is a regular, collaborative, and meaningful interaction affecting the student's social, mental, and physical outcomes, as well as decision-making. Parents play integral roles in

ensuring their children are well-rounded in their learning environment. Parental involvement in a variety of forms began early in American history. Fathers claimed, “unquestioned control over their family,” which included spiritual and educational instruction (Scott, 2015, p. 469).

Conversely, Trahan and Cheung (2018) emphasized that a father and mother display different roles in practical ways of involvement in their children’s education. Fatherhood may change the social group as it becomes the norm based on most cultures, their motivations, and personal values. Trahan and Cheung (2018) implicitly maintained that motherhood becomes an instrument for safeguarding and nurturing children as parental involvement continues into the 21st century. However, according to Shuffelton (2017), the phrase “parental involvement” does not appear in the primary 1965 Education and Secondary Education Act (ESEA), nor do the words parent, parental, or the gender-specific mother or father. Kim and Hill (2015) asserted, “Extant research on parental involvement in education has been conducted largely without respect to which parent is involved” (p. 919). The co-parenting relationship with the father and mother was an unspoken notion that the relationship frameworks function similarly for both parents. The co-parenting relationship with the father and mother was an unspoken notion that the relationship frameworks function similarly for both parents.

Historically, the purpose of ESEA was to support additional resources for students in districts serving low-income families who are vulnerable to failing academically. Persuasive arguments and precise leadership capabilities were instrumental in making the ESEA successful in legislative history (Casalaspì, 2017). Additionally, ESEA serves in these districts to grant federal assistance for books, special education centers, and scholarships for low-income college students. Consequently, authorized by ESEA, encouraging parental involvement in children’s education became a long-standing goal of the Title I, Part A, Education for the Disadvantaged,

which was amended by the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 (NCLB, P.L. 107-110) (Paul, 2016).

The No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB, 2001) is complex legislation that defined parental involvement in contemporary educational policy and practice, configured the Elementary and Secondary Education Act, and reshaped education policy throughout the United States (Shuffelton, 2017). The NCLB is most explicitly laid out in Title I schools. Parental involvement is a vital part of solutions that will close the achievement gap in American schools (Shuffelton, 2017).

Social

Parental involvement encompasses the whole child's welfare at home and in school. Wang and Sheikh-Khalil (2014) asserted, "Parental involvement in education remains important for facilitating positive youth development" (p. 610). Unfortunately, research signifies that as students go from grade to grade, parental engagement minimizes. PI has been in a downward spiral in the higher grades. "Bronfenbrenner's theory predicts that children's development will be enhanced if parents and early care and education programs interact in concert, working in mutually reinforcing ways in both settings" (Kim & Riley, 2014, p. 68).

The need for PI in higher grades is more significant than in earlier grades, especially because adolescents and teens are so vulnerable as they grow through various social and developmental stages. Bandura (1991) maintained that people learn from one another, through examination, replication, and demonstration. Psychologically, everybody is a human agent in one capacity or another (Bandura, 2001). Humans need guidance for future goals and encouragement to uphold and continue with sound ethical and social behaviors. "When families are involved in middle-level students' education, students are more likely to achieve at higher rates both

academically and socially” (Kyzar & Jimerson, 2018, p.15). Parents and school leaders should collaborate and act as a team to support students because it will impact their social culture, the context of their families’ lives, and grow trusted associations (Robinson, 2017). Leadership can take collaboration to a new level with the teacher, parent, and student connecting.

The teacher should collaborate with parents without judging the dynamics of their household situations. Teachers should help the family and try becoming problem solvers. “School integration can mean that the children are entering the same building in the morning, but then other structural arrangements and school policies resegregate the student body by race and class” (Cross, 2017, p. 768). There can be no social change if the school communities are status quo. School is often the first social contact for some children. Teachers’ support, peer relationships, teacher attitude, and strong parental validation have a substantial impact on children’s success in school (Tadesse, 2014).

Theoretical

Researcher and theorist Urie Bronfenbrenner’s (1979) general rationale for this proposal provided his 1973 report to the federal government supporting parental involvement.

Subsequently, he validated the theory as “an example of a mesosystem hypothesis within his bioecological systems theory” (Kim & Riley, 2014, p. 70). In Bronfenbrenner’s theory, the mesosystem involves the connections between the immediate surroundings in a child’s life, such as the connections between the home, early care, and the education program (Riley, 2014).

Recent research has revealed that the proportion of students whose parents described appearing at a typical meeting in their child’s school, a teacher-parent conference, a school or class event reached their highest recorded levels in 2016 (Child Trends, 2017). Ceballo, Maurizi, Suarez, and Aretakis (2014) have warned, “Even worse, no precise and consistent operational definition

of ‘parental involvement’ has emerged in the literature; consequently, measures of parental involvement differ drastically across studies” (p. 117).

Nevertheless, schools are striving to bring change in the classrooms with positive cooperation from the family and community. This research study will explore the essence of parental involvement in their children’s education, which gives the participants a “voice” in the process. There are times when parents perceive they do not have a voice in their children’s education. Yoder and Lopez (2013) averred, “Power differentials were clearly evident between the parents and society, with the parents feeling powerless... (p. 15). Parents are the foundation of their children’s education because they give voice to the child for values, opinions, beliefs, perspectives, and character.

Parental involvement is an individual right and responsibility for families to actively take part in their children’s education (Castro et al., 2015). A school cannot thrive effectively without parents actively participating in a child’s education (Castro et al., 2015). Schools that implement policies can gain a greater understanding of approaches used to enhance collaboration between educators and parents (Robinson, 2017). Collaboration is reciprocal and encompasses focusing on the person as well as sharing. Consequently, if parents cannot trust their children’s school (teachers or administrators), they will not be interested in participating in any functions at the school. Federal and state education policy strongly encourages parents’ active participation in school-sponsored activities (Park, Stone & Holloway, 2017). The policy may include volunteering, PTA/PTO membership, and or attending parent-teacher conferences.

A qualitative research method was appropriate for this study because researchers want to discover the experiences of how parents actively participate in their child’s education with a real contribution. This overall research plan investigated the experience of PI in a Christian school to

address issues of the deterioration of parents' participation at the middle school level. Reaching high standards for educational outcomes by society is expected from different types of programs. Day and Dotterer (2018) asserted, "Gaps in educational outcomes between racial/ethnic and socioeconomic (SES) groups persist in the United States, and parental involvement is often cited as an important avenue for improving outcomes among racially/ethnically diverse adolescents" (p. 1331). Active parenting in the school's environment includes parents discussing future educational goals; always keeping communications open with teachers; and volunteering in the classroom, field trips, and or parent workshops (Daniel, 2013) to foster the education of their children.

Situation to Self

As a Christian, parent, and educator, the most significant activity parents can do is watch their child grow spiritually and academically. Bunnell (2016) emphasized, "Home, church, and school are the three primary locations that influence parental involvement" (p. 98). Parents who are involved in their children's education must understand the importance of being engaged. I did not have the stability, support, or care that was needed to move forward in school. When I was growing up in New York City, life was tough for my eight siblings and me. We grew up with lots of challenges in school and no parental guidance; therefore, parental involvement is vital to me. I feel strongly about parents being an intricate part of their children's educational achievement. Blandin (2017) contended, "Effective communication between the home and school is vital to connecting these two institutions; it is this connection that influences the child's academic success" (p. 275). I am an excited researcher, who is motivated and interested in the experiences of parents' participation in their children's education because I did not have the luxury of my parents being present in my education.

Consequently, I believe that parental involvement is an important element that influences their children's learning and the outcome of their academic achievement. Children's perceptions, creativity, and feelings are dependent on the involvement of their parents. Many students cannot learn effectively as a result of not being stimulated.

As a scholar, my philosophical assumptions are an axiological conjecture because of the values (integrity, honesty, loyalty, and morality) I bring to this study. The truth and ethical assumptions as an epistemological researcher allow me to get as close as possible to the participants in this investigation and to understand their truth. While ontological examination assumes that reality is seen through the eyes of others differently, I report the differences as themes developed during my findings. The methodological research in this study assured details by experiencing inductive, emerging, and shape of the collected data. These assumptions are subjective and discerning to the participants seen through multiple views. Conducting this research has informed the readers of the experiences of parents who are involved in their children's education.

I conducted this transcendental phenomenological study because parental involvement in Christian schools has declined in the past few years. I never had the opportunity to go to a Christian school, but I have worked in one where parental engagement was minimal. Most times, parents could be seen at a sports game, nothing more. I have actively chronicled all values and biases (Creswell & Poth, 2018). As a growing pragmatist, I believe that it is essential to solving problems in a sensible, practical way that complements the conditions of what is happening and exist at the moment. I thank God for freedom of choice, because looking at the world with one set of eyes does not allow a researcher to see the beauty in the "what" and the "how" of the

researcher's progression (Creswell & Poth, 2018, p. 314). Although I believe in other impressive educational theories, I tend to take a pragmatic approach towards teaching.

Problem Statement

There are currently problems with parental involvement (PI) in children's education at Christian schools. Ozolnieks (2019) asserted, "Parents, who closely support their student through elementary years may become detached from the daily process through the high school years as students and parents prepare for college and career" (p. 27). There is a significant gap in research, specifically when it comes to the phenomenon of parents' experiences as they are involved in Christian schools. The problem exists when parents are not engaged in their children's education, and schools desire to increase student academic achievement with parental participation (Schneider & Coleman, 2018). Parent-teacher associations (PTAs) on the elementary level are well known, and there are "supporter" clubs on the secondary level, but there is minimal PI on middle and secondary levels. Large numbers of studies on PI have tried to convey the problems that plague schools across America, but there is still not a significant amount of literature invested in understanding the experiences of parents as they try to pursue a substantial role in their children's education. Pragmatically, the literature has continued to encourage PI, however, without exploring much about the phenomenon. Perhaps, the literature has not investigated what parents experienced. This research seeks to acquire a general understanding of this phenomenon. The Bible mandates parental involvement (Psalm 78:5-7) in children's religious education (Bunnell, Yocum, Koyzis, & Strohmyer, 2018) as well as secular education. Parental support is essential for both components to make a difference for a student's learning as he or she grows in cognition.

There is an obligation to children that the home and school collaborate to address PI's persistent problem. Negative reactions from schools may impede some parents; they may feel ineffective if the family is from a different cultural or linguistic background, and the majority possibly feel alienated from teachers and school processes. Parental involvement (PI) amalgamated with commitment and active participation from the parent, the school, and the student is a joint venture. "There are many problems and concerns about the groups' lack of involvement. Parental involvement in religious education is a historical and relevant phenomenon, one that many are encouraging, yet few understand" (Bunnell, 2016, p. 15). Many elementary, middle, and secondary schools do not know how to bring the nontraditional family together or deal with areas of concern that it represents. Parents feel unwelcome at school (especially in the urban communities), lack knowledge of the school's policies that will help their child with their education, or may not feel that education is important enough for them to be involved in school activities.

Knapp, Landers, Liang, and Jefferson (2017) stated, "Nevertheless, studies have shown that PI is strongly linked with children's academic performance" (p. 80). There are still some questions that remain about children's academic, developmental, and behavioral connections in school and at home. Numerous solutions can improve parental involvement, including collaboration among all stakeholders. The most significant factor in this equation is for the administrators and teachers of the school to be committed to the child's education. When parents can believe the schools guarantee help, perhaps, parental involvement will rise again through the implementation of these solutions.

The primary objective of PI is to improve and close the student achievement gap with the help of parental engagement. Notwithstanding, researchers have asserted that there have been

tremendous challenges for teachers and administrators who desire to encourage PI, for example, completing homework as a way to improve academic achievement. Investigators claimed that the findings of previous PI studies have not been consistent (Núñez et al., 2015). Consequently, investigators explained that different patterns for different folks might have a more direct or intermediate result on PI engagement and the student's academic excellence (Núñez et al., 2015). Researchers have contended that youth unquestionably influence and connect to the school environment when the home environment is consistent and cohesive (Bronfenbrenner, 1979; Yoder & Lopez, 2013). When children are in a critical stage of development, a new complexity of social life will increase responsibilities. Pstross, Rodríguez, Knopf, and Paris (2016) suggested, "Parental involvement has, in large part, been found to positively correlate with student academic achievement" (p. 635). Therefore, a well-connected home-school environment is crucial for efficacious learning outcomes.

Purpose Statement

The purpose of this transcendental phenomenological study is to understand the experiences of parents who are involved in their children's education. The central phenomenon of this study were the experiences of 12 parents at a Christian School. The school administrator nominated the parents to fulfill the criteria. However, only 11 participants followed through with the research, and one dropped from the study. At this stage in the research, parental involvement defines fostering healthy activities with a child through participation in events, volunteering, workshops, and other instances of engagement (Perriel, 2015). The theory guiding this study is Urie Bronfenbrenner's (1979) Ecological System, which espoused that human development interaction between individuals and their environment influences their behavior with parents, friends, and school. Bronfenbrenner's scientific work and his collaboration with the United

States government assisted in the construction of the Head Start program in 1965. In summation, “While parental participation is likely to diminish through middle and high school years, research demonstrates that it is still vital to augmenting academic accomplishment and creating other constructive results” (Daniel, 2013, p. 41).

Significance of the Study

This study builds on the experiences of parents who function actively in their children’s education. This research also had practical significance because it is concerned with the experiences those parents have when they are involved in their children’s education. From a theoretical perspective and guidance, Bronfenbrenner’s (1979) mesosystem theory predicted that children’s development heightens in education programs if parents intervened in their children’s education early in their lives (Kim & Riley, 2014). Bronfenbrenner (1979) later officially provided examples of the mesosystem supposition within his bioecological systems theory that made connections between a parent’s engagement in a child’s life and school (Kim & Riley, 2014). Parents would experience working reciprocally with teachers and administrators to reinforce ways of participation. Blandin (2017) claimed, “The significance of the relationship between the home and the school is that both these contexts are central to the development of the child” (p. 274). Although it is still up to the parents to involve themselves with their children’s education, research suggests that school-related parental involvement is exceptionally significant in influencing adolescents’ academic achievement (Gordon & Cui, 2014).

The research was empirically significant because it provides relevant information about the experiences of Christian school parents. The experiences of parents actively supporting their children in school provide loving and nurturing intervention for life. Parental involvement functions to foster and maintain their children’s spiritual, social, emotional, physical, academic,

and occupational growth (Quezada, 2014). Students with involved parents or other caregivers earn “higher grades and test scores, have better social skills, and show improved behavior” (Blandin, 2017, p. 276).

Several studies focus on a shift in the parent-teacher communications, which would significantly increase communication between the stakeholders in the schools and the households (Blandin, 2017; Kim & Riley, 2014; Williams, Swift, Williams, & Van Daal, 2017). Some schools try to encourage parents to correspond with teachers about their children’s academic performance (Schneider & Coleman, 2018) and in other studies, Williams et al. (2017) asserted, “For many parents, involvement in their children’s learning in the home is a naturally occurring practice” (p. 5). Families wrestle with many factors that could affect their household (Blandin, 2017). There are problematic issues that might interfere with students’ abilities to do well in school. Because of such adverse events, the influence of parents has dwindled enough to cause alarms that there is an overabundance of information with few studies offering specific solutions.

The goal is to ensure that both parents and teachers collaborate on the best methods as partners. Collaboration is most beneficial for the sake of the children. “Many researchers highlight the role of parents in spiritual development, religiosity, spiritual disclosure, and educational endeavors” (Bunnell, 2016, p. 14), but lack views on the experiences of parents who are involved in their children’s education. Practically, the study provided essential understandings for parents who desire to become more active in their children’s education. The study can make an impact on all stakeholders to develop a plan of action and implement it as it develops to become a positive resource to reach all parents. Finally, this research may encourage stakeholders to play a more significant role in children’s education. In order to reach this potential significance, the study addressed one central question and three sub-questions.

Research Questions

This study sought to build a theory in which to answer to the following central research question and several sub-questions to address specific components of this research.

Central Research Question

What are the experiences of parents who are involved in their children's education?

Parents have a choice to exercise their rights to experience involvement in their child's school, whether private or public sectors (Taylor & Francis, 2018). Parental encouragement and support for learning activities at home, combined with parental involvement in schooling, are critical to children's education and parent's desire to nurture their children in their primary years. Cultural differences or parents' past experiences with school can play a vital role in PI (Taylor & Francis, 2018).

Subsequent Research Questions

1. How are parents encouraged to move from merely monitoring to becoming more actively involved in their children's education?

Schools must advise parents of their legal rights about the activities that are available to them in their child's school districts. Educational leaders can also garner extended insights into what is needed to engage parents in authentic ways to involve these critical partners in schools. Robinson (2017) stated, "Therefore, school districts have an obligation to inform parents promptly of their rights be connected in their children's school's education" (p. 15). A connection with parents is critical for teachers to recruit and give more chances for parents to volunteer in their children's schools. It is equally important to understand that parents need this chance to involve themselves in a typical school function, which will increase participation (Epstein, 2018).

2. What do parents perceive to be obstacles that hinder their active involvement with children's school activities?

Parental involvement has obstacles for families because of low-income, poverty, homelessness, special needs, language barriers, dysfunctional homes, abusive environments, or being of African American descendants, all of which may cause classroom disparity. "Without family involvement, intervention is likely to be unsuccessful, and what few effects are achieved are likely to disappear once the intervention is discontinued" (Kim & Riley, 2014, p. 70). Teachers must find ways to manage every challenge to ensure that all students and parents are involved in activities at school (Duez-Curry, 2017). Although parents' views about different issues can act as barriers to efficient PI, parents still view their role in their children's education is important.

3. What roles do the administration and teachers occupy in parental involvement?

Parents who are actively involved in the child's social environment in school, the neighborhood, and at home foster development in a constructive way (Bronfenbrenner, 1979). When parents receive personal invitations to be active in their children's school culture from teachers and administration, this can be a motivation for all concerned. "The pedagogical approach of the school is designed to engage learners cooperatively, promote partnerships between parents and teachers, and demonstrate respect for all members of the learning community" (West, Miller, & Moate, 2017, p. 381). Even if parents cannot participate at the time, invitations will let them know that they are a part of the education process in their child's academic success.

Definitions

1. Axiological – The philosophical study of value, ethics, and aesthetics that depend fundamentally on notions of merit, value theory, and meta-ethics. (Creswell & Poth, 2018).
2. Ecological systems theory – Five different levels of human development divided into natural environments. The Microsystem, the Mesosystem, the Exosystem, the Macrosystem, the Chronosystem (Bronfenbrenner, 1979).
3. No Child Left Behind (NCLB) – The No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 was a U.S. Act of Congress that reauthorized the Elementary and Secondary Education Act; it included Title I provisions applying to disadvantaged students (Shuffelton, 2017).
4. Parental Involvement (PI) – Parental involvement is coalition of functioning participation and responsibility of the parent(s) or guardian in regular, two way and meaningful communication involving their child’s academic learning and other student activities (Madison, 2017).
5. Parent/Teacher Associations (PTA) – A Parent-Teacher Association (PTA) is an organization that enables parents to be involved in their children’s schools (Fisher, 2018).
6. Pragmatism – Pragmatism is concerned with action and change and the interplay between knowledge and action (Creswell & Poth, 2018).
7. SES – Socioeconomic status is the social standing or class of an individual or group. It is often measured as a combination of education, income, and occupation (Mansour et al., 2016).
8. Q-DAS – Qualitative Data Analysis Software - move data, categorized, and easily linked to similarly themed texts (Creswell & Poth, 2018).

Summary

Chapter One addresses the overview, background, situation to self, problem statement, purpose statement, the significance of the study, research questions, definitions, and this summary. There has been enormous research explored on parental involvement, but it is limited in its exploration of the experiences of parents who are involved in their children's education. Bronfenbrenner's theory (1979) emphasizes the importance of PI in early care and education programs (Kim & Riley, 2014). Parental participation is lacking in many public schools as well as private schools. The goal of this transcendental phenomenological research was to exploit the depth of the information collected on PI and to understand the experiences of parental engagement. "School-family engagement matters and school personnel who want to enable middle school students to rise to their potentials cannot ignore the importance of family outreach" (Kyzar & Jimerson, 2018, p. 22). Ongoing research continues to indicate the need for family engagement in schools. PI fosters and boosts student success, decreases truancy, and reestablishes parents' trust in their children's education.

CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW

Overview

Chapter Two discussed the need to understand the experiences of parents who are involved in their children's education in a Christian school. Bunnell (2016) asserted that there is a need for further research that goes "beyond" spiritual audiences (p. 14). According to Wong et al. (2018), adolescent research has shown that parental involvement (PI) motivates and inspires student achievement. "Parental involvement not only makes children aware of parental expectations for schooling, but it also facilitates children's learning and engagement in school by sustaining students' learning interests across contexts" (Wong et al., 2018, p. 1545). Nevertheless, researchers devised an abstract school-related PI plan as a multidimensional theory, not operationalized effectively (Affuso, Bacchini, & Miranda, 2017). In the United States, the last few decades have made PI a "top priority" for improving achievement in every community (Park et al., 2017). The facts are, PI should look like a multifaceted characteristic within each family. Garbacz, McDowall, Schaughency, Sheridan, and Welch (2015) affirmed, "Parent educational involvement is considered a critical element in fostering academic and social-emotional development and has been identified as such in national policy in many countries" (p. 384). The way sociologists paid attention to schools, families, and communities has changed considerably over the years. According to Klemencic, Mirazchiyski, & Sandoval-Hernández, 2014, most research in the 1960s and the 1970s focused on families, schools, or communities as if organized in a separate entity or "competing contexts" (p. 118).

Additionally, Park et al. (2017) proposed that empirically qualitative research infrequently explored school-wide benefits of school-based PI and has seldom been practical. Pemberton and Miller (2015) argued, "We believe schools struggle because supporting evidence

for their efforts to increase parental involvement is at best simplistic and perhaps misleading” (p. 744). Still, PI support in schools is tremendously strong because collaboration with all stakeholders and student achievement is on the rise (Perriel, 2015). Some research suggests that PI gives children the right amount of attention and praise, which in turn, helps them to recognize their education’s worth when families engage in their children’s education followed by a progressive trajectory (Kyzar & Jimerson, 2018). With the help of parents, children are more likely to feel competent, and school attendance becomes more important to them. Prior literature furthermore demonstrated links between parent-teacher trust, student academics, and behavior (Santiago, Garbacz, Beattie, & Moore, 2016). An extensive literature in general on PI in children’s education in the United States has been well documented (Wassell, Hawrylak, & Scantlebury, 2017). Parental involvement consists of all stakeholders joining together for the greater good of the student. “Another development in the parental involvement research is the move above and beyond an emphasis on increasing the absolute quantity of parental involvement” (Kim, 2018, p. 150). Research has emphasized and tempted to understand the quality and quantity of PI during involvement.

Chapter Two’s literature review examines the experiences of parents that are involved in their children’s education primarily through Urie Bronfenbrenner’s (1979) theoretical framework of collaboration applied to parental involvement (PI): (a) social, emotional development; (b) parent/student meaningful relationship in school; (c) parents’ motivation to work with teachers; and in other related literature; (d) parental homework guidance; (e) parent-teacher collaboration; (f) community involvement; (g) intervention and a summary. Inadequate PI is assessed as a potential deficiency of trust between educators and families (Pemberton & Miller, 2015), thereby reducing the prospect of connecting the parent/child meaningful relationship in school and

promoting the child's learning. Williams et al. (2017) believed that if teachers and administrators are clear in sharing information with parents, they will engage more in the student's homework assignments and other assignments. Recent investigations extended the framework of Bronfenbrenner (1979) by identifying empirically developed parent-involvement theories that indicate parent involvement is a multidimensional concept (Garbacz et al., 2015).

Parents must actively seek opportunities to get involved with their children's school and community. When parents engage with their children in school, they can produce enormous connections that will strengthen bonds with them. Well-informed parents care about the child's educational needs (Pemberton & Miller, 2015). PI encourages communication within the family, school, and community, which can foster higher self-esteem and confidence in the student (Epstein, 2018). Children interact better with their peers, and their social skills are advanced when there is better communication with the stakeholders. Evans (2017) asserted, "When parents have positive relationships with educators, parents promote appropriate social skills and behaviors" (p. 15). Because stakeholders are teammates in the child's life, research suggested that the whole community's involvement will boost the emotional well-being of the child (Robinson, 2017). The framework of PI mainly focuses on the needs and roles of the community as a whole, which include the student, parent, teacher, administrator, and community. The ideology is that schools explain, organize, and prioritize resilient programs to engage families in their children's education (Klemencic et al., 2014).

PI also incorporates a family bonding with other families who can share hopes and concerns about their children and then work together appropriately to resolve the issues (Wassell et al., 2017). Therefore, parental involvement is a partnership with all stakeholders, while empowering parents with an influential voice in their children's education (Robinson, 2017).

Unfortunately, the practice of collaboration with parents, family, and community does not always communicate strategies and activities for building listening skills.

Theoretical Framework

The theoretical framework in parental involvement incorporates (a) social, emotional development (Bandura, 1999; 2001; Vygotsky, 1978); (b) parent/student meaningful relationship in school (Vygotsky, 1978); (c) parents' motivation to work with teachers (Bronfenbrenner, 1979); and in other related literature on parental involvement, (a) parental homework guidance (Bandura, 1999); (b) parent-teacher collaboration (Bandura, 2001, Epstein, 2002, 2018; and (c) community involvement (Epstein, 2002). These theories provide a framework for exploration. The theoretical understanding of PI relies on the construct of Bandura's learning theory, which encompasses attention, memory, and motivation, connecting behaviorist and cognitive learning. Lev Vygotsky's (1978) Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD) theory occurs in the space "between a student's ability to perform a task under adult guidance and or with peer partnership, which steers the student's ability to solve problems independently" (p. 102). Epstein's (2002) developed a framework for defining six different types of parent involvement to strengthen educators in advancing school and family partnership programs.

The primary theoretical framework of the proposed study was Bronfenbrenner's (1979) bioecological model theory of educational psychology, which supports how PI is relevant to human development. Kim and Riley (2014) stated, "Bronfenbrenner's theory predicts that children's development will be enhanced if parents and early care and education program interact in concert, working in mutually reinforcing ways in both settings" (p. 68).

Social and Emotional Development

Parents who support children's healthy social and emotional development are involved in their education (West et al., 2017). When children are older, they can move into society in healthy ways. Thomson et al. (2018) claimed that parents, educators, and the community together have the responsibility to support young people to become independent, socially skilled, and well-rounded citizens developing toward personal and professional pathways. Bronfenbrenner (1979) embraced that the youth's development is affected by their background and surrounding environmental factors. Bronfenbrenner provided general guidance for parent involvement and formalized it as part of his bioecological systems theory. His theory encompasses five sequentially "layered environmental systems," which plays an intriguing role in molding the development of the young (Mansour et al., 2016, p. 223). He believed that individuals' development is affected by everything in their surrounding environment.

The ecological system organizes contexts of development into five levels of external influence: microsystem, mesosystem, exosystem, macrosystem, and chronosystem (Bronfenbrenner, 1979). The foundation for the systems development begins with the microsystem, the institutions, and groups (Bronfenbrenner, 1979), which will directly influence the child's development, including family, school, religious institutions, neighborhood, and peers.

The microsystem exists as the smallest and most immediate environment for children's development because this is where they live. Therefore, the microsystem integrates daily home, school, peer group, or community environment and routines for the child. The developmental improvement of the child mentally, spiritually, emotionally, and socially is nurtured and supportive when interactions and relationships reasonably fostered. Communications within the

microsystem typically imply personal relationships influenced by and reciprocated by family members, teachers, and classmates. The influence of the home setting and home-school connections to support children have yielded many terms and definitions, which include “family involvement, family-centered services, family-school partnerships, and family engagement” (Garbacz, Herman, Thompson, & Reinke, 2017, p. 2). Home and school environments are assumed vital in influencing child development and targeted systematically to create an excellent childhood outcome (Chen, Anderson, & Watkins, 2016).

The mesosystem (Bronfenbrenner, 1979) relates to the influences associated with the microsystems, interactions between the family and teachers, and the relationship between the child’s peers and the family. The child’s development is affected positively by his or her parents interacting with the child’s friends. The parents are involved with children’s experiences to dispel instability and conflicting emotions that may influence their development destructively. The parents are careful not to criticize the child’s peers openly.

The exosystem comprises the associations in a social setting in which the individual does not have an active role in the immediate context (Bronfenbrenner, 1979). Other people’s experiences may influence a parent or child’s experience at home. One parent might have changes in his or her work schedule that could augment conflicts with the other parent, and the change of plans may interfere with the child emotionally. The exosystem pertains to the connections that may occur connecting two or more settings affecting the developing child indirectly. Other people and places may still affect the child, although the child may not directly interact with them.

The macrosystem illustrates the cultural lives of individuals. Social frameworks include development, industrialized countries, socioeconomic status, poverty, and ethnicity

(Bronfenbrenner, 1979). The child, parent, school, and parent's workplace are all part of this macrosystem. Social frameworks relate children's peers and their families, which share the same traditional identity, heritage, and values. The macrosystem develops when each subsequent generation changes, leading to their unique development in the macrosystem.

Lastly, the chronosystem is the shape of environmental events and transitions over life courses, including sociohistorical circumstances (Bronfenbrenner, 1979). Sociohistorical is a family's transition to one chaotic event or another. The family has a catastrophic experience happen in the household, and the aftermath becomes less tumultuous in the child's development. Bronfenbrenner assumed that the actual physical characteristics of a setting could stimulate certain behaviors; however, no studies included physical elements as a focus of study (Cross, 2017). Ecological systems theory held by Bronfenbrenner (1979) embraces the youth's development reflecting the background and surrounding environmental factors. Bronfenbrenner's approach encompasses the five sequentially "dynamic systems approach," which play an intriguing role in molding the development of the young (Tudge et al., 2016, p. 430). Santiago, Garbacz, Beattie, and Moore (2016) asserted, "Within an ecological model, the microsystem comprises specific settings in which children reside (e.g., home, school)" (p. 1003). The mesosystem includes collaborations among microsystems, for example, mutual connections occurring within the home and school (Santiago et al., 2016). At home, parents know about their children and help to build their social development with siblings and peers.

Bronfenbrenner's (1979) hypothesis is accurate, Kim and Riley (2014) postulated, "Then the types of parent involvement we should encourage are those types that increase consensus on goals concerning the child and opportunities for the parent (not just the child) to develop" (p. 70). It is also important to note that Lev Vygotsky's (1978) social context that involves building

knowledge and collaboration on real-world experiences and building instructional strategies that promote the distribution of social learning as the forerunner for cognitive development. Existing developing hypotheses and research have long supported and proven the significance of “friendships, peer relations, group norms, and school” venues as crucial components in human development (Cross, 2017, p. 767).

Parent/Student’s Meaningful Relationship in School

While parental involvement is essential for the student to excel academically, PI also contributes to a meaningful relationship for both parents and students to help solve problems at home cooperatively (Pemberton & Miller, 2015). A meaningful relationship between parents and their children can stem from working together to form a purposeful bond. Children will develop learning intellect when exposed to specific social humans (Vygotsky, 1978). When students see their parent’s positive anticipation of their school attendance and eagerness to complete challenging curricula, the students will develop profound relationships in school and at home.

Social and emotional learning is critical enough that parents and school officials must focus on the development of the whole being of the student. When there is parental engagement, raising children’s self-cognizance will lead him or her to become better choices in life. Gonida and Vauras (2014) acknowledged, “The mediating role of self-evaluation bias in the relationship between the quality of parental emotional support and children’s academic functioning is indicated” (p. 350). Parental engagement includes a dual role in raising children’s self-awareness so that children can manage emotions, make responsible decisions, and resolve conflicts non-violently. “Parental involvement is a multifaceted construct including parental beliefs, expectations, aspirations, attitudes, behaviors, and affective components” (Gonida & Vauras,

2014, p. 349). The communicative relationship between the parent and child's experiences is purposeful as they participate in significant events together (Williams et al., 2017).

Empowering parents gives opportunities to build their confidence as they participate in the education of their children (Daniel, 2013). When supported by the schools, parents are motivated to do more to inspire and nurture their children's learning. Bandura (2001) stated that any factor in life profoundly influences personal development as a chosen behavior. As researchers maintain focus on how the effects of parental involvement influence their children to do well in school (Schneider & Coleman, 2018), the precursors could be three frameworks for exploring, schools, homes, and communities. Having a family involved in a child's education appears to be the most structured, valuable, and effective intervention for nurturing and maintaining a child's development. "What children can do with the assistance of others might be in some sense, even more, indicative of their mental development than what they can do alone" (Vygotsky, 1978, p. 85). Family involvement is crucial, and without it, intervention may likely become unproductive. Eventually, the achievement will dissipate (Kim & Riley, 2014). Student academic achievement, facilitated by purposeful inspiration, implies that the more parents know about their children's experiences, the more the children will be competent enough to concentrate on schoolwork and lower impediments (Affuso et al., 2017, p. 572).

Consequently, researchers understand that there are a host of reasons as to why parents are not involved in their children's education. Baquedano-López, Alexander, and Hernandez (2013) mentioned that four critical factors restrict parents who are not or cannot become involved in their children's school. These factors are "time, poverty, lack of access, lack of financial resources, and lack of awareness" (p. 157). The schools and teachers certainly play an intricate part of PI, which has been the foundation of the majority of research on parental

involvement. Not only is there an abundance of frameworks researchers use to explain PI, but there are also countless ways that researchers emphasize PI between parents and school personnel (Williams & Sánchez, 2013). The schools, the homes, and the communities emphasize a different aspect of the dynamics that exist today in parental participation.

Research has shown despite the efforts of trying to improve parent's participation in schools, families in low-income areas continue to struggle because the schools are at "best simplistic and perhaps misleading" (Pemberton & Miller, 2015, p. 744). While schools may struggle to support families in low-income areas, especially students at an early age, PI is imperative. During a child's early education, most teachers applaud PI because of open engagement channels for advocating and influencing the child's positive thinking and behavior toward learning (Madison, 2017). Children will naturally spend considerable time with parents and learning skills to increase their knowledge of the alphabet, phonological awareness, and memory, among other skills at home before the start of school. Parents have a start at teaching their children early developing traditional literacy skills, which links to normal literacy, a level of intelligence, or the result of income status later in life (Lopez, 2017).

Parents' Motivation to Work with Teachers

When parents and teachers work together, they become allies for the student. Vygotsky (1978) stated that children's mental development being reliant on a collaborator is more than expected. Collaboration in the relationship between the parents and teachers can be a challenge at times; the concern must be about the students' needs. All stakeholders, including nurses, administrative office workers, and lunch dieticians, must communicate with all students' families supportively to develop reciprocated respect, trust, and appreciation of one another (Epstein, 2013). The information received from all sides combined constructs a more productive

understanding for students. Teachers must understand students, families, and diverse cultures, which will better position them to become creative and develop purposeful learning experiences that are important to adolescent education (Kyzar & Jimerson, 2018). Frequently, teachers do not know the background of their students, and this may put them in a precarious predicament. Lovelace, Eilenfeld, and Francese (2014) emphasized that teachers ought to use sensible practices that can help both students and teachers how to learn and “loosen up” (p. 2).

The purpose of the practices is to support the student’s attention and focus on the content topics with fewer distractions. Confusion can strain a more focused, meaningful teacher-student relationship because an appreciation of uniqueness goes beyond the classroom’s significant elements and jargon. It is the responsibility of the adult stakeholders to instill education, ethical boundaries, care, and guidance for children because they do not determine life choices and career development at such a young age (Madison, 2017). A meaningful relationship between the student and the teacher requires connecting, respecting, appreciating, engaging, and investing in the students’ and their parents’ lives. Establishing more differentiated learning environments emphasizing teacher-student interactions, as well as high-quality instruction, are equally rigorous and pertinent to help the relationship flourish (Mac Iver, Epstein, Sheldon, & Fonseca, 2015). The marginalization of a student may be due to cultural differences, knowledge gaps, and socioeconomic status, which results in the need for supplemental support within education learning environments (Akin & Newman, 2013, p. 234). Therefore, the bonds between parents and teachers are not only beneficial but crucial for the students’ welfare. Nevertheless, the academic groundwork has had a significant impact on the low socioeconomic status communities. “Previous research highlights the direct impact of SES on ability” (Mwangi, Cabrera, Kurban, & Kurban, 2018, 2019, p. 6).

Research has uncovered how significant it is for parents and teachers to bond because the relationship may affect the improvement of students' academic achievement (Santiago et al., 2016, p.1003). Parent-teacher relationships can flourish when the concerns of both parties are addressed and explained concerning issues that may arise. Parental involvement will produce a healthier relationship between parents and teachers. Gonida and Vauras (2014) stated, "Researchers agree that parental involvement significantly contributes to academic attainment and takes different forms both at school and at home" (p. 349). Teachers may have preconceived ideas about parents because of the low levels of PI at some schools. The lack of PI participation may influence staff attitude because on some level they feel that parental involvement is not important enough to parents.

Related Literature

Research continues to promote the 2001 reauthorization of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act, under the No Child Left Behind (NCLB) Act of 2001, in an attempt to join homes and schools through a variety of instruments that foster collaboration between families and communities (Baquedano-López et al., 2013). "Although research into the mediating factors driving this achievement growth is nascent, it is unlikely that NCLB could affect student learning without affecting the learning environment, including instruction" (Grissom, Nicholson-Crotty, & Harrington, 2017, p.417). Parent, family, and community involvement means different things to different people. Parent, family, and community involvement in children's education is linked with advanced academic accomplishment because all stakeholders are working together to support the child's learning (Epstein, 2018). Research indicates that students are more likely to have their self-esteem built as parents increase their involvement regularly (Williams et al., (2017).

Family involvement promotes strong parent, teacher, student, and community partnerships (Goodall, 2017) when caring for the whole child, including collaborating on their homework. Research has also suggested that eligibility for a free or reduced-price meal might be a factor or influence for a parent to trust teachers and schools and become actively involved in their children's education (Santiago et al., 2016). Research has discovered that parents who have a college education are highly likely to become engaged in their children's education (Child Trends, 2017). Therefore, the gap narrows when these same parents volunteer, serve on a committee, or be a part of parent-teacher associations. Horvat and Baugh (2015) asserted, "Policymakers and parents often have fundamentally different assumptions related to choosing. Policymakers assume parents are in an advantageous position to select a school for their child" (p. 10). Researchers claimed that parents understand the available choices, parents can assess the benefits and difficulties of the choices they make concerning their children's education, and parents have a useful and accurate assessment of their child's educational needs (Horvat & Baugh, 2015).

Parental Involvement Connections

Parental involvement significantly decreases after elementary school. The responsibility of encouraging and fostering a positive relationship is left entrusted to educators (Daniel, 2013). PI remains one of the most critical positive areas of the youth's development (Wang & Sheikh-Kalil, 2014). However, teachers' attitudes contribute to the obstacles that constrain parents from becoming a significant part of their children's education in school. A lack of parent resources and parental familiarity with school policies may also contribute to this lack of PI. The school's involvement in training teachers in parent education and providing parents with family resources may increase PI. Teachers need to understand the dynamics and influence that parents exert on

the academic success of their children. Teachers who support student learning are required to address students' social service needs as well. When teachers assist students and parents, they are supporting the essentials for closing achievement gaps. The schools, parents, students, and community form partnerships and collaborate for the success of all stakeholders.

Ever since the NCLB act, teachers expected parents to be more engaged in their children's education because involvement is the key to the children's academic success. However, Child Trends (2019) indicated that approximately 15% of the time, a parental commitment was connected with augmentations in accomplishments. Nearly 35% of the time, it was linked with decreases in achievement. When researchers complain that parents are not involved enough, the question other researchers asked, "Is there a point where being involved is more of a hindrance than a help?" (Child Trends, 2019, p. 2). The parental involvement connection with educators, schools, and the community provides parents with the tools they need to regularly bond and revolutionize school climate.

Many parents have shown an interest in their children's education, but are not connected with the right resources to help them. The parent involvement connection always begins at home with the children. Then the school should be a resource to apply any skills that parents have in creating a supportive school climate for their children. It is definitely up to educators to connect with families and give parents opportunities to be a part of their children's educational achievement. Meng and Muñoz (2016) stated,

Good teachers should possess the following characteristics: (a) self-confidence, (b) challenge themselves, (c) collaborative work with other teachers, (d) diligent and eager to learn new knowledge, (e) social responsibility, (f) care about their students, (g) high-level teaching skills and (h) concern about students' needs. (p. 461)

A student will feel comfortable asking both teachers and parents questions that are concerning to him or her. PI is an effective way to foster children's relationships and build their confidence.

Parent/Homework Guidance

"NCLB required states to meet a series of outcome-based student-achievement benchmarks" (Heise, 2017, p.1866). The strategy of homework responsibilities and the guidance children need from parents presents a partial resolution for governing or the observation of the child's behavior (Williams et al., 2017). Researchers understand that PI is a progressive phenomenon, emerging as one of the most significant concerns today. The integration between two of the ecological systems (microsystem and mesosystem) lies between the child's home and school. There is a need to identify the similarity between the two "significant institutions, especially regarding students' academic achievement. The utilization of this theory would facilitate that process" (Blandin, 2017, p. 275). Bunnell (2016) alleged that PI in religious education is critical; nevertheless, general education is just as important when parents participate. Research in parental engagement needs understanding and clarity to combat parent involvement problems. Johnson et al. (2016) declared that active parenting encouragement during the elementary school years with homework assignments and connecting with their children's teachers improve the child's reading.

The most appropriate forms of involvement are with students who are at the kindergarten and elementary levels because of age and lack of maturity. Although parental involvement is an essential influence on these students, all students throughout their schooling need the support of their parents. Bandura (1999) asserted, "Efficacy beliefs are the foundation of human agency" (p. 4). A teacher must respect and value different social customs and moral influences that parents

respond to concerning being involved in their children's education, for example, homework (Ndebele, 2015). However, PI activities are not the same on each level, and parents must work with their children according to their age appropriateness.

Therefore, schools need to recognize how parent involvement events can help students and their families effectively transition from one grade level of schooling to another. The influences and effects of PI take on various forms of participation because students and schools always change. Bandura clarified mastery experiences to be "vicarious experiences, social persuasion, physiological and emotional states are the four forms that increase self-efficacy beliefs" (as cited by Altinoz, 2016, p. 29). There is a parallel between parental effectiveness and parental commitment in elementary, middle, and high school. The principles of self-efficacy tools will increase independently of each other. "It may be that parental efficacy is also a factor that impacts involvement decisions for parents of high school students with disabilities" (Hirano et al., 2016, p. 3550).

Specific research findings of the relationship between parents who are involved with their children's education, and the results stressed the significance of the different facets of PI (Núñez et al., 2015). The researchers examined the perceived control nature of parental involvement in helping students in the elementary, middle, and high schools with homework. PI in primary grades influences children's development of comprehension and reasoning (Ndebele, 2015). Parental participation links with the way children grasp concepts and their ability to form opinions (Wong et al., 2018). Parental engagement in research is critical because it supports the need for parents to address students' disinterest in fragmentary homework, support student self-efficacy, and help with student's inefficient time-management. Gonida and Cortina (2014) asserted, "Some of the highlighted benefits of homework in the literature are that homework

increases the understanding of the school topics helps teachers to monitor the progress of students” (p. 57). Parents and children collaborating on homework help increase their children’s enthusiasm for school.

Children can develop the right planning strategies, organization, and develop self-efficacy when parents are available to assist them in educational goals. Parents’ roles in guiding children with homework support their children’s educational outcomes at home, and it involves parents in their children’s learning (Gonida & Cortina, 2014). Parents that are available to help students with their homework tasks offer limited solutions to monitoring undesirable behavior. Homework is a part of school activity, and parents must be creative and make homework applicable to reflect real-life situations, which can enhance their child’s problem-solving skills. In the interim, parents will be able to activate their experiences and interact with their children (Park et al., 2017). Studies conclude that PI has the most favorable outcomes in children’s education, whether they attend a Christian school or public school.

Researchers asserted that parents should engage their children in activities, especially literacy before they enter elementary schools because this type of parental involvement fosters the child’s development (Johnson et al., 2016). A parent or guardian’s involvement happens with restored confidence when children earn higher grades, have reduced truancy, and develop better social skills as their behavior improves. It is also valuable and worth the time for educators to explore how parents communicate and maintain their children’s enthusiasm toward homework in general and particularly at the end of elementary school (Madjar, Shklar, & Moshe, 2016). Researchers also agreed that the child, home, and school would shape and influence the child’s development according to factors, and sociodemographic concerns are relevant for achievement (Mansour et al., 2016).

Home-based involvement characterized by activities or engagement taking place outside of school, and school-based involvement includes, but is not limited to, parent-teacher conferences, observing their children in the class, or volunteering in learning and social events (Freund, Schaedel, Azaiza, Boehm, & Lazarowitz, 2018). “These behaviors usually refer to parents’ helping their children with homework, reviewing for tests, monitoring the child’s progress, and talking about what happened at school” (Freund et al., 2018, p. 196). Some researchers believed that teachers should support PI as they steer parents into the right types of activities (Pemberton & Miller, 2015) that will be helpful for them as they guide their children in classwork as well as homework. “Parents’ attitudes toward homework have been conceptualized as an aspect of parental involvement that plays a vital role in student-related approaches and behaviors” (Madjar et al., 2016, p. 173).

Parents’ roles continuously shift between nurturing, supervising, aiding, and refereeing, and homework assignments are a prominent part of PI. Inevitably, a considerable portion of parent-child interactions revolves around homework completion. Teachers often communicate with parents when homework is issued, and often teachers view homework as a beneficial requirement, aimed to augment students’ understanding, to improve the connections between school and home, and to encourage every student (Madjar et al., 2016).

Parental/Teacher Collaboration

Rodriguez, Blatz, and Elbaum (2014) asserted that some arguments in favor of hopeful parent-school collaboration supported different sources, such as improved student outcomes, social justice for all students, and parent involvement is the law (Individuals With Disabilities Education Act IDEA, 2006; No Child Left Behind Act of 2001, 2006). Schools can institute and sustain collaborative relationships with parents and agree that it is as reliable and sensible

educational practice (Rodriguez, Blatz, & Elbaum, 2014). Researchers (Santiago et al., 2016) revealed a correlation between parent-teacher trust and parental involvement in schools and students' achievement. Herrera (2014) indicated that parents who are motivated and excited expect a collaborative partnership with their children's teachers incorporating both societal and individual factors in schools. Flemmings (2013) emphasized, "When parents, teachers, and students view one another as partners in education, a caring community forms around students and begin the work necessary to develop a relationship between the school and home" (p. 37). Not only can parental involvement help foster relationships among students and teachers, but it also supports and build a relationship between teachers and parents (Gartmeier, Gebhardt, & Dotger, 2016). In any new relationship, trust is always a big issue; therefore, parents and teachers must build on that trust to gain a better perspective on helping and encouraging the student. "Trust is necessary for the development of collaboration between home and school" (Deslandes & Barma, 2016, p. 8).

When a relationship of trust of staff members and caring parents comes together, they recognize that their partnership in the student's/child's education is strong. Nel Noddings spoke about the caring and nurturing relationship between teacher and student. "Educational experiences in the context of caring relations foster critical thinking" (as cited by Thornton, 2018, p. 264). Caring in this context denotes a relationship between student and teacher, not just family members who care. Noddings (2006) asserted, "Caring teachers and managers employ the balancing/negotiating strategy...that works toward a revival of intrinsic interest" (p. 342). Teachers can take the time to earn the parents' trust by understanding dynamics at home, and the parents can take the time to understand the teacher's task as the educator in their children's classroom. This relationship of trust does not come spontaneously but must build-up and develop

with frequent collaboration. Parenting practices fulfill the psychological needs of their adolescents to foster proficiency in academics, self-sufficiency, and connection for increased school commitment. Students' outcomes will be positive and successful (Wang & Sheikh-Khalil, 2014).

Collaboration can occur at conferences, in face-to-face conversations, in telephone conversations, via written comments, and through participation in educational and social activities (Deslandes & Barma, 2016). Most of the time, reports concerning only the negative aspect of behaviors are given to parents every week. The schools are not fully joining or collaborating well with parents to discuss the proficient performance of students, or provide students with the best possible education regardless of the student's socio-status (Kraft & Rogers, 2015). Positive information about students often gives parents incentives to go that extra mile for their child's school. No parent wants to hear negative criticisms about his or her child incessantly. Some schools are failing to communicate with parents or involving parents in their children's academic progress. The reports, most of the time, are given to parents every week only concerning the negative aspect of behaviors. The schools are not fully joining or collaborating well with parents to discuss the proficient performance of students or provide students with the best possible education regardless of the student's socio-status (Kraft & Rogers, 2015).

Most of the students from low-income families' parents did not participate in school activities. According to Gijsberts and van der Ploeg (2016), PI will be "higher in more homogenous schools and that there will be less discrimination, which is beneficial for the children's development in ethnically concentrated schools" (p. 908). However, schools that are having a difficult time with students from different countries are less likely to have high parental engagement because of the language barriers. Schools can develop learning materials for parents

to assist their children at home and support their learning while reinforcing new concepts taught from school (Shivraj et al., 2018). When school districts help families with this type of barrier, offering English tutoring classes or hiring language interpreters will influence and increase parental involvement for non-English speaking parents/guardians.

The influence of demographic variables plays a significant role in parent involvement in their children's education (Núñez et al., 2015; Rosenberg et al., 2018). Additionally, PI encourages continuous development, which evolves into phases lasting through childhood and adolescence and these crucial transitional periods move children from one level of schooling to another (Durisic & Bunijevac, 2017) with the help of their teachers. When parents trust the relationship with their children's teachers, it promotes parent involvement. Epstein (2018) agreed that when teachers adequately trained to serve in the school community, teachers' partnerships with the parents and students will serve as connective stakeholders in students' education. "Parents are also encouraged to volunteer during classroom parties, field trips, and school dances. There are biennial parent-teacher conferences, assemblies which the parents may attend, and an open-door lunch policy" (Hood, 2013, p. 48).

Researchers agree that parental involvement in their children's education is one of the most significant predictors of student success. Parents are involved with students in school activities to build-self-efficacy, not only with children's homework tasks but in the academic and social communities of any practice where there are school resources available (Williams et al., 2017). PI extends outside of the classroom and creating more optimistic encounters for children, which cultivates their academics in school. Bandura (2001) believed that humans could begin to understand their worth and take actions to move forward in their values. People must believe that they can create the desired results needed to succeed and foresee detrimental ones when it

occurs, and “by their actions, they have little incentive to act or to persevere in the face of difficulties” (Bandura, 2001, p. 4). The idea of parental involvement as a positive influence on students’ academic attainment has become intuitively appealing. However, a lack of clarity of the definition of parental involvement is problematic for research effectiveness.

Parent-teacher communication influences parents to attend school events and volunteer at their children’s school. Epstein et al. (2002) argued that some children succeed in school, although there are no parents in the household to support their needs. Teachers, other family members outside the immediate family, and members of the community can provide valuable guidance and encouragement to these students (Epstein et al., 2002). As support from the school, family, and community accumulates, significantly more students feel secure and cared for, understand the goals of education, work to achieve their full potential, build positive attitudes and school behaviors, and stay in school (Epstein, 2018). Although research continues to explore ways to increase parental involvement, some strategies have failed to close the achievement gap (Núñez et al., 2015). Schools have developed multiple pathways (Gartmeier et al., 2015) in which to encourage parental engagement.

Community Involvement

A program that can produce strong partnerships with parents, teachers, students, and communities, will reduce undue burdens on teachers; and organizing family activities will not be arduous for the teachers as well (Epstein, 2018). In a six-point plan for active community involvement, Epstein (2002) discovered in her research that there is an overlapping sphere of influence that encircles the whole child, which involves the family, the school, and the community. Parental engagement is so significant that parents must connect with their children’s education at home and in early childhood programs because it validates young children and

exerts a positive influence on them (Kim & Riley, 2014). Nevertheless, Epstein (2002) speculated that the effects of the development of involvement with parents and children might directly as much as indirectly affect them both. Consequently, parental involvement must be part of a more significant approach of balancing support through teachers' professional development and a systematic determination to join together with all stakeholders because parent-teacher conferences may not be enough; nevertheless, it is a good start (Durisic & Bunijevac, 2017).

Researchers Kim and Riley (2014) and Epstein (1995) investigated parents who participated in their school-aged children's activities and illustrated their findings as parents communicating, volunteering, helping with homework, involving themselves with school decision-makers, having school workshops, and linking to community services. The welfare, health, and learning of students are dependent on an active school, home, and community environment. The student, parent, teacher, and community agreements are an opening for the stakeholders to collaborate and forge long-lasting and constructive relationships with students and family, but relationships based on the quality of engagement of all parties concerned can flourish (Kyzar & Jimerson, 2018). Below is a summary of Epstein's (2018) research for community involvement:

- Parenting: "Help all families establish a home environment to support children as students" (p. 96).

Administrators, teachers, and other professionals can give the necessary information and help that will benefit the student's physical, mental, and emotional well-being. The material can go through a wealth of conduits that will ensure that parents are informed about their child's development.

- Communicating: “Design effective forms of school-to-home and home-to-school communications about school programs and children’s progress” (p. 97).

Parent-teacher conferences, emails, phone calls, school newsletters, and sharing student work with families are successful ways to communicate with parents and guardians.

- Volunteering: “Recruit and organize parent help and support” (p. 99).

It is imperative to draw on the talents and gifts of parents to ensure classroom activity involvement. Research on parental involvement continues to show that family engagement in schools improves the student’s overall well-being in the classroom.

- Learning at Home: “Provide information and ideas to families about how to help students at home with homework and other curriculum-related activities, decisions, and planning” (p. 103).

Parents should receive enough information to assist their children with learning. The information must be clear and on the child’s grade level. Parents should not have to figure out how to help their child if the work is ambiguous. The homework must be well-defined, and parents need to know about homework policies. The teacher can help the parents by giving them guidelines about monitoring their children and how to discuss schoolwork at home. Homework discussions will help involved parents and students converse about what they are learning in class.

- Decision making: “Include parents in school decisions, developing parent leaders and representatives” (pp. 104).

Parents can engage in a PTA or any other parent group that can involve their child when it is suitable. Family representation in the school councils and other school

governance committees will ensure their commitment. Families can be a part of the process of nominating other family members for regional and district councils and committees. Encouraging parents to be involved with leadership training will help establish a network of family involvement. PI in district elections and decision-making processes will encourage the family to better-informed decisions about their child's education.

- Collaborating with Community: "Identify and integrate resources and services from the community to strengthen school programs, family practices, and student learning and development" (p. 105).

Communities can provide services to students, and vice versa, during school and out-of-school time. Parents need encouragement from their children's school and to get involved with other family community activities like summer programs that correlate with learning skills. Schools can also collaborate with the parents and offer to mentor and tutor for community businesses. As children are developing, academically, and socially, parents become grateful to teachers for their children's experience, especially as the children get older (West et al., 2017), and parents are grateful for the collaboration of all stakeholders.

Parents who are involved in their children's education perceive their child will excel in learning. If every student and their families can have entrance into the community health, cultural, recreational, and social support services, they will feel needed and empowered as advocates for their children. Clinton (1996) cited an African proverb to ignite communities to take care of the whole child, "It takes a village to raise a child" (p. 11). Students, families, and staff at a school should offer community service as a team. "The school setting has been viewed as an ideal venue because of the amount of time adolescents spend at school and the relative ease

of implementing strategies that can benefit adolescents directly” (Hearst, Grannon, Davey, & Nanney, 2017, p. 56). Parental involvement demands that not only students, parents, and teachers collaborate, but communities also who functions as a stakeholder.

Researchers have concluded that various reports documenting parental involvement in children’s education are numerous (Akin & Neumann, 2013). However, there is a lack of studies considering the experiences of parents of adolescents in low-income Latino families (Ceballo et al. 2014). Two home-based indicators of socioeconomic status (SES), parent/caregiver education, and parent/caregiver occupation appear to connect with parental involvement and young people’s extracurricular involvement (Ceballo et al., 2014). What needs to be addressed and assessed is the relevance of PI for parents of diverse ethnic and socioeconomic families with proven strategies that work for them (Wang & Sheikh-Khalil, 2014). More affluent families engage in extracurricular activities more often than not (Mansour et al., 2016). The lives of children from wealthy and underprivileged American families take different approaches when it comes to PI. Researchers believed that the lack of PI symbolizes the “inequalities imposed on children by their home, neighborhood, and peer environment are carried along to become the inequalities with which they confront adult life at the end of his or her school years” (Hanushek, 2016, p. 20).

There is a different perception in the way parental involvement is in families. However, some research indicated that independent of families’ background and general social context, a school’s influence tends to have a low impact on a student’s achievement (Hanushek, 2016).

Nevertheless, education is essential to every home lifestyle, schools do have a bearing on the lower-class income families, and life continues to happen even when a parent cannot get connected with the child at school events (Gibbs, 2013). The discrepancy is not only in the

elementary, middle, or secondary level, but it extends to university levels. Gibbs (2013) argued that generally, educational development within a university is on a different level only in association with distinctive components in school. However, parental involvement should not stop at the primary levels because parents are the best influences in their children's academic community. Lazaridou and Gravani Kassida (2015) stated, "Parents' involvement works not only to increase opportunities for academic success but also to mitigate the natural turbulence caused by adolescence" (p. 99).

Still, parental activity at the middle school and secondary levels has become increasingly vital for students to most likely remain in school, complete college, and mature into healthy, productive adults. Naturally, the development of middle school children requires that parents remain active within the student's school (Park, 2018). PI at the middle and secondary school levels is difficult for the students because parents must help them balance their developing independence and parental overflow of protection. Vygotsky (1978) recognized that the community plays a central role in the process of "making meaning" from everything (p. 90). Vygotsky (1978) claimed, "Learning is a necessary and universal aspect of developing the culturally organized, a specifically human psychological function" (p. 90). Vygotsky acknowledges that learning always occurs and cannot be separated from a social context. Subsequently, social learning in any community tends to be the front-runner for academic development.

Community resources frequently have been available and have supported students in nearby schools. The positive impact of connecting with the community is well documented (Epstein, 2001). The fact that the community supports the educational process cultivates high-performing schools. Duez-Curry (2017) confirmed, "A teacher needs to become part of the

community to educate its children effectively” (p. 128). There was a general decrease in PI and perceived benefits of PI during secondary education (Bunnell, 2016). Research continues to show that PI at the elementary, middle, and secondary level, regardless of the parent’s education, family income, or background, can improve with parenting resources and teacher guidance.

However, parent involvement affects minority students’ academic achievement across all cultures. Joyce Epstein (1995) concluded that a family’s contribution to children’s education far surpasses what the family socioeconomic status success entails. Students are often provided with either quality or lack of quality teaching based on the teacher’s perception of parental involvement and or the parent’s socio-status, even with recommending special programs by the teacher. Ho and Cherng (2018) declared, “While teacher expectations of parental involvement often favor school-based activities, their perceptions of parental involvement are also strongly influenced by the sociodemographic characteristics of families, including race/ethnicity and nativity” (p. 135).

Interventions

According to Argentin, Barbeta, and Maci & Society for Research on Educational Effectiveness (2016), PI has a determining factor in the life of students’ performance according to their socioeconomic background. Systematic reviews confirm that a critical role in shaping PI association is parental commitment. Oates (2017) purported, “The effectiveness of the educational system plays a critical role in society” (p. 15). There are relevant considerations which govern the efficacy of PI interactions and relationships between parents, families, and teachers.

Many institutions insist on the reinforcement of families and communities to function alongside them. “Differences in program quality, teaching practices, timing and duration, and

levels of school and family support are contributing factors” to the success of all students (Reynolds et al., 2017, p. 1453). A child’s poor scholastic performance may require parental intervention. With the direct involvement of parents, student’s literacy will increase and develop as teachers routinely share literacy techniques with parents to practice at home with their children. Even if the parents give a little of their time to participate, it is a modest beginning.

Teachers and parents can work collectively with set goals to create strategies to increase the children’s literacy skills. Working together can benefit everyone who is concerned. Some common strategies can help include hosting family literacy nights at school, hosting events at the library, and presenting school plays. A combination of these literacy activities is only the beginning of resources that can bring the whole school community together. Everybody in the school circle should care enough for the success of all students and recognizes that teachers cannot or should not try to build the bridge alone. Bronfenbrenner (1979) believed that parents working as co-teachers in their children’s education could begin to nurture the children’s development socially and academically. Thereby, the power given shifted the balance from the teacher, enabling them to develop new skills to aid in the child’s growth.

Offering parental involvement opportunities in school develops the confidence and motivation parents need to connect with teachers in the classroom and establish lasting relationships with other parents in the community. PI is associated with young children’s ability to do well at school when factors such as joining together in different activities or showing attention and friendliness may be seen later in life (Huat See & Gorard, 2015). Many types of research have shown that critical predictors of parents who do not get involved in their children’s education may be due to low levels of education or professional stature (Mossakowski, 2015).

While poverty or high income may play a complicated role in PI, chronic stressors, such as economic hardship at home, are probably at the top of the list of parents' uninvolvement.

Studies have indicated that high economics plays a vital function in more cognitive stimulation and emotional responsiveness as parents' involvement based on their income status (Puccioni, 2015). Parents are more concerned about working or finding a job rather than becoming involved in their children's education. However, this is not always the case. Students in low-income families can readily excel with help from their parents and schools to boost self-efficacy, academics, and a positive influence on the children's outcomes. Mac Iver et al. (2015) asserted that communication results from educators, parents, and students, were linked with substantially greater student achievement in academics, "particularly for students from families with low incomes and for English language learners" (p. 29). When PI is on high levels of engagement, the values of student academic achievement increased tremendously. Research continues to show how increasing parental involvement motivates students to persevere academically, especially among the African American communities (Darensbourg & Blake, 2014).

González-Patiño and Poveda (2015) asserted, "Recent comparative studies focused on families with different socioeconomic and cultural characteristics incorporate parental networks, parental and school ideologies, formal and informal spaces of collaboration, as elements that fit into the school-family relational equation" (p. 319). In their research, Ng and Lee (2015) stated that parents of low-income families wanted to be involved in their children's education when given a chance. However, they did not want to be a part of a parent-teacher association nor interact with elected officials of any kind.

Researchers argued that parents with higher education backgrounds often engaged themselves at the school level in ways such as developing ideas to raise money to support the children and the school, voting for PTA candidates, and becoming candidates for parent managers at the school board (Ng & Lee, 2015). Even when some parents of low-income families are not involved in PTA meetings, they will insist on having a voice for their children's academic accomplishments. These opportunities for parents will be the first step to developing long-term goals for their children's academic success. Practical education will undoubtedly necessitate parents' participation. If parents are caring for their children's education at home, it is just as important that children need a parent's presence in school as well. Of course, the parent-teacher relationship is vital, and the teacher and parent must model positive behavior for the student's encouragement.

Summary

Research supports PI and encourages report in-school activities with both parent and teacher as a significant factor in the child's academic success (Bunnell, 2016). When teachers and parents motivate students through an active connection to classwork and homework, it fosters eagerness for everyone, and engagement in future activities becomes influential (Park, 2018). Garbacz et al. (2015) acknowledged that there had been a "large body of evidence supporting parent involvement," but noted that different studies had shown different results (p. 1014). The findings do not agree about parent participation as consistently connected with encouraging conclusions for children. Nevertheless, parents can expect that there will be strong encouraging and constructive relationships between teachers and students when they are actively involved in their children's school activities. Discussions about the school, grades, and students' future academics pursuits help parents to modify their schedules for the sake of their children's

well-being. Parents' involvement in their children's education has significantly deteriorated. PI has raised enough cautionary signs to be a concern. Many families are combating real concerns that may impede students' abilities to do well in school. "Although there are numerous factors that contribute to this disparity, parental involvement may play a role in bridging the gap in children's school outcomes" (Garcia, 2018, p. 15).

Consequently, a plethora of literature on parental involvement became accessible with some authentic resolutions. The primary theme in search of parenting support is the parents' knowledge of their children's development while being active in their schools. The wealth of literature on PI aspires to prove that collaboration with parents and their children's education work. Parents are responsible for their children's well-being, and in their formative school years, parental involvement is vital. Throughout most literature, researchers have agreed that parents have a positive effect on their children when schooling is a priority.

Therefore, PI has shown to be an essential strategy to ensure a student's increased academic achievement in schools (Oates, 2017). Some strategies for PI intervention after-school activities may include but are not limited to award ceremonies, class parties, after-school clubs, talent shows, or movie nights. When students feel like they have someone to turn to with questions or concerns, it is more likely for them to turn to their peers. If a parent-teacher relationship begins, children may turn to their parents and or teachers for help when needed. PI is the most effective path to fostering a rewarding and prolific environment. A teacher has the possibility of associating families with excellent opportunities for participation and student support. This connection allows teachers an ongoing commitment with the family personally, and students will probably feel more relaxed and achieve at a higher rate. If teachers try to connect with parents as authoritative, uncaring, and distant figures, parents will view them as

educators with no empathy. However, the duty of education has been exclusively in the hands of the teachers for far too long, and this may be one reason why teachers may act apathetic.

Argentin et al. (2016) asserted, “Indeed, pressure on school system is already high, and teachers’ overload is already a relevant issue” (p. 2). The Americans have treated education as if parents had the luxury of just dropping their children off at school and believed that teaching was solely in the hands of the teachers. The truth became more evident when research showed that education required parents and or guardian’s active involvement in schools (Argentin et al., 2016). Heddy and Sinatra (2017) concluded, “The results provide evidence that a parent intervention may increase the likelihood of engagement in transformative experiences (TEs) in a science course and maintaining girls’ interest in science, which has theoretical and practical implications” (p. 765).

Students’ interest in schooling had declined in middle and high schools because of the lack of PI engagement, specifically with girls, in Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics (STEM) disciplines. Involving students in their learning may facilitate an increased academic worth, which means that students will feel more valued, and parents can play an exciting part of this process (Heddy & Sinatra, 2017). Bryce, Bradley, Abry, Swanson, and Thompson (2018) focused on three specific academics influences on students’ achievements (direct parental involvement, the student-teacher relationship, and teachers’ instructional support). The data collected appear to suggest that these influences are directly responsible for students’ achievement when the school climate is actively conducive to learning when all stakeholders (families, schools, communities) are involved. With all the literature about PI conveying almost the same messages, parents who devotedly contribute to their children’s education and learning process desire to help them excel in their academics.

CHAPTER THREE: METHODS

Overview

Chapter Three elucidates the research design, participants, setting, research procedures, data analysis approach, and trustworthiness in this transcendental phenomenological study. The purpose of this investigation was to understand the experiences, beliefs, motivations, and views of the parents who are active participants in their children's education. This chapter discusses the design, questions, site, and criteria for the participants, an explanation of procedures, the role of the researcher, the method on data collection, and an explanation of how data was analyzed. This chapter concludes with a discussion on the trustworthiness of this research and the ethical considerations that factor into being a Christian and honoring God's will of being honest in all said and done, which also contributed to the understanding of the phenomenon concerning the experiences of parents engaged in their children's education.

Design

This qualitative research, a transcendental phenomenological study, is an added dimension to the study of parental involvement with human experiences. German philosopher Edmund Husserl (1859-1938) established the school of phenomenological methodology seeking to understand human experiences (Rutland & Campbell, 1996). Following Husserl, Alfred Schutz (1899-1959) sought to understand the meaning displayed in the background of lived experiences, which always contains a component that is disguised and ambiguous (Sousa, 2014). Schutz directed investigations and believed that a phenomenological understanding intentionally attaches experiences, without assumptions about a causative clarification and is unhindered from disregarded prejudices and conjectures as much as possible (Gros, 2017). Phenomenology is the philosophical study of the structures of experience and consciousness from the first-person point

of view, the study of human phenomena. Husserl's philosophical phenomenology posed a point of transformation for Schutz, who examined healthy people in society as they focused on daily living (Gros, 2017).

A phenomenological study is an attempt to isolate prejudices and predetermined speculations about human experiences, feelings, and reactions to a specific situation. According to Creswell and Poth (2018), a qualitative study involves participants who have lived experiences, concepts, or phenomena that constitute research, as well as the "ever-changing nature of inquiry from social construction, to interpretivism, and the social justice in the world" (p.7). Through this challenging methodology, Moustakas (1994) called phenomena the abstraction and complexity of lived experiences. Sousa (2014) supported phenomenological psychology as an autonomous discipline because its area of intervention defines a phenomenon.

The significant components of this design that drove this research were the participants' thoughts, beliefs, and judgments. Moustakas (1994) noted that epoche is a conscious process of identification and subsequent quarantine of natural occurrences within the thought patterns. It is the description that creates the "what" the phenomenon that the participants in the study have experienced (Creswell & Poth, 2018).

This transcendental phenomenological research design method was appropriate for the research topic. Transcendental phenomenology, based on principles discovered by Husserl (1931) and transformed into a qualitative method by Moustakas (1994), was a viable method for this phenomenological research. The rationale for using a transcendental approach made this study viable to understanding the experiences of parents' involvement in education. The discovery of the experiences and essences of parents actively participating in their children's education was phenomenal. A statistical approach for this research would not have been

appropriate for this type of investigation. Selecting a transcendental phenomenology was an appropriate design because it brought all “prejudgments” regarding the phenomenon explored to coincide with the central and research questions. Creswell and Poth (2018) described the history of a phenomenology research approach as having a “strong philosophical component” (p. 75), and it is most popular in the social and health sciences. Moustakas (1994) introduced Husserl (1859-1938), who is considered “the father of transcendental phenomenology, formed the basis of all the other phenomenological methods” (Eddles-Hirsch, 2015, p. 252).

Transcendental phenomenology is an attempt to eliminate everything that epitomizes preconceived notions or assumptions. It requires the researcher to look at things openly, honestly, and without partiality. Moustakas (1994) asserted that the transcendental phenomenology comes with challenges as the researcher has to describe things as “they are, understand the meanings, and essences in the light of intuition and self-reflection” (p. 16).

Research Questions

CRQ

What are the experiences of parents who are involved in their children’s education?

RQ1: How are parents encouraged to move from merely monitoring to becoming more actively involved in their children’s education?

RQ2: What do parents perceive to be obstacles that hinder their active involvement with children’s school activities?

RQ3: What roles do the administration and teachers occupy in parental involvement?

Site

The site was both purposeful and convenient for this research in a small Christian school in Kentucky. Since the focus of this study was to understand the experiences of parents who are

involved in their children's education in a Christian school, it was necessary to find participants who were available in this type of school for research. There were originally 12 participants, but one dropped out, and one participant was not able to be in the focus group. All of the participants were married with children attending the same school, except for one who is a widow with children attending the school. Most of the participants were teachers (except two, the school admission counselor and the dietician). The school administrator nominated the 12 parents to fulfill the criteria. These participants are parents of children of mixed ages and mixed grades. Interviews and the focus group were performed in one of the school's classrooms because it was a place of convenience for all participants.

The Kentucky area represents the geographical environment that will be most accessible for research. McQuiggan and Megra (2017) addressed statistics as they were specifically referring to the general population in parental involvement. The most common school-related activities in the area that parents participated in (89%) are at the end of the school year and involve attending a general school meeting, a parent-teacher organization, or association meeting (McQuiggan & Megra, 2017). There were at least 78% of the students' parents who reportedly attended a regularly scheduled parent-teacher conference; 79% of the parents participated in a school or class event. Parents volunteered or served on a committee 43% of the time. Fifty-nine percent had parents who participated in school fundraising (McQuiggan & Megra, 2017). Approximately 33% of the parents met with a guidance counselor. During a given school year, parents will participate in meetings or activities on an average of 7.5 times (McQuiggan & Megra, 2017).

The demographics of the population in this Christian school are as follows: Female 44%, Male: 56%, Caucasian: 92.2%, Multiracial: 7.1%, Asian: 0.7%, Included are married households

with an annual income of approximately \$67,000 or higher, single-parent households with an annual income of less than \$55,000, where the average ages of the parents are 37 and children are four years old (“a Christian school in the northeastern United States,” 2019). This information will not be able to identify the school because the school’s name is fictitious.

Participants

Purposeful sampling was sufficient for quality control and increased understanding of the research problem from different perspectives (Creswell & Poth 2018). Purposeful sampling in this qualitative research sought to ensure that the participants have the same experiences in this phenomenological study (Creswell & Poth, 2018). These participants were selected because they generated useful data for this research. This type of purposeful sampling differs from the “statistical inferences to a population” (Creswell & Poth, 2018, p. 148).

Purposeful participants shared their phenomenological experiences about parental involvement in their children’s education. The administrator chose 11 parents participants from the school to participate in this study. Creswell and Poth (2018) asserted, “In order to develop a well-saturated theory, a higher number than 20-30 individuals must be studied” (p. 159). Creswell and Poth (2018) also pointed out that a “sample size of five to 25” who have experienced the same phenomena is sufficient (p. 150). These participants were parents of children ages 4-17 years old. The participants in this study are protected by agreements in the research ethics and Institutional Review Board (IRB) procedures. Additionally, participants were given pseudonyms and other identifying information, which protect their privacy in this study.

Procedures

I received a written approval letter from the Institutional Review Board (IRB) for permission to research this study (see Appendix A). The interview questions (see Appendix B),

surveys part one and part two (Appendix C), and other data collection procedures (Appendix D) were part of the study during this research. The parents that were directly involved in the research signed the informed consent acknowledging their full cooperation in the study and that they were able to discontinue their participation without fear of maltreatment in any sense. The parents signed the provided informed consent forms for the investigation (see Appendix E). All consent forms were given directly to the participants by the administrator to conduct the study. The principal's letter was sent directly to the principal via email (Appendix F). The school permission letter also received via email (see Appendix G). The recruitment letter went out via email to the administrator for recruiting participants. The participants were given the first survey by the administrator before the interviews, and the second survey was completed before the focus group meeting. The administrator set-up and scheduled the focus group session and interviews. The research study proceeded immediately after ascertaining all consent forms from the participants and the administration. The administration appointed participants for this research. The administration gave the email to three volunteers for the pilot studies to ensure that the interview questions were clear, understandable, and appropriate for data collection before the actual research. I collected data from the participants after the adjustment of the survey and focus group questions. It took me approximately three weeks to collect all the data. All information that is pertinent for this study (interviews, surveys, and focus group questions) was available to the administration for approval.

The informed administration acknowledged the anticipated beginning of the study and the projected conclusion of the study. All necessary forms given at the said time were for their perusal. All information is confidential and kept on a password-secured computer.

All pertinent data were detailed, descriptive, and reflective notes taken during the research process is on a locked computer for safekeeping. Data, including interviews, focus groups, surveys, and journal notes, were accumulated using protocol sheets appropriate for these methods. Once collected, the recorded and transcribed data were coded for accuracy and then categorized to identify common themes (Creswell & Poth, 2018).

I was able to organize, prioritize, and utilize the semi-structured, open-ended interviews, surveys, and a focus group (recorded and transcribed verbatim), and journal notes to facilitate the development of common themes. There was an expansion in quality and accuracy, through insightful analysis; all data was analyzed data using triangulation, member checks, and detailed coding. Data triangulation involved the parents' experiences through engagement in their children's education. The interpreted findings of the research have been recorded.

Creswell & Poth (2018) observed that triangulation in various models, data sources, approaches, or research within the study is a phenomenon. Triangulation involves carefully reviewing the data collected through different methods in order to achieve a more accurate, valid qualitative representation of participants' responses. Triangulation means using more than one method to collect data on the same topic. Data triangulation is a way of assuring the validity of this research. Different methods for collecting data from the same topic can involve different types of samples as well as methods for the data collection. I have achieved triangulation through interviews, surveys, and a focused group, which is appropriate for the credibility of this qualitative analysis. Creswell & Poth (2018) stated that data triangulation is "To make sure that the findings are transferable between the researcher and those being studied, thick description is necessary" (p. 256).

As a researcher, I was able to communicate the findings from relevant literature, practices, and implications of the data that assisted in finding a gap, and I have made the proper suggestions for future research. This qualitative research data-collection methods included interviews, surveys, focus group, and journal documentation. The goal of this study's data analysis was to discover and identify themes, patterns, concepts, insights, and understandings (Creswell & Poth, 2018). Reflective journaling used throughout the interviews and the focus group to collect rich data. In journaling, I described the personal thoughts of the participants outside of the questioning sessions, along with my impressions. The focus group was completed through individual textural and structural descriptions (Moustakas, 1994).

The interviews were semi-structured questions (Creswell & Poth, 2018). The interviews and the focus group were recorded and transcribed verbatim. The interviews and focus group transcripts and detailed description of the data was collected and organized by using NVivo Data Analysis Software (Q-DAS), and the analysis procedure followed by a synthesized phenomenological analysis suggested by Creswell and Poth (2018). Not only are these procedures relevant to systematize trustworthy qualitative research, but it is also clear that the researcher's role is pivotal to report a valid analysis and interpretation of the study.

The Researcher's Role

I believe that parents should be involved in every area of their children's' lives. "For the children ought not to lay up for the parents, but the parents for the children" II Corinthians 12:14b (New King James Version). I am an advocate for children. Children are little people with loud, prominent voices and should be heard. Parent-children relationships are not only vital in education but also life. Every student who walks into any classroom is a candidate for excellence and can achieve higher goals when their parents are active contributors in schools. It is easy to

see how difficult it is for students to excel when their parents are not actively involved in their education. In this research, I understand that the researcher is the human instrument in the investigation. I have collected, analyzed, and interpreted all the data. There is no relationship between the participants in this study and me. My relationship with the participants and my philosophical assumptions will play an intricate part in this research. Additionally, readers must grasp the role that I play in this inquiry.

Data Collection

This research study collected data from three sources (interviews, surveys, a focus group, and journal notes). The participants filled-out the first survey before the one-to-one interviews. Interviews were valuable for attaining systematic information about the participant's personal feelings, perceptions, and opinions. This form of data collection may result in a higher response rate than other methods because the participants were very comfortable with me, and I was able to ask extended questions. Creswell and Poth (2018) asserted, "A variation for a one-on-one interview is both the interviewee and the interviewer being physically located in the same room" (p. 164).

In the focus group, I was able to get detailed information about the personal experiences, insights, and opinions of the participants provide a broader range of information given together as compared to individual interviews. However, once in the focus group, participants seemed shy and more subdued. The participants acted as though they did not want to answer the questions in a group setting. Although I believed that the participants would be more comfortable amongst their peers in the focus group, I was wrong. I had to coax them to talk about their experiences. Creswell and Poth (2018) avowed, "Focus groups are advantageous when the interaction among interviewees are similar and cooperative with each other..." (p. 164). The

interaction of the focus group (once it got started) gave the participants' strength to answer each question honestly.

In this systematic data collection approach, the final survey allowed for a deeper understanding of each participant after the focus group. Using this final survey was beneficial for the research because of the open-ended questions, which ensured rich data from the participants (Creswell & Poth, 2018). Also, the final survey asks for responses that are not classified or tallied numbers as in a quantitative survey. The open-ended questions for surveys are unique within themselves because they contributed to the participants' abilities to generate useful data through genuine conversation rather than a yes or no response.

Finally, I was able to take journal notes after the interviews. The journal notes are intended for reflection and meaning in the understanding of the experiences of the participants. I was able to write in my journal to help me provide a recording of my thoughts or ideas about issues that came up during data collection. Journaling my thoughts assisted in what I may perceive in the behavior of the participants, which is relevant to data collection after the focus group time ended. Keeping and using journals helped me process reflective writing. Creswell and Poth (2018) suggested that a research journal should be "kept throughout data collection" (p. 163).

Pilot Study I

I completed a pilot with three volunteers to ensure that the interview questions were clear, understandable, and appropriate data. Janghorban, Latifnejad Roudsari, and Taghipour (2014) asserted, "A pilot or preliminary study is referred to as a small-scale of a complete survey or a pretest for a particular research instrument such as a questionnaire or interview guide (p. 4). Moustakas (1994) stated that a "human science research question" (p. 3) must define the full

essences and meanings of the “human experience” (p. 3). This pilot study represented a small-scale experiment of the preliminary research to evaluate its feasibility of time and adverse events that may occur or to see if the questions needed to be adjusted before the actual research began. The volunteers in this study pilot did not participate in the original study. This pilot study helped me with the research survey questions. Pilot studies are considered vital components of good study design (Janghorban, Latifnejad Roudsari, & Taghipour, 2014). It took three weeks to gather the data. An overview of the participants’ responses in the first pilot study is presented in Table 1 below:

Questions	Parent 1	Parent 2	Parent 3
Are the questions relevant to the topic?	Yes.	Yes	Yes
Are the questions easy to understand?	Yes.	Yes, questions are clear and straight to the point.	Yes. I think the questions are understandable and easy to answer.
Are there any questions that need to be adjusted or removed?	No.	Please expound on what a focus group entails (question # 8).	No.
Is the survey too long or redundant?	No.	Adequate length and no redundancy.	No.

Table 1. Responses from Parents in The Interview Pilot Study I.

Interviews

The interviews were the central source for gathering data for research analysis. The interviews took place after school hours in a classroom with tables, chairs, and a smartboard at the school, which was convenient for all the participants. The data collection began with one-on-one open-ended, semi-structured in-depth interviews. The interviews comprised of 10 open-ended questions. The interviews lasted approximately one hour, and the interview responses were easily analyzed and compared. The sessions took three days a week for three weeks.

I asked the participants a list of semi-structured questions (one-on-one) not formalized allowed for open discussions (Altinoz, 2016). The sessions were chronicled and backed up on audio-recording from an iPad, and additional journaled notes. A semi-structured interview is a series of predetermined, open-ended questions that the researcher queried participants. Semi-structured interviewing is developed by writing guide questions in advance. “Semi-structured interviews are a common data collection method in qualitative research, and the quality of the interview guide fundamentally influences the results of the study” (Kallio, Pietilä, Johnson, & Kangasniemi, 2016, p. 2955). As a researcher, I am allowed to use semi-structured questions and go off-script and continue to ask relevant questions; and utilizing semi-structured questions is an appropriate method to use because I prepared my questions ahead of time. As a professional, preparation is prudent and allows participants the freedom to express their experiences easily (Kallio et al., 2016).

I asked the participants to share their lived experiences concerning their involvement, including an approximate timeline, as well as specific activities that they engage in with their children. Additionally, I asked the participants about their impressions of the success of their endeavors in increasing their children’s achievement. This data collection strategy answered the central question (What are the experiences of parents who are involved in their children’s education?), which is concerned with the participants’ parental involvement experiences. The open-ended interview questions are listed below.

Questions one through 10 examined the experiences of parents who are engaged in their children’s education. The questions helped parents acknowledge what they have gained or mastered through involvement. These types of questions are qualitative uncovered from experiences rather than determine the characteristics of a quantitative approach. Additionally,

these questions gave light to the central question (What are the experiences of parents who are involved in their children's education?) and additional questions in the interviews.

Standardized Open-Ended Interview Questions

1. What have been your experiences as a parent in your children's school activities?
2. How important is it for you to be involved in your children's education?
3. Aside from helping your children with their homework, how often do you participate in their education?
4. What have been your most significant experiences with other activities at your children school?
5. What are your involvements in discussing class assignments with your children?
6. How do you feel about other parents' participation in their children's education during school and after-school?
7. How do you feel about working with your children's teachers?
8. Have you ever been in a focus group meeting at your children's school? If yes, how was the experience? If no, why not?
9. Describe the attitudes and approaches of the teachers that instruct your children?
10. How did you address any issues with your children's teachers if you are not able to get involved with activities at school?

Pilot Study II

In the second pilot, three volunteers focused on the questions to confirm that they were clear, understandable, and appropriate data for the study. The pilot study for this focus group was imperative because the questions needed to be tailored to the group's experiences. In a focus group, Krueger and Casey (2015) asserted, "A focus group is not just getting a bunch of people

together to talk. A focus group is a special type of group in terms of purpose, size, composition, and procedures” (p. 2). The participants came together because of the same experiences they share as parents. An overview of the participants’ responses in the second pilot study is presented in Table 2 below:

Questions	Parent #1	Parent #2	Parent #3
Are the questions relevant to the topic?	Yes.	Yes.	Yes.
Are the questions easy to understand?	Yes.	Yes.	Yes.
Are there any questions that need to be adjusted or removed?	No.	No.	No.
Is the survey too long or redundant?	No.	Not too long or redundant	No.

Table 2. Responses from Parents in The Focus Group Pilot Study II.

Focus Group

The study in the focus group addressed the need for collaboration, which is beneficial because participants yielded the best information about their experience regarding the same phenomenon. Participants were supportive of each other. Some participants may feel more at ease in the focus group as opposed to the feeling of intimidation in a one to one interview. In this research, the participants were more at ease in the interviews, but reticent in the focus group. Therefore, some participants were hesitant about presenting any information (Creswell & Poth, 2018). Cheng (2014) asserted, “One of the key factors in focus group interviews is that participants can converse with other people comfortably. Under this condition, the composition of a focus group is very important” (p. 381).

The focus group met in a classroom with 10 participants for approximately an hour. IRB approved all focus group questions and procedures. The focus group’s emphasis was on

collecting data relevant to under-emphasized research questions. The information for the meeting was communicated and confirmed with all the participants. After the interviews, participants signed the consent forms. The participants in the focus group contributed data from their experiences in PI. The focus group allowed the participants to connect. During the scheduled focus group session, guided by questions on a PowerPoint through a smartboard, enabled all participants to contribute to the meeting and enjoy the visibility of the PowerPoint. The questions were placed in the presentation, one question per slide, so that all participants had an opportunity to view and have time to write and discuss each question.

Although the discussion time per question was restricted to 5-15 minutes to maintain efficiency to allow those who wish to answer each question without pressure, some questions were answered in less than five minutes or more than 15 minutes. I was able to maintain order after a question asked became protracted.

The focus group supported the triangulation needed for rigorous phenomenological research. The following questions were queried during the focus group because this method assisted in answering the research question two (What do parents perceive to be obstacles that hinder their active involvement with children's school activities?), with open-ended questions. The focus group questions prompts are below and fully developed after the initial analysis of the one-on-one interview data. Consequently, the focus group yielded additional questions to satisfy research question two.

Focus Group Questions

1. What do you like best about the school activities for your children?
2. What do you think about workshops that will help you understand how to get involved in your children's school?

3. What would encourage you to work together with your children's teacher to foster a more conducive learning environment?
4. What is the first thing that comes to mind when you think about becoming active in your children's school?

Questions one through four opened the group to recognize that engaging in activities with their children is a pivotal point in their education. Although there are more programs available in some schools for families to engage, it is often difficult for parents to get involved with the activities because of different reasons. Regardless, schools stress the learning process for a child and the importance of the parent's support in their children's education. Cwetna (2016) declared, "A better understanding of this role, as parents perceive it, might help researchers, administrators, and teachers improve their efforts to provide parental support" (p. 20).

5. What is your greatest need to help you continue engagement in your children's school or at home?
6. What would be a reasonable way to share responsibility with teachers in helping your children learn to meet educational goals that ensure parent involvement? Why would these methods be reasonable?

Questions five and six addressed parents' influence on their children in the classroom and school settings. Parents can encourage children's learning, set high, reasonable expectations for educational goals and standards. When parents become involved in their children's school and their community, parents become role models in their children's eyes. Regardless of socioeconomic, ethnic, or racial background, a parent who is engaged supports their children's benefits academically, although these families may reflect the difference. Darensbourg and Blake (2014) affirmed, "These differences are reflected through speech, dress, behaviors, self-

expression, class participation, views of authority, body language and many other factors that affect the learning environment” (p. 23).

7. What makes you confident or not so confident in your ability to make wise choices about your children’s schooling?
8. Overall, what is your level of confidence in your children’s school?

Because some parents found satisfaction during their children’s elementary school years and were unhappy during their children’s high school years (Pincham King, 2016), questions seven and eight will examine the confidence participants have in their choice of school, teacher, and involvement.

Surveys

The survey depicted the compilation of data from participants through their responses to questions posed. “Information has been obtained from individuals and groups through the use of survey research for decades” (Ponto, 2015, p. 168). Surveys can range from asking a few targeted questions of individuals to obtaining in-depth information related to behaviors, preferences, or even more rigorous studies such as research instruments. The validity and reliability of my created surveys established credibility through piloting procedures. I designed two surveys for the participants (Part I and Part II) and given to the participants before the interviews and the focus group entailing eight open-ended questions.

The participants’ responses were no longer than a four-sentence paragraph. The participants were able to leave the study if they want to or leave some questions blank. Participants were reminded that their responses are confidential and that there are no wrong answers to any of the questions. Participants filled out the required surveys and returned them to me immediately after completion. I reminded participants that they are not under any obligation

or mandated to participate in this research, can leave the study at any time, leave some questions blank, and that there are no wrong answers; their responses are always confidential.

Surveys played a central part in this research because an active communication channel is essential in building school relationships for all stakeholders. According to Ma, Shen, Krenn, Hu, and Yuan (2016), all stakeholders have partnered in critical areas of open communication for families to garner healthy relationships in schools. What establishes this foundation for family involvement in education is the communication between teachers and parents (Schneider & Coleman, 2018). Part I of the survey, questions 1 through 8 are designed to investigate the magnitude of the relationship between teacher and parent. These questions will in-turn answer research question one (How are parents encouraged to move from merely monitoring to becoming more actively involved in their children's education?) with additional questions.

Survey Questions

1. Tell me about your relationship with your children's teacher.
2. What type of information do you receive from the teacher regarding your children's academic progress?
3. What type of communication do you have with your children's teacher?
4. What rapport will you establish with your children's teacher to foster their learning goals?
5. How important is it for you to be involved in your children's education?
6. What influence do you have with your children to motivate them in their academics?
7. In your opinion, what has been the greatest encouragement on academic achievement in your children today?
8. In the past year, how often have you met with your children's teacher?

Research has shown over time that parental involvement is critical for the success of students in every grade (Schneider & Coleman, 2018). Parents may not understand what constitutes parental involvement. Consequently, in Part II of the survey, questions 1 through 8 helped parents become more confident about the value of their school involvement. Through their experiences, parents can develop an immense appreciation of the critical role they play in their children's education. The essential aspects of their children's success in school are dependent upon the degree to which the parents take active roles of participation in the child's education. "One important aspect of family-school relationships is parent trust" (Santiago et al., 2016, p. 1005). Therefore, research questions two and three are addressed (What do parents perceive to be obstacles that hinder their active involvement with children's school activities? What roles do the administration and teachers occupy in parental involvement?).

1. What are some examples that you can give of your involvement in your children's academics in school?
2. What are some examples of your engagement with your children in educational activities at home?
3. What are examples of high-quality information about your children's school that is beneficial to both you and the children?
4. How do teachers involve parents and students from culturally diverse and economically disadvantaged backgrounds?
5. What are your needs as a parent that will help you participate and stay motivated in your children's education?
6. How often do you meet with your children's teacher?

7. What problems do you foresee moving forward as a parent if you are not involved in your children's education?
8. How can the school administrators and teachers help you become more involved in your children's academics?

Data Analysis

This transcendental phenomenological focused on the descriptive experiences of the participants. Using the seven steps of Moustakas (1994) consisted of textual descriptions, structural descriptions, horizontalization, essence, reduction, and elimination [epoche or bracketing], themes, and validation. I synthesized the data into meaningful, developed themes. The organization of the data began with transcribed interviews, surveys, and journaled notes. Analyzed material from the methods and procedures recommended by Moustakas (1994) included bracketing. Moustakas noted one of Husserl's concepts, epoche or bracketing (Creswell & Poth, 2018), which called for researchers to set aside their experiences, as much as possible, to take a fresh perspective toward the phenomenon under examination (Creswell & Poth, 2018, Moustakas, 1994). Being an objective researcher can be difficult if the researcher has had the same experienced, but as much as possible, I collected the data from the participants without biases. The data was analyzed by reducing the information to meaningful statements or quotes and combining the statements or quotes into themes (Creswell & Poth, 2018). According to Creswell and Poth (2018), themes are clusters of data relating to the unchanged components of experience put into a label. These clustered and labeled constituents are the core themes of the participants' lived experiences. The data developed a textual description of the participants' experiences.

The purpose of a textual description is to describe and interpret the characteristics of the data, bringing the words of the participants to life. The textual description allows detailed descriptions of what the participants have experienced. As the researcher, carefully taking the participants' information and "analyze the data by reducing the information to significant statements or quotes and combine the statements into themes and develop a textual description of the participants' experiences" (Creswell & Poth, 2018, p. 78) was difficult because of the type of parents (participants) involved in this research. By analyzing the textual description of the data, I was able to get a better understanding of the phenomenon. This method performed, described, and interpreted the characteristics of the recorded and visual messages.

Integration of all the participants "how" are the experiences of the structural descriptions for the meanings of the phenomenon. Structural descriptions "seek all possible meanings, looking for divergent perspectives, and varying the frames of reference about the phenomenon or using imaginative variation" (Creswell & Poth, 2018, p. 315). The structural descriptions of the data integrated into an individual structural description (Moustakas, 1994). Creswell and Poth (2018) declared that statements made during data collecting would allow me to "write descriptions of how the participants were influenced by the context or setting of the experiences" (p. 80).

According to Creswell and Poth (2018), horizontalization allows the researcher to "list every significant statement that is relevant to the phenomenon, and placing equal value to every participant's word, without discrimination" (p. 314). When employing horizontalization during data analysis, I was able to go through the data from the first and second questions and "highlight significant statements, sentences, or quotes that provided an understanding of how the participants experienced the phenomenon" (Creswell & Poth, 2018, p. 79).

The essence of the phenomenon was developed using a composite description (Creswell & Poth, 2018). I wrote a composite description of the participants' experiences regarding the phenomenon. Creswell and Poth (2018) asserted, "The composite description (essence) incorporates both the textual and the structural descriptions" (p. 201). The essence of the research allowed an understanding of the "what" and the "how" of the participants' experiences.

Edmund Husserl (1859-1938), a German philosopher, established the school of phenomenology methodology seeking to understand human experiences (Sousa, 2014, p.42). Husserl explains that reduction is the process of expressing the untainted essence of an emotional experience. Moustakas (1994) stated that through reduction and elimination [epoche or bracketing], the researcher sets aside all personal experiences and considers only the experiences of the participants' phenomenon (p. 59). By bracketing this data from my investigation, I was able to get a clearer understanding of the participants' points of view without prejudices. Using the reduction and elimination process, my attitudes, and biases were set aside as much as possible. As the researcher, it is imperative that all critical, meaningful units from the collected data, themes, and validation "take a fresh perspective toward the phenomenon under examination" (Creswell & Poth, 2018, p. 78). As the researcher, I analyzed the data by "reducing the information to significant statements or quotes and combined the statements into themes" (Moustakas, 1994, p. 60).

Creswell and Poth (2018) asserted, "Themes are also called meaning units, which provide the foundation for interpretation because it creates clusters and removes repetition" (p. 201). Themes are patterns across data sets related to the specific research questions. Themes will occur when there are idea patterns that suggest that there are numerous theme data sets. I applied the

collected data to identify, assess, and specify themes within the data. It was my judgment call to determine which themes are more central than others.

There are several strategies for validating themes. Creswell and Poth (2018) asserted that the validating of data “involves corroboration evidence from different sources to shed light on a theme or perspective” (p. 260). Checking the “invariant constituents and their accompanying theme against the complete record of the research participants” (Moustakas, 1994, p. 3) helped in the validation of the data. Through triangulation information, I was able to provide “validity to the findings” (Creswell & Poth, 2018, p. 260) through the data analysis, which was crucial.

The data analysis procedure followed a synthesized phenomenological analysis suggested by Moustakas (1994) called NVivo, which is a Qualitative Data Analysis Software (Q-DAS). NVivo Q-DAS was primarily used in analyzing the audios and video from interviews, focus groups, surveys, and the unstructured text from journaling. (Bunnell, 2016). NVivo Q-DAS organized the collected data to achieve accurate results. Moving the data, categorizing, and easily linking the data helped to develop critical themed texts (Creswell & Poth, 2018).

Triangulation of the data collected ensured that the participants’ experiences legitimized the research. Coding was used for structure and order because of the massive amounts of data collected (Miles, Huberman & Saldaña, 2014). Code themes are aligned to support other elements in the study. The chosen coding types influenced the research design and uncovered essential parts of the final analysis of the data. Each coding step and its review of the data permitted insight into the participant’s experiences. After assembling codes, the organization of broader themes and categories were identified. Identifying themes from existing codes may occur during this process. I reduced the themes to make it more manageable while creating order

within the themes so that I was able to “link themes together” (Sohn, 2017, p. 14), and it was complicated at times because of the amount of data that needed sifting.

A research journal enabled me to reflect on data from the interviews and the focus group. I wanted to capture thoughts as I listened intently to the participants. I was hoping that nothing was forgotten. What cannot capture from live video recordings, or what I may have perceived from the participants, I wrote in my journal. This memoing process captured short phrases, key concepts, and helped to synthesize the data in a higher analytical meaning (Creswell & Poth, 2018).

Identifying the themes from individual participant’s experiences is the textural structure. The structural description is tested for alternative interpretations while building themes. A structural description is the participants’ experiences (what phenomenon they experienced), and how they have experienced the phenomena (environments, circumstances, or their surroundings). The culminating aspect of the textural and structural descriptions is to communicate an overall essence of the experience (Creswell & Poth, 2018) is an integration of all the participant’s structural descriptions in the essences. The horizontalization is the listing of every significant statement (Creswell & Poth, 2018). A composite description develops the essence of the lived experience, describing what the participants have experienced. Schutz sought not only to equate the content of the perception linked to the start of the social reality of everyday life but also, how this reality comes to assume the form it is (Farganis, 2011). Reduction and elimination (epoche or bracketing) remove and eliminate all statements that are redundant, vague, or overlap (Creswell & Poth, 2018). These steps are detailed below:

Textual description

The interviews and my journal writings disclosed an understanding of the thought processes from the participants. Through this process, the themes emerged from the research and applied to the textual description from their experiences (Creswell & Poth, 2018). The textual description was written utilizing the collective phenomenon, and this procedure allowed focusing on the participants' experiences practicality. The textual description created the "what" participants in the study experienced in the phenomenon (Creswell & Poth, 2018, p. 78; Moustakas, 1994). The textual description technique described and interpreted the characteristics of recorded audio and visual messages. This process allowed themes in the textual description to designate the content, structure, and functions of the words contained in the texts, including verbatim recordings. The critical considerations in the textual description include selecting the types of documents to be studied. This technique helped me to illustrate and interpret the characteristics of the recorded messages as the participants were engaged.

Structural Description

The “how” of the experiences integrated individual structural descriptions from the focus group participants for meanings (Creswell & Poth, 2018, p. 78). This technique empowered the essences of their lived experience while incorporating invariant constituents and themes. The “how” of the experience is an integration of all individual structural descriptions for each participant for the meanings.

Horizontalization

The horizontalization listed every significant statement (Creswell & Poth, 2018), and the quote listed was relevant to the experiences of the participants, and every comment had equal value. Horizontalization of the data is the phenomenological reduction process. Moustakas (1994)

stated that the researcher must be aware and receptive to every statement of the experience, granting each comment equal value (p. 122). A composite description developed the essence of the lived experiences describing what the participants have previously experienced. Reduction and elimination (epoche or bracketing) removed redundant statements that were vague or overlapped. I have kept all critical, meaningful units from the experiences of the participants in this research to create cluster themes (Creswell & Poth, 2018).

Essence

A composite description developed to reveal the essence of the lived experiences of the participants (Moustakas, 1994). This technique allowed me to uncover the heart of the investigation and impart acumen into the phenomenon. It is through epoche that eyes open to observe and obtain that interconnectedness without polluting the purity of the lived experience with preconceived beliefs, thoughts, or judgments (Moustakas, 1994). From a Christian perspective, God created us in His image and Jesus said that we are the light of the world (“You are the light of the world; a city that is set on a hill cannot be hidden” Matthew 5:14 New King James Version), which make Christians stand in all transparency to others. If the process of epoche is measured against that light, the challenge will accurately measure the descriptive lives of the participants under that scope. A developed journal from my experiences with the participants helped me to search specifically for any biases or assumptions that might impact this investigations’ findings negatively in any way. Summarizing the essence of the experiences of the participants supported the purpose of this study.

Reduction and elimination (epoche or bracketing)

Reduction of data for each participant checks for overlapping or repetitive statements and eliminates those accounts that are redundant, vague, or overlap (Moustakas, 1994). All

preconceived experiences were set aside as much as humanly possible (Creswell & Poth, 2018). On several occasions, the participants' report began to sound like the same story but from a different angle. Moustakas (1994) describes "multiple angles of perception" (p. 91) that enhances strength and intensity to insights of the phenomenon. After carefully identifying elements of bracketing, the process of reduction became cleaner after the analysis. Identifying the experiences of the participants meant digging deeper into the data to uncover meanings related to the phenomenon.

Themes

The process of analyzing the data into themes can be somewhat complicated, if not for NVivo Q-DAS. Themes are the invariant constituents that are clustered and labeled in this research. A cluster refers to the related invariant components of experience into a thematic label (Creswell & Poth, 2018). These clustered and labeled constituents are the core themes of the participants' lived experiences. Moustakas (1994) notes the difficulty, and yet the necessity, of the process so that the experience is looked upon more constructively "in an immature and completely open manner" and "suspend everything that interferes with fresh vision" (p. 86). Validation of the themes was checked against the transcripts to ensure that they are present and valid (Creswell & Poth, 2018). The identification of the invariant constituents and themes by the application was the final phase. A replication of this study may be possible for further data collection and analysis to continue for future investigation within this phenomenon. Extracting themes from the process of reoccurring themes are valuable to the study.

Trustworthiness

Trustworthiness is essential in establishing and investigating the qualitative results in a study. Trustworthiness embodies the attributes of credibility, transferability, confirmability, and

dependability. It is my job as a Christian researcher, to truthfully and impartially represent the participants in this study with the highest integrity. Connell (2018) confirmed, “Trustworthiness is the “quality of an investigation (and its findings) that make it noteworthy to audiences” (p. 86). Trustworthiness is essential to produce quality data to ensure that the findings and interpretations of this study are in good standing.

Credibility

Credibility describes the degree to which the findings accurately describe reality. Credibility depends on the richness of the information gathered and on the analytical abilities of the researcher. Credibility is involving the establishment of the results of the research ensuring its believability. The participants’ data from triangulation included member-checking to establish credibility. Methods used to establish credibility include but were not limited to meetings with participants, “observation (if appropriate to the study), peer-debriefing, member-checking, and reflective journaling” (Connelly, 2016, p. 435).

Dependability and Confirmability

Connelly (2016) asserted, “Dependability refers to the stability of the data over time and over the conditions of the study” (p. 435). Dependability guarantees that the research findings are consistent and repeatable by other researchers and that the findings will be consistent. If a person wanted to replicate this study, he or she would have enough information from the research description. Utilizing an inquiry audit establishes dependability, which necessitates an outside person to review. The outsider will also examine the research process and the data analysis to ensure that the findings are consistent and repeatable.

According to Connelly (2016), “Confirmability is the neutrality, or the degree findings are consistent and could be repeated” (p. 435). Confirmability questions “how” data collection

supports the research findings and is the progression of impartiality in the research discoveries. The findings were based on the participants' responses and no potential bias or personal motivations. The next researcher will also examine the research process and the data analysis to ensure that the results are reliable and suitable for additional research. Confirmability questions “how” in data collection, supporting the research findings, and is the progression of being impartial in the research discoveries. The findings based on the participants' responses were not potentially bias or had any underlying personal motivations. While selecting the participants for this study, the administrator depicted them to have prolific information about PI, which added to the dependability of this study.

Transferability

Transferability is an additional facet of qualitative research, which is considered a possibility that what is found in one context, is applied to another context. Transferability describes a degree to which research can be transferred to other texts and how validating the research outcomes apply to comparable phenomena. The enhanced transferability produced a thorough job describing the research context and the assumptions that are central to the research. Connelly (2016) averred, “Researchers support the study’s transferability with a rich, detailed description of the context, location, and people studied, and by being transparent about analysis and trustworthiness” (p. 436).

The rich lived descriptive experiences of the participants were provided through in-depth, open-ended interviews. Transferability is judging conclusions of the research to entail the “thick descriptions” that is important to a reader. Readers can make informed judgments about whether the findings can transfer to their circumstances. Transferability refers to the degree to which

research can be transfer to other texts and how validating a researcher's outcomes that apply to comparable phenomena.

Memoing

Memoing is a process in the development of ideas that are written down as data that is collected and analyzed. In my journal notes, I recorded the actions and experiences of what the participants shared with me from the interviews and the focus group. I journaled after each interview and after the focus group meeting. Utilizing a journal for memoing is a standard format for qualitative research (Creswell & Poth, 2018), which can be used in addition to other data collection methods. I reflected on my notes from the participants' eagerness through observation. Memoing was the accumulation of all my written thoughts that I recorded concerning my perception of the participants' visible, verbal, or non-verbal cues. The processing of memoing created a different set of data that signified my thoughts, which were distinctive from the participants' reflections.

Memoing also assisted in capturing the moments when I was not recording. Journaling contributed credibility substantially to this research because I was an eyewitness to the participants' behavior after the audio and visual had ceased. Journaling proceeded after collecting supportive information from other data for this research. Additionally, journaling incited the unearthing of emerging themes from the data, which helped with answering the research questions. It was important to chronicle my thought processes as I was reflective while observing the participants' verbal and non-verbal cues. The methodological memoing may underscore any biases subjective to the interpretations of the data I collected.

Audit Trail

An audit trail provides information about specific transactions relating to the items kept in an accounting record. Ang, Embi, and Yunus (2016) asserted, “Audit trail or inquiry audit is a commonly used strategy for establishing dependability (reliability), credibility (external validity) as well as confirmability (objectivity) (p. 1863). An audit trail is significant because it tracks data back to its origin and provides transparency and defense of records for compliance, record integrity, and accuracy. The audit trail system can protect against misuse or harm concerning the security of sensitive and or vital information. An audit trail is significant because it tracks records back to its origin and provides transparency and defense of records for compliance, record integrity, and accuracy (Creswell & Poth, 2018). The audit trail system can protect against misuse or harm concerning the security of sensitive and or vital information. The triangulation of data validates the information collected through various methods used such as the interviews and focus group.

Member Checks

Audio and video recordings transcribed from the interviews, and the focus group meeting was returned to participants for their review and approval. This process increased the reliability of the study because it established the confidence and truthfulness in the study’s findings and purged erroneous readings. Member checking occurred immediately after the study to increase credibility (Creswell & Poth, 2018). Member checks provided the participants with relevant feedback that validated and helped improved the accuracy, credibility, validity, and transferability of the study (Creswell & Poth, 2018).

Triangulation

This transcendental phenomenological study collected the primary data source from interviews, surveys, a focus group, and journal notations, and the triangulation of the data was validated from those sources. Substantiating data from these resources allowed verification and authentication of the occurrences within the methods. During triangulation, it was confirmed that the validity of the research data was justifiable because of the use of one or more methods in collecting data on the topic. When using triangulation, the validation of this study's findings is credible because of cross-checking and cross-referencing the data. The different data collected allowed substantiating evidence, which directed light on different themes. Triangulation facilitated validation of data by cross verification from three (interviews, focus group, and journal notations) sources, according to Creswell & Poth, 2018. Between members check and triangulation, the data analysis produced credibility in the transcripts and the finality of the themes in the findings. Triangulation of the data analysis occurred when the essence of the methodology used was consistent and accurate in the findings.

Ethical Considerations

In any research, whether qualitative or quantitative, ethical considerations are indispensable. Respecting the anonymity and confidentiality of participants is vital. The participants must be well informed about what they are consenting to and understand that they can withdraw from the research at any time. The IRB will be notified immediately if potential harm may arise concerning the researcher or participants. Assigning security codes to computerized records and securing passwords ensures the participants' privacy. A computer was used to store collected data and secured with an appropriate password. The data is protected on a flash drive, locked in a secured location, and I alone have access to all the collected data

safeguarded. The data after three years will be destroyed accordingly. As indicated previously, the participants' data are protected against any biases. The identity of all participating agencies and students used pseudonyms and retained in the strictest of confidentiality. Sustaining an identity key to match the pseudonyms of all participants, are kept in a secure location, is critical. All the procedures and transcribed notations were provided to participants after the finalized analysis.

Summary

This research investigated the experiences of parents involved in their children's education through a developed transcendental phenomenological research methodology that synthesized the themes suggested by Moustakas (1994). All the participants have children in a small-sized, private Christian school in Kentucky (pseudonym) that reflected the demographic areas of school-aged students. Data was generated through interviews, surveys, a focus group, and journal notes. The trustworthiness of this research adhered to ethical considerations, credibility, dependability, transferability, and confirmability. The conclusion of this research followed a description of the essential qualities of parents' experiences in their children's education.

All the data collected were transcribed verbatim. A phenomenological reduction method and Moustakas's (1994) data analysis procedures were used to secure a distinct and meticulous perception of the common themes within the data. Summarized and completed data will be kept in the strictest of confidence. All critical, meaningful units shared from the participants' experiences are confidential at all times.

The methodology that I used in this phenomenological research is in contrast with other research methodology because the goal was to describe the lived experiences of the participants.

This phenomenological perspective research-based all of its findings solely on the lived experiences of the participants. I processed all identifiable data, have accurate records kept privately, and bracketed out any preconceived beliefs, opinions r notions about the phenomenon that could cause biases. Any conjectures resulting from the phenomenon will be from an impartial perspective. This phenomenological exploration strived to record authentic lived experiences of parents involved in the education of children.

CHAPTER FOUR: FINDINGS

Overview

This transcendental phenomenological study was conducted to understand the lived experiences of parents who are involved or uninvolved in their children's education at a Christian School. Parental involvement in school and at home can lead children to a more successful career in college. Mwangi (2018) asserted, "Parental involvement is widely acknowledged as a critical factor influencing the college choice process among families" (p. 1). This chapter discusses the demographics of the participants, the participants' interviews and focus group discussions, research questions, and common themes in the context of the research questions. Chapter Four concludes with the results of the data analysis drawn from the investigated of this study from the composite description, which expresses a synthesis of the meaning and essence of parental involvement.

Participants

In this study, 12 participants volunteered to share their experiences as parents who are involved in their children's education. Regrettably, only 11 participated in the interview, and only 10 participated in the focus group. The Christian school that approved the research is a small PK-12 but has extensive activities for parents' participation. The participants are of different ages, and their children are on different grade levels. Given the statistics online, the specific grouping is described as a mixed culture. I was very disappointed as the researcher, culturally speaking, to find that this Christian school constitutes a homogeneous environment (Caucasian, mostly teachers, or work at the school). Every one of the participants was deeply involved in their children's education. Pseudonyms for the participants presented at the onset of the meetings. Table 3 describes the participant demographics.

Pseudonyms	Age	Gender	Ethnicity	Occupation Marital Status	Number of Children
Kristine	39	Female	Caucasian	Stay-at-Home Mom Married	4
Tiffany	42	Female	Caucasian	Teacher Married	3
Mariana	45	Female	Caucasian	Stay-at-Home Mom Widowed	3
Lindsay	48	Female	Caucasian	Stay-at-home Mom Married	4
Rebecca	48	Female	Caucasian	School Admission & Enrollment Counselor Married	2
Faith	35	Female	Caucasian	Teacher	1
Ruth	47	Female	Caucasian	School Dietician Married	2
Maria	36	Female	Caucasian	Spanish Teacher Married	2
Joshua	60	Male	Caucasian	History Teacher/Coach Married	2
Alexandria	39	Female	Caucasian	Teacher Married	2
Esther	40	Female	Caucasian	Art Teacher Married	3

Table 3. Participant Demographics.

Kristine

Kristine is a 39-year-old married mother of four children and a stay-at-home mom.

Kristine has three children from a prior marriage. All of Kristine's children attend the same school, and she came to the table with a bubbly attitude and eager to get into the interview, and she is deeply involved in the children's activities at school, where she also volunteers. Kristine

was very nervous at the beginning of the interview, but not shy in the least. I encouraged her to relax. As Kristine began to relax, she opened up about the many activities that she was involved in and how tiresome it is for her at times.

At one point, Kristine began to tell me that she felt that the kids were doing too much, but she wanted them to stay focus on the things of God. I asked Kristine if she feels overwhelmed at times, and she stated, “I like to keep tabs on them all the time. Yes! There have been times I felt very burned out, very burnt out.” When asked about the involvement of other parents, Kristine stated, “Parental involvement, it is lacking. I feel like it’s less and less. It is very hard to get a lot of parents involved.” Kristine values the education that her children are receiving and understands that it is difficult for some parents to get involved at the school.

Tiffany

Tiffany is a 42-year-old teacher who is the mother of three children. Tiffany is very adamant about parental involvement and declared that both she and her husband hold education on a high pedestal. Tiffany is straight to the point and has a no-nonsense attitude about education as she insists that pushing her children to become independent of her and her husband. Tiffany assured that both parents are available if the children need them. Tiffany also feels that she has to be involved in every event for her children and agrees that there are not enough parents involved in their children’s education. As a teacher, Tiffany alleged that some parents use teachers “as educators only, and the parents don’t have to do anything else.”

One of Tiffany’s sons diagnosed with depression invoked a sadness in Tiffany. She admitted that he wanted to kill himself, and the school has been a champion in helping Tiffany and her husband with watching for signs of harming himself or others. Tiffany claimed, “I can go to the teachers and ask them to pray for him and keep an eye out for him.” Tiffany was a very

poignant woman as she spoke about her son, who has terrible anxiety. She took deep breaths every time she answered a question. I asked Tiffany if I could pray with her, she agreed. Tiffany wept silently and thanked me for the prayer. The interview lasted about an hour and fifteen minutes because I did not have the heart to stop Tiffany from talking. In any case, Tiffany was the last interviewee for the day.

Mariana

Mariana is the most powerful speaker of all the participants. Mariana is a widow with three teenage girls. The oldest and youngest daughters need learning support. Mariana is a determined mother who insists that her involvement in her children's education is the most crucial aspect of their growth into adulthood. Mariana indicated, "So, from the time they were even in pre-school, all the way up to each of their grades accordingly, I have weekly communications with their teachers." Mariana appreciates the significance of being active in her children's education, and she made it known very early in the interview that she is not a "lax" parent. In Mariana's experience as an involved parent, she states that she is preparing her children for the future. Getting involved with the children and community affairs are the most significant experiences for Mariana.

Mariana goes into deep thought when a question is asked and then gives a hearty laugh after she verbally expresses her thoughts. However, Mariana sadly put her head down when she stated that she believed that her "children were in a bad way because their father died when they were very young." It was evident that she still feels the loss of her husband. Mariana believes that the loss of a child's father will take opportunities from their future. I asked Mariana what did she mean? Mariana stated, "I've been trying to do the best I can. My older two children had their lives turned upside down. So, I had to be a statue for them. You know, from that point on and

trying to get them. . . because when a child loses their father, that really takes a lot of their future away. And so, I've been trying to do the best I can." Mariana knows that she can rely on the teachers to support her and the children. Mariana claims that the teachers "go above and beyond for each student."

Lindsay

Lindsay is a 48-year-old stay-at-home mother, married with four children. Lindsay is particularly thoughtful about involvement in her children's education. Lindsay prolonged speaking, and I needed to repeat or elaborate on most of the questions. Lindsay denoted that she "limit their television and screen time extremely." When the children need help at home, Lindsay uses flashcards to help them study, especially math. Lindsay laughs and says, "Which they hate."

Lindsay believes that parental involvement taken lightly is unacceptable. I clarified what I meant by experiences as a parent in children's education. Lindsay explained that whatever the children were doing at any given time was fun and exciting, and when she can, Lindsay is at the school helping others, and she enjoys being around other parents. Lindsay believes that it is beneficial for parents to be involved in their children's education. Lindsay stated, "I think children do better in school when their parents are more involved because kids are actually not self-motivated, most of the time." Lindsay included the fact that she enjoys working with the teachers because they take care of each other and work hard with the students.

Rebecca

Rebecca is the school's admission and enrollment counselor and the mother of two children. Rebecca and her husband are 11-year believers, who decided to raise their boys in a Christian school, although neither one of them grew up in a Christian household, they grew up in a loving household. Rebecca believes that it is imperative for children to not only be in a

Christian environment at home but a Christian school as well. Rebecca's involvement in the children's education is less now than before because they are older, but she and her husband are at every possible event. Rebecca feels that since the children are more "self-sufficient," she does not have to be so involved with them in their homework unless it is a "big project." Rebecca used the word "self-sufficient" often concerning her children's school and home activities.

Rebecca declared, "I think it's been very good; I think just being a parent and being involved." She recalls a study (Dr. Dobson's Focus on the Family) that she did with her husband, and "it forever changed our lives." It was concerning their children "being on loan from God." Parental involvement is "high on the meter" for these parents and attending activities at the school is without question important. Although educational success is significant to Rebecca, she feels that the children should be rooted and grounded spiritually, and their education provides a spiritual channel for them to grow. Rebecca claimed that is the reason why the children attend a Christian school and "It's that spiritual side first I know for our family."

Rebecca said that the school "instituted this year's minimal 30-hour work requirement from all families" for parents to be involved in the activities of the school. The requirement did not have to be the parents per se, but any member of the family eighteen years of age or older. The school wanted all of the children to feel a sense of personal gathering amongst the families. Rebecca indicated "A couple of people grumbled at first. 'Why do I have to do this,' but we need parents to be involved, and it was a way for us to help promote that." It is so valuable to Rebecca that parents are involved with their children at school because she knows which parents are not active all the time. Rebecca was practically screaming, "We need parents to be involved! I think sometimes it's just reprioritizing what's important."

Faith

Faith has one four-year-old child in pre-K, and she is a teacher. Faith stands firmly to her parental involvement convictions and believes that it is essential because, as a teacher, she has realistic expectations for her daughter. Faith also placed importance on helping her child at home while pointing out teachable moments and believed that teachers should “set clear expectations” for parent involvement and explain, “this is what I expect you to do when you’re at school.” If a parent participant in any activity, it is most beneficial for both them and the child. It is on the parents to show the children some initiative. Unfortunately, the children suffer in the long run because of a lack of involvement.

Faith was impressed with the organization of the school’s information notifying the parents of different activities for the pre-K students’ involvement. Faith stated, “The teachers are very welcoming and friendly and have positive attitudes,” and this is an encouragement for some parents to be active or become active in their children’s education. Faith feels that both the teachers and parents are on the “same page and the same team,” and therefore, if any issues arise, they can come to some favorable resolutions.

Ruth

Ruth is a 47-year-old pleasant woman who is married with two children, but only one child is attending the school now. Ruth is also one of the school dietitians. Ruth enjoys having her children in a Christian school and enjoys the fact that her children are learning the truth about God, Jesus Christ, His Word, “everything.” Ruth stated that she only had the best experience as a parent in the school because her children have never been to a public school. Although her oldest child is no longer in school, Ruth said that she is not that involved in her youngest child’s activities like before. “I would have to say as he got older; it was a little less important when he

was younger. I'm not as involved, still involved, making sure he has everything done, but I'm not super-involved, being honest. Like at some point, they need to breathe, and they need to take responsibility."

Ruth experiences involving her child's sporting events, engaging the whole team prayers, and she believes that experience is what "touches me the most and what really drives home." As the team kneels to pray for each other if an injury occurs, Ruth sees "powerful" classmate intimacy as the team comes together. Ruth insists that the entire school appeals to parents to get involved. All of the activities are available for them at school as much as possible. Ruth states that it is "so very important for parents to get involved in their children's education and some afterschool programs." However, Ruth feels that there are times when students can be independent of a parent participating in their events. Although Ruth is not involved in her child's activities like before, she has a good relationship with the teachers, and she can communicate any concerns if she finds it necessary.

Maria

Maria spoke openly and candidly about her daughter being gifted, and obviously, she is very proud of her. Maria only spoke about her son (the youngest), to state that he wants to work alone and "he doesn't enjoy learning, and he would rather do a lot of hands-on activities to learn and only in his classroom." Unfortunately, Maria's son does not have the accommodations like his sister does. Maria believes that her experiences with the children should have the freedom to explore new adventures and will only intervene if "they need it." Maria said that she told her children that they were not flawless", and "if you don't want mom, then you want to kind of use the rocky learning process for yourself, that's okay too." Maria said that she would sit on the "sidelines" waiting for the children to ask for help. Maria acknowledged that parental

involvement is precious, but not at the cost of her children's expression of themselves. She wants the children to be free with little interference from the parents.

Joshua

Joshua is a 60-year-old History teacher and football coach, who has two children at the school. Joshua is a small-framed man with a humble spirit, and he was a little subdued at the beginning of the interview but opened up very quickly as we begin to converse. Joshua said that he is not as involved with helping his children with school work since the children are getting older. Joshua and his wife are always available for their children if they need assistance with any homework. However, Joshua is involved in his children's activities during school and after school. Joshua and his wife have always been available for their children since preschool. Joshua stated that he had bad experiences in elementary and high school. "I wanted them to do better than I did. I want them to know the mistakes or the difficulties I have or had. I want them to overcome that or not to have to deal with that." Joshua said that both of his children are "incredibly gifted academically" and in a much better place than he was as a youth.

Joshua's experiences as an involved parent allow him to stay closer to his children and to watch them grow in every area of their lives, spiritually and academically. When asked about the attitudes of the teachers, Joshua asserted, "There would be sometimes where I might think 'okay, this is a little bit too picky.' As a teacher, I might disagree with a little bit, but I usually understand what you're doing, I guess." As I looked at Joshua, I was able to discern his disdain for that particular teacher that he spoke about, but he tried quickly to keep his opinion non-judgmental.

Alexandria

Alexandria is a 39-year-old art and drama teacher, and the mother of two attend the school with her children for three years, and she enjoys working there as an instructor.

Alexandria experiences being an involved parent in her children's education, "have been pretty positive and parents are really willing to help out," and it is better than public school because of the smaller class settings. Alexandria regards some of the teachers as her friend and competent colleagues. As an art and drama teacher, Alexandria said, "I've never felt like it was a hassle for anybody to help out with anything." Alexandria is a very upbeat and optimistic person, and she loves to be involved in her children's education at school and at home.

Alexandria believes that parental involvement is valuable, but she also thinks that her children need the freedom to grow and make mistakes. Alexandria's desires are for more parents are involved at times. Especially when the child or children have behavioral issues or perhaps learning difficulties. Alexandria believes that there are three kinds of parent involvement. "There are the ones that are completely uninvolved, then there's the ones that are overinvolved, and are the ones questioning everything that you're teaching in a classroom (and you are like, okay!)" Parents who come into the school with high expectations look to the teacher to perform miracles when they are not available to get to the activities. Alexandria states that as a teacher, she tries to make herself available and even purposely staying around to converse after activities.

Esther

Esther is a 40-year-old art teacher at the school with three children, and she is very involved in the children's activities and proclaimed that her experiences in the children's education have been positive for the time that they were in kindergarten. Being involved in the children's education is "super important" to Esther. She believes that if parents' experiences

interact with other children aside from their own, a family unit begins to bond. Esther also has a child who has suffered from anxiety for a while. The teachers have supported an open policy with her as a parent and allows the child time to adjust to different situations in school.

Maintaining a line of communication open with parents and teachers “makes so much of a difference and especially for our school retention wise.” Esther speaks with profound wisdom when speaking about her children as “God’s gift” and spending her money to take care of His “children” in a Christian school. Esther wants her children fed mentally, spiritually, as well as academically in a school that will “mature her children with God’s Word” and honestly “assess things in the world according to the example of Christ” with their whole hearts. Esther’s most exceptional and most significant experiences include being an asset to her children on the drama team, the parents who are involved in other activities, teachers who are team players, and other students at her school embracing her younger children.

Results

In this section, the results address research questions answers developed through the themes’ progression from interviews, surveys, a focus group meeting, and journal notations. The data were coded through NVivo and repeatedly analyzed as while sifting through the documents. The data provided by the participants in this study answered each research question. Based on three outstanding expected themes and with one unexpected theme development. I analyzed each word and phrase through horizontalization (Moustakas, 1994) that appeared to dominate other words.

Developing Themes

The data collected from interviews, surveys, a focus group meeting, and journal notes were analyzed. The coding and themes from the research described the experiences of the

participants' involvement in their children's education. I discovered the experiences of the participants as they perceived parental involvement in three expected themes development (experiences, parental involvement/activities, education/school) and one unanticipated theme (teachers). See Figure 1.

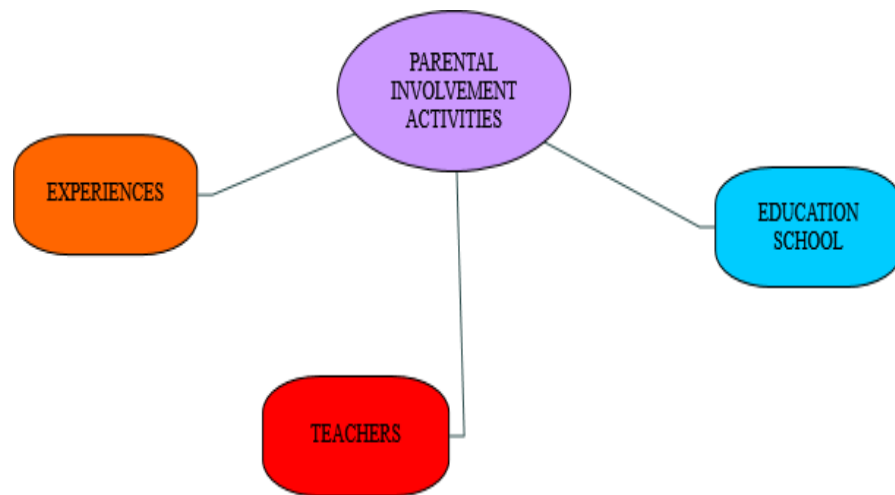


Figure 1. Developing Themes.

Interviews

The interview questions addressed the central and guiding questions of the research. Before the interviews began, participants signed consents, and they fill-out the first surveys. Ten semi-structured, open-ended questions were given in interviews after 11 participants approved written consent. The face to face interviews took place at a Christian school according to times convenient for the participants. Recorded interviews on an iPad provided clear audio. Within a week, the interviews concluded. The participants were very zealous and enthusiastic in their description when answering questions; some participants were more thorough than others. The interviews were typically one hour, but a couple of participants needed more time to talk.

Surveys

In this research, two surveys were given to the 11 participants: the first survey at the beginning of the interviews: the second survey at the beginning of the focus group meeting. The surveys played a valuable part in collecting data from the participants to analyze their responses to questions posed. These surveys contained in-depth information about the participants' relationship as parents who are involved in their children's education. Because I designed the surveys, I had to establish validity and reliability through piloting procedures. Each survey given entailed eight open-ended questions.

Focus Group

Having a focus group meeting helped address the central and guiding questions of the study. Only 10 of the 11 participants arrived at the focus group optimistically. The focus group was impressive because all of the participants knew each other since most of the parents worked at the same school. Therefore, the participants already had a good relationship built. The focus group took place in a large classroom at the same school, where the interviews took place. Audio and video recording of the focus group meeting gave better perception for analyzation from my iPad. The focus group meeting took more than an hour because I wanted to give each parent a chance to speak, which worked out well. I used my computer to show PowerPoint slides that guided the eight questions to encourage conversation. At the beginning of the meeting, I gave the participants the second survey. The meeting was very slow in conversation, but by the middle of the second question, all of the participants were eager to answer the question posed to them, and they interacted with other participants.

Journaling

Journaling was intended to help me reflect on the attitudes and body language of the participants as I listened, observed, and wrote in my book. Keeping a record of the notes in my journal assisted me with processing reflective writing after the interviews and immediately after the focus group departed. Analyzing these journal notes helped me with understanding the experiences of the participants. Journaling my thoughts were relevant for data collection and assisted in what I may perceive in the behavior of the participants.

Codes and Themes.

The codes and themes listed in Table 4 below, formulated significant statements and related statements from the participant's interviews, surveys, and focus group meeting, and journaling information. Three themes developed with another unexpected emergent theme. The central and subsequent research questions of the study guided the research's outcome.

Open-Codes	Enumeration of Open-code Appearance Across Data Sets	Themes
Participation	65	Parental Involvement/Activities
Activities	71	
Parental Involvement	173	
Parents	85	
Together	11	

Projects	24	
Children	90	
Relationship	22	
Families	15	
Everybody	34	
Enjoy	8	Experiences
Attitude	24	
Encourage	33	
Engage	2	
Improvement	3	
Approachable	28	
Impressed	2	
Motived	33	
Good Experiences	52	
Christian Education	108	Education/School
Interacting with Peers	46	
Focus on School	22	
Support	13	

Enrolled	4	Teachers
Teachers	75	
Conversations	17	
Academics	71	
Homework	59	
Administration	13	
Assignment	2	

Table 4. The above Enumeration Table was formatted from a sample given by: Yocum, R., Silvey, R., Milacci, F., & Garzon, F. (2015). Spirituality in school counseling practice and implications for school counseling education. *Journal of Academic Perspectives*, 2015(3).

Thematic Analysis

All data were synthesized and identified with significant statements, elimination of overlapping statements, grouping similar statements into three categories, and coding the statements into themes. The themes were carefully analyzed from the interviews, the focus group, along with journal notes transcripts, to identify common themes meaning, which appeared from the data. The data process began with transcribing the data into a Word document and uploaded to NVivo Q-DAS. Collection of the data discovered three types of themes with repeated word or phrases observed from the NVivo.

Theme One: Parental Involvement/Activities

In analyzing the data for this study, theme two answers subsequent questions one and two:

1. How are parents encouraged to move from merely monitoring to becoming more actively involved in their children's education?

The participants understand that parental involvement remains a critical part of growing young children's academic development. Tiffany stated, "When I think of being active in my kids' school, I think of how blessed I am to be able to work in the school in the same building." Each of the participants did not hesitate to inform me immediately that their families and the school experiences are second to none. Joshua stated, "They grow up so fast, and it's like I want to spend every moment with them being involved in everything that they're doing academically, athletically, whatever it is." Rebecca reinforced, "So, it's our job as their parents to guide them. We have a lot of parents that work a lot or something, and they will say they can't be involved." Families will always play an intricate role in fostering development in children, whether their parents, grandparents, or guardians are involved, not only in school, but at home for them to embrace the real world. Kristine declared, "I'm here a lot mostly because I am so passionate about Christian schools and wanting to be involved. And I'm glad that I had the opportunity."

While children develop better social skills, academic achievement, and improved behavior when their parents are involved at school, it is also true that children will be unlikely cut school and are less troublesome in class. Consequently, their homework completion is brought in on time when their parents are involved. When it comes to parental involvement, Esther emphasized, "It makes so much difference and especially for our school retention wise." Parent involvement was worth the children's progressive and academic growth when a parent like Esther stated, "When you become more active in your child's education, your school becomes more familiar with one another, the families become a family, it becomes tighter, and there's more school pride. Everything just explodes from there."

2. What do parents perceive to be obstacles that hinder their active involvement with children's school activities?

Some parents believe that obstacles that can impede or deter parental involvement may include, but are not limited to unavailability, scheduling, believing their contribution to the school is meaningless, no knowledge of how the system works, inadequate childcare, linguistic and cultural dissimilarities, conflicts at home or difficulties with administration and teachers. All of the participants agreed that the parent's most significant obstacles are lack of communication from administration and teachers or "interacting" with the parents. Faith stated, "More open about setting up conferences at a certain point when required." Esther also declared that administration and teachers should have "invitations to participate, sharing their needs to provide educational experiences" for the parents.

In any case, the parents need every opportunity available for them to engage in their children's education. Rebecca stated, "I think most teachers here have an open-door policy." The parents also agreed that parental involvement would suffer if they did not have a way of communicating other than face to face. The parents can utilize what the participants call "Ren Web" to engage with administration and teachers concerning their children's education and other activities. Joshua stated that administrators and teachers should keep the parents in the loop about the progression and "struggles" in the children's academics; this is essential to the participants. Communication is the key to parental involvement. The lack of communication can be a hindrance in parental involvement in any household if collaboration lacks in any way.

Theme Two: Experience

During the final analysis of coding and dissecting theme, the first and second themes (parental involvement/activities and experience) provides an answer to the central research

question: What are the experiences of parents who are involved in their children's education?

The interviews, a focus group, and journal writing data allowed the parents to share their experiences about their involvement in their children's education. Maria believed that getting involved in their children's experience at school while they are in "an activity creates a lack of academic pressure." To process the first theme from the data analysis, 'experience' emerged from the interviews maintaining the participants' description of their lived experience. Because of the lived experiences of these participants, their parental involvement has shown successful modification in their children's education from bad to good to excellent. Ruth expressed her thoughts about parental involvement and said, "It's been positive, especially being in a Christian school makes a big difference." Parental involvement sets the bar high for parents who are not involved because they fear that they may not measure up, but Esther stated, "My experiences have all been very positive here."

Most of the parents had great experiences with being involving themselves in their children's education. Alexandria stated that she always had a "very positive experience" participating in her children's education. I've never felt like it was a hassle for anybody to help out with anything." The experiences of these parents and their impact on making educational decisions for their children have built a strong school community and a more substantial community presence. Ruth stated, "So, it's been very positive, reassuring that my kids are learning the truth in everything they do, sports, classroom, bus rides. It's all Christ-based." It is essential to understand that the participants are parents first, then teachers. Rebecca said that the church changed the life of both her and her husband Carl, knowing that the children were on loan from God. The children "are the Lord's and not ours, that has forever changed", Rebecca said.

Theme Three: School/Education

The third theme (school/education) answered the subsequent research question number three:

1. What roles do the administration and teachers occupy in parental involvement?

Although the participants in this study are 100% involved in their children's education (some more than others), participants revealed that most parents at the school do not participate for whatever reason. One of the teachers at the school, Tiffany stated, "Kids don't always, they're not always mature enough or have the life experience to see how valuable education is." Ruth insisted that the school is like "families interacting with one another." Consequently, the administration and teachers are continually looking for ways to promote parental involvement without making it seem forceful. Although the school is a Christian school as opposed to a private school, in her interview and the focus group, Tiffany also maintained, "This is an issue that we had last year, not with the teachers but administration wise that I pay for my kids to go to a Christian school not a private school", and she wanted to make that statement "clear to administrators." Christine added that activities "allows maybe upper-grade students to bond better with some of the younger grades" at some of their school events.

The school has initiated a policy for parents to volunteer time throughout the year, but some parents were still uninvolved by the time of this writing. Esther contended, "I think that you can't expect your child to find importance in something if you aren't making it important." The influence of the school and the relationship between the parent and children influence the outcome of the children's educational engagement and aspirations. Nevertheless, the teachers try their best to help each child without prejudices. Joshua stated, "Administration would have to get

together to maybe communicate with each of us. They need to help individuals, mainly those individuals who need help with learning skills or whatever.”

Unexpected Theme: Teachers

During data collecting, all of the participants identified several factors involving parental engagement during data analysis; an unexpected emergent theme surfaced in the word frequency query, ‘teacher or teachers.’ The word ‘teacher or teachers’ became more prominent as the number of times it appeared in the data indicating a high-level count from data analysis. This theme illustrated the need for teachers to show parents love, kindness, and patience as they are instructing their children. Faith insisted, “I feel like they’re dedicated and invested and just confident in what they’re doing. They feel like they’re supposed to be there in that role”. Faith also stated that she was encouraged when she meets with the teachers because they are trustworthy. Ruth stated, “You can see a little bit more of their personal side having conversations with them not so much even about educational things.”

If it takes a village to raise a child (Clinton, 1996), then that village certainly includes teachers who have the role of educating the child, sometimes parenting the child, and I dare to say, sometimes feeding the child. The participants did not hesitate to point out teachers who were instrumental in helping their children succeed academically in one way or another. During this part of the analysis, it was clear that the participants felt important, and teachers and administration welcome parents to volunteer in or out of classrooms at any time.

During the children’s education, both administrators and teachers must show parents that their time is valued. Ruth stated she like having a school that gives opportunities to be “an example Christlike in school.” Teachers have a challenging role in not only teaching the student but teaching parents how to help their child succeed. Tiffany asserted, “I think that first, you

have to convince parents that it is a partnership. A lot of times, parents just send their kids to school, and it's the teacher's job to teach them. And if they don't learn well then, the teacher has done something wrong." When parents genuinely feel like they can trust the school community, they will not feel embarrassed if they make a mistake. Therefore, providing guidelines help parents understanding the role that they should undertake.

Research Questions

Research questions represent themes and codes. The research questions and answers through personal and confidential conversations with the participants are below, as each research question connects. The themes and codes produced specified answers to the research questions that guided this study. Each question is answered succinctly and thoroughly and analyzed according to questions correlated to Chapter Three.

Central Research Question

The central question asked: What are the experiences of parents who are involved in their children's education? This question is answered by the second generated theme (experiences) because of the phenomena of the parents' experiences produced from the interviews, the surveys, and the focus group methods. I observed the participants' behavior as they spoke to me candidly. The parents shared more than asked, and their excitement was welcoming. Parents were eager to share their experiences about their involvement in their children's education. Faith, Rebecca, Esther, and Mariana were clear about setting ground rules for their children "at home and educating them while at a store, stop sign, or on vacation," which expanded the experiences of everyday living for them at home and their children's school. The activities at the school allow parents to become part of the school community. Tiffany said that workshops are suitable, Esther agreed, but said that "workshops would be good, but not every parent will come out and get

involved.” Alexandra claimed that her experiences at the school created an atmosphere that promotes “positivity.” Every parent that I interviewed had good experiences working with their children in the school. For example, Joshua pointed out the fact that he had “enough trust and confidence” in the teachers at his children’s school to believe that the school was “going to be a positive experience” for his boys. Joshua also stated, “I don’t know how many activities I am not able to be at. I don’t know if I’ve really, in my experience, have any times that I haven’t been able to be involved.”

Over and over again, the participants made it very clear that they are involved in their children’s education because of the importance to mold the children into better citizens today for a better society tomorrow. Case in point, Alexandria stated that her experiences “have been pretty positive,” although her family drives “pretty far away,” but it’s always a pleasant experience. Some of the participants said that their children are ‘self-sufficient’ or ‘independent’ and barely needed any involvement, while other participants stated that they had to be involved in their children’s education on a ‘daily basis’ to keep the children focus.

Research Sub-Question 1.

The first research sub-question in this study asked: How can parents become encouraged to move from merely monitoring to becoming more actively involved in their children’s education? Throughout the research journey, all of the parents agreed that they were encouraged by the school’s policy for activities, and they were motivated to either getting more involved or staying involved in their children’s education. Education is essential to the parents in this research. Esther said, “I like that my child can be involved in school activities. It’s a great opportunity to teach them how to be involved in community work and to work well with others at our school.” The third theme (school/education) points out the participants’ reality that school

is at the top of the list of priorities in the participants' household. Other parents who are not involved were encouraged to participate in the school's policy, which implemented a 30-hour mandatory school service. The participants believe that their school offers a high-quality education because of its status as a Christian school, and a fair number of students are thriving academically. The school is not diversified; therefore, the participants' answers were as if they were embarrassed that the school had no diversity. Faith in God, spouse, children, and education plays a vital role in the participants' lives. Alexandria stated that her children are "rewarded for their A's and punished for poor grades."

Research Sub-Question 2.

The second research sub-question of the study What do parents perceive to be obstacles that hinder their active involvement with children's school activities? Most of the parents did not see any obstacles hindering them from being involved in their children's education. The third theme (school/education) still contributes a big part in answering the above question. However, a few mentioned that their older children were becoming more self-sufficient and that they would be less interested in activities at the school. Only one (Joshua) out of 11 participants have been in a focus group before. A parent's greatest need is for teachers to keep them informed about the academic success and failures of their children. Collaboration spoke volumes in the focus group. When teachers and parents find a reasonable way to foster learning goals for the children, they share in the responsibility of teaching that child together. Most of the parents put academics first in the line of involvement, but for the most part, I sense that sports play a more significant role in this school. Educational outings in the community are high on the parents' list of examples of involvement.

Research Sub-Question 3.

The third research sub-question of the study asked: What roles do the administration and teachers occupy in parental involvement? Although the last unexpected theme (teachers) drew a robust analytical consensus with the participants, I believe that the question above answer comes from responses made by the parents. For instance, one of the participants, Maria stated that there are some outstanding teachers, but there are teachers and administrators with “different personalities the strict, the spiritual, you know. I mean it’s just run; we’ve run the gamut.” All of the parents agreed that some administration and other teachers are helpful, compassionate, and resourceful. Most of the participants are teachers as well as parents, which made the research challenging for determining the validity of their statements. Having a face-to-face conference with the teachers was the best approach, according to the participants. The participants’ level of confidence in their choices for the children’s education and school was remarkably Christ-centered. Some of the participants stated that their relationship with all of the teachers was excellent, while others believe that strained relationships with a few teachers are evident, and those teachers show “no mercy.” Communication with the parents is well received and activities in the home-produced academic progress through report cards.

The first theme (parental involvement/activities) connects with the parents’ activities at school, and how involved that are in their children’s education. Participants meet with their children’s teachers daily, once a week, few weeks, or once a year, or as needed. The participants’ greatest encouragement came in different forms, such as through prayer, watching students accomplish a dramatic play together, overcoming an anxious moment, improving academically, or listening to a teacher tell other students that they can make it. The participants believed that if they are not involved in their children’s education, they will fail, drop out of school, or lose

interest in school altogether. Most say that the administrators and teachers help the parents and do a ‘good job’, others say that ‘interacting’, ‘providing’ opportunities of involvement’ and ‘keeping parents informed’ is collaboration at its best. After carefully analyzing the data for these questions, nearly all of the participants stated that their communication with their children’s teachers was ongoing. If the participants needed to talk with the teachers for any reason, there are numerous ways to communicate any concerns. Email, phone, text, Ren Web, or meeting with the teachers are different ways of communication, which can foster their children’s learning goals.

Summary

In Chapter Four, the lived experiences of parents involved in their children’s education are unquestionably the bases of this study’s findings. A description of the participants’ demographics includes pseudonyms, marital status, age, the number of children, and occupation. The participants are, at the very least, concerned about other parents in the school who do not become a participant in their children’s education. An analysis of the data collection includes interviews, a focus group meeting, and journal notations that synthesized the themes. Finally, based on the research questions in this study, Chapter Four provided four themes, which depicted experiences, parental involvement, education, and teachers highlighting responses to the research questions.

Chapter five will detail the theoretical frameworks of Bronfenbrenner (1979), Bandura (1977), Vygotsky (1978), and Epstein (2002). These leaders in social change pioneered the bioecological theory, social learning theory, the zone of proximal development or (ZPD), and overlapping spheres of influence, collectively bring families together to build upon communities and societies. Parental involvement is not an individual struggle, but a societal struggle.

CHAPTER FIVE: CONCLUSION

Overview

The purpose of this transcendental phenomenological study is to describe the experiences of parents who are involved in their children's education at a Christian school. The collection of data for this study through interviews, a focus group, and journal notation for developed from the participants' experiences.

Chapter Five summarizes the themes' answers, a central research question, and three subsequent questions presented in this research. A discussion of how the theme relates to the experiences of parents as they engage in their children's education at school and at home and the literature that involves other relevant themes. This chapter also discusses the implications for uninvolved parents, teachers, and administration. The delimitations and limitations of this phenomenological study are discussed, followed by recommendations for future research.

Summary of Findings

The central question asks, "What are the experiences of parents who are involved in their children's education?" The participants are Christian people who enjoy the experience of being involved in their children's education. They attend general meetings, a PTA meeting, volunteering in classrooms or school events, as well as serving on the school board or committee constitutes PI. The lived experiences of the parents in this study are positive because each of them has a deep commitment to their children and school. Lindsey said that when parents are active, "I think it's good for the kids to have a bond with the other kids in their class and the other students, but it makes them feel more comfortable to be able to do things later on."

The first subsequent research question asked, "How are parents encouraged to move from merely monitoring to becoming more actively involved in their children's education?" The

participants agreed that the school's environment and organization endorse both parents and students to engage in various activities, including classroom goals and home life. The school presents families with opportunities to become involved in their children's education by providing adequate information when needed. Tiffany stated, "Communication with teaches, access to lesson plans, homework, in grades" a parent that will help parents participate and stay motivated in their children's education. If parents receive invitations to share their aspirations and or fears about their children, other parents will be encouraged to collaborate to set goals for every student.

The second subsequent research question asked, "What do parents perceive to be obstacles that hinder their active involvement with children's school activities?" Teachers in this school have the first contact with the parents, and it is not always a positive one. Teachers are the ones that can have an everlasting, good impression on the parents and the children. When teachers' communication with the parents is uncomplicated and undemanding, there can be an avoidance of miscommunication. Lindsay stated, "A friendly environment is helpful being open and honest in a positive way" for parents to become or stay active in their children's education.

The third and final subsequent research question asked, "What roles do the administration and teachers occupy in parental involvement?" Administration and teachers have exceptional work to fulfill with parents and their children. These roles are educational and challenging jargon should be the last words parents need to encounter. Both administrators and teachers need to make sure that parents have information about their children's school and classroom in their language because the diversity of languages and culture must be acclimated. Maria indicated that administration and teachers are doing a good job, "Parents need to want to be involved." However, the school ought to have information consistently accessible, unambiguous, succinct,

and most all, readable for every parent, and the administrators should never hesitate to assist with accommodate parents' work schedules.

Discussion

The purpose of this transcendental phenomenological study was to understand the lived experiences of parents who are involved in their children's education. Throughout the data collection from interviews, a focus group, and journal writings, four major themes emerged (experience, involvement/activities, school/education, and teachers). This study examined how the literature exemplified the theoretical framework utilized by Bronfenbrenner's (1979) *Social Ecological Theory*, Bandura's (1978) *Social Learning Theory*, Vygotsky's (1978) *Zone of Proximal Development* and Epstein's (2002) *Six Types of Parental Involvement Framework*, and how it relates to both theoretical and empirical research.

Theoretical Literature

The theoretical framework in Bronfenbrenner's theory envisioned that with the help of their parents, children would develop into healthy, mature adults (Kim & Riley, 2014). Although researchers suggested that parental involvement helps children recognize that their education is valuable when a parent shows interest in the child's education, it is equally important that children have parental support in every area of life because children adapt to the same emotional role parents' model (Wong et al., 2018). Therefore, no matter what the income or background of a student, when parents are active in the child's education, that child is more likely to do well in school, and the student's academic pursuits will excel.

Social Ecological Theory

This research accomplished and confirmed the theoretical literature reviewed in Chapter Two. The framework of Bronfenbrenner's (1979) social-ecological theory (see Figure 2) was

pertinent for this research as it assisted in guiding and understanding the influence that parents and teachers have on children. Bronfenbrenner's theory explains why the environment "affects how a child grows and develops" (Cross, 2017, p.767). The microsystem, mesosystem, exosystem, macrosystem, and chronosystem influence children's development during their school years. Throughout other research literature, this social theory has impacted the way that parents', school administrators', and teachers' environments have changed the status quo. The work on these systems was essential to understanding a systematic approach to human and social development.

Parents who are involved in their children's education and teachers need to understand the importance of this theory to build profound relationships with every student and thereby construct persuasive communication for the classroom that involves every parent. The "norms and values" of understanding students at home and school may not be equivalent as perceived by administrators, and teachers and children "may experience a sense of great dissonance" (Madjar et al., 2016, p. 177). Theoretical guidance from previous reviews of research provided a look at children's ability to allow their parents a chance to intervene on their behalf. When parents step into the role as co-teachers, Bronfenbrenner (1979) believed that the change of control empowers them to help their children develop academically. Parents move with a willingness to involve themselves in any part of their children's education. In this ecological viewpoint conjecture, human development ensues as a cause for active involvement in the gradual complexity of the parents, administrators, and teachers. Mutual collaborations in the children's immediate environment is a cause for celebration because of the unification of the learning experiences. All graphics from Google online in this dissertation is free to use or share and allows copying or redistribution the content when the content remains unchanged.

Figure 2. Urie Bronfenbrenner's (1979) Ecological Systems Theory.

Social Learning Theory

The Social Learning Theory focuses on learning that occurs within a social context. It considers how people learn from one another, encompassing such concepts as observational learning, imitation, and modeling. Using Bandura's (1999) social learning theory (see Figure 3), the participants and teachers became good role models for the children to help them reach their potential. According to Bandura (1999), "Students do imitate not only each other but also the teacher" (p. 74). When children have good role models, heading toward higher levels of responsibility, which will determine their educational outcome. Bandura (1986) believed that self-efficacy for the students' intrinsic gratification in a task is motivated by witnessing models like their parents, teachers, and or society.

Bandura's Social Learning Theory has been a revised model through qualitative and quantitative research (Pincham King, 2016) and the continued literature that supports this

learning theory, and the movement towards efficacy continues to develop. Just as the participants' perceptions of PI is subjective to their competencies, as parents, they want to do well while engaging as supporters in their children's education. The participants admitted they enjoyed being involved in their children's lives, whether it is school or otherwise. According to the results from this research, the parents are teaching their children how to become independent learners and it can be determined that their behavior towards self-efficacy is modeled well. The participants continued to express the feeling of the real family. Participants believed that it is essential to appreciate the parents' views about their children because these parents have a better understanding of the needs of their children both in their academics and social experiences with the enjoyment in learning.

Figure 3. Bandura's (1977) Social Learning Theory.

Zone of Proximal Development

Social constructivism theory developed by Vygotsky (1978) recognized that children can perform a simple task with a parent or teacher but cannot perform the same task alone without becoming exasperated. The teacher acts as the facilitator, planning instruction that directly

connects the students' prior knowledge to help them understand what they need to learn (Park, 2017). The determination of the actual developmental level of students defined their independent problem-solving skills and the deciding factor that allows them to complete problem-solving issues under adult supervision or in collaboration with peers more adept.

Figure 4. Vygotsky's (1978) Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD).

With Vygotsky (1978) and other educational professionals, the role of education should support children's experiences, "which are in their ZPD" (Park, 2017, p. 33). Therefore, this is encouraging and advancing unimpeded learning for the student. Some of the participants believed that their children are able to move forward in their education with little or no intervention. The parents encourage self-efficacy. When the participants spoke about their children's academic achievement, they give recognition to the teachers for always keeping them abreast of their children's progress. Bandura (1999) stated that teachers were role models for their students also, which aligns with Vygotsky's theory.

Empirical Literature

Research implied that student academic outcomes are linked with lower dropout and truancy rates when a parent or family member becomes actively engaged in that student's education. Parental involvement not only has direct effects on the enhancement of academic performance (Knapp et al., 2017), but PI also has positive influences on a student's attitude and behavior. When parents show interest in children's education and school activities, the parent can influence the child's attitude toward school, classroom behavior, self-esteem, absenteeism, and motivation.

Six Types of Parental Involvement Framework

This transcendental phenomenological study adds to the current research by providing parents perception and experiences to specific involvement in their children's education. The findings in this study are vital because every participant gave an account of their experiences as involved parents. Parental involvement emphasized should convey impartiality, but the truth of the matter is, problematic issues arise in educational practices. "Like so many educators and researchers, we are concerned with approaches to parental involvement that construct restricted roles for parents in the education of their children" (Baquedano-Lopez et al., 2013, p. 449).

The empirical literature of PI has described the connections between numerous styles of parental commitment and how student's success in school and the summarized research findings on parent involvement with school-age children and their schools. Epstein's (2002) six types of parent involvement framework (see Figure 5) supports educators in their development of "comprehensive programs of school and family partnerships" and also helped this research to formulate other questions as an outcome that can improve parent engagement, practices in the classrooms, and the community at large (p. 12). This framework is a direct correlation to the

research and empirical literature for PI as it relates to the participants' experiences with their children in the school and community. In other words, these parents are practicing what they preach. In light of this research on PI, the participants moved with compassion about the school's learning environment. The participants are not only parents, but most of them are teachers who understand the value of PI. Their school address the issues of communication, collaboration, and parental involvement in their communities.

Figure 5. Epstein's (2002) Framework on Six Types of Parent Involvement.

Utilizing the given tools from Epstein's framework, the stakeholders in the community build attention to the character of education and PI in their schools. The participants in this study (parents) believed that the administration and teachers are interested in the families and show that they care while working on their behalf. The involvement of parents shows that children also care about learning and want to thrive, and the children are happier and appreciate the importance of their education. Parents help them to understand that what they are doing is meaningful. In the focus group, the participants agreed that their children's teachers have

opportunities to teach them about the involvement in community work and teach the children how to work well with others outside of the school.

Parental involvement (PI) is not a buzzword suggestion in the school of this study. However, PI is perceived as the foundation in children's learning and parents' attitudes toward education, volunteer work in school, and the community as it relates to the social structure of the family (Epstein 2002). Parents' engagement makes a substantial difference in building children's home life, school life, social life, and academic life. The participants understand that PI is linked to positive behavior, positive attitudes, higher grades, and regular attendance at school (when involved) or negative behavior, negative attitudes, low grades, and low attendance at school (when not involved). The Christian school continues to provide opportunities for parents to get involvement.

Nevertheless, it is the responsibility of the parents to take advantage of the opportunities afforded them. These alleged inconsistencies between the home and the school are seen when the school leaders are not cognizant of the child's environment. Parents who are raising children in this 21st century have many challenges because 'It is all about me' generation, selfish attitudes, and the blame games.

The participants emphasized that there is "a lot of involvement" opportunities at school and in the community; there are also "extracurricular programs" for parents to partake. It was evident that this Christian school wants to ensure the success of all of its students. Hood (2013) asserted, "When people feel connected to their communities, they become more active within the society" (p. 2). Ironically enough, parents who are involved know where their child's education journey and community are going as they witness the highs and lows along the way. Most of the participants commented on good experiences, which resulted from close relationships with the

teachers, administration, and staff. Primarily, most of the participants work at the school, and their attitudes seem to reflect buoyancy, allegiance, and robustness.

Implications

In this section, the discussion of the theoretical, empirical, and practical implications detailed.

An association of the literature and research findings reveals that PI and the psychological well-being of the children is complicated. However, the research continues to show that

Bronfenbrenner, Vygotsky, Bandura, and Epstein went different routes to researching the best ways for parents to support their children's education. Nevertheless, all of the theorists came to the same conclusions, that parents' involvement in their children's education is imperative.

Theoretical Implication

Bronfenbrenner's (1978) bioecological theory is one of the most well-known as the theoretical framework in human progression. "In spite of its popularity, the notion of culture within the macrosystem, as a separate entity of everyday practices and therefore microsystems, is problematic" (Vélez-Agosto, Soto-Crespo, Vizcarrondo-Oppenhimer, Vega-Molina, García Coll, 2017, p. 900). Bronfenbrenner's model will guide any research, but the findings can improve the way stakeholders think about serving their communities. Bronfenbrenner stated that there is a connotation of associating social policy and development in research (Vélez-Agosto et al., 2017). The results of this study analyzed indicated that the participants in this Christian school are sure about their experiences involvement in their children's education, but there were not enough teachers and parents promoting involvement for parents outside of this study.

Later in Bronfenbrenner's (1978) theory, he unequivocally acknowledged reciprocities with significant consideration to the biological and predisposition characteristics that allow children to endure social experiences. Tudge et al. (2016) believed that Bronfenbrenner's move

might be accurate, but “misleading in its implication that this “later work” merely strengthens the child environment reciprocity aspect of the theory” (p. 435). In their studies, Tudge et al. (2016) indicated that other studies variables about Bronfenbrenner’s ecological theory did not examine or expose children to a “proximal process,” but only included data from other forms of the framework on longitudinal studies (p. 71). Both Bronfenbrenner’s (1978) ecological theory and Epstein’s (2002) studies were utilized and focused on the family, home, and school relationships with connecting parental involvement and children’s achievement.

Though Bandura’s (1977) Social Learning Theory explained in this study that the research was on parental involvement, only the parents were studied. However, the children will mirror the behavior of their parents. Children are predisposed to the behavior of adults. Students often learn extraordinary things, merely observing other people. There are always good and bad, and the consequences of those behaviors can effectively increase appropriate or decrease inappropriate ones. Therefore, Bandura (1999) asserted that teaching and modeling these behaviors always provide an alternative to coaching and influencing new behaviors. Parents need to understand that children learn from what they see modeled before them. It is also critical for teachers to be a good model and practice appropriate behavior with parents and students. The observation of positive and appropriate behavior leads students to mimic the same behavior with the support of their parents and teachers. The participants were resolute in their stance that the higher performance of their children in academics was due to their constant involvement when they were in the early grades up until recently.

Vygotsky’s (1978) Social Development Theory explains how social interaction and the environment plays an essential role in cognitive development. This theory was evident in this study. Teachers need to model appropriate behavior and positive social interactions for students

shaped inspired by parents who model the same behavior social competence at home and in the children's school. Teachers also can create directed and strategic behavioral and social interventions for students that will help create encouraging connections leading them to better cognitive development. Participants receive daily instructions from the teachers over various approaches. Part of these instructions are appropriately supporting communication with the parents, building confidence and trust that "increase parents' social persuasions" (Altinoz, 2016, p. 210), which in turn results in the children's attaining a firmer self-efficacy belief.

An excess of reliable research supports the idea that relationships in PI promote good partnerships between parents and teachers, while children become academically and socially proficient. Epstein's (2002) suggestion of six types of involvement: parenting, communicating, volunteering, learning at home, decision making, and collaborating with the community, contribute to a total partnership with supporting students in their academic success. The model encourages participation from parents and other family members. This engagement encourages schools to tackle and conquer challenges that would impede the implementation of outreach in academic and social programs.

Parents view themselves in this research as beneficial partners in the school community because of the relationships they have fostered with administration and teachers who work together with them in the school and community, as well as motivating and influencing their children's academics. This guiding model of the school-family-community partnership will continue to build upon relationships for the stakeholders and consistently build children up both socially and educationally (Epstein, 2002).

Altinoz (2016) discovered that other investigators saw the effect that parents and schools were set up policymakers for implications. Perhaps if parents attended activities created to

improve PI or school performance, it may “lead to positive outcomes in their child’s performance at school” (p. 35). The participants’ children, teachers, and communities provided engagement for parental involvement. Through the experiences of the stakeholders, a more precise interpretation better supported their perception of how to engage in education with the help of teachers, students, and family members. These stakeholders may include district administration, teachers, and the community, but the school may not be able to account for those families that cannot or will not get involved in any activity. This Christian school had 100% of parental involvement in this study, which does not account for those parents that are not involved in their children’s education. Researchers have found that there is strong validation for the significance of parental involvement in their children’s academic grades, and research continues to show that these effects are adequate for implications (Epstein, 2002).

Empirical Implication

Research literature found little empirical evidence from other studies that parent’s involvement in their children’s education ineffective. Altinoz (2016) asserted that many researchers “found that these studies had many methodological weaknesses such as sample size, not using a control. Although these studies were methodically weak, fifteen of these studies reported positive outcomes” (p.34). Many of the participants complained that there are not enough parents involved in the children’s education at the school. One participant (a teacher) mentions that she saw a child alone at an event and was heartbroken. Although not directly stated, I suspected that the participant spoke with the parent at one point. The participants vehemently described the lack of workshops during the focus group meeting where training and professional development strategies are needed in order to bring more parents in to feel comfortable communicating with the administrators and teachers. These workshops will have a

significant impact on parental involvement for the better, specifically for parents of different backgrounds.

Policymakers and stakeholders need to exploit and implement additional workshops for parents to become or stay involved in their children's school because if there are cracks in the education system that prohibits them from participating for whatever reasons, there needs to be a change. Of course, there are times that parents are unable to attend specific meetings or activities, but those involved in producing such policies can devise a plan that would include these parents as well. Parental involvement is at an all-time low and is indisputably influential from pre-K to grade 12 and seemingly more paramount during the middle school years. These young students need support, advice, and encouragement from their parents, teachers, and community (Oats, 2017). Each participant with a middle school student repeatedly spoke of their independence and self-efficacy. Although this Christian school is small, it still houses over a hundred and fifty students, which means that the funding for implementing parent workshops may be minimal. According to the participants, the school administrators and teachers initiate several funding events each year. The need for workshops is necessary and will likely encourage more parent commitment at this school.

Practical Implication

This researches' practical implication resulted from data provided by parents who are involved in their children's education consistently. Several practical implications emerged from the data amassed during this study. The strategies and ideas that the participants described in the focus group meeting allow for replication, expansion, and improvement for future implementation. Administrators and teachers can learn from this study because there is a great need to keep parents active in their children's school life as well as home life. After all, parents

active in their child's education is invaluable and much needed. Starting with workshop training is a beginning to understand the needs of the parents and must be considered. After participating in or reading this study, each participant as parents has an opportunity to empowered other parents by organizing workshops that will infuse and ignite a passion for secured relationships in the school system. Participants can also empower themselves by researching ways to implement parent workshops and train other parents to do the same. According to Wong et al. (2018), PI will motivate and inspire student achievement when their families are involved. This research found that all the parents who were involved in their children's education did have higher grades and were less likely to drop out of school.

PI, according to the participants and other research literature, believed that children are conscious of their parents' expectations for education, their children's learning, and their engagement in school especially being well informed by administrators and teachers (Pemberton & Miller, 2015). Also, participants claimed that they were involved in community work with their children.

The participants made a strong case for encouraging each other and the communication within the family, school, and community, which played a significant role in fostering higher self-esteem and confidence in their children (Epstein, 2018). There are no doubts after conducting this research that some of the children interact better with their peers, and their social skills are advanced, but there is still a need for other parents to get involved when there is better communication with all stakeholders. Evans (2017) asserted that parents who are unswervingly engaged in positive relationships with all stakeholders if they model appropriate social skills and behaviors. The research suggested that the entire stakeholder's commitment determines children's emotional well-being (Robinson, 2017). However, since there were so few parents

involved in this research and the parents mainly worked at the school, it was difficult to determine the outcome of other parents. There is a sense of disparity in this particular school.

Delimitations and Limitations

Twelve participants were asked to contribute their experiences in this study about parental involvement. Although there were no administrators' or teachers' input requested because the focus of interest was only in the attitudes and experiences of parents, most of the parents were teachers. The targeted group was restricted because the participants selected, worked at the school, and parents outside of the school did not participate.

Unfortunately, this study's limitations are potentially strong because the sample size was too small, all of the participants were Caucasian, the school's location was in a middle-class neighborhood, and it was in a Christian school. While the participants were willing to participate in this research, it was clear that some of them either answered some of the questions in short answers or were not truthful. It was also clear from the assessment that all the participants' answers were practically the same.

Recommendations for Future Research

The transcendental phenomenological study overall was to examine the essence of the experiences of parental involvement in education. A recommendation for further research would be a larger sample size for the researcher to expect the participants to mirror the behavior of the whole group and uncover a variety of opinions without biases for future research.

Research for future study would be examining the parents who are involved and those who are not involved comparing experiences, which will provide understanding from both sides. Comparing the two may be difficult research to implement, but attainable. Epstein (2002) believed that establishing partnerships with all stakeholders in an educational setting is

achievable. Stakeholders must commit to working cohesively and effectively for the sake of the children. Stakeholders deemed themselves to make a sensible determination to maintain PI for the greater good of all students. Students will demonstrate academic success based on their parents' authority, reassurance, and support.

Another future research recommendation would be investigating in a different community, or a public school, to determine if socioeconomics can change the parents' experiences. Parents from a diverse group of people are crucial when researching parental involvement because of different ages, cultures, and ethnicities may react differently to involvement in their children's activities at school.

As the researcher, I recommend a qualitative investigation for developing parent workshops, which can help improve parental involvement if administrators and teachers would establish a comprehensive partnership with the community. These parent workshops will guide the school and families to work in collaboration. Developing a lasting, manageable partnership should be a priority every school year. Nobody can control the participants' thoughts or feelings about a given topic or question. It is unethical for any researcher or participant to lie in order to gain. The experiences of the participant in this study spoke as though scripted; thereby, further research necessary for authenticating the demand for real parental involvement.

Summary

Chapter 5 is a summary of the findings and interpretations for the research questions, which lead to implications for further extensive research on parental involvement studies that examined the experiences of parental involvement in their children's education on a deeper level. Based on the qualitative results in this study, the experiences of the participant may be genuine, but there is a need to have better communication with other parents outside of the Christian

school in which they work. Not all parents have the same goals, resources, or beliefs to act on the learning expectations for their children. There are responsibilities and accountabilities of these problems that lie with the stakeholders. The participants confirmed that there is a need for all of the parents and families to get involved. The participants have positive experiences and expectations, and 90% of the participants were willing to foster parent workshops to encourage other parents.

The participants in this study perceived themselves as the model parents and viewed themselves as advantageous partners in the school community. These assumptions are related to the collaboration with administration and teachers in the Christian school and community. The participants' belief is to motivate and influence their children's academics and sports. The participants' engagement in their children's education is perhaps their direct relationship with God.

Overall, research has proven and shown the effectiveness of parental involvement in children's education. Students will trust their parents and teachers more, students excel academically, students improved social skills, students' have lower dropout and truancy rates, and students' improved behavior when acclimated to school environments. Although there were several limitations, the study is a segue to conduct further exploratory research to improve parental involvement in middle schools. Schools must encourage parents' involvement and implement a parent workshop to collaborate and instill partnerships in the community. Communication and collaboration maintained are practical tools for complex school issues. As complex and controversial as parental involvement is, officials must strive to bridge that defining gap between parents who are involved and those parents who are not involved in their children's education.

For the first time in history, parental involvement started to become a household word that involved disadvantaged children in the inner cities in elementary and high schools. Subsequently, it was federally funded by legislation (Casalaspì, 2017) the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965 to make parental involvement mandatory for parents to serve on school boards and contribute to classroom events. The participants also stated that their school had implemented a mandatory parent to contribute to the school. Parental involvement is supposed to support parents to participate in their children's classroom, but research showed that parents did not understand their status in the classroom and needed additional training from school districts, even to sit in the classrooms. Therefore, programs hiring parents were established, such as PI coordinators, aides, bus drivers, and cooks to justify parents' involvement in their children's education. Nevertheless, whether these strategies worked or not, research continues to prove that it does (Affuso et al., 2017).

Although it was disappointing to research a school that was not diverse because the only participants were from the school, gleaning this vital information from this school was invaluable. As a researcher, I would want to understand the various cultures and social groups that may allow students the option to make the connection from their lives to the lives of their peers as their parents are active in their children's education. This study would have been strengthened by the school if it was diverse, with additional participants who would have participated in this research.

Nevertheless, it was refreshing to interview some of the participants that spoke values to my heart. One was Marianna, who lost her husband and is taking care of three children alone. Tiffany shared with me that one of her sons diagnosed with anxiety, which brought her to tears. Rebecca was most tenacious regarding rearing her children as independent boys as quickly as

possible. Several of the participants' stories allowed me to dig deeper and pray for them. One of the most critical aspects of this research is finding genuine participants who influence their children in education. The other important issue is the benefits this research conveys to society as a whole, outside of academia. The main reason parents need to be involved with children's entirely stems from God's creation of family from the Garden of Eden. Even if all parents were involved in their children's education, there still needs to be an equilibrium in every area of that child's life. We live in a fallen world, and at best, we (parents, teachers, society) can only help children contribute to the world in many ways. I understand that parental involvement can improve children's wellbeing (mentally and physically) and augment education that will strengthen lives and environmental sustainability, to name just a few.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX A

IRB Approval

LIBERTY UNIVERSITY

INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD

September 19, 2019

Deborah Ann Minix-Fuller

IRB Exemption 3912.091919: Parental Involvement in Children's Education at a Christian School: A Transcendental Phenomenological Approach

Dear Deborah Ann Minix-Fuller,

The Liberty University Institutional Review Board has reviewed your application in accordance with the Office for Human Research Protections (OHRP) and Food and Drug Administration (FDA) regulations and finds your study to be exempt from further IRB review. This means you may begin your research with the data safeguarding methods mentioned in your approved application, and no further IRB oversight is required.

Your study falls under exemption category 46.101(b)(2), which identifies specific situations in which human participants research is exempt from the policy set forth in 45 CFR 46.101(b):

(2) Research that only includes interactions involving educational tests (cognitive, diagnostic, aptitude, achievement), survey procedures, interview procedures, or observation of public behavior (including visual or auditory recording) if the following criteria is met:

(ii) Any disclosure of the human subjects' responses outside the research would not reasonably place the subjects at risk of criminal or civil liability or be damaging to the subjects' financial standing, employability, educational advancement, or reputation;

Please note that this exemption only applies to your current research application, and any changes to your protocol must be reported to the Liberty IRB for verification of continued exemption status. You may report these changes by submitting a change in protocol form or a new application to the IRB and referencing the above IRB Exemption number.

If you have any questions about this exemption or need assistance in determining whether possible changes to your protocol would change your exemption status, please email us at irb@liberty.edu.

Sincerely,



G. Michele Baker, MA, CIP
Administrative Chair of Institutional Research
Research Ethics Office

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APPENDIX B

Interview Questions

1. What have been your experiences as a parent in your children's school activities?
2. How important is it for you to be involved in your child's education?
3. Aside from helping your children with their homework, how often do you participate in your children's education?
4. What have been your most significant experience with other activities at your child/children school?
5. What are your involvements in discussing class assignments with your children?
6. How do you feel about parents' participation in their children's education during and after-school?
7. How do you feel about working with your children's teachers?
8. Have you ever been in a focus group meeting at your children's school? If yes, how was the experience? If no, why not?
9. Describe the attitudes and approaches of the teachers that instruct your children?
10. How did you address any issues with your children's teachers if you are not able to get involved with activities at school?

APPENDIX C

Focus Group Questions

1. What do you like best about the school activities for your children?
2. What do you think about workshops that will help you understand how to get involved in your children's school?
3. What would encourage you to work together with your children's teacher to foster a more conducive learning environment?
4. What is the first thing that comes to mind when you think about becoming active in your children's school?
5. What is your greatest need to help you continue engagement in your children's school or at home?
6. What would be a reasonable way to share responsibility with teachers in helping your children learn to meet educational goals that ensure parent involvement? Why would these methods be reasonable?
7. What makes you confident or not so confident in your ability to make wise choices about your children's schooling?
8. Overall, what is your level of confidence in your children's school?

APPENDIX D**Survey Handouts I & I****Parental Involvement Survey Handout Part I**

Please complete this survey before the interview.

Married ☐ Single ☐ Please print clearly.

1. Tell me about your relationship with your child/children's teacher.

2. What type of information do you receive from the teacher regarding your child/children's academic progress?

3. What type of communication do you have with your child/children's teacher?

4. What rapport will you establish with your child/children's teacher to foster their learning goals?

5. How important is it for you to be involved in your child's/children's education?

6. What influence do you have with your child/children to motivate them in their academics?

7. In your opinion, what has been the greatest encouragement on academic achievement in your child/children today?

8. In the past year, how often have you met with your child/children's teacher?

Parental Involvement Survey Handout Part II

Please complete survey and return it to the researcher after the focus group meeting.

Married ☐ Single ☐ Please print clearly.

1. What are some examples of your engagement with your child/children in educational activities at home?

2. What are some examples that you can give of your involvement in your child/children's academics in school?

3. What are examples of high-quality information about your child's/children's school that is beneficial to both you and the child/children?

4. How do teachers involve parents and students from culturally diverse and economically disadvantaged backgrounds?

-
5. What are your needs as a parent that will help you participate and stay motivated in your child's/children's education?

6. How often do you meet with your child's/children's teacher?

7. What problems do you foresee moving forward as a parent if you are not involved in your child's/children's education?

8. How can the school administrators and teachers help you become more involved in your child/children's academics?

APPENDIX E

Other Data Collection Procedures

Interviews, surveys, and a focus group will occur to collect the information, along with journal note-taking during each session of the interviews and focus group. The first survey will be given to the administrator for the participants along with the consent forms. Subsequently, audio-recording and video-recordings and a template with time stamps for every meeting will be used every five minutes to mark the time. The data collection of journal notes, interviews, and a focus group meeting will be assembled after data completion. The final survey will be given to participants after the focus group or via e-mail. Scheduled appointments for one day a week for two weeks for the interviews and focus group will be set-up with the participants.

Field Notes

Interviews	Interviews will be one on one and will be held at a convenient location for participants (i.e. school auditorium, cafeteria, or classroom) for 45 minutes to an hour, at least one day a week for two weeks.
Focus Group	This focus group will be guided by questions on a PowerPoint that will enable all participants to contribute to the meeting. The focus group will convene in a classroom with all participants for about 45 minutes to an hour.
Surveys	The first survey will be given to the administrator for the participants along with the consent forms. The final survey will be

	given to participants after the focus group or via e-mail.
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APPENDIX F

Informed Consent

The Liberty University Institutional
Review Board has approved
this document for use from
9/19/2019 to --
Protocol # 3912.091919

Informed Consent

Parental Involvement in Children's Education at a Christian School: A Transcendental
Phenomenological Approach
Deborah A. Minix-Fuller
Liberty University
School of Education

You are invited to be in a research study concerning parental involvement in your child/children's education. You were selected as a possible participant because you meet the criteria as a parent that is 18 years or older and your child/children attend Columbia County Christian School. Please read this form and ask any questions you may have before agreeing to be in the study.

Deborah A. Minix-Fuller, a doctoral candidate in the School of Education at Liberty University, is conducting this study.

Background Information: The purpose of this study is to understand parents' experiences involving their children's education. The central research question is: What are the experiences of parents who are involved in their children's education?

Procedures: If you agree to be in this study, I will ask you to do the following things:

1. Complete two surveys. You will be asked to complete the first survey at the beginning of the study and complete the second survey at the end of the study. Each survey will take approximately 45 minutes to an hour. I will ask you a list of questions. The sessions will be audio-recorded.
2. Participate in a one-on-one interview. The interview will take approximately 45 minutes to an hour and will be audio-recorded.
3. Participate in a focus group with other parents. The focus group will take approximately 45 minutes to an hour to complete, and the focus group will be audio/video recorded. The focus group will be guided by questions on a PowerPoint.
4. You will complete a member-check list to verify the accuracy of the transcripts. This will take 10-30 minutes to complete.

Risks: This study will have minimal risks, which means they are equal to the risks you would encounter in everyday life.

Benefits: Participants should not expect to receive a direct benefit from participating in this research.

Benefits to society may include a better understanding about helping to activate parental involvement in their child's/children's education. Schools that actively involve parents and engage community resources help students adapt well in school.

Compensation: Participants will not be compensated for participating in this study.

The Liberty University Institutional
Review Board has approved
this document for use from
9/19/2019 to --
Protocol # 3912.091919

Confidentiality: The records of this study will be kept private. In any sort of report I might publish, I will not include any information that will make it possible to identify a subject. Research records will be stored securely, and only the researcher will have access to the records.

- To conceal the identity of the participants, each participant will be assigned a pseudonym. I will conduct the interviews in a location where others will not easily overhear the conversation.
- Data will be stored on a password locked computer and may be used in future presentations.
- Interviews and the focus group will be recorded and transcribed. All recordings (audio/visual) will be stored on a password locked computer for three years and then erased. The researcher will be the only one to have access to these recordings.
- I cannot assure participants that other members of the focus group will not share what was discussed with persons outside of the group.

Voluntary Nature of the Study: Participation in this study is voluntary. Your decision whether or not to participate will not affect your current or future relations with Liberty University. If you decide to participate, you are free to not answer any question or withdraw at any time without affecting those relationships.

How to Withdraw from the Study: If you choose to withdraw from the study, please contact the researcher at the email address/phone number included in the next paragraph. Should you choose to withdraw, data collected from you, apart from focus group data, will be destroyed immediately and will not be included in this study. Focus group data will not be destroyed, but your contributions to the focus group will not be included in the study if you choose to withdraw.

Contacts and Questions: The researcher conducting this study is Deborah A. Minix-Fuller. You may ask any questions you have now. If you have questions later, **you are encouraged** to contact her at (917) 617-4242 or dafuller2@liberty.edu. You may also contact the researcher's faculty chair, Dr. Russell Yocum at ryocum@liberty.edu.

If you have any questions or concerns regarding this study and would like to talk to someone other than the researcher, **you are encouraged** to contact the Institutional Review Board, 1971 University Blvd., Green Hall Ste. 2845, Lynchburg, VA 24515 or email at irb@liberty.edu.

Please notify the researcher if you would like a copy of this information for your records.

The Liberty University Institutional
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Protocol # 3912.091919

Statement of Consent: I have read and understood the above information. I have asked questions and have received answers. I consent to participate in the study.

☐ The researcher has my permission to audio-record my interview and audio-record/video-record me in a focus group as part of my participation in this study.

Signature of Participant

Date

Deborah A. Minix-Fuller
Signature of Investigator

APPENDIX G

Principal Research Permission Form

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED],

As a graduate student in the School of Education at Liberty University, I am conducting research as part of the requirements for a doctoral degree. The title of my research project is *A Christian School's Parental Involvement Experience in Their Children's Education: A Transcendental Phenomenological Approach* and the purpose of my research is to understand the experiences of parents who are involved in their children's education.

I am writing to request your permission to conduct my research at [REDACTED] [REDACTED] utilizing 12 parents for the research. I am also asking your permission for two or three pilot study participants to ensure that the interview questions are clear, understandable, and appropriate data before the actual research. All of the participants will receive permission to email me their answers from the pilot study as well as the surveys. Participants will be presented with informed consent information before participating. Taking part in this study is entirely voluntary, and participants are welcome to discontinue participation at any time. This would be the procedure, if the participants agree to be in this study, I would ask them to do the following things:

1. The first procedure will be a one on one interview with each participant. It will take place after school hours, in a classroom or conference room, and take about 45 minutes to an hour for each session, at least two days a week for two weeks. I will ask participants a list of questions. The sessions will be on audio-recording.
2. The second procedure will be a focus group. The focus group will be guided by questions on a PowerPoint that will enable all participants to contribute to the meeting. The focus group will convene in a classroom or conference room with all participants for about 45 minutes to an hour. The information for the meeting will be communicated to and confirmed with all the participants beforehand via e-mail after all consent forms are signed. The session will be audio-recorded.
3. The third procedure will be two surveys, part one will begin before interviews, and part two after the focus group has ended. The first survey will be given to the administrator for the participants along with the consent forms. The final survey will be given to participants after the focus group or via e-mail.

Thank you for considering my request. If you choose to grant permission, please provide an appropriate signature(s) in a statement on official letterhead indicating your approval and e-mail it to: dafuller2@liberty.edu. In addition, the participants may contact me via e-mail (dafuller2@liberty.edu) to schedule the interviews and the focus group.

Deborah A. Minix-Fuller will be conducting the research. You may contact her at dafuller@liberty.edu or by phone at (917) 617-4242 for any additional information. You may also contact the faculty advisor, Dr. Russell Yocum at ryocum@liberty.edu. Any correspondences will be kept in the strictest of confidence.

Liberty University Institutional Review Board,
1971 University Blvd, Green Hall 1887, Lynchburg, VA 24515
or email at irb@liberty.edu.

Sincerely,

Deborah A. Minix-Fuller

Research Student

APPENDIX H
School Permission Letter



Association of Christian
Schools International

July 17, 2019

Dear Deborah Minix-Fuller I am looking forward to participating in the research that you will be conducting at [REDACTED] this coming school year. You have my permission to coordinate your project as part of your doctoral degree research at Liberty University. If you have additional questions, please contact me.

Sincerely, [REDACTED]

Administrator
[REDACTED]

APPENDIX I

Recruitment For Parents

Dear Parent:

As a graduate student in the School of Education at Liberty University, I am conducting research as part of the requirements for a doctoral degree. The title of my research project is *Parental Involvement in Children's Education at a Christian School: A Transcendental Phenomenological Approach*. The purpose of my research is to explore and understand the experiences of parents who are involved in their children's education.

There are four questions that will be addressed in this research: What are the experiences of parents who are involved in their children's education? How are parents encouraged to move from merely monitoring to becoming more actively involved in their children's education? What do parents perceive to be obstacles that hinder their active involvement with children's school activities? What roles do the administration and teachers occupy in parental involvement? I am writing to invite you to participate in my study.

If you are 18 years of age or older, a parent of a student at Columbia County Christian School, and you are willing to participate, you will be asked to complete a one-on-one interview, participate in a focus group with other parents, complete two surveys and review transcriptions of the interview and focus group. It should take approximately 45 minutes to an hour each for the interview, focus group and surveys and 10-30 minutes for the transcript review. Your name and other identifying information will be collected as part of your participation, but your information will remain completely confidential.

If you are interested in participating in this study, you can call me at (917) 617-4242 or email me at dafuller2@liberty.edu to schedule the interview and focus group meeting within two days. I will obtain your information and email you the consent form and first survey to complete and return at the time of the scheduled interview.

The consent document contains additional information about my research. Please sign the consent document and return it to me at the time of the interview, along with the first survey.

Sincerely,

Deborah A. Minix-Fuller
Research Student