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Parental Workshops and Student Academic Success

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Concordia University–Portland
College of Education
Doctorate of Education Program

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Parental Workshops and Student Academic Success

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Abstract

This qualitative participatory action research study analyzed the perceptions and experiences of parents regarding the effectiveness of their involvement in parental workshops along with their perceptions of their engagement in parent involvement activities and their impact on student behavior and academic achievement. The study took place in a local church. The targeted population was low socioeconomic status (SES) and African American parents. Twenty parents with children attending grades K-12 participated in the study. The results of the study paralleled with the review of literature, in researchers suggested that there is a lack of opportunities for parent involvement among low SES and minority parents. They also suggested that low SES and minority parents are eager to become involved when given the opportunity. The study's findings revealed similarities and themes among parents regarding their perceptions of their involvement in parent involvement workshops and activities and the impact their involvement had on student achievement and behavior. This study confirmed the need for workshops and similar programs to provide parents with a comfortable environment in which to obtain skills they need and address relevant topics. Interviews revealed that parents felt that the workshops provided them with the tools and skills they needed to help their children succeed academically and behaviorally. These findings revealed that parent involvement workshops are indeed a feasible method of increasing parent involvement and positively impacting student achievement and behavior. In addition, the study provided recommendations for future research.

Keywords: parent involvement, communication, reading, motivation

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Chapter 1: Introduction

Evidence strongly indicates that parent involvement positively impacts student behavior and academic success (Epstein, 2009). While socioeconomic status and educational levels of parents influence student achievement, parent involvement has the strongest effect on student success (Fan & Chen, 2001). Teachers, parents, and the community play significant roles in the educational success of students. The support and motivation provided by all stakeholders is crucial to a positive learning experience and a quality education. This is especially true of low socioeconomic status (SES) and minority parents, where research has shown substantially lower levels of parent involvement (Jeynes, 2016; Toldson & Lemmons, 2013). Research indicates that all parents want their children to do well. Ethnicity and socioeconomic status do not have anything to do with the desire for children to succeed (Toldson & Lemmons, 2013). Overwhelmed by demands of family, work, school, and extra-curricular activities, low SES and minority parents often lack time, resources, information, and skills to help their children with their education.

Many researchers, including Epstein (2010), Hoover–Dempsey and Sandler (2007), Jeynes (2016), and Toldson and Lemmons (2013) have studied parent involvement over the years. Epstein’s research has been the basis for much of the current and past research on parent involvement. Epstein (2010) recognized six key categories of parental involvement: parenting, communicating, volunteering, learning at home, decision making, and collaborating with the community.

Parental involvement has been addressed at every level of government, from national to local levels. Legislation (Title I, No Child Left Behind, and Every Student Succeeds) was intended to ensure an equal and quality education received by African American students and

European American students (Battle–Bailey, 2004; Diamond & Gomez, 2004). Too often, teachers assume that low SES and minority parents are not interested in their children’s educational outcome. Assumptions based on stereotypes do a disservice to students and parents (Jeynes, 2016; Lareau, 2000; Ransaw, 2014). Rather than perpetuating stereotypes associated with low SES and minorities, teachers must do all they can to involve every parent in their children’s education. Moreover, more must be done to provide schools in low SES communities with the resources they need to involve parents in the education of their children.

No Child Left Behind requires schools to implement parent involvement plans and policies (U.S. Department of Education Staff, 2016, para. 12). Title 1 defines parent involvement as regular, two-way communication between parents and their children regarding learning and school activities (Diamond & Gomez, 2004). Parent involvement activities include: participation in home and school learning activities, decision making, and workshops/Parent Teacher Association (PTA)/Parent Teacher Organization (PTO).

Parent involvement is a critical component of student academic success (Epstein, 2010). This researcher will examine the perceptions of a sample population of African American parents regarding their involvement in parental workshops and their perceptions of the impact their engagement in parent involvement activities has on student behavior and academic achievement.

Background, Context, History, and Conceptual Framework for the Problem

Over the years a great deal of legislation has been passed to close success gaps between low SES/minority students and White students. Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) of 2015, No Child Left Behind (NCLB) Act of 2001, and Goals 2000: Educate America Act of 1994 are meant to increase the capacity of schools to engage families. Parents and teachers are responsible

for providing a quality education to all children regardless of socioeconomic level or ethnicity. (U.S. Department of Education Staff, 2016, para. 12). Unfortunately, NCLB fell short of expectations by setting unrealistic goals for academic achievement for students and schools. NCLB's one-size fits all design did not recognize the ethnic diversity of today's schools. ESSA made it easier to meet those goals while also requiring schools to implement parent involvement plans that were equitable for all students and parents. Schools must meet the needs of a student population that is more diverse than ever before (Epstein, 2010; Toldson & Lemmons, 2013). Because of existing inequities in educational outcomes for minorities and low SES students, it is important that teachers understand parental involvement and how to implement parental involvement activities that includes all students (Diamond & Gomez, 2004; Epstein, 2010).

This study will form a conceptual framework based on the research of Epstein (2010), Hoover-Dempsey and Sandler (2007), and Toldson and Lemmons (2013). The problem this research study will investigate is how parental involvement in education significantly impacts student behavior and achievement (Epstein, 2010; Hoover–Dempsey & Sandler, 2007; Toldson & Lemmons, 2013). Epstein's research is the comprehensive framework that most other scholars cite as the basis for their own research. Epstein defined parental involvement as spheres of overlapping influences that impact student academic achievement and development (Epstein, 2010). The six categories of parental involvement include activities that involve and satisfy the needs of all parents and students. For this study, parental perceptions and experiences in parental workshops and their participation in specific parental activities will be examined. The researcher will also examine the impact of parents' involvement on students' behavior and academic achievement.

Statement of the Problem

The Every Student Succeeds Act and No Child Left Behind Act require schools to provide all parents with opportunities to be involved in the schools (U.S. Department of Education Staff., 2016). The problem investigated in this research study is the lack of opportunities for parent involvement among low SES and minority parents and what types of programs can be developed to increase parent involvement and positively impact student achievement and behavior. Despite legislation designed to close achievement gaps for low SES and minority students, studies show a significant lack of parent involvement for these populations (Battle-Bailey, 2004; Diamond & Gomez, 2004). More research is necessary to determine what can be done to strengthen parental involvement among low SES and minority parents. Possible causes of this problem include narrow definitions of parental involvement, lack of sufficient resources, and lack of training or formal education (Battle-Bailey, 2004; Diamond & Gomez, 2004; Lareau, 2000). Teachers who limit their definition of parental involvement to include only participation in parent-teacher conferences and volunteering at school often have negative views of low SES and minority parents. The assumption is that low SES and minority parents do not want to participate in their children's education. Narrow definitions are not culturally sensitive to the ways low SES and minority parents help with their children's education at home. There is a need for broader and more flexible definitions that include home and school activities. Parents' opinions and perceptions about education can also be a factor in improving or hindering academic skills (Epstein & Sheldon, 2006). A qualitative action research study is beneficial to interacting with study participants and improving knowledge of the perceptions and experiences of parents regarding the effectiveness of their parent involvement activities for improving student behavior and academic success. Action research involves a cycle

of planning, action, observation, and reflection (Ferrance, 2000, p. 8). The goal of action research is to effect action or change (p. 8).

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this qualitative action research study is to analyze the perceptions and experiences of parents regarding the effectiveness of their involvement in parental workshops along with their perceptions of their engagement in parental involvement activities and their impact on student behavior and academic achievement. According to Toldson and Lemmons (2013), in a single academic year, parents of White children visited schools 8.9 times while parents of Black children visited schools only 5.5 times. Much of the existing research has examined parental involvement without focus on specific ethnicities or socioeconomic statuses of the parents. This study will explore parental involvement of African-American and low SES parents.

Results from the current qualitative action research study may provide educators with information on obstacles faced by African-American and low SES parents that prevent them from participating in their children's education as well as information specific to parental involvement activities that can increase their involvement. Educators will be able to use the findings of this study to develop a plan that will increase levels of parental involvement among African-American and low SES parents.

Data will be obtained using in-depth interviews. Open-ended questions will encourage participants to reflect and engage in discussions regarding their perceptions and experiences related to their involvement in parental workshops and parental involvement activities. Action research is an interactive method of collecting information to investigate topics. This study was best conducted using an action research study methodology (Ferrance, 2000).

Research Questions

The purpose of the study directed the development of the research questions. The goal of this action research study was to analyze the perceptions of parents regarding their involvement in parental workshops and parental involvement activities and the perceived impact of their involvement on student behavior and academic success.

Q1: What are the perceptions of parents regarding the effectiveness of their participation in parental workshops and activities as it relates to their level of participation in their child's education?

Q2: What kinds of parent workshop/activities do parents believe had the most impact on their involvement in their child's education and behavior?

Q3: What are the perceptions of parents regarding the impact of their involvement in parent workshops on their child's motivation to succeed academically?

Significance of the Study

The significance of this study is to examine the perceptions and experiences of parents concerning the effectiveness of their involvement in parental workshops and parental activities and the perceived impact on student behavior and academic achievement. This study is different from related studies as it focuses on a sample of African-American and low SES parents with children enrolled grades K–12 at a local North Texas school. This study is designed to provide educators and parents with data that reveal the effectiveness of parental workshops on parental involvement of African-American and low SES parents as well as parental involvement activities that impact student behavior and achievement. The findings of this study may help educators and parents strengthen parental involvement and improve student behavior and achievement.

Furthermore, this study can provide data that will help educators develop and implement effective parental involvement programs that satisfy the requirements of all parents removing barriers and encouraging them to actively participate in their children's education.

Administrators and teachers may be able to impact the home learning environment by conducting parental workshops that provide training and materials for parents on topics such as how to improve children's study skills or learning in various academic subjects. When parents are able to assist their children in completing assignments and instill the importance of making good grades, students will be able to receive additional support and develop a sense of confidence based on parental interactions. Results may also reveal ways to improve two-way communication between teachers, parents, students, and specific parental involvement activities that positively impact student behavior and achievement.

More research is needed to provide better evidence on the impact of parental workshops and specific parental involvement activities on African-American and low SES parents and the impact of their participation on student behavior and achievement. Knowledge of whether parental involvement, parental workshops, and specific parental involvement activities increase levels of parental involvement will be beneficial to researchers as they seek to contribute to the limited body of knowledge in this area. Data will help educators provide resources to parents that help them overcome obstacles preventing them from becoming involved in their children's education.

Definitions of Terms

The following definitions are made available to ensure clarity and improve comprehension of the terms used in this study. Definitions developed by the researcher do not include a citation.

Parental involvement. The federal government's definition of parental involvement is regular and meaningful two-way communication between parents and students regarding student learning and participation in school activities (Mapp, 2012, p. 13).

Student behavior. Students are expected to assume full responsibility for their behavior and will be held accountable for their individual and/or collective actions in the classroom.

Disruptive behavior. Behaviors that interrupt classes and negatively impact the instructor's ability to teach and the ability of other students to learn.

Student achievement. The amount of academic content a student learns in a determined amount of time. Positive and negative changes in student achievement are reflected in grades and test scores.

Assumptions, Delimitations, and Limitations

This action research study will analyze parent perceptions regarding how their participation in parental workshops along with their involvement in activities that impact their children's behavior and academic success. It is assumed that the genders of study participants will not affect their perceptions (Leedy & Ormond, 2010, p. 7). The study is limited to parents who volunteered to participate. It is assumed that all participants will answer interview questions honestly and to the best of their abilities (Leedy & Ormond, 2010, p. 5). Confidentiality was preserved using codes to identify participants as P-1 through P-20.

Most parents were from a single ethnicity but the population of parents was 93% African American, 5% Latino/Mexican American, and 2% White. Because of the large number of potential participants in the study population, the study did not examine parental involvement of parents from other ethnic groups or parents with students who attended schools located in rural or suburban school districts throughout the Dallas/Ft. Worth area. Because literature indicates

that parental involvement and student academic achievement among minority populations begins to decline at this level, the study will focus on the convenience sample population of African-American parents with students in grades K–12 (Feuerstein, 2000; Liontos, 1991). The study is delimited to parents of children attending a single North Texas school in the 2016–2017 school year. Results of this study are generalized to the participants used in this study.

Summary

In this qualitative action research study, the researcher analyzed the perceptions and experiences of parents regarding the effectiveness of their involvement in parental workshops along with their perceptions of their engagement in parental involvement activities and their impact on student behavior and academic achievement. The study sought an understanding of specific parental involvement activities and their impact, positive and negative, on student behavior and achievement. Data collected through interviews, activity logs, and discussions were analyzed for similarities that lead to effective parental involvement while also identifying potential obstacles towards effective parental involvement. The goal of this research study is to enhance existing knowledge of parental involvement from the perspectives of the parents.

The perspectives and experiences described by the parents participating in the parental workshops may add to the existing research on parental involvement. Parent perceptions and experiences may provide insight into what is effective and what is not effective.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

The purpose of this action research study was to analyze the parent's perception regarding the effectiveness of their involvement in parental workshops along with their perception of engaging in parental involvement activities and their impact on student behavior and academic achievement. This literature review is organized into several segments. This study discusses the benefits and barriers to parental involvement and the theoretical framework associated with the study of parental involvement.

Socioeconomic status or social class was determined using a combination of the following statistics: education, income, and occupation. A parent's socioeconomic status can be a determining factor in the academic success of children. According to the American Psychological Association (2016), children from low socioeconomic backgrounds learn more slowly than children from other socioeconomic backgrounds. Low literacy and chronic stress in low-socioeconomic homes can negatively affect a child's academic skills before they attend an actual class. Another negative effect is the lack of resources in schools located in low-socioeconomic communities. Inadequate education and increased dropout rates affect children's academic achievement, perpetuating the low-SES status of the community. Improving school systems and early intervention programs may help to reduce these risk factors, and thus increased research on the correlation between SES and education is essential (APA, 2016, p. 1).

Education is the key to success. Without an education, it can be hard for people to accomplish their dreams and goals. Having an education of any kind is beneficial in assisting individuals to take care of their family and themselves. Many adolescents gain a sense of self-esteem when parents become involved with their children's academic success. When parents are able to assist their children to complete assignments and instill the importance of making good

grades, students are able to grasp the importance of hard work. Studies show that parental involvement positively impacts students' academic success (Emeagwali 2009; Epstein, 2003; National PTA, 2009). Educational research has focused on the part families play in their children's educational development.

The National Center for Education Statistics' Parent and Family Involvement in Education Survey for 2012 found that attending school events such as PTA meetings or workshops is the foremost type of parent involvement in schools. "Seventy-six percent of parents surveyed attended a parent-teacher conference; 74% attended a class or school event" (NCES, 2016, p. 13). Title 1 was intended to close the achievement gap among low SES and minority families. Studies have suggested that increased parental involvement is needed among low SES and minority students and low SES and minority families need additional resources (Battle-Bailey, 2000; Gomez, 2004). Furthermore, research also indicates that because of a lack of formal education, low SES parents may not place the same value on education that high SES families do (Lareau, 2000).

Every Student Succeeds

Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA), legislation developed by the Obama administration and signed into law on December 10, 2015, builds on the progress made by The No Child Left Behind (NCLB) Act of 2001 and Goals 2000: Educate America Act of 1994. ESSA provides a Family Engagement and Responsibility Fund to help school districts improve the capacity of schools to engage families.

NCLB made parents and educators accountable for providing a superior education to all children, but it also exposed some of the obstacles to closing the achievement gaps among minority and low SES students and their peers (U.S. Department of Education Staff, 2016, para.

12). NCLB set unrealistic student performance targets and school ratings based only on test scores. It also provided a one-size-fits-all support and accountability system for struggling schools (U.S. Department of Education, 2016). ESSA grants flexibility to states in meeting their obligations under NCLB in “exchange for rigorous and comprehensive state- developed plans designed to close achievement gaps, increase equity, improve the quality of instruction, and increase outcomes for all students” (U.S. Department of Education, 2016, para. 12). Research that shows how student achievement improves when parents are involved shows that teachers cannot take the place of parental involvement in a child’s education, and the absence of parental involvement makes a teacher’s job more difficult (Emeagwali 2009; Epstein, 2003; National PTA, 2009). A 2003 study (Johnson & Duffett, 2003) indicated that 66% of teachers believed parental involvement would significantly improve student achievement in their schools, while nearly 72% of parents agreed that when parents are uninvolved, children are often overlooked in schools (Johnson & Duffet, 2003).

Definition of Parental Involvement

This study defines parental involvement as activities that impact student achievement and behavior, including communication, learning at home, participation in school activities, and modeling behaviors that encourage similar behaviors in the student. For example, a parent who reads for pleasure models that behavior for their children encouraging them to read for pleasure as well. Parental involvement can be defined as an activity that includes actions such as discussing school with children and attending PTO/PTA meetings (Feuerstein, 2000). Desimone (1999) defined parent involvement as “a set of group defining actions, beliefs, and attitudes that serve as an operational factor in defining categorical differences among children from different racial ethnic and economic backgrounds” (p.11).

Sui-Chu and Willms (1996) identified four categories of parental involvement and evaluated the impact of each category on the academic success of eighth grade students. Studies suggest that parents from a high SES background are more involved in their children's education than parents from a low SES background. An effective way of improving the academic success of students may be implementing policies and/or strategies that increase parental involvement while also reducing existing inequities related to social class. According to Sui-Chu and Willms (1996), "working- class parents place less emphasis on the importance of schooling and maintain a greater separation between their roles and those of school staff than do middle-class parents" (p. 127). In communities with a large population of high SES parents, it is easier to get parents involved with their children's education usually because parents and schools have more resources.

There are a number of definitions, but regardless of which definition is used, parental involvement is an important factor in student academic success (Bracey, 2010). Epstein's parental involvement theory suggests that when parents, teachers, and the community combine their efforts they have a greater influence on students and as a result students learn more (Epstein, 2010). Epstein's conceptual framework contains six categories of parental involvement—parenting, communicating, volunteering, learning at home, decision-making, and collaborating—that provide families, schools, and communities with activities that involve all parties and contribute to student academic success (Epstein, 2010).

Research Models That Support Parental Involvement

Several researchers have attempted to categorize parental involvement. Bloom's parental involvement model is comprised of seven roles at three levels. Level 1, involvement, is comprised of parent-as-spectator and parent-as-teacher roles. In the parent-as-spectator role,

parents' monitor their children's progress, check homework, and attend meetings. In the parent-as-teacher role, parents' actively assist their child with their homework and create a learn-at-home routine to reinforce what their child learns at school (Bloom, 1992).

Level 2, participation, is comprised of parent-as-accessory-volunteer, parent-as-educational-volunteer, and parent-as-employee roles. In the parent-as-accessory-volunteer role, parents help with school activities such as field trips and getting information out to other parents. In the parent-as-educational-volunteer role, parents help in the classroom by performing tasks such as checking homework and listening to children read. In the parent-as-employee role parents get paid to work at the school in one of the other capacities (Bloom, 1992).

Level 3, advocacy, is comprised of parent-as-decision-maker/policymaker and parent-as-mover-and-shaker roles. In the parent-as-decision-maker/policymaker role parents participate in administrative functions, school council, and mobilizing other parents. In the parent-as-mover-and-shaker role parents work to initiate and implement changes at the school (Bloom, 1992).

Sloper and Cunningham's (1990) model of parental involvement contains four levels including communication, decision-making/policymaking, helping with schoolwork at home, and helping with activities at the school. McNeal, Jr.'s (2001) model of parental involvement also consists of four elements including parent-child discussion, involvement in PTOs, monitoring of child's behavior, and direct involvement in school activities. Each of these models has elements in common including involvement in workshops and conferences, helping with homework, and communication.

Six Types of Parental Involvement

Extensive research has been conducted about parental involvement and its effects on student achievement over the years (Epstein, 2008, 2010, Toldson & Lemmons, 2013). Epstein

(2010) is the founder and director of the National Network of Partnership Schools at Johns Hopkins University and a leading researcher of parental involvement. A number of theoretical models are associated with parental involvement and student academic success. However, Epstein's work has been subjected to the scrutiny of the peer review process of other scholars in the field (Jordan, Orozco, & Averett, 2001). Epstein's research focuses on overlapping spheres of influence. Her model emphasizes that students are best served through the collaborative efforts of parents, schools, and the community (Epstein, 2010). Epstein identified six major categories of parental involvement: parenting, communicating, volunteering, learning at home, and decision making. The six categories of parental involvement include many activities, such as parental workshops and helping with homework, that involve and satisfy the requirements of all parents and students.

In the parenting element of Epstein's parental involvement model, teachers help families create home environments that are supportive to children, creating conditions conducive to learning. Parents and educators work together to help schools develop an understanding of families and their desires for their children's education. For example, parents and educators can collaborate to develop parent involvement programs that include workshops for parents, family support programs, and home visits (Epstein, 2010).

In the communicating element of the model, two-way communication systems are designed and maintained to keep parents informed about school programs and student progress. Some examples include holding yearly conferences and follow-up meetings with parents, providing language translators, sending weekly or monthly folders home to parents for review, parent/student pickup of report cards, sending home notices regularly, and placing phone calls (Epstein, 2010).

In the volunteering element of the model, educators and parents work together to organize and recruit other parents to help with and support school activities and programs. Some example volunteer activities include school programs to help teachers and students, sending out postcard surveys to identify talents of volunteers, scheduling meetings between parents and students, creating a telephone tree to provide families with information and a parent patrol to assist with school safety programs (Epstein, 2010).

The learning at home portion of the model requires teachers design and provide activities that engage students in learning at home and concepts to help parents help students with homework. Some examples include providing information about skills for each grade level, homework policies and schedules and assisting students to improve skills. It can also include a calendar of activities for parents and students, summer learning packets, and including families in setting student goals (Epstein, 2010).

The decision-making element gives parents a voice in school decision-making and the development and improvement of school policies. Some examples include formation of networks linking families with parent leaders and parent organizations and district-level boards to engage families and the community. It can also include making certain that families are aware of school and local elections so they can participate (Epstein, 2010).

Finally, in the collaborating element of the model, educators, families, and the community work together to identify and organize community resources for parents, students, and the school to support learning. Some examples include collaborating with businesses, religious organizations, colleges, senior citizen groups, and other civic organizations to create tutorial programs, cultural programs, and summer school programs (Epstein, 2010).

Epstein's research has shown that when these six categories of parental involvement are implemented, there is the "potential for schools, families, and communities to create caring educational environments" (Epstein, 2010, p. 10). She recommended creating an Action Team for School, Family, and Community Partnerships to implement the six categories of involvement. Her research and the work of several schools have identified five steps that can be taken to develop positive connections between parents, students, schools, and communities.

Working together builds partnerships. The action team will include three teachers, three parents, and one administrator. The team is responsible for "assessing present practices, organizing options for new partnerships, implementing selected activities, evaluating next steps, and continuing to improve and coordinate practices for all six types of involvement" (Epstein, 2010).

The second step is obtaining support. Funds are needed to "guide and support the work and expenses" (Epstein, 2010, p. 32) of the action team. Funds can come from sources including federal and state funding programs and fundraising programs. These funds can be used "to support staff development in the area of school, family, and community partnerships; to pay for lead teachers at each school; to set up demonstration programs; and for other partnership expenses" (Epstein, 2010, p. 32).

The third step of building the action team involves identifying starting points. The team will collect information from parents, students, and educators about their experiences, wishes, and views. They will conduct surveys and organize discussion panels to assess starting points – present strengths, needed changes, expectations, student goals, and a sense of community.

The fourth step is the development of a 3-year plan. Using the information they have gathered in Step 3, the team will create an outline of the steps they will need to take to "help the

school progress from its starting point on each type of involvement to where it wants to be in three years” (Epstein, 2010, p. 34).

Finally, in Step 5 the action team will hold yearly presentations to inform parents, students, educators, and the community of their progress. They will also provide updates on the three-year outline, detailed information about plans for the upcoming year, and answer questions.

Epstein (2010) created the Partnership-2000 Schools program. It is based on Epstein’s 20 years of research. Epstein added “challenges” to the six types of involvement that encourage schools to go beyond traditional understandings of the six types to include all families including those of diverse socioeconomic, linguistic, and cultural backgrounds.

Supporting Research

Epstein’s model is a widely cited conceptual framework that is also supported by work of the research community. Jeynes (2016) conducted a meta-analysis of 42 studies to determine the connection between parental involvement, academic success, and behavior of African-American students, and students’ grades pre-kindergarten through college freshman. Jeynes used Epstein’s model, “the one cited by most researchers” (p. 197) as the basis for his meta-analysis, in order to gain insight into which types of parental involvement work better than others (Jeynes, 2016, p. 197).

The study addressed several research questions. The first question analyzed the existence of a significant connection between parental involvement and student achievement of African-American students enrolled in grades pre-Kindergarten through college freshman. The second question assessed whether parental involvement was affected by the age of the students. For Questions 1 and 2, the study suggested that parental involvement has a positive impact on African-American youth regardless of student grade level. The reason for this may be that

African-American parents “are more persistent” than parents of other ethnicities throughout the life of the child (Jeynes, 2016, p. 210). The third research question analyzed if parental programs impact African-American students. The study found a positive relationship between parental involvement programs and academic achievement of African-American students (p. 211). The fourth question studied the effects of specific types of parental involvement on African American students (p. 197). The findings of this study showed “that parental expectations, parental style, and parental participation were associated with higher levels of academic achievement” (Jeynes, 2016, p. 211).

Studies had to meet specific criteria, including, the study methodology being distinguishable from other study variables, inclusion of enough statistical information to determine impact, and use a control group (p. 198). The meta-analysis took cross-sectional measures of the impact of parental involvement and calculated the correlation coefficient between parental involvement and student achievement. Researchers recorded attributes such as the duration and frequency of training sessions, the method of training (workshops), the type of behavior or achievement measure (class grades, tests), unit of analysis on which the effect was measured (individual student or classroom), and the connection between parental involvement and student achievement and behavior (p. 198).

The meta-analysis found a substantial connection between parental involvement and student achievement across all grade levels: pre-Kindergarten through college freshman. Overall parental involvement “was associated with better school outcomes” (Jeynes, 2016, p. 204).

Chrispeels and Rivero (2000) examined parental involvement elements such as decision making, learning at home, collaborating, involvement, and communication. They conducted an ethnographic case study that examined how a group of 198 Latino parents perceived the part they

played in their children's education and their relationship with the school. The parents in the study participated in the Parent Institute for Quality Education (PIQUE) program. Chrispeels and Rivero (2000) studied the impact of the program by evaluating parents' perceptions of the part they play in their children's education both before and after their involvement in the program.

The study variables were:

- Parents' definitions of their role in their child's life;
- Parents' perceptions of how they are to help their children succeed academically;
- Parent perceptions of opportunities for parental involvement.

Parents' participated in eight 90-minute sessions using a set curriculum. Pretest surveys collected baseline data and posttest surveys collected follow-up information from 95 parents participating in the program. Classroom sessions were observed and videotaped and in-depth interviews were conducted with 11 parents. The findings of the study suggested that parents that participated in PIQE were more involved with their children and with their school and their teachers. Parents reported changes in the way they parented their children including changes to their discipline methods and communication within the family. All the parents attributed these changes to their participation in the PIQE program.

Trusty (1999) investigated the impact that parental involvement in education had on a student's educational expectations two years after graduating from high school. The study began during the students' eighth grade year. The effects on eighth-grade educational expectations were measured using structural equation models (mathematical models). This study also supports elements from Epstein's (2010) parent involvement model including parent involvement in both home and school activities and parent-student communication. Trusty (1999) reviewed the a national sample of 9,929 eighth graders and student reports to evaluate the effects of parent

involvement on eighth grade students and their educational expectations two years after graduating from high school. Controlling factors in the study included family income, occupation, and education. The study utilized the following parent involvement criteria: involvement in school organizations and at home as reported by the parent and student.

The study found that if students felt that their parents were involved in their education they were more likely to have plans to go on to college two years after graduating from high school. According to the study, three forms of parent involvement significantly affect student expectations -

- Students' supplied information regarding parents' home-based involvement.
- Parents' assessment of their involvement in parent organizations at school.
- Parents' evaluation of their home-based involvement. (p. 227)

When parent-reported involvement in the school's PTO/PTA increased by one standard deviation during the student's eighth grade year, it resulted in a 22% increase in student expectations to attend college (p. 229). But an increase of the same amount in student-reported home-based parent involvement during the eighth grade increased student expectations to attend college by 58% (p. 229). The study suggests that when students see their families involved in their education they expect to go farther in school (p. 220). Student hopes and dreams to continue their education beyond high school is closely connected to their parents' involvement in their education; this is particularly true of discussions about school held in the home.

Conceptual Framework

In Epstein's (2010) conceptual framework the primary focus is the partnership between parents, teachers, students, and the community. The best predictors for a child to be successful in school are teachers and parents working together to guide students' lives. According to Hoover-

Dempsey and Sandler's (1997) model of parental involvement, student achievement is influenced by modeling, reinforcement, and direct instruction. If a child perceives education as a positive and collaborative experience with a goal of academic achievement, then the child is more likely to succeed. Parents can help students improve on their schoolwork by modeling behaviors such as reading for pleasure, working together, and increasing skills. Parents and teachers collaboratively working together can make it easier for the child to be successful in and out of the classroom.

Parental involvement is a critical component in the education of all children, irrespective of their ethnic or socioeconomic background. Toldson and Lemmons (2013) used surveys and secondary data analysis to explore factors associated with student success and parental involvement among the parents of Black, Hispanic, and White students. Secondary data analysis differs from meta-analyses in that it uses existing data collected in previous studies to pursue a new research question or an alternative perspective from the original research (Heaton, 2008). Factors explored in the study include social demographics, school environment, and parenting practices. Parents participating in the study completed the National Household Education Surveys (NHES) and The Parent and Family Involvement Survey (PFI). NHES and PFI were used to determine if parent participation was associated with better grades for students. The study utilized the PFI Survey to collect data from a sample of parents of students in Kindergarten through twelfth grade. This national representative sample included "7,480 of the children were White, 1,628 Black, and 2,576 Hispanic" (p. 242). Random digit dial telephone surveys were used to obtain the dataset. It was selected because it had a clear indicator of parental participation; had an adequate sample of Black, Hispanic, and White participants; was a national survey that included multiple states and geographic areas; and had adequate measures of

contributing factors, such as parental expectations, parent's level of education, and household composition (p. 242). "Parental involvement in school was linked to good grades, supportive schools, and positive parenting practices. Per quantitative survey data there is a noteworthy relationship between the number of times parents attend school meetings and student academic performance" (p. 246). Furthermore, the study revealed that Black and Hispanic parents lived in dangerous neighborhoods, had only a grade school education, and were less likely to visit their children's school.

Conversely, the study revealed that parents of Black and Hispanic students were less likely to visit the school than parents of White students. Over a period of one academic year, the average number of times parents of White, Black, and Hispanic parents visited the school was 8.9, 5.5, and 4.8, respectively. Nonnative English-speaking parents reported visiting the school an average of 3.3 times while native English-speaking parents reported visiting the school 8.1 times. Toldson and Lemmons (2013) found that schools communicate with parents from different racial backgrounds in different ways. "For example, schools typically call the parents of black children and send written messages, like a newsletter, to parents of white children. The school also calls parents of children who are making lower grades" (p. 250). The authors noted that parents are more likely to visit the schools if their neighborhoods and environments are safer and supportive. This research supports the research of Epstein (2010) and Dauber and Epstein (2008). "A supportive school is defined as one that provides information to help parents help their children including information about learning from home, community services, explanations about course content and learning goals, child development, volunteer opportunities, and student progress reports" (Toldson & Lemmons, 2013, p. 252).

Toldson and Lemmons (2013) further determined that teachers and parents could use

their findings to create a strategic plan to increase parental involvement and student achievement across culturally diverse groups of students and parents (p. 253). School leaders need to identify strategies that will keep parents involved and consistent with their children's academic achievement.

Informed parents can help their child succeed in their academic achievement. According to Hara and Burke (1998), "the time, effort, and commitment required from all stakeholders to build a strong parental involvement program is indeed offset by the improvement in students' academic performance and attitude toward learning" (p. 227). Active engagement from parents could lead to increased academic performance for their student. Trainings, communication, and collaboration were completed in a variety of ways to showcase parental understanding and student performance. Training for parents included classes for GED, college credit, and family literacy. Parents can help students improve on their schoolwork by modeling behaviors such as taking classes and college courses to increase their skills. Training also included topics on learning in specific academic subjects for each grade level, K–12, so parents can help their children with homework (Epstein, 2010; Hoover-Dempsey & Sandler, 1997).

This study used the work of Epstein (2010), Hoover-Dempsey (2007), and Toldson and Lemmons (2013) to form a conceptual framework to determine the impact of parental involvement in parental workshops and engagement in specific parental involvement activities on the behavior and student achievement of low SES and African-American students (Epstein, 2008; Epstein & Sheldon, 2006; Hoover-Dempsey, 2013, Toldson & Lemmons, 2013).

Parental involvement is defined as activities that impact student achievement and behavior, including communication, learning at home, participation in school activities, and modeling behaviors that encourage similar behaviors in the student. It is important that educators

and parents work together to improve student behavior and achievement among low SES and African-American students (Epstein, 2010; Jeynes, 2016). It is crucial that educators do all they can to increase parents' understanding of how they can utilize specific parental involvement activities to support their children (Epstein, 2010; Jeynes, 2016). Parental workshops will provide parents with knowledge and skills to support their child both at home and at school. This research developed parental involvement workshops that focus on communication, learning at home, participation in school activities, and modeling behaviors.

Study findings may be useful to school educators, parents and the community as an indicator of the importance of parental involvement, i.e. training and collaboration to improve student achievement (Epstein, 2010; Jeynes, 2016; Toldson & Lemmons, 2013). The findings of this study may also help teachers to develop and implement better policies and procedures related to parental involvement. The data will also add to the existing research and literature and may help to provide an equal and quality education for both African-American students and European-American students. This study may increase the ability of educators to communicate with parents and provide outreach programs inspiring them to become more involved in their children's education.

Research providing better evidence of the effects of parental workshops and specific parental involvement activities on student academic achievement is needed (Jeynes, 2016). An understanding of which parental involvement activities with which families and at what grade levels produce a positive impact on overall student achievement could be helpful to all stakeholders. Schools are a microcosm of the world. They are diverse, a community of all ethnicities. That diversity makes it imperative for teachers to utilize parental involvement activities in ways that are best for all children (Epstein, 2010; Jeynes, 2016).

In conclusion, this study will utilize specific parental involvement activities that are related to high levels of parental involvement and student achievement. The more the parent is involved, the better the child can perform on their academic achievement across on social demographics.

Review of Research Literature and Methodological Literature

Research has established parents become involved in their children's education, helping with tasks like homework, simply because of strongly held beliefs that they should be involved (Hoover-Dempsey, 2007). Additionally, parents believe that their involvement positively affects their children's learning and is valued by their children's teachers. Parents affect a child's educational outcome in an effective or ineffective manner. According to Hoover-Dempsey (2007), a parent's ideas about how they should raise their children and what role they should play in helping them with schoolwork at home influences the decisions they make regarding their involvement with their child's education (p. 17). This study will look at parent perceptions regarding which parental workshops impact student behavior and academic achievement.

African American Fathers and Mothers

The National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) uses a graduation rate measurement known as the adjusted cohort graduation rate (ACGR; NCES, 2014). According to the ACGR, in 2013–2014, the percentage of public high school freshman who graduated in 4 years was 87% for White students, compared to 73% for Black students. The 14% difference is cause for concern. The same report shows that White students had higher ACGRs than Black students in every state except Montana, where the ACGR for White students was 88% and for Black students was 89% (para. 5). These statistics are concerning and can help people understand the impact the African-American parent has on their children.

Ransaw (2014) discussed how involved African-American fathers affect their children's educational outcomes in a positive manner. The qualitative case study investigated nine African-American men as they attempted to become good fathers by helping their children in school. The study found that African-American men could impact their children's academic achievement in a positive manner. Parental strategies of the fathers participating in the study included continuing their involvement with their children both during and after college, communicating with their children, and modeling good behavior. Using a qualitative interview design, Ransaw (2014) wanted to explore how African-American fathers see their fathering as it relates to their children's academic success. Because many of the participants attended Black churches, the interview process took place at four separate churches. The environment was important to the study because fathers were able to select which was more comfortable for them and their child.

African-American fathers know the importance of being active and involved in their child's educational achievement. The study confirmed, "African-American fathers were just as likely as White fathers to help with homework, provide guidance, spend time quality time with their children" (p. 16). The findings of the study were that homework was not the only way that African-American fathers helped their children academically. They also provide tutoring, take their children to libraries and museums, assist with school projects, and help their children do school related projects at home over the summer. Participants were recruited from four different churches because these locations are the most likely places to find groups of African-Americans with different demographics (p. 6). The fact that fathers who regularly attend church services are more likely to be involved with their children may have biased this study's findings. Irrespective of whether the fathers were religious or not, African-American males can positively affect the academic success of their children (p. 17).

Extensive research has been conducted on parental involvement and student achievement. Much of that research has not been specific to whether the mother or father is involved. A meta-analysis conducted by Kim and Hill (2015) examined mother's and father's in different ethnic groups and the relationship between father's involvement in education versus mother's involvement in education and the impact on student achievement (grades Kindergarten through 12) across different types of parental involvement.

The meta-analysis included "52 empirical studies representing 390 correlations for the relationship between parental involvement (mothers or fathers) and student achievement" (Kim & Hill, 2015). For the purposes of the study parental involvement was defined as "specific strategies that fathers and/or mothers use to enhance their children's education" (p. 920). Studies used in the meta-analysis included parental involvement elements such as school involvement and homework assistance. Studies also included student test scores and GPA. Two coders used a coding method based on previous meta-analytic studies on parental involvement. Variables included the study setting, population characteristics, research design, parental involvement measures, student achievement, and the effect size (p. 924).

Overall, the meta-analysis found that the strength of the relationship between parental involvement and academic success varied depending on the type of parental involvement for both fathers and mothers. When compared, little difference was found between mothers and fathers for home involvement. Statistics for school involvement and student achievement were higher for mothers, suggesting that a father's involvement at school may not be as positively related to student achievement.

When comparing different ethnic groups, the study found that the relationship between parental involvement and achievement was stronger for White fathers than it was for African

American fathers (p. 927). For African American mothers, the relationship between parental involvement and achievement was marginally higher compared with mothers in the Ethnic Majority group (p. 927). The strength in the relationship between parental involvement and achievement was the same for mothers and fathers across both ethnic groups.

Synthesis of Research Findings

Although many scholars and researchers believe that the effect of parental involvement throughout a child's education can be beneficial and substantial, others believe that it could have major disadvantages. Researchers Lindsay Horvatin (2011) and Lynn Balster Lontos (1991) found some barriers to parental involvement including feelings of inadequacy, failure, and poor self-esteem (Lontos, 1991, p. 20). Horvatin (2011) argued that cultural differences, finance, work-related limitations, as well as judgmental attitudes and scheduling conflicts can also create barriers between parental involvement and student achievement. Barriers such as these could make parents uncomfortable with supporting their children's academic success. The lack of resources and support could lead to parents being uninvolved because they simply believe they do not have enough help to motivate and push their child to the next level.

Lontos (1991) further suggested that parents from low socioeconomic backgrounds and a lack of education see schools as authority figures and leave it to the school to educate their children (p. 21). In a 2014 U.S. Census Bureau report, 80% of single parent families were headed by single mothers (U.S. Census Bureau, 2014). Unfortunately, these types of statistics can lead to feelings of despair, making many people feel as though they do not have the time to assist their children with schoolwork.

Researchers found that people living in poverty are often unable to support or parent their children in the manner they would like, and this can impact their children's academic success

(Horvatin, 2011). There is a need for culturally sensitive teachers and counselors who can remove the barriers that interfere with student success and improve parental involvement (p. 7).

Horvatin (2011) argued that living in poverty could lead to many families being unable to support their children. A parent's lack of monetary funds can hinder a child's academic growth tremendously. "In 2009 the poverty rate was 14.3%, which was an increase from 13.2 % in 2008" (Congressional Digest Staff, 2010). The poverty rate continues to rise. In 2010 the poverty rate was 15.3 and by 2011 it was 15.9 (Bishaw, 2012, p. 1). While most people associate poverty with a lack of money, it "may also result in the lack of power, increased humiliation, and a sense of being excluded by others" (Horvatin, 2011, p. 7).

Furthermore, barriers such as social growth and helicopter parents can hinder a child's academic success because, according to LeClaire (2016), "Helicopter parents are obsessed with their children and become over-involved in their lives. They overstep boundaries, cross the line and downright break the sound barrier of acceptable parental participation" (p. 1). Students are beginning to establish their own identity. However, parents can hinder a child's learning by being overprotective.

Parents should be involved in their child's education, but they should also respect the fact that teenagers need to practice being adults, making their own decisions with parental guidance. They need to make their own decisions and face other challenges that will shape their identity and build their self-esteem (Locke, 2012). Overprotective parents do whatever they can to keep their child from being harmed, but it can have an effect on their social growth as they get older.

School is not only a place where a child can learn how to read and write. It also teaches them social skills that shape them into an adult. The time that a child spends away from their parents allows them to develop into their own person rather than a carbon copy of their parents.

Spending too much time with their parents can lead to an unhealthy attachment. A child must learn to be independent (NCES Staff, 1998).

A too-involved parent could make the student irresponsible and immature. All students should learn how to think and act for themselves without the overbearing parent assisting their every move. Helicopter parents can also be dangerous because they hover over their children, depriving them of having a childhood. Many children learn from their mistakes, but if they don't make any mistakes they do not have the opportunity for learning. Furthermore, helicopter parents can be a disturbance in the classroom. The traits of a helicopter parent include daily e-mail and daily classroom visits. Helicopter parents can be a disadvantage to the academic success of the child because it could make the child feel unsuccessful and incompetent. Locke (2012) acknowledged that when parents do too much for their children, micromanaging every detail, the end result is a child incapable of meeting life's challenges on their own (p. 250). No one should create an environment where children feel helpless and incompetent. When parents allow fear of what might happen to govern their decisions, it then becomes hard to remember that children learn a great deal when their parents are not there to tell them what to do. Children learn from failure and by being challenged; they learn that they can handle anything (Bayless, 2013). For a student to succeed, parents must be willing to let go and let them establish who they are. Students can learn from their mistakes how to problem solve effectively.

There are several different disadvantages and limitations that can affect parental involvement on the academic success of students. Studies show that disadvantages like these could ultimately hinder a child's academic growth instead of helping it and creating scholars.

Critique of Previous Research

Sui-Chu and Willms (1996) analyzed the relationship between parental involvement and eighth grade student reading and math scores using data obtained from the National Educational Longitudinal Study (NELS). They used a hierarchical linear model. Sui-Chu and Willms (1996) selected four types of parental involvement to create a balanced study. The types of parental involvement they used included home and school activities such as discussion, supervision, communication, and participation. Their main goal was to cast doubt on the theory that low SES parents were not as involved in their children's education as high SES parents. Their experimental quantitative research study was different from other studies because they studied not only the impact of parental involvement on student academic performance, but also the impact of characteristics of school communities. The absence of data regarding school policies and programs that may or may not promote parental involvement along with the absence of student performance data prior to the eighth grade could present challenges when analyzing data. The lack of performance data from previous years makes it impossible to measure the impact of parental involvement over time. This study could be replicated by other researchers using current NELS data and applying longitudinal analysis.

Wilder (2014) conducted a qualitative research synthesis of nine meta-analyses to investigate how parental involvement effected student achievement and identify any trends in findings across studies. The qualitative research synthesis methodology incorporated different approaches to assimilate findings from research evidence. Only studies published in peer-reviewed journals were used in the meta-analysis to ensure accuracy.

The study findings showed a consistent relationship between parental involvement and academic achievement irrespective of ethnicity and level of education (Wilder, 2014).

Nevertheless, the strength of the relationship changed when different types of assessments were used to measure student achievement. These differences are usually explained by the difference in beliefs regarding parental involvement held by people from different ethnic backgrounds. When defining and evaluating parental involvement, one should remember the cultural and ethnic diversity of parents and children (p. 393). While the meta-analyses confirmed the impact of parental involvement on student academic achievement, more research is necessary to determine what can be done to strengthen parental involvement in the education of their children.

Chapter 2 Summary

The research and literature indicate that parental involvement could positively impact student achievement. Parental involvement in education is crucial for students to succeed in life (Emeagwali 2009; Epstein, 2008; National PTA, 2009). This literature review has presented an overview of the conceptual framework for this study and a review of major studies of parental involvement programs. Research studies were analyzed in terms of their relevance to the models of parental involvement and their applicability to inner-city schools.

Most researchers reviewed in this chapter agreed that parental involvement does indeed affect student achievement (Epstein & Sheldon, 2006). It is clear that the importance placed on education by parents affects a child's academic performance. Children tend to mimic the behavior of their parents. Parents modeling behaviors such as reading can increase their child's academic skills Hoover-Dempsey and Sandler's (1997). Parents' opinions about education can be a factor in improving or hindering academic skills. Teachers must work with parents to increase their children's learning abilities (Epstein & Sheldon, 2006).

The overview of the literature revealed that parents positively impacted the success of their students through the use of parental workshops (Bloom, 1992; Epstein, 2010; Hoover-

Dempsey & Sandler, 1997). Studies show that teachers may be able to help change the home learning environment by conducting parental workshops that provide training and materials for parents on topics such as improving student study skills or learning in a variety of subjects (Epstein, 2010). Schools can also collaborate with local colleges to provide training to parents. Epstein (2010) stated that teachers should plan for parental involvement much like they do for the curriculum to produce a successful learning environment for all students.

An action research study was conducted with intention of determining how parental workshops can lead to improvement in academic performance of children. A review of the literature indicates that parents and teachers both want the best for children, but they often have different understandings about the definition of parental involvement and how to best implement parental involvement models. Parents do want their children to be successful in school, but many parents do not know how to help or lack the resources to help (Epstein, 2010). Teachers concerned about their students and their ability to achieve often struggle to provide opportunities that involve parents (Epstein, 2010). Parents, teachers, principals, and the community must work together to create opportunities for parents and provide students with activities, both in school and at home, to help them succeed.

Chapter 3: Methodology

This qualitative action research study focused on a sample of 20 parents. A convenience sample from a church was utilized. The demographic makeup of the church was 72% African American, 21% Latino/Mexican American, and 7% White. All parents were required to be 18 years-of-age and have children in K–12 grade levels to volunteer. Due to the overall population of the church, participation by a high percentage of minority parents was expected. Nonminority parents were not excluded, but their participation was not likely. The goal of the study was to examine the connection between parental workshops and the behavior and achievement of students. As shown in Chapter 2, parents often lack the knowledge and skills to support their child’s education (Epstein, 2010; Hoover-Dempsey, 2007). Over the course of the study, parent participants attended six 90-minute workshops that addressed these topics:

Expectations and Standards for Students in Grades K–12

Parents learned what is expected of their students for academic success in school environments. School standards related to academic performance and student behavior and regulations was discussed. The work of Epstein (2010) and Hoover-Dempsey (2007) was used as the basis for this workshop, which informed parents of the expectations and standards their children are expected to meet and provided ways for them to support those expectations. Parents examined the expectations and standards booklet for students and developed three goals they would like to et for the parental workshops.

Learning at Home Activities

Parents were shown activities such as home tutoring, study skills, checking and supervising homework, encouraging reading at home, and rewarding performance at school. The work of Chrispeels and Rivero (2000), Jeynes (2016), Toldson and Lemmons (2013), and

Epstein (2010) was used as a basis for this workshop. Parents watched a public video on YouTube entitled Best practices of highly effective tutors and listed strategies they could use at home to assist their child with their academic success.

Common Core Resources

Parents reviewed what their child should be learning in English and mathematics in each grade with the new standards. They were provided with direction on how they can support their child at home. The work of Trusty (1999), McNeal, Jr. (2001), Hoover and Dempsey, (2007), and Epstein (2010) was used as a basis for this workshop. Parents examined the student expectations provided by Texas Education Agency detailing all of the objectives that their child is expected to learn by grade level. The researcher showed the parents public websites they could use to assist their child at home. Examples of suggested websites included: BrainPop Jr, Measuring Up, Learning Farm, and Kumon.

College Planning

In Chapter 2, the researcher discovered that students who believed that their parents were interested in their education make better grades and was more likely to go on to college after graduating high school (Trusty, 1999). Parents were equipped with the knowledge and skills to help their children with college opportunities and financial planning. The work of Trusty (1999) was used as the basis for this workshop, which provided parents with the tools they needed to help their children prepare for college.

Communicating with Your Children

The literature review in Chapter 2 also showed that two-way communication between parents and their children regarding classes, school activities, grades, and college planning was a problem. Parents can help and learn more by talking to their children about what they are

learning. The work of Epstein (2010), Hoover-Dempsey, (2007), and Toldson and Lemmons (2013) was used as a basis for a workshop that will address this problem. Parents watched videos showcasing positive and supportive, as well as negative and non-supportive ways to communicate with their children. Parents also got the opportunity to role-play with other parents using the strategies they learned from the videos.

What Motivates Children to Learn

During the research, the researcher learned that children are curious, and they learn from everything they do. A good study habit starts early, so helping young kids form good attitudes about learning is critical for parents to motivate children to learn. Parents must be very cautious about the use of many extrinsic rewards because this can severely interfere with children's motivational development. Praise for an accomplishment is appropriate, but the researcher taught parents to be sure that their child is doing a task because he or she is interested, not because he or she thinks it will bring praise from them. Praise for effort is better to motivate kids to learn and to achieve.

Parents received different magazines and created one-page biographies of meaningful things in their lives. They cut and pasted different symbols, pictures, words, and other images on a sheet of paper that represented their different skills and personalities. The object of this exercise was to allow parents to be knowledgeable of whom they are so they can better connect with their children and express their interests and personalities.

The researcher developed and conducted the workshops. The activity log of parental involvement in workshops helped determine which workshops parents attended, how often they attended, their involvement in the activities with their children at home and at school, and any positive and negative changes they noticed. A class list was used along with the activity logs to

note what areas of the workshop the parents were interacting with and in what areas the researcher initiated more involvement.

Open-ended questions were asked as a part of the interview process to initiate a discussion that provided a stronger understanding of parental perceptions of the extent to which parental workshops impact student behavior and academic achievement. Data such as initial interview responses, discussions related to the interview responses, follow-up interview responses related to the second interview, and activity logs were analyzed to determine what changes were needed that might initiate more parental involvement and/or greater impact on student behavior and academic achievement. Based on the analysis the researcher redesigned the workshops, conducted the six workshops again, and repeated the interview process. Workshops were redesigned based on new topics that participants had identified as topics they need more help with.

The research method, design, and procedures described in this chapter were formulated from an application of parental involvement models described in the literature. This research was used to understand the benefits of parental involvement in parental workshops and the impact engagement has on the academic success of their children (students) through parental workshops.

This chapter describes the purpose of the study and research questions. It is the researcher's hope that this study will improve the ability of schools to involve parents' in the education of their children. Additionally, this chapter includes the instrument used, the study sample, and the data procedures followed by the data analysis procedures, the study limitations, and the ethical concerns regarding the investigation.

Research Questions

The following research questions provided the focus for this action research study as the researcher attempted to determine how parental involvement (i.e., parental workshops) influenced student behavior and student academic success. Furthermore, the research questions aligned and linked the overall purpose of the research, which was to investigate the perceptions of parents regarding the effectiveness of their involvement in parental workshops along with their perception of their engagement in parental involvement activities and their impact on student behavior and academic achievement.

Q1: What are the perceptions of parents regarding the effectiveness of their participation in parental workshops and activities as it relates to their level of participation in their child's education?

Q2: What parental workshop activities did parents believe had the most impact on their involvement in their child's education and behavior?

Q3: What are the perceptions of parents regarding the impact of their involvement in parental workshops on their child's motivation to succeed academically?

Purpose and Design of the Study

The purpose of this action research study was to analyze parents' perceptions regarding the effectiveness of their involvement in training workshops and their perceptions of the impact of their involvement on their children's behavior and academic success. This qualitative study used action research to investigate these perceptions. This study utilized the perceptions of parents to gauge the effect of parental workshops on student achievement.

According to Creswell (2014), a qualitative study is “subjective and seen through the eyes of the participants in the study” (p. 104). This includes the researcher, the individuals being studied, and audience interpreting the study. Types of qualitative research designs include ethnographies, grounded theory, case studies, and phenomenological studies. This study used interviews and activity logs to collect and examine data. The best methodology for such a study is qualitative action research study. Action research is an interactive method of collecting information to investigate topics such as parental involvement in education (Creswell, 2008).

There are five steps involved in action research: identifying the issue, collecting data, interpreting data, taking action, and reflecting (Ferrance, 2000). However, the researcher’s action research cycle consisted of six steps:

Step 1: Implementing/conducting the parental workshops.

Step 2: Viewing feedback from parents regarding their input, concerns, suggestions, and needs from their activity logs and individual interviews.

Step 3: Redesigning the workshops to better fit the need of all parents involved in the program.

Step 4: Implementing another six weeks of parental workshops designed based on the parent feedback.

Step 5: Analyzing the data from the second round of activity logs and individual interviews to understand their perceptions.

Step 6: Analyze entire research cycle and data to develop a deeper understanding through common themes and patterns in the parent’s perceptions.

The findings of the action research study were based on parental perceptions. In other words, the findings were based on things as they are “seen through their eyes,” and as such it meets the definition of a qualitative study (Creswell, 2014).

This chapter presents the research methodology that was used to develop and conduct parental workshops and interviews for the study. Parents provided their perceptions of their involvement in parental workshops and their perceptions of how their involvement impacted their children’s behavior and academic success. It is the researcher’s hope that the findings of this study can be used to help educators develop an approach to greater parental involvement with a view to improving students’ academic success.

Research Population and Sampling Method

The population of the study consisted of 20 participants, predominately African-American, with children in grades K–12. The children attend a school in North Texas with a population consisting of 93% African Americans, 5% Latino/Mexican American, and 2% White. Parents of all ethnicities were welcomed to participate.

A local church was selected as the location of the study for its accessibility to the study participants and the researcher. A conference room at a church was used for the workshops. Because of the limited time, the study used a convenience sample. Creswell (2014) stated, “In many experiments . . ., only a convenience sample is possible because the investigator must use naturally formed groups (e.g., a classroom, an organization, a family unit) or volunteers as participants in the study” (p. 215). Accessibility was also a factor. Convenience sampling was chosen because the study was using parents of students attending a local school.

A convenience sample from Miracle Temple Church of Deliverance was utilized. The demographic makeup of the church was 72% African American, 21% Latino/Mexican American,

and 7% White. All parents were required to be 18 years of age and have children in K–12 grade levels to volunteer. Due to the overall population of the church, participation by a high percentage of minority parents were expected. Nonminority parents were not excluded, but their participation in the study was unlikely. Participants were advised of the study via a flyer passed out at the church. The flyer invited the parents to attend a meeting at the local church where they were given all of the details of the study and had the opportunity to volunteer. Participants in the study came to the first parental workshop and signed consent forms notifying me of their willingness to participate in the study.

Parents were asked to return the consent forms within a week by dropping them in a designated box that was left in the conference room for the study. The total number of participants was 20. The convenience sample was taken from the church population. While volunteers from any ethnicity were allowed to participate, study volunteers were likely to be African American. The church, located in Desoto, Texas, was chosen for the setting of the study because it provided access to a pool of participants and the demographics of the church mirror the population this study had identified through the literature as warranting additional support in the area of parental involvement. Furthermore, the church had adequate room for the workshops and provided the accommodations needed for effectiveness. This was a single site data collection study where the 20 participants assembled over six weeks. An approval letter from the pastor of the congregation was received prior to conducting the study. The focus of this study was the level of parental involvement of low SES and African-American parents. Existing inequities in educational outcomes for minorities and low SES students made it important to conduct this study so it can help teachers understand parental involvement and how to implement parental involvement activities that include all students (Diamond & Gomez, 2004; Epstein, 2010).

Parents participating in the study will have children in grades K–12. Parents who met that criterion were eligible to participate in the study.

Instrumentation

Interviews with parents were designed to obtain a clear understanding of parents' perceptions of their involvement in their children's education. Interviews were held in an office adjoining the conference room. Parents were interviewed immediately at the end of their participation in the workshop series. Based on the action research cycle of planning, action, observation, and reflection, their responses to interview questions and activity logs of their participation in the workshops and their activities both at home and at school were used to develop six new workshop topics. Parents kept an activity log to track their involvement in home and school activities. The activity log documented what they have been learning and listed the activities that had been effectively working at home with their students. The activity log took no longer than 10–15 minutes to write weekly. The researcher used interviews and activity logs to track and monitor any increases in the frequency and duration of parental involvement activities at home and school as well as the problems and successes that parents experienced. This helped the researcher identify areas that parents needed assistance with and develop new workshops based on those findings.

Parents were interviewed approximately eight weeks later, after the workshops were developed and implemented. The average interview lasted 20–60 minutes. Interviews were tested on several participants prior to data collection (Gill, Stewart, Treasure, & Chadwick, 2008). Some of the interview questions were directly related to parental workshops and their effect on student achievement and others were related to the effect of workshops on levels of parental

involvement. This qualitative action research study focused on a group of parents attending a church located in Desoto, Texas.

Data for the study were gathered through conducting personal interviews with parents involved in the parental workshops. The researcher reviewed the transcripts from all participants in the study. A review of responses to the questions helped in identifying similarities and differences between the responses. Furthermore, the review helped the researcher in the analysis of the data. The researcher sorted and coded patterns and themes based on the recurrent themes in participant responses (Yin, 2011, p. 187). The researcher identified participants' statements regarding their experiences and perceptions related to parental involvement in parental workshops, documenting significant statements (horizontalization of data), treating each statement equally, and developing a list of nonrepetitive, nonoverlapping statements (Creswell, 2014, p. 147).

The researcher compared, recorded, and transcribed interviews for accuracy and thoroughness. The researcher used a combination of key word and scrutiny-based techniques to code themes in data (p. 215). Key-word technique involves identification of key words and searching for all instances of the word or phrase. Each time the word or phrase was found, a note of it would be made. Themes are identified by sorting key words based on similar meanings. Scrutiny based techniques involve identifying themes that are missing from the text. The researcher understood that some participants might be uncomfortable sharing certain information or they may simply think that the researcher already knew about some things, so they might not include all information. Data were coded by identifying emerging themes from the parent responses to interview questions (Glaser & Laudel, 2013; sect. 4.2). The researcher coded the data by developing and modifying codes as each interview was coded.

Qualitative research explores meaning and perceptions to get a better understanding (DiCicco-Bloom & Crabtree, 2006). In a qualitative study an interview is an intimate meeting in which open-ended questions are used to obtain detailed narratives (p. 317). The interviews encouraged parents in the study to share their perceptions. It is also a process that leaves interpretation of the study to the researcher. “The purpose of the qualitative research interview is to contribute to a body of knowledge that is conceptual and theoretical and is based on the meanings that life experiences hold for the interviewees” (p. 314).

Data Collection and Analysis

Data were collected through personal interviews. Furthermore, tables were used to assist in identifying common patterns and associations in the data. This qualitative study used action research to investigate the perceptions of parents regarding their involvement in parental workshops and their perceptions of the impact their involvement had on student behavior and academic achievement. This study was different from the related literature and research because it focused on specific activities of parents in parental workshops and the impacts of the workshops on a group of inner city African-American and low SES parents.

The term action research was first coined by social psychologist and educator Kurt Lewin. He used it in his work and described it as “work that did not separate the investigation of a problem from the action required to solve the problem” (Ferrance, 2000, p. 7). In action research, the researcher is one of the participants in a collaborative project with the other participants. All of the participants share input for the study. Action research is a reflective process. It involves a cycle of planning, action, observation, and reflection. The goal of action research is to effect action or change. Action research reduces the gap between theory and practice through a cycle of investigation, implementation, evaluation, and theory (p. 7). The

resulting new knowledge is tested through action. Action research was the best methodology for this study because it involves participants who will be affected by the knowledge obtained in the study. It allows participants to develop and test conceptual models that can be used in similar situations (p. 8).

This action research study was initiated by conducting a cycle of 12 60-minute workshops. Parents were interviewed prior to their participation in the workshops, after they completed the workshops, and again two weeks later. Parents were asked about their current levels of parental involvement. Parents examined the expectations and standards booklet for students and developed three goals they had for the parental workshops. Parents participated in specific parental involvement activities outside the workshops. Parents kept an activity log of their participation in the workshops and their activities both at home and at school. After the study participants completed the workshops and parental involvement activities, they were interviewed. Parents were asked about their participation in parental workshops, their activities outside the workshops, and their perceptions of the extent to which their participation impacted their children's behavior and academic achievement. The reactions and perceptions of the parents combined with interview data was analyzed to identify and discuss key themes. Based on the data gathered from the interview process and the activity logs, the researcher developed new workshops to address new themes and issues uncovered. The parents then participated in the second set of workshops. They recorded their activities related to the second set of workshops along with their activities at home and school in their activity logs. The last step of the action research study was another set of interviews.

According to Crouch and McKenzie (2006) 20 participants or less is best for a qualitative study. The smaller sample size helps a researcher build a more intimate relationship with participants and encourages discussion (p. 18). No participants withdrew from the study.

Open-ended interviews along with personal narrative accounts and reflections of the researcher were used to identify any similarities in the themes of the discussions and experiences of the parents in the study. Personal narratives can occur when open-ended questions are used. The researcher recorded personal reflections in a journal during and after workshops and interviews. Interviews provided an intimate atmosphere in which reflection and open discussion can occur; that is not possible with questionnaires or surveys (Creswell, 2007). Open discussion also allowed the researcher to expound on responses from parents. Because of the action research method being used, the analyses of the interviews also included the researcher's reflections. The data were analyzed to determine similarities and differences between the parents' perceptions. Member checking was used to determine whether study participants felt the interview transcripts and themes were accurate (Creswell, 2008). The narratives were presented in summary form.

Data Analysis Procedures

Parents' interview responses were analyzed using a combination of data reduction and thematic analysis. Miles and Huberman (1994) defined data reduction as a type of analysis that allows researchers to organize data in a way that helps them to verify facts and draw conclusions (p.11). Instead of counting words and phrases, thematic analysis identifies and describes understood and clear ideas (Waters, 2016). Once the themes were identified, they were presented in an understandable way. Immediately following each interview, the researcher used the notes taken during the interview to create a summary and synthesize or reduce the data.

Data were placed in tables to help identify patterns in the data. Categories for the tables were listed as they occurred after reading the narratives/interviews. Tables included space for comments. Only those categories relevant to the study were used. Categories include participants (coded for confidentiality), workshop activities, place, time, and perceptions. Codes were used to develop ideas and themes related to parents' perceptions of their participation in workshops and perceptions of the impact their involvement has on their children's behavior and academic success (Namey, Guest, Thairu, & Johnson, 2008). Analysis also included the frequencies of topics within the data.

Tables helped the researcher identify similarities and differences in patterns among parent perceptions. The researcher familiarized himself with the transcribed data from the activity logs and audio recordings of interviews. All 20 interviews were transcribed and checked for accuracy. Transcripts of the interviews and entries from activity logs were imported into NVivo 9, a qualitative analysis software that identifies patterns in text and other data sources. Transcripts were searched and coded line-by-line for items of text that were related to the research questions. As codes emerged, they were compared to ensure that all codes used would contribute to the research.

Data were reviewed several times and it was also coded and re-coded. Finally, the codes were collated into themes. Themes were reviewed and defined. The researcher developed color tables to illustrate the significance and relationships between codes and themes.

In order to maintain confidentiality of participants, codes were used to identify parents. Twenty parents were identified as P1 through P20. One parent for each student was interviewed after they completed the initial set of workshops and after they participated in the newly developed workshops. Parents were asked about their current level of parental involvement.

They were also asked about their participation in parental workshops and their perceptions of the extent to which their participation impacted their children's behavior and academic achievement. The researcher created the interview questions. Prior to interviewing parents, a group of three experts will face validate the interview questions (Simon, 2011, p. 1). Face validity "refers to the extent to which a test or the questions on a test appear to measure a particular construct as viewed by laypersons, clients, examinees, test users, the public, or other stakeholders" (Collegeboard.org, 2016). The last step in the research process was to involve a review of the data to draw appropriate conclusions. Results will be explored to determine the types of improvements necessary to increase parental involvement.

Data were encrypted and stored in locked file cabinets located in a locked safe in the researcher's home. After three years, the researcher will destroy all documents collected in this study using a paper shredder. The researcher will be the only person to access the data and the identity of the participants was protected through numeric identifiers. Deductive disclosure is an issue that will be reviewed by committee.

Limitations and Delimitations of Research Design

Some limitations for this in-depth action research study were time constraints and analysis. However, time constraints were not an issue because everyone was able to show up to the parental workshops on a weekly basis. The data for this study were collected from the responses of the study participants.

Interviews were conducted outside of the church's regularly scheduled programs. Open-ended questions were asked to the participants. All parents spoke English, and the participants' gender did not significantly affect their perceptions (Kim & Hill, 2015). It was assumed that all participants answered interview questions honestly and to the best of their abilities.

For measurement purposes, the operational definition of parental involvement included participation in parent workshops and engaging in parental involvement activities such as supporting and assisting children with homework, studying, and school assigned projects in the home learning environment. Parents were involved in a number of other ways that are not included in this research study. The study was based on parents' perceptions of the extent to which parental workshops impact student behavior and academic achievement. Parental involvement included not only their participation in activities like workshops and home learning, but also the relationship that exists between parents, students, teachers, and the community. The sample only focused on the parents who attended the parent workshops. Participants based their definition of parental involvement on information they received from teachers and the community.

This study focused on parents' perceptions regarding parental involvement in parental workshops along with their perceptions of their active engagement in parental involvement activities, the impact student behavior, and academic achievement. The researcher's study did not examine in depth, the other parental involvement factors, such as planning, related to a successful parental involvement program and partnership between stakeholders.

This study was delimited to parents of a single ethnicity. The participants in this study were African-American parents with students who attended inner city schools in the Desoto, Texas, school district. The study did not examine parental involvement of parents from other ethnic groups or parents with students who attend schools located in rural or suburban school districts throughout the Dallas/Ft. Worth area. The study focused on the convenience sample population of African-American parents with students in grades K–12 because literature

indicates that parental involvement and student academic achievement among minority populations begins to decline at this level (Feuerstein, 2000; Lontos, 1991).

Validation

Transferability. Transferability refers to showing that the results of a study are applicable in other contexts (Lincoln & Guba, 2008). Because the findings of this qualitative action research study were based on parental perceptions and are therefore not transferable. For the findings to be transferable they must be applicable to other populations, situations, and contexts (Creswell, 2014). The researcher cannot prove that the findings are applicable to other populations, situations, or contexts. The results of this study were interpreted while bearing in mind that a source of threat to transferability is that similar studies may not produce the same results. The threat occurs when other researchers do not duplicate study environment, population, and methodology. In such cases, findings may or may not be applicable to other schools. In order to make the results of a study transferable, researchers will be provided with a detailed account of the study environment, population, and methodology. This will be controlled or reduced through variations in the study or customizing the study appropriately (Universal Teacher Staff, 2016). Parental involvement is defined as an activity encompassing a wide range of behaviors including discussing school with children and attending workshops (Feuerstein, 2000). This definition includes learning at home, school-based activities, communication, volunteering in classrooms, attending sporting events, and home-school collaboration. Collaboration between home and school includes two-way communication between parents and teachers through activities such as workshops for parents and parent-teacher conferences.

Credibility. Credibility refers to confidence in the findings on the part of the participants (Lincoln & Guba, 2008). In order to ensure credibility, a group of three experts validated the

interview questions (Simon, 2011, p. 1). “Since from this perspective, the purpose of qualitative research is to describe or understand the phenomena of interest from the participant’s eyes, the participants are the only ones who can legitimately judge the credibility of the results” (Lincoln & Guba, 2008, p. 319).

Researcher bias can be problematic in any research method. In action research, the involvement of the researcher is acceptable. Most research requires the researcher to be objective, but in action research, subjectivity and bias are not only unavoidable, but also natural and acceptable (Charles & Ward, 2007; Ladkin, 2005).

Dependability. The researcher was prudent in conceptualizing the study, collecting data, and interpreting the results. The logic used in selecting study participants and activities that the researcher interviewed and observed will clearly be presented in the researcher’s data analysis. The researcher documented the research process in logs and field notes creating an audit trail. Other researchers repeating this study utilizing the same method and participants will be able to achieve similar results.

Expected Findings

This action research study was designed to analyze parent perceptions regarding their participation in workshops geared toward parental engagement in activities and how it impacted their children’s behavior and academic success. The researcher looked for the following elements during the study: Did parent participation in parental workshops have a positive effect on student behavior and academic success; did certain workshops have a greater effect than others; and did parental involvement in workshops contribute to the academic success of students prompting parents to become involved in the education of their children?

Ethical Issues in the Findings

Conflict of interest. The study was designed to analyze perceptions of parents, their participation in parent workshops, and its impact on their child's behavior and academic success. It was hoped that participation in the study would also make parents aware the benefits parental involvement could have for the long-term success of their child.

Researcher's position. The researcher's position in this qualitative action research study was two-fold; the researcher was both a participant and the principal investigator. In action research the researcher and participants collaborate sharing their input. Action research is a cycle of planning, action, observation, and reflection.

Ethical issues in the findings. Several ethical principles were taken into consideration at the beginning of the study. Parents were assured that their names would be confidential. Participants were informed that participation was voluntary. Parents were advised of the study via a flyer sent home at the church. The flyer invited them to attend a meeting at a local church where they were given all of the details of the study and had the opportunity to volunteer. The participants in the study provided their names and phone numbers on a sign-up sheet. They were given consent forms before they left the first meeting. They were asked to return the consent forms within a week by dropping them in a box that was left at the church for that purpose. Follow-up telephone calls were placed to parents to explain the materials.

Approval for the use of human participants for the research project was obtained through the IRB process prior to conducting any research. In order to maintain the confidentiality and anonymity of all participants, numbers were used (P1–P20) to identify parents involved in the study. The study did not use actual names. No data were collected without approval to conduct the study from the IRB. The participants received explanations of the importance of the research.

The researcher received permission from the pastor of the church and obtained approval through the IRB process to use human participants for the research project.

Summary

The purpose of this action research study was to analyze parents' perceptions regarding the effectiveness of their involvement in parental workshops along with their perceptions of their engagement in parental involvement activities and their impact on student behavior and academic achievement. The demographic variables were age, gender, race, and education level. This chapter includes the purpose and design of the study, the research questions, a description of the research method and population used in this study, instrumentation, data analysis methods, validation methods, ethical issues, and a summary. This study used action research methods to collect data. Instruments used to collect data were activity logs and interviews. Instruments were researched for reliability and validity. Experts in the field of education have, consistently used the instruments the researcher used, in research.

Interview data concerning parental involvement were gathered, along with parents' perceptions regarding student achievement and behavior. Data were compiled and gathered using structured interviews. The study site was small, promoting effective communication among participants. The methodological design and methods described in this chapter were based on research methods originating from existing literature and prior research.

Chapter 4: Data Analysis and Results

A child's first learning experience comes from their parent. When a child starts school parental involvement continues. The purpose of this qualitative action research study was to analyze the perceptions and experiences of parents regarding the effectiveness of their involvement in parental workshops, along with their perceptions of their engagement in parental involvement activities and their impact on student behavior and academic achievement.

Description of Sample

This study's sample population consisted of 20 parents. A convenience sample from a church located in Desoto, Texas, was utilized. The demographic makeup of the church was 72% African-American, 21% Latino/Mexican American, and 7% White. All study participants were at least 18 years-of-age and had children in K–12 grade levels. Due to the overall population of the church, participation in the study consisted of a high percentage of minority parents.

Potential participants were advised of the study via a flyer passed out at the church (Appendix A). The flyer invited parents to attend a meeting at the local church where they were given details regarding the study and the opportunity to volunteer. At the first workshop, parents who chose to participate in the study signed consent forms showing their desire to participate. Additional flyers with information for each workshop were distributed.

Research Methodology and Analysis

This qualitative study used action research to investigate parental perceptions. Action research is an interactive method of collecting information to investigate topics such as parental involvement. This study used the perceptions of parents to gauge the effect of parental workshops and student achievement.

The action research cycle consisted of:

Step 1: Implemented/conducted the parental workshops.

Step 2: Viewed feedback from parents regarding their input, concerns, suggestions, and needs from their activity logs and individual interviews.

Step 3: Redesigned the workshops to better fit the needs of all parents involved in the program.

Step 4: Implemented another six weeks of parental workshops designed based on the parent feedback.

Step 5: Analyzed the data from the second round of activity logs and individual interviews to understand their perceptions.

Step 6: Analyzed entire research cycle and data to develop a deeper understanding through common themes and patterns in the parent's perceptions.

Parent participants were asked to attend six 90-minute workshops that addressed the following topics (Appendix C):

- Expectations and Standards for Students in Grades 8–12
- Learning at Home Activities
- Common Core Resources
- College Planning
- Communicating with Your Children
- What Motivates Children to Learn

The Learning at Home workshop provided parents with skills including home tutoring, study skills, checking and supervising homework, encouraging reading at home, and rewarding performance at school. The “Communicating with Your Children” and “Motivating Your

Children to Learn” workshops showed parents how to properly communicate with and motivate their children to learn.

Parents were asked to keep activity logs of their involvement in the workshops, including how often they attended, what they learned, a list of activities that effectively worked with their children at home and at school, and any positive and negative changes they observe. As a part of the interview process, parents were asked open-ended questions. This initiated a discussion that provided a stronger understanding of parent perceptions of the workshops and the impact of the workshops on their ability to positively impact student behavior and academic achievement over the course of the first six parental workshops.

Data gathered from the initial interview responses, discussions related to the interview responses, follow-up responses related to the second interview, and activity logs were analyzed to determine what new topics might initiate more parental involvement and/or greater impact on student behavior and academic achievement.

New topics were created based on themes and key words found in study participant journal entries and responses to interview questions, including social media literacy, peer pressure, motivation, boosting self-confidence, and reading for pleasure. Some journal entries and responses to interview questions include:

- I am really enjoying the workshops and I’m learning a lot. I have trouble motivating my children. What can I do? My neighbor gives her kids money for doing well. I don’t want to do that (P3–Journal Entry).
- I read so much about drugs in schools. How can I help my child avoid situations like that (P5–Journal Entry)?
- Interview Question 6: What type of information would you like to learn more about?

- Like most kids today, my children are constantly on Facebook or SnapChat. I would like to learn more about Social Media (P11).
- Interview Question 8: What topics would you like to know more about in order to better assist you in developing a positive support system for your child?
- I would like to know more about how I can help my children deal with peer pressure. This is a big problem. I've seen my children so depressed over how another student is treating them (P12).

Study participants were encouraged to write freely and describe what they did with their children daily or weekly in their activity log. An activity log of parental involvement in the workshops helped determine which workshops parents attended, how often they attended, their involvement in the activities with their children at home and at school, and any positive and/or negative things they noted as a result of using the parental involvement strategies. During the first interview session study participants were asked if the workshop training class accommodated their needs as a parent and why or why not. Study participant P14 stated, "I believe the parental workshops training classes are accommodating my needs as a parent because I am able to identify the strengths and weaknesses of my 5th grader regarding reading and math. The parental workshop entitled, 'Expectations and Standards for Students,' helped me understand what was expected of my child and the standards he was required to meet in order to move onto the 6th grade." Additionally, during the interview session participants were asked about their perceptions regarding the information and benefits provided to them and their children in the workshops. P11 stated, "I have two high school children that love social media. I believe social media is safe for teenagers, but your workshop entitled, 'Social media,' helped me realize how to set expectations regarding social media and teach my children the importance of

being careful and mindful of what they post because everyone can see it.” While analyzing the activity logs and interview questions the researcher was able to pinpoint what parents really wanted to learn. Therefore, the researcher reorganized the remaining parental workshops based on their needs and questions.

Themes and keywords from interviews and activity logs included informational, effective, successful/positive changes at home, engaging, increased involvement, motivational, and ways to communicate successfully. For example, P10 had children in grades 6 and 7; she said that the parental workshops were very informational. She loved the activities she was involved in and how she was able to effectively implement certain strategies that her children benefited from. The parental workshops provided her with information that she could keep for the rest of her life. P10 stated, “The parental workshops were very informational and geared towards becoming more influential in my child’s educational outcomes.”

P20 had a child in the 6th grade and was excited about the positive outcomes she had with her child after she left the parental workshops. She really enjoyed college planning because, even though her child was in the 6th grade, it made her realize that college tuition is steadily increasing every year and she must prepare her child to keep good grades to obtain scholarships in the future. P20 stated, “My child wants to attend Harvard University, during the parental workshop I found out that it costs about \$40,000 per year to attend. I was astonished with the amount of tuition, but it made me realize that I needed to be more supportive and concerned about my child’s academic needs.”

P3 was a father who had a child in the 7th grade and was concerned about how to check homework. In one workshop, the researcher suggested implementing school-like routines that encouraged students to use a daily planner and to leave their homework on the kitchen table

when they were done so their parents could check and sign. As an adolescent, my parents introduced this routine and it helped me stay organized and structured. The father loved the idea and started using a daily calendar at home so he could model how to plan effectively. P3 quoted, “I never thought that a simple daily planner could have so much impact on in my child’s life. I have started to see improvements from my child academically and socially because he encourages his friends to stay on top of their schoolwork in order to be successful. Thank you for your suggestion.”

While study participants’ perceptions of the first set of workshops were positive, many parents expressed a need for workshops covering topics they needed more help with. Based on this analysis, per the action research model, the researcher redesigned the parental workshops based on the topics study participants identified. The new workshops were held and the interview process was repeated. Participants participated in the following six new workshops (Appendix D):

Social Media

This workshop taught social media literacy to make parents more knowledgeable about their children’s online activity, cyberbullying, and Internet predators. While reading one of the activity logs, P12 was concerned that social media was taking over her 10th and 12th grade children’s lives. She stated, “My children come home and immediately starts to scroll through Instagram before doing their homework and chores. They are very addicted, please assist me in helping them limit their Social media.”

Dealing with Peer Pressure

Parents were provided with tips and skills for helping their children deal with peer pressure. P13 was a mother of a 3rd grader who was a follower and started to behave like his

friends. She was greatly concerned with his behavior the last couple of months and needed some engaging techniques that could help her child become a leader and not a follower. She quoted, “My son is a follower, please help me instill in him the importance of finding friends that share the same values as him.”

How to Get Children to Read

Parents learned how to help their child develop a life-long love of reading. P16 was a concerned father, his daughter was in the 9th grade but was on a 5th grade reading level. He wanted suggestions on how to improve her reading level. He stated, “My daughter is in special education, but I need more tips and strategies I can use at home to improve her reading comprehension.”

Signs of Depression and Suicide

Parents learned how to recognize the signs of depression and suicide in their children, so they can help them through their struggle and prevent possible tragedies. P5 actually had a child in the 10th grade that tried to commit suicide due to bullying from another student. He was heartbroken and did not understand why his daughter would want to take her own life. He quoted, “We provide everything that our children want/need and always support them no matter the situation. Please help me identify the signs of depression so I can help my daughter with peer pressure.”

Motivating Kids to Be Active and Healthy

Eating the right foods and staying active can have positive or negative impacts on a child’s academic success. Topics discussed included the different types of food to eat, staying active in sports, and other ideas. P17 was a mother with two overweight children and was concerned about their eating habits and lack of motivation to exercise and lose weight. She was a

diabetic and did not want her boys to have to suffer like she did growing up with this disease. She stated, “High blood pressure and diabetes run in the family, how can I keep my boys more active and encourage them to eat better and to live a better lifestyle?”

The Final Verdict

The researcher completed all parental interviews and collected all activity logs to finish collecting data for the study. During the interviews and reading the activity logs, the researcher noticed that goals of the parental workshops were being met and parents were becoming more involved in their child’s academic success. For example, P2 stated, “I have a son in the 2nd grade that is struggling with mathematics. ‘Parental Workshop 1: Expectations and Standards for Students,’ really prepared me for what he is supposed to learn in 2nd grade Math and gave me strategies and techniques I can use to assist him in and getting ready for STAAR exam in 3rd grade.

Summary of the Findings

Parental involvement in student education has been a cause for concern for many years (Epstein, 2009, Fan & Chen, 2001). Research suggests that increased parental involvement has a positive effect on student academic achievement and behavior. An examination of parental perceptions, experiences of parents regarding the effectiveness of their involvement in parental workshops, along with their perceptions of their engagement in parental involvement activities and their impact on student behavior and academic achievement, revealed that workshops provided parents with resources and skills that increased their involvement in their children’s education and had a positive impact on student behavior and academic success.

The research questions that guided the study were:

Q1: What are the perceptions of parents regarding the effectiveness of their participation

in parental workshops and activities as it relates to their level of participation in their child's education?

Q2: What parental workshop activities did parents believe had the most impact on their involvement in their child's education and behavior?

Q3: What are the perceptions of parents regarding the impact of their involvement in parent workshops on their child's motivation to succeed academically?

One parent for each student was interviewed after they completed the initial set of workshops and again after they participated in the newly developed workshops. One-on-one interviews using open-ended questions generated a variety of responses that provided strong data. To ensure accuracy the researcher recorded interviews and transcribed audio recordings using an iPad. A journal was used to record reflections of the researcher. Study participants were asked to review interview transcripts to ensure accuracy. Confidentiality of participants was maintained using the codes P1 through P20 (Table 1).

Table 1

Demographics

Parent (pseudonym)	Role	School (pseudonym)	Child(ren) in grade(s)
P1	Mother	RY	K, 2
P2	Mother	AW	1, 2
P3	Father	OS	7
P4	Mother	RY	4
P5	Father	DH	10
P6	Father	OS	7, 8
P7	Mother	AW	3, 4
P8	Mother	AW	2, 5
P9	Mother	RY	3, 4
P10	Mother	OS	6, 7
P11	Father	DH	9, 11
P12	Mother	DH	10, 12
P13	Mother	AW	3
P14	Mother	RY	5
P15	Mother	OS	7, 8
P16	Father	DH	9
P17	Mother	OS	7, 8
P18	Mother	AW	4, 5
P19	Mother	RY.	5
P20	Mother	OS	6

Parents participating in the study were able to share their perceptions by answering interview questions and keeping a journal. Themes and key words provide a better understanding of the parent’s perceptions regarding parental workshops. While collecting data, the researcher began to see key words that provided the definition of each theme.

Theme 1: Informational

Parents wrote about how the parental workshops were informative. Parents specifically wrote about the things they learned and what they could improve upon at home while working with their children. During the interviews, participants shared success stories about how they used the information from the workshops to help their children become better students. The

researcher wanted to provide parents with useful and interesting information that would compel and motivate them to seek knowledge about their children on their own. There is no perfect way to raise a child because everyone is different. However, parents should always begin by researching ways to help their children be successful in life. Most children look up to their parents; therefore, it was critical that the researcher provided information that would be beneficial in making them realize their importance for their children's academic career. The researcher believes the more resources a person has access to, the more prone he or she is to overcome obstacles children may arise. P14 stated, "The parental workshops were so informative, that I began sharing the resources with my co-workers and church members. Mr. Thompson provided me with a plethora of useful information anyone can use with his or her children. I was excited and eager to learn more about how my child can become more successful and be the lawyer she wants to be every week."

- P11: "The parental workshops were very informative. The topics were engaging and more importantly I learned skills that helped me motivate my children."
- P17: "I can't believe all of the wonderful information I got at these workshops! I learned skills that were very effective in helping me to help my children. I saw a very positive change in both of my children's grades and their behavior."

Theme 2: Effective

Parents spoke about how their involvement in parental workshops had been effective in teaching them the skills they needed to help their children improve academically and behaviorally. Many parents were surprised at how effective their involvement proved to be in producing positive changes in their children.

Data collected from interviews and activity logs showed that several parents used the theme/keyword *effective* when describing their perceptions of parental workshops. Parents saw positive changes in their child both academically and in their behavior. They recognized how effective their active participation in the workshops was in bringing about these positive changes. During the creation of the parental workshops, the researcher studied activities that would produce a long-lasting effect on parents and their children. One of the main goals of the parental workshops was to be effective in the household to improve student academic success. Additionally, while collecting data, the researcher could tell that the parental workshops were accomplishing the purpose. P8 stated, “Because of the parental workshops my second grader is reading on a 3rd grade reading level. One of the parental workshops taught me to buy books based on my child’s interest. He loves sports, so I began buying books on a kindergarten level and within 3 months he began reading 3rd grade books without mispronouncing any words.”

- P9: “I think the workshops were very effective at providing me with the skills and information I needed to help my child be more successful in school.”
- P6: “I found the workshops had a very positive affect on my involvement with my child’s education and on my child’s grades.”

Theme 3: Successful/Positive Changes at Home

Parents shared success stories and any positive changes that were occurring at home with their child. During interviews parents would tell me that the parental workshops were successful and produced positive outcomes in their children. Some parents said they saw an immediate increase in student interest once they were able to implement strategies conducive to student learning. The researcher loves success stories, so it brought the researcher great joy when parents would tell the researcher how successful the parental workshops were. One of the goals of the

parental workshops were for them to be successful, but most of all positive. P19 quoted, “One particular workshop taught me the importance of watching my language and tone of my voice when correcting my child. I would get so angry and lash out with harsh words, but the parental workshop encouraged me not to yell but to listen to why my child made that choice. This communication tool was very successful in my household and my whole family is now learning how to spend time listening.”

- P8: “The workshops were wonderful. They were very informative. After attending the workshops, I was able to help my children with their homework. Anyway, they were very beneficial – my children started bringing home good grades for a change!”
- P16: “Yes They were informational and beneficial. I am able to provide the help he needs because I have the skills. My son is bringing home A’s and B’s and he is actually enjoying school now.”

Theme 4: Engaging

No matter what topic is taught or discussed, it is important that it be presented in a way that grabs the attention of the audience. Parents spoke about how interested they were in the workshop topics. The researcher wanted to ensure that the parental workshops were engaging, but more importantly the researcher wanted to ensure that parents were able to learn skills that helped motivate them to learn. The researcher has been an educator for 11 years and knows the importance of keeping students engaged so they can be life-long learners instead of just learning something for an occasion. Parents were impressed by how engaged they were and they were able to implement the activities that engaged their children at home. P11 stated, “I am so glad that the parental workshops were not boring, because after a long day of work I did not want to come to training and get lectured all day. The activities were beneficial and helpful in

understanding what it takes to raise a successful child. I have definitely learned a lot from the parental workshops and will continue to implement what I learned throughout the maturation process of my child.”

- P11: “The parental workshops were very informative. The topics were engaging and more importantly I learned skills that helped me motivate my children.”
- P16: “Yes They were very engaging. I was so excited about what I was learning. I am more comfortable with helping him because I have the skills to help him. My son is bringing home A’s and B’s and he is actually enjoying school now.”

Theme 5: Increased Involvement

The researcher chose the topic for this dissertation because there is a need for increased involvement among parents. Studies show that parents who are actively involved in a child’s academics have a positive impact on their children’s success. Parents were able to identify certain involvement strategies that let their children know they supported them no matter the situation.

A search for similarities and patterns in parent responses to interview questions and activity log entries showed that parent believed their involvement in the workshops increased their involvement with their children’s education. Increased involvement includes helping with homework, communicating, attending school functions, and modeling desired behaviors.

Parents’ perceptions indicated that they believed their involvement in workshops had a positive impact on their children’s academic success and behavior. Parents learned skills that enabled them to help their children. Their confidence in their ability to help their children is a guiding factor in their increased involvement.

- P20: “Definitely! Now that I know what the school expects of my child and I have developed the skills I need to help her I spend a lot more time helping her. Since I became more involved I’ve seen a positive change in her grades and in her behavior.”
- P4: “The skills I learned at the workshops increased my involvement with my son. I think I’m more comfortable because I’m sure of myself. I was always afraid I might do more harm than good especially when he brought home math homework. These workshops were great! Now he’s happy because he’s doing well in school.”

Theme 6: Motivational

Parents shared how the parental workshops motivated them to be more dedicated and committed to helping their children become better students. Motivating children was a dominant theme in parent interviews and activity logs. Motivating children to learn can be difficult. Attempts to motivate a child to read and learn often fail when faced with competition from video games, television, and a host of other technologies. When searching for similarities and patterns in parent responses to interview questions and activity log entries, *motivational* was mentioned by every parent. Workshops motivated parents to become more involved with their children’s education, and they also learned how to motivate their children to learn.

Parents’ attitudes toward learning play an important role in their children’s academic success. Parent involvement in workshops can motivate their children to learn. The workshops provide parents with skills that allow them to help their children. Their example is a motivational factor for children.

- P3: “I’ve been able to use the things I’m learned to really motivate my child. I’ve been spending every day with him tutoring him. We read together and he has started bringing home books from the library.”
- P10: “The workshops have motivated me to get more involved and I’ve motivated my children through my involvement. Their grades have improved and their behavior has, too.”
- P2: “I think the workshops that taught home tutoring, study skills, and encouraged reading at home had the most impact on my child. I think the workshop on Expectations and Standards had the least impact. I think that the other workshops provided skills that we could use to help them improve their grades.”
- P5: “I think the “Learning at Home” workshop and the “Communicating with Your Children” workshop had the most impact. I learned how to tutor my children and encourage them to read. I also learned how to talk to them about what they needed help with. I would say the Expectations and Standards workshop had the least impact. The workshops that gave us tools we could use had more impact.”

Theme 7: Communication

During the parent interviews, one of the themes was communication. Parents mentioned communication when responding to interview questions 1, 2, and 4. They stated that their participation in the workshops has been instrumental in increasing communication with their children and improving their relationships. Parents were more comfortable asking their children about what was going on at school. The workshops gave them skills that enabled them to help their children with homework and other common problems such as peer pressure. Children that believe their parents are interested and involved are more comfortable communicating with

them. Communication takes several forms of face-to-face communication, including texting, Skype, email. Regardless of what form it takes, data suggest that communication is important in building strong relationships between parents and their children. The following table provides a graphic representation of parental responses across key themes.

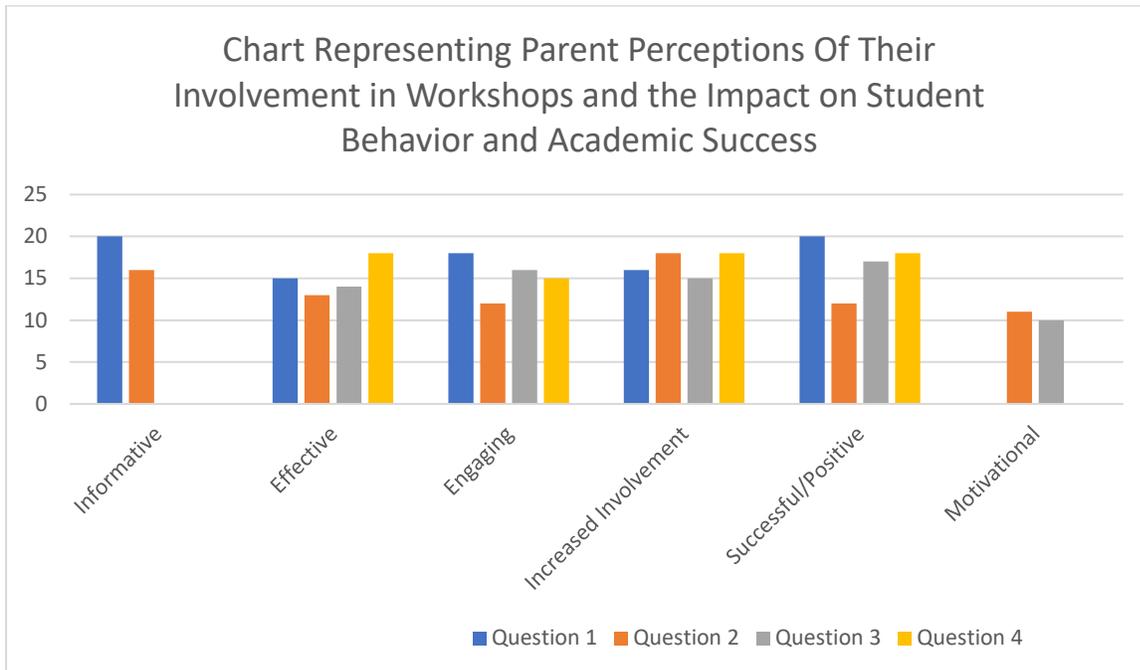


Figure 1. Parent perceptions of their involvement in workshops and the impact on student behavior and academic success.

First Set of Interview Questions

Thematic analysis searched for similarities in interview responses and activity log entries, locating and identifying patterns in parent experience and perceptions. Themes were found by reading transcripts of interviews and activity log entries line by line. Themes and keywords were highlighted, and codes were created. Communication was not only prevalent, it was important in relation to the research.

- P7: “I think the most important thing I’ve gotten from these workshops is the ability to really communicate with my children about what they need and what is going on in their lives. Now I have the tools to help them succeed in school and they know I want to help.”
- P14: “My son and I have communicated more since I started attending the workshops. I am more comfortable helping him because I have the tools to help him. We could talk about what help he needed.”

Presentation of the Data and Results

Data show that parents found the first set of workshops both engaging and informative. Parents stated that their involvement in workshops increased their involvement in their children’s education. Their involvement also led to positive changes in their children’s behavior and academic success. Data show that parents believed that the workshops that provided them with skills that improved communication with their children and showed them how to encourage their children to read and study had the most impact on student behavior and academic success (Appendix F). Responses to interview questions were analyzed using a combination of data reduction and thematic analysis.

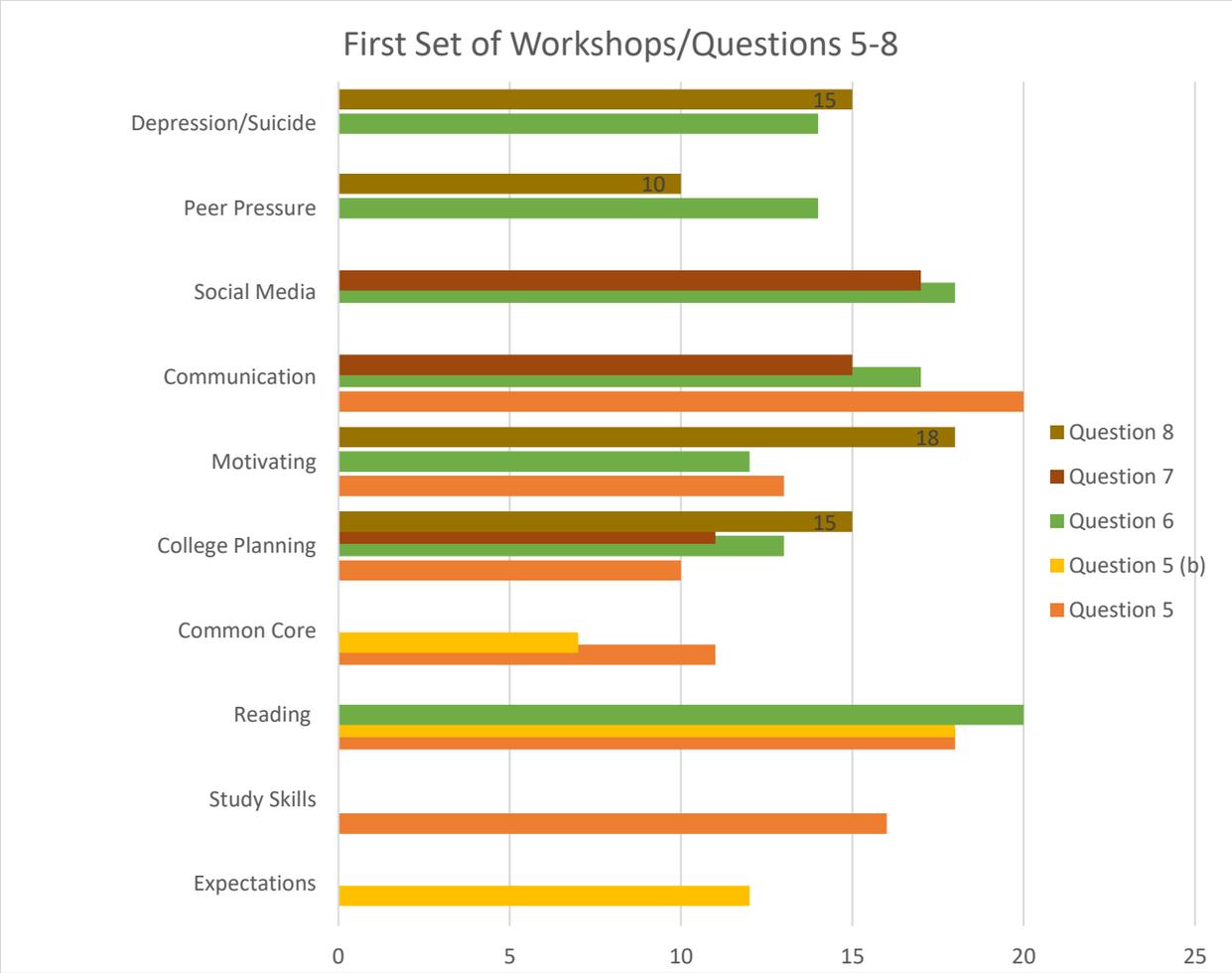


Figure 2. First set of workshops/questions 5–8.

First Set of Workshops

Coding was used in this qualitative action research study to help organize the data for interpretation. A code in qualitative research can be a word or short phrase. In this study, parents shared their perceptions of their experiences through parental involvement workshops. Because each parent’s perceptions may vary, the researcher searched for patterns, grouping like things together as well as those things that are similar. “Patterns can be categorized by similarity, difference, frequency, sequence, correspondence, and causation” (Saldana, 2008, p. 5). The coding process consisted of a number system and color scheme to code responses to interview

questions and activity log entries. A review of the data revealed themes and patterns that were then categorized.

Themes and keywords from interviews and activity logs include *informational, effective, successful/positive changes at home, engaging, increased involvement, motivational, and ways to communicate successfully*. Once themes were identified, the data were placed in tables to help identify possible patterns in the data. The researcher developed codes/themes related to parental perceptions of their participation in workshops and their perceptions of the impact their involvement had on their children's behavior and academic success. During the interviews, the key themes used most often when discussing parent involvement in workshops and the perceived impact were *informative, effective, successful/positive, engaging, increased involvement, motivational, and communication* (Appendix E).

Second Set of Workshops

After the first set of interviews, the researcher analyzed the data from the interviews and activity logs. These data were used to design the second set of workshops. During the first set of data collection, parents indicated that they needed more information on the topics such as Social Media, Dealing with Peer Pressure, How to Get Children to Read, Signs of Depression and Suicide, and Motivating Kids to be Active and Healthy, which guided the second set of workshops. Data from the second set of workshops indicated that parents believed the workshops provided them with skills that increased their levels of involvement in their children's education and had a positive effect on student behavior and academic success. During the interviews, the key themes used most often when discussing parent involvement in the second set of workshops and the perceived impact were *positive, increased involvement, and valuable* (Appendix G). Most parents said that the workshops they found most helpful were the Social Media workshop

and the Motivating Kids to Be Active and Healthy workshop. The Social Media workshop stressed the importance of social media literacy and provided parents with social media skills that helped them communicate with their children. The Motivating Kids to Be Active and Healthy workshop stressed the importance of being physically active and the positive effects of physical activity on student academics and self-esteem.

The majority of parents described the workshops as informative opportunities that provided them with resources that helped them to help their children succeed academically. Several parents described the workshops as a place where they felt at ease to discuss their concerns and their hopes for their children. Parents are sometimes unsure of how they can be involved in their children’s education. The workshops not only provided parents with resources, but also with the skills to use those resources. Parents indicated that they saw positive improvements in their children academically and behaviorally (Appendix G).

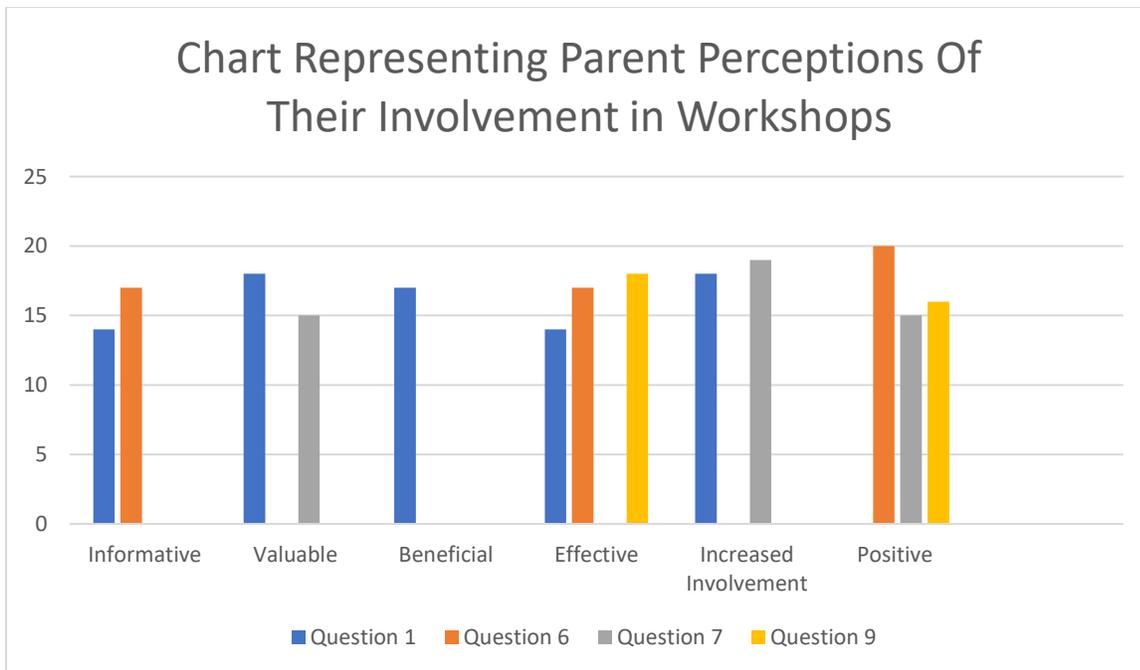


Figure 3. Parent perceptions of the involvement in workshops.

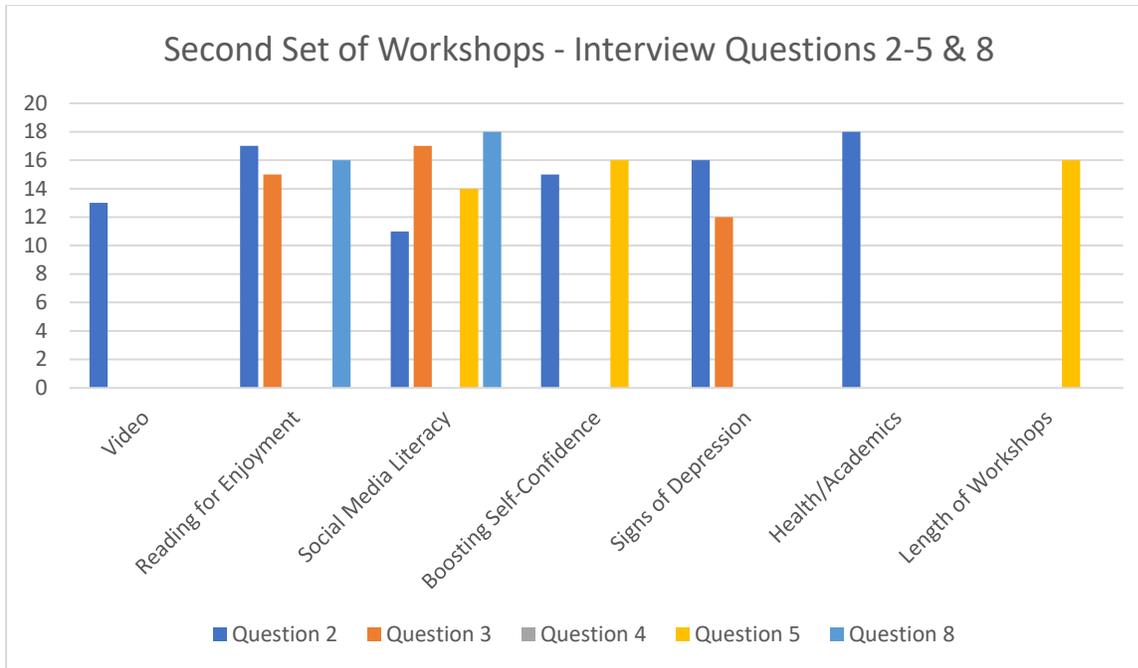


Figure 4. Second set of workshops.

Second Set of Workshops and Interview Questions

Workshops created an environment that welcomed parents and provided parents with tips and tools to engage their child. Some things may seem obvious, but some were overlooked. For example, parents were asked to provide their children with a quiet environment in which they could do their homework. Many parents found that this was one of the most important strategies they had in helping their child succeed academically.

When asked about the impact that the workshops had on their child, P2 said, “My son and daughter have shown positive improvement in their attitudes about themselves and school, doing homework, and attending school. Their grades and behavior has improved dramatically.”

Summary

In the last workshop, parents shared their feelings regarding the workshops and the impact their involvement had on student behavior and academic success. P12 said, “I understand now how important our involvement is and how great our involvement influences student

learning.” Students who knew that their parents were involved in their education communicated with their parents more openly and exhibited positive attitudes toward learning and improved behavior.

Findings indicated that parents participating in this study increased their involvement in their children’s education. While some parents required more help in certain areas than others, the study showed that, overall, parents found that their participation in any one of the workshops increased their involvement at school and at home and that their involvement had a positive impact on student behavior and academic success.

Chapter 5: Discussion and Conclusion

Introduction

The U.S. government has passed several pieces of legislation meant to increase parent involvement and close the success gap that exists between low SES/minority students and White students, including the No Child Left Behind (NCLB) Act of 2001 and Goals 2000: Educate America Act of 1994. Research has proven that there is no substitute for parental involvement to improve student academic success and behavior (Epstein, 2010; Hoover-Dempsey & Sandler, 2007; Toldson & Lemmons, 2013). Students who know their parents are involved in their education make better grades, behave better, and are more likely to attend college.

The purpose of this qualitative action research study was to analyze the perceptions and experiences of parents regarding the effectiveness of their involvement in parental workshops along with their perceptions of their engagement in parental involvement activities and their impact on student behavior and academic achievement. It is hoped that the findings of this study may help educators and parents to strengthen parental involvement and improve student behavior and achievement.

Research was conducted using the five steps involved in action research: identifying the issue, collecting data, interpreting data, taking action, and reflecting (Ferrance, 2000). Face-to-face interviews with 20 parents were conducted immediately following their participation in each workshop series. Parents were interviewed immediately at the end of their participation in the workshop series. Based on the action research cycle of planning, action, observation, and reflection, their responses to interview questions and activity logs of their participation in the workshops and their activities both at home and at school were used to develop six new workshop topics. Parents kept an activity log to track their involvement in home and school

activities. The activity log documented what they learned and listed the activities that worked effectively at home with their students.

Data for the study were gathered through conducting personal interviews with parents involved in the parent workshops. The researcher reviewed the transcripts from all participants in the study. A review of responses to the questions helped the researcher identify similarities and differences between the responses. The review helped the researcher in the analysis of the data. The researcher sorted and coded patterns and themes based on the recurrent themes in participant responses (Yin, 2011, p. 187).

This qualitative action research study identified workshops that increased parental involvement, particularly with low SES/minority students, and discovered the similarities and differences in perceptions of parents regarding the impact of the workshops. The researcher identified specific workshops that schools can use as a model that might increase parental involvement and improve student academic success and behavior. Parent involvement is a critical component of the academic success of students. It is hoped that the information provided by this study will be beneficial for schools to establish similar parental involvement workshops that will increase parental involvement, improve student academic success and behavior, and narrow the success gap that exists between low SES/minority students and White students.

There has been a lack of literature on workshops that could be used to encourage and increase parental involvement. This chapter reviews, analyzes, and discusses the findings of this study in relation to relevant literature. This chapter also discusses the potential impact for students who struggle academically and behaviorally.

Summary of the Results

The research questions were answered by themes that emerged from interview and activity log data reported in Chapter 4. The first research question focused on parent's perception of the effectiveness of their participation in parental workshops and activities as it related to their level of participation in their child's education. The parent's answers revealed several themes. Data from the study provided the researcher with information that parents have different perceptions of effectiveness. Answers from the parents revealed that many found the workshops effective at increasing their involvement in their child's education. Others found that the workshops were effective in improving their children's academic success and behavior. The findings indicate that parents want to become more involved with their child's education, but often lack the knowledge and skills necessary. When parents know what is expected of their children and provided with the resources to meet those expectations within the home, they are more likely to become involved in their children's education. The workshops provided parents with the knowledge and skills they needed and desired to help their children. Schools should develop parental involvement programs and workshops that are scheduled on a regular basis at times that parents can attend after work.

The second research question focused on workshop activities parents believed had the most impact on their involvement in their children's education and behavior. Findings indicated parents believe workshops that provide them skills to help their children had the most impact on their involvement in their children's education and behavior. Themes and keywords in the data showed workshops that provide communication skills, home tutoring skills, study skills, and encouraging reading at home had the most impact on parents' involvement in their children's education and behavior. Children notice when a parent is interested in what they are doing.

Parents took home skills that allowed them to actively support their children. Possessing a solid knowledge base was instrumental in improving the path of communication between parents and their children.

The third research question focused on the perceptions of parents regarding the impact of their involvement in parental workshops on their children's motivation to succeed academically. When searching for similarities and patterns in data, *motivational* was a dominant theme – mentioned by every parent. The data revealed that parental involvement increased by participating in workshops that modeled behaviors to motivate their children to succeed academically. The workshops provided parents with skills that enabled them to create a richer learning environment at home. Parents described home learning environments that engaged and motivated their child as a distraction free study space with a desk, pens and pencils, and reference materials. The students noticed the change in their parents and were motivated to learn. Many parents noticed an improved self-esteem in their child. Parents noted that prior to their involvement in the workshops their child's academic performance was low. Parents attribute the increase in their involvement and the positive effects on their child's motivation to succeed academically to their involvement in the parental involvement workshops.

Discussion of the Results

Based on the findings, the researcher concluded that parents believed their involvement in parental workshops and their engagement in parental involvement activities had a positive impact on student behavior and academic achievement. The workshops were an essential part of increasing parental involvement in education and in improving student behavior and academic achievement.

Based on the data, parents believed that parental involvement workshops are a strong model for schools to follow to increase parental involvement and positively impact student behavior and academic success. Common themes described the perceptions of the participants concerning the effectiveness of their participation in parental workshops and activities as it relates to their level of participation in their children's education. Hosting a variety of engaging workshops that provided parents with skills they can use to help their children helped parents understand the importance of their involvement in their child's education. Workshops gave parents specific skills and strategies they could use at home, such as tutoring, study skills, encouraging reading for enjoyment, checking, and motivational skills. Parents indicated that the workshops were effective at both increasing their involvement in their children's education and positively impacting their child's academic success and behavior. Parental involvement workshops provide an alternative for parents to become more involved in their child's education. Jeynes (2011) stated, "We need to identify what creative actions are most likely to attract parents to become involved" (p. 172). The effectiveness of parental involvement workshops can be seen with the increase in parent involvement.

The majority of parents indicated that they saw the greatest impact after using skills they learned in the Communicating with Your Children and Learning at Home workshops from the first series of workshops. Parents stated the workshops illustrated how they could establish a supportive two-way communication with their children. This two-way communication made them feel more comfortable with talking to their children about school and the problems and successes they have at school. Parents who communicate with their child about school, after school activities, plans for college, and their expectations to succeed have children who succeed in school. Parents were given specific strategies to help their child with homework. They were

also provided with examples of what teachers expected when homework was turned in. Parental expectations and involvement are related to student academic success (Jeynes, 2016, p. 211). Parents had varied opinions about which workshops had the greatest impact on their involvement in their child's education and behavior and what alternative workshops they wanted to participate in. The second workshop series included alternatives such as Social Media, Dealing with Peer Pressure, and How to Get Children to Read.

Parents indicated that their children became more motivated to succeed academically after they became involved in parental involvement workshops. Research shows a strong relationship between involved parents and student academic success and behavior (Epstein, 2010; Jeynes, 2011). Parental involvement in the workshops had a direct positive impact on student desire to learn and succeed academically. Parents learned about what was expected of their children at school and took the opportunity to learn how they could help. The parental involvement workshops motivated parents to become more involved and to learn how they could help their children. They modeled behaviors that motivated similar behaviors in their children, leading to positive changes academically and behaviorally. Children notice when a parent is interested in what they are doing. Parental involvement has a positive impact on student behavior, attitudes about learning, and self-esteem. It motivates them to succeed.

Discussion of the Results in Relation to the Literature

Parental involvement workshops can be used to support parental involvement and positively impact student behavior and academic success in low SES/minority students. Parental involvement workshops provide an opportunity for parents and schools to work together to support student academic achievement. There is a strong relationship between parental involvement and student academic success. Like Epstein's model, this study showed that

parental involvement programs such as workshops increase parental involvement and positively impact student academic success and behavior (Epstein, 2010). When provided with the tools and skills to support their children, there is a positive correlation between parental involvement programs and academic achievement of African-American students (Jeynes, 2016, p. 211).

Parental involvement workshops motivate parents to become more involved in their children's education because the workshops are designed to meet the needs of the parents. The workshops provide the parents with the skills they need so they feel more comfortable with their abilities to help their children. Children notice when their parents are interested in their education, their lives, and their future. Parents' involvement in the daily activities of their children strengthens their relationship and positively impacts their education, thus leading to academic success.

Parents in this study were motivated to educate themselves so they could improve their children's learning. Parents can help students improve their schoolwork by modeling behaviors such as reading for pleasure, working together, and increasing skills. According to Hoover-Dempsey and Sandler's (1997) model of parental involvement, student achievement is influenced by modeling, reinforcement, and direct instruction. If a child perceives education as a positive and collaborative experience with a goal of academic achievement, then the child will be more likely to succeed. These parental workshops focused on providing parents with specific skills and strategies to help their children at home and school and increasing parental involvement.

Limitations

This qualitative action research study was limited to the responses shared by parents to the degree to which participants were comfortable providing their perceptions. The information parents shared was limited to each parent's perspective and experiences. The findings of this

study were limited to a small sample in of 20 African-American parents. A larger sample of parents could have given additional insight into parental involvement by adding information related to their respective understanding. Triangulating the data from interviews and logs verified the results and ensured the accuracy of the analysis conducted in the transcripts and activity logs.

Implications

The findings of this study provided strong information about how parents perceive the effectiveness of their participation in parental workshops and activities. This study is important for ensuring all stakeholders including parents, students, and educators understand the impact of their involvement in their children's education. Parent workshops provide an opportunity for parents to learn and understand how they can help their children. Workshops can provide consistent opportunities for parents and children to connect. Workshops include multiple informative sessions and can be developed according to parent interests and availability. They can also be used as a tool to address parent concerns. This study can benefit educators who choose to use it to build relationships with parents and their communities.

Recommendations for Further Research

This qualitative action research study analyzed the perceptions and experiences of parents regarding the effectiveness of their involvement in parental workshops along with their perceptions of their engagement in parental involvement activities and their impact on student behavior and academic achievement. Further research might explore the impact of parental involvement in workshops as it is perceived by educators to obtain additional useful information for developing workshops and programs. Conducting a study with a larger sample of parents as well as the studying the perceptions of parental involvement from parents with students attending

charter or private schools may also be useful. Additional studies might look at quantitative data such as the impact parental involvement workshops have on student scores on standardized tests. A quantitative study might also explore or compare the perceptions of English speaking parents and non-English speaking parents regarding the effectiveness of their involvement in parental workshops and parental involvement activities and the impact their involvement has on student behavior and student achievement.

Conclusion

This study has revealed that parents have very positive perceptions of the effectiveness of their involvement in parental workshops, their engagement in parental involvement activities, and their impact on student behavior and academic achievement. The findings of this study have also shown that parents understand how important parental involvement is in education and the many ways their involvement helps their children. From the data gathered, the researcher is convinced that parental workshops are a strong parental involvement tool that benefits parents, students, and educators.

There has been a lack of research on workshops and programs that could be used to encourage and increase parental involvement. This study showed that low SES/minority parents want to be involved in the education of their children, just like high SES/majority parents. When asked why they were not involved in their children's education, most parents stated that they lacked the skills and strategies to help their children and believed that they might do more harm than good. Workshops that address the needs of parents and students must be developed. Parents who were made aware of the expectations for their children and taught the skills that they can use at home to support their children, including home tutoring, reading at home, and math, noted a positive impact on their child's academic success and behavior.

When workshops are conducted in a place where parents are comfortable and at times that are convenient for parents, parents will attend them. Epstein (2010) showed programs or workshops that engage parents in their children's education at home are essential to student academic success (Epstein, 2010). If teachers are to encourage positive attitudes and outcomes for parents and students, they must develop workshops that effectively engage and train parents. They must also be conducted during times that are convenient for the parents. It is not the sole responsibility of teachers to educate children. Teachers, parents, and students share the responsibility of ensuring student academic success. Educators can develop strong workshop series based on the one used in this study to involve parents in their children's education.

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Appendix A: Flyer



Program Goals

Academic expectations and Standards for students in all grade levels, how to help your child improve study skills through at home activities, Common Core resources, attendance and participation in school, and communication tactics with your children.



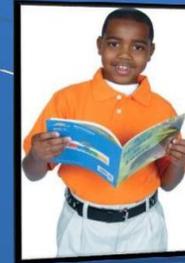
**Needed!! Parents of school-aged children
Kinder – 12th Grades**

Interest Meeting Information:

May 17, 2017 @ 6:30 p.m.

What to Expect:

- ✓ This parent workshop will meet 1 time per week for 12 weeks.
- ✓ You do not have to attend every time!
- ✓ All materials for student success will be supplied
- ✓ I would like an activity log to be filled out by parents (10-15 minutes per week)
- ✓ I would like to interview you 2 times about your experiences in the workshop (30minutes per interview)



Parental Workshops:

**Leading Your Child
To Academic Success**

1301 Parkerville Road
DeSoto, Texas 75115
(469) 855-1998
dwainjr11@yahoo.com

Appendix B: Interview Questions

First Set of Interview Questions:

1. Is the parental workshop training class accommodating your needs as a parent? Why or Why not?
2. Do you feel that the parental workshops have been informational and beneficial for you and your child? Why or Why not?
3. Do you believe the parental workshops increased your involvement with your child as a result of utilizing the information you gained, and if so did they impact your child's academic and/or behavioral success? Why or Why not?
4. What are your perceptions about the outcome of the parental workshops and how did it impact your interaction with your child's behavior and/or academic success?
5. What parental workshop activities did you believe had the most impact on your child's behavior and/or academic success? Which one had the least? Why did one activity have more impact or less impact than the other?
6. What type of information would you like to learn more about?
7. What additional information or skills do you believe could improve your interactions with your child?
8. What topics would you like to know more about in order to better assist you in developing a positive support system for your child?
9. Was the format of the workshop beneficial to helping you understand the information and how it can be positively utilized with your child?
10. What improvements or changes could be made to better present this information?

Second Set of Interview Questions:

1. Do you feel that the parental workshops were valuable in helping you utilize strategies to help your child succeed academically and behaviorally? Why or Why not?
2. Which activities from the parental workshops were beneficial and what knowledge did you gain throughout the process?
3. What things were most helpful from the parental workshops?
4. What things could be improved upon?
5. What topics do you believe you need more information on?

6. What is your overall perception of the parental workshops?
7. What are your perceptions regarding the effectiveness of your participation in parental workshops and activities as it relates to your level of participation in your child's education?
8. What parental workshop activities did you believe had the most impact on your involvement in your child's education and behavior?
9. What are your perceptions regarding the impact of your involvement in parental workshops on your child's motivation to succeed academically?

Appendix C: First Set of Workshops

Expectations and Standards for Students in Grades 8–12

Parents learned what was expected of students for academic success in school environments. Additionally, school standards related to academic performance and student behavior and regulations were discussed. Parents examined the expectations and standards booklet for students and developed three goals they would like to set for the parental workshops.

Learning at Home Activities

Parents were shown a PowerPoint presentation on the importance of parents assisting with activities at home, such as home tutoring, study skills, checking and supervising homework, encouraging reading at home and rewarding performance at school. They were shown a public video on You Tube entitled, “Best Practices of Highly Effective Tutors.” Parents created a list of strategies they could use at home to assist their child with their academic success. The last 10 minutes of the parental workshop parents were placed in groups of 4 taking turns tutoring one another. The researcher modeled tutoring and the parents acted out their roles.

Common Core Resources

Parents were shown a PowerPoint presentation explaining how Common Core’s initiative is Preparing America’s Students for College and Career. Parents reviewed what their child should be learning in English and Mathematics in each grade along with the new educational standards for ALL subjects. The researcher provided direction on how parents can support their child at home using a public website: <http://www.corestandards.org/what-parents-should-know/>. Lastly, the researcher taught parents how to navigate through certain websites and applications that they could use to assist their child at home.

College Planning

Students who believe that their parents are interested in their education make better grades and are more likely to go on to college after graduating high school. Parents were equipped with knowledge and skills to help their children with college opportunities and financial planning. Parents looked up different colleges their child would like to attend and estimated the cost of tuition for four years using a spreadsheet. Parents got a glimpse of how much it costs to attend a four-year college. They developed a plan to help their child obtain scholarships through academic achievement. The researcher showed parents how to apply for different scholarships, displayed the different requirements to gain admission to college, and discussed the importance of grades and taking college entrance exams.

Communicating with Your Children

Literature showed that two-way communication between parents and their children regarding classes, school activities, grades and college planning was a problem. Parents who are able to properly communicate with their children about these topics are able to motivate and inspire their children to be all they can be. Parents watched videos showcasing positive and supportive, as well as negative and non-supportive ways to communicate with their children. Parents also got the opportunity to role-play with other parents using successful strategies they learned from the videos.

What Motivates Children to Learn

Children are curious. They learn from everything they do. Good study habit starts early, so helping little kids form good attitudes about learning is critical for parents if they are to motivate their children to learn. Parents must be very cautious about the use of many extrinsic rewards, since this

can severely interfere with a child's motivational development. Parents were shown that praise for an accomplishment is appropriate, but they must be sure that their child is doing a task because he or she is interested, not because he or she thinks it will bring praise from them. They were taught that praise for effort is better to motivate kids to learn and to achieve. Parents received different magazines and created a one-page biography of meaningful things in their life. They cut and pasted different symbols, pictures, words, etc. on a sheet of paper that represented their different skills and personality. The object of this exercise was to allow parents to become more familiar with whom they are so they can better connect with their children and to allow them to express their interests and personalities.

Appendix D: Second Set of Workshops

Social Media

Social media is very prevalent in today's society and parents must be aware of the positive and negative attention social media can bring. Social media is a major part of teens' lives, it is important they have a healthy relationship with the Internet. Parents watched a video and received a handout to take notes. They took the notes home so they could begin using some of the techniques they learned, such as all phones off by 9 and how to use social media. Social media literacy is critical, especially with predators always lurking around.

Dealing with Peer Pressure

Peer pressure is very prevalent in today's society among teenagers. Parents were very concerned about how to deal and help with peer pressure. They were shown a slide show of facts and a movie entitled, "A Girl Like Her." Parents took notes during the slide show and movie. Parents were given tips to help with peer pressure such as boosting self-confidence, tips and ways to refuse certain things, and how to help your teen avoid certain situations.

How to Get Children to Read

Teaching children how to read early and establishing a routine that would help them enjoy reading for the rest of their life is important. Parents were taught the importance of helping children read things that were interesting for them. Most boys like sports and most young girls like fashion. Class discussions covered topics such as getting reading material that was on a lower reading level, but met the child where he or she was regarding their reading level. Parents were given tips to both encourage children to read and build reading and comprehension skills, including keeping a log or sticker page and giving a treat or prize.

Signs of Depression and Suicide

Parents were shown a TED video entitled, “Why we need to talk about depression” by Kevin Breel. A lot of children secretly deal with depression; Mr. Breel goes into detail regarding how he fought his own battles with depression and how he overcame his struggles. Depression can lead down a long dark path, so it is important for parents to learn how to recognize when something is not right with their children.

Motivating Kids to Be Active and Healthy

As children get older, it can be a challenge for kids to get enough daily activity. “Reasons include increasing demands of school, a feeling among some kids that they aren't good at sports, a lack of active role models, and busy working families” (Nemours Foundation, 2017). Eating the right foods and staying active can have positive or negative impact on a child’s academic success. Topics discussed were different types of food to eat, staying active in sports, etc. When kids are active, their bodies can do the things they want and need them to do. Why? Because regular exercise provides the benefits of: strong muscles and bones, weight control, decreased risk of developing type 2 diabetes, better sleep, a better outlook on life. Healthier and more physically active kids also are more likely to be academically motivated, alert, and successful (Nemours Foundation, 2017). Physical competence builds self-esteem at every age.

The Final Verdict

The researcher completed all parental interviews and collected all activity logs to finish collecting data for the study. The activity log contained open-ended data encouraging parents to write what

they did with their children such as tutoring or reading daily and their final perceptions of the parental workshops.

Appendix E: Statement of Original Work

The Concordia University Doctorate of Education Program is a collaborative community of scholar-practitioners, who seek to transform society by pursuing ethically-informed, rigorously-researched, inquiry-based projects that benefit professional, institutional, and local educational contexts. Each member of the community affirms throughout their program of study, adherence to the principles and standards outlined in the Concordia University Academic Integrity Policy. This policy states the following:

Statement of academic integrity.

As a member of the Concordia University community, I will neither engage in fraudulent or unauthorized behaviors in the presentation and completion of my work, nor will I provide unauthorized assistance to others.

Explanations:

What does “fraudulent” mean?

“Fraudulent” work is any material submitted for evaluation that is falsely or improperly presented as one’s own. This includes, but is not limited to texts, graphics and other multi-media files appropriated from any source, including another individual, that are intentionally presented as all or part of a candidate’s final work without full and complete documentation.

What is “unauthorized” assistance?

“Unauthorized assistance” refers to any support candidates solicit in the completion of their work, that has not been either explicitly specified as appropriate by the instructor, or any assistance that is understood in the class context as inappropriate. This can include, but is not limited to:

- Use of unauthorized notes or another’s work during an online test
- Use of unauthorized notes or personal assistance in an online exam setting
- Inappropriate collaboration in preparation and/or completion of a project
- Unauthorized solicitation of professional resources for the completion of the work.

Statement of Original Work (Continued)

I attest that:

1. I have read, understood, and complied with all aspects of the Concordia University- Portland Academic Integrity Policy during the development and writing of this dissertation.
2. Where information and/or materials from outside sources has been used in the production of this dissertation, all information and/or materials from outside sources has been properly referenced and all permissions required for use of the information and/or materials have been obtained, in accordance with research standards outlined in the *Publication Manual of The American Psychological Association*

Dwain C. Thompson Jr.

Digital Signature

Dwain Christopher Thompson Jr.

Name (Typed)

2/6/2018

Date