2022

Rural Title I School Teachers' and Parents' Perspectives on Parent Involvement at Home during the COVID-19 Pandemic

Delceina Anita Layne
Walden University

Walden University

College of Education

This is to certify that the doctoral study by

Delceina A. Layne

has been found to be complete and satisfactory in all respects,
and that any and all revisions required by
the review committee have been made.

Review Committee
Dr. Donald Yarosz, Committee Chairperson, Education Faculty
Dr. Mary Trube, Committee Member, Education Faculty
Dr. Mary Howe, University Reviewer, Education Faculty

Chief Academic Officer and Provost
Sue Subocz, Ph.D.

Walden University
2022

Abstract

Rural Title I School Teachers' and Parents' Perspectives on Parent Involvement at Home

during the COVID-19 Pandemic

by

Delceina A. Layne

EdS, Nova Southeastern University, 2011

MS, Nova Southeastern University, 2009

BS, Florida Atlantic University, 2006

Dissertation Submitted in Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree of

Doctor of Education

Walden University

February 2022

Abstract

Parent involvement has a positive influence on academic performance of students.

However, the level and experiences of parent involvement in rural Title I schools serving

kindergarten through third (K-3) grade students during the COVID-19 pandemic was

unknown. The purpose of this basic qualitative study was to explore early childhood

teachers' and parents' perspectives on parent involvement in the home during the

COVID-19 pandemic for two rural Title I schools serving K-3 students in the southern

United States. Bronfenbrenner's bioecological systems theory of human development and

two of Epstein's six types of parent involvement (communication, learning at home)

framed this study. Eight teachers who had been employed in grades K-3 for a minimum

of 1 year and eight parents who had a student enrolled in grades K-3 in the same school

were purposefully selected for interviews. Interview transcripts were analyzed using an

inductive process to reveal four themes for teachers and parents: (a) communicated in

multiple ways; (b) collaborated in multiple ways; (c) shared resources with stakeholders;

and (d) discovered their increased agency from challenges. Teachers and parents both

shared they increased their sense of agency and involvement by addressing challenges

due to changes related to COVID-19; therefore, it is recommended that more studies

investigate the ways teachers and parents have increased their agency by responding to

challenges related to parent involvement in rural Title I schools. This study can result in

positive social change by increasing school stakeholders' understanding about the

importance of parent-teacher communication and involvement in children's education in

the home specifically in rural settings during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Rural Title I School Teachers' and Parents' Perspectives on Parent Involvement at Home

during the COVID-19 Pandemic

by

Delceina A. Layne

EdS, Nova Southeastern University, 2011

MS, Nova Southeastern University, 2009

BS, Florida Atlantic University, 2006

Dissertation Submitted in Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree of

Doctor of Education

Walden University

February 2022

Dedication

The dedication of this doctoral study is to my immediate family who has not only been supportive but also understanding of this journey. You all have never given up on me and have continued to be my motivation even when I could not see the light. To my children, Kendrick, Bianca, Shaniqua, Jacorey, and Akeem, thank you for giving me joy during those family moments away from the computer. To my beautiful grandchildren Arnaysha and Stephen for always loving me despite the many weekends I spent completing assignments and consumed our play time. I could not accomplish this without the support and encouragement from all of you. I love you.

Acknowledgments

First, I want to thank God for giving me a chance to take my education to the level of Doctorate. Thank you for giving me the Grace to complete this extraordinary endeavor in my life. It is to you I give the glory and honor for walking me down this path and never letting go of my hand when I wanted to give up.

To all my children, Kendrick, Bianca, Shaniqua, Jacorey, Akeem, Arnaysha, and Stephen, thank you for believing in me and being my motivation. It is your strength and encouragement that has helped me to continue. I have always tried to set a good example for you all, and I pray that you will continue what God has placed in you. Never allow anyone to tell you that you are a failure, or you cannot do it. May my strength and love travel with you through life's journey to success. Lastly, I appreciate you my brother, Ricky of Barbados, for always encouraging me and telling me I can do it.

I also would like to thank my doctoral committee, Dr. Yarosz, and Dr. Trube; you have been phenomenal during this process. I thank you Dr. Yarosz for your constant support and the phone conversations, which helped me to put this together and bring a piece of work that is exquisite.

Table of Contents

ii

iv

List of Tables

Chapter 1: Introduction to the Study

Through this basic qualitative study with interviews, I sought to address low

parent involvement (PI) in the home for children enrolled in kindergarten through third

grade in rural Title I schools in the southern United States during the COVID-19 (C-19)

pandemic of 2020 through 2021. Low PI has been the perception of stakeholders in the

southern United States for years prior to the pandemic of 2020 (Malczyk & Lawson,

2019; Peterson et al., 2018; Soutullo et al., 2016) and this perception has continued and

increased during the C-19 pandemic (Bhamani et al., 2020; Gazaway, 2019; Pajarianto et

al., 2020). As stricter mandates are being placed on schools and teachers to provide a

more rigorous curriculum, parents find themselves experiencing tension and concern to

help their children with at-home instruction (Bhamani et al., 2020). After the C-19

pandemic struck the rural areas of the southern United States, teachers began relying on

parents to help educate their children at home. Furthermore, school staff expected parents

to understand the rigor that is being asked of students for their learning.

The broader issue of the perception of lower levels of PI in homes where families

live at or below the federal poverty level remains (Malczyk & Lawson, 2019; Peterson et

al., 2018; Soutullo et al., 2016). Researchers have identified that a gap in practice exists

for educators in Title I schools and have recommended that further studies are needed

(Malczyk & Lawson, 2019; Peterson et al., 2018; Soutullo et al., 2016). This study adds

to the body of research on practice related to PI in the home by specifically exploring the

perspectives of rural Title I early childhood teachers and parents of kindergarten through

third grade (K-3) children enrolled in schools where PI is reported to be low (see Gu, 2017). Through semistructured interviews, I gained relevant insights into teachers' and parents' perspectives on PI in two rural Title I schools during the C-19 pandemic. It is hoped that this study will result in school stakeholders gaining deeper understanding from teachers' and parents' perspectives on PI in the home about what works, how it works, and what will work more successfully (see McDowell et al., 2018). In Chapter 1, I provide an overview of the study's background, problem, nature, scope and delimitations, and limitations. In addition, I introduce the conceptual framework and conclude with a summary of the main points presented.

Background

PI integrates parents' active engagement and commitment to partnering with school personnel on behalf of their children for at-home engagement (Edwards & Compton-Lilly, 2016). It is widely recognized that strong PI benefits schools, families, and communities (Edwards & Compton-Lilly, 2016; Gu, 2017; Morrison et al., 2015); however, most researchers who concluded these benefits did not conduct their studies in rural Title I primary schools (see Malczyk & Lawson, 2019; see Peterson et al., 2018). Moreover, strong home and school partnerships are needed now more than ever in the local schools due to the C-19 pandemic (see Bhamani et al., 2020; see Pajarianto et al., 2020).

Under Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA), PI for Title I-participating children is mandated by federal policy makers (Leadership Conference Education Fund, 2016). In

fact, since the 2001 No Child Left Behind (NCLB) Act, the predecessor of ESSA, PI has been mandated for programs receiving Title I funds. ESSA requires that strategies are put into practice by school personnel to engage and involve parents. These requirements include conducting parent outreach, implementing PI activities and procedures, and creating and distributing parent-friendly communication for linguistically diverse parents. Further, under ESSA Section 1116, a plan for PI must be collaboratively created, submitted, and updated by all school stakeholders as needed to reflect parents' and families' ongoing needs related to their children's education (Leadership Conference Education Fund, 2016).

Meeting these federal requirements was compounded by the C-19 global pandemic during the winter of 2020. Response to the C-19 pandemic may continue to be a concern in the future for all schools including rural Title I primary schools (Bhamani et al., 2020). According to Bhamani et al. (2020), the sudden closure of schools in 2020 caused difficulties for families. Bharmani et al. suggested that there is fear among school stakeholders that students are missing out on learning opportunities because many students are not prepared for learning at home through online virtual learning. Further, students' parents are not prepared to support students' learning at home (Bhamani et al. 2020; Borup et al. 2020; Pajarianto et al., 2020). Learning in the home during the C-19 pandemic has caused hardships for parents, many of whom are also working online at home, increasing the need for teacher and parent communication (Borup et al., 2020). Teachers and parents are challenged to ensure that students' education continues with an

acceptable level of quality (Bhamani et al.2020; Borup et al. 2020; Pajarianto et al., 2020).

Despite mandates and supports under ESSA, PI is reported to be relatively low in rural Title 1 primary schools serving K-3 grade students in the southern United States (Gu, 2017). Two schools, which were identified as the settings for this study, are located in a community where residents are diverse in such factors as family background, education level, language, sex, race, culture, and socioeconomic status. For example, according to a County Elementary School report in 2018, females comprised 53% and males 47%, with a 16.7% student mobility rate. Black students comprised 79.9% with both white and Hispanic students following at 9% each, and multiracial students following at 3%. The College and Career Ready Performance Index (CCRPI) score for the school district was 68.9% in 2018 with proficiency in different subjects varying by grade levels. These demographics are relevant in my proposed study because they document diversities in the local schools. For instance, Malczyk and Lawson (2019), Peterson et al. (2018), and Soutullo et al. (2016) suggested that PI may look different within diverse communities. When school leaders and personnel are considering models of PI to be implemented in their district, most models available to them are those PI models that were conceptualized and created based primarily on white, middle-class values (Soutullo et al., 2016). Walther et al. (2015) found that school personnel may discount factors such as culture, race, education background, and socioeconomic status in considering types of PI models offered in schools. Boonk et al. (2018) suggested that

challenges related to ethnic, racial, and socioeconomic differences may limit the abilities of stakeholders to make inclusive decisions. This may be related to school personnel not having access to models for PI that were developed in schools which had a large minority population or where the majority of families did not live at or below the federal poverty level (FPL; see Dove et al., 2015; see Soutullo et al., 2016). The perception of low levels of PI in the home for parents of children enrolled in rural Title I schools serving diverse families living in poverty may be inaccurate (Dove et al., 2015; Soutullo et al., 2016). Criteria for PI that are considered by school personnel are based on a set of expectations presented in models of PI (Ramos, 2017). School stakeholders may not consider the diversity of educational needs addressed by parents in the home (Dove et al., 2015; Ramos, 2017).

Researchers have acknowledged gaps in information about low-income families' perspectives on PI and recommended further inquiry (Dove et al., 2015). Ramos (2017) called for studies to identify perceived benefits of PI and Dove et al. (2015) suggested studies identifying barriers or inhibitors to PI. Therefore, this study aimed to address the local problem and address a gap in practice by exploring teachers' and parents' perspectives on PI in the home during the C-19 pandemic. This study is important for all school stakeholders of rural Title I primary schools in order that they may gain deeper understanding from multiple perspectives regarding PI in the home in rural Title 1 primary schools during the C-19 pandemic.

Problem Statement

The problem addressed in this study is low levels of PI in the home during the C-19 pandemic for rural Title I schools serving K-3 students. PI in the home was reported as low in rural Title I schools located in the southern United States prior to the pandemic (Gu, 2017; Malczyk & Lawson, 2019; Peterson et al., 2018; Soutullo et al., 2016) and PI in the home continues to be reported as low due to challenges for teachers and parents during the pandemic (see Borup et al., 2020; see Pajarianto et al., 2020). Low levels of PI are reported at the local level and beyond, including families residing within the state and nation where families live at or below the FPL (Malczyk & Lawson, 2019; Peterson et al., 2018; Soutullo et al., 2016). Furthermore, researchers have identified a shortage of studies investigating PI that revealed what types of PI in the home are relevant and successful for families with children enrolled in low-income schools (Dove et al., 2015; Ramos, 2017).

At the local level, a spokesperson from a group of parents, who works at the same plant that is the largest employer in the district, provided her views on the problems with PI in a local informal meeting. This meeting took place after the local district implemented policies related to C-19 in March 2020; however, at the time her comments were made in June 2020, parents and teachers anticipated that school would be back to normal in September. She said, "All those meetings are when we're working. We work long shifts beginning at 6:00 o'clock in the morning. We work until 6:00 o'clock at night. There is no time to go to the school for a meeting" (Parent, personal communication, June

15, 2020). Likewise, another parent from the same group stated, "I met with the teacher about my son's behavior problems. The teacher told me, 'You should come sit in the classroom and see for yourself!' I'd like to do that, but when?... I need to work," (Parent, personal communication, June 15, 2020). Statements from these local parents confirmed what was identified in research findings. For instance, Li and Fischer (2017) found that most low-income parents want to participate in shaping the academic progress of their children by being involved, however, there are factors that contributed to their lack of involvement. In some instances, categories of involvement and engagement by low-income parents do not fit neatly into the traditionally recognized way of involvement or engagement (Soutullo et al., 2016).

Researchers suggested that parents play a critical role in the early development of children; therefore, their involvement in their child's education has a major impact locally and nationally to influence children's academic achievement in the school and at home (Morrison et al., 2015). The local Parent and Teacher Organization (PTO) president shared her views in an informal meeting of parents, as follows:

> I think PI is of the utmost importance, especially now during the pandemic more so than ever. I know it's going to be hard for parents, but it's going to require some sacrifice and adjustments on the parents' behalf. In this pandemic, times have changed so drastically in a way that none of us expected. If something happens to where schools shut down a second time, then parents are going to have to get creative when it comes to young children learning virtually. It takes a

village to raise a child and we are all going to have to rely on one another in the

community to come together, get involved, and make this work. (PTO president,

personal communication, July 20, 2020)

Researchers' findings supported the position that more PI could lead to more

academic support for children (Boonk et al., 2018; Morrison et al., 2015). Pajarianto et al.

(2020) found there is a need for strong PI during the pandemic because much of the

instruction children are receiving is done in a distance learning format. Bhamani et al.

(2020) and Borup et al. (2020) stressed that families depend on teachers to assist them in

their children's learning at home. Parents are working with their children in the home

during the pandemic, however, they are facing challenges with at-home teaching and

learning (Pajarianto et al.). A counselor in the local school district suggested the need for

strong PI now with the C-19 pandemic. She stated, "Parents should be involved to know

what safety measures and precautions are being put in place to ensure their children are

safe. When it comes to academics, parents should be involved all around to help their

students be successful" (Counselor, personal communication, July 21, 2020). Pajarianto

et al. (2020) noted the current challenge to PI during the pandemic, is how families are

utilizing online learning when they have limited economic resources.

For decades, the education sector has engaged in efforts to increase PI through

policy and legislative transformations aimed at school improvement (Morrison et al.,

2015; Yazan, 2015). Yazan (2015) suggested that research on PI in rural Title I primary

schools has received limited attention. More studies are needed for several reasons, as

follows: (a) PI has been a critical element in school improvement (Yazan); (b) limited knowledge about what PI entails in low income or Title I schools (Dove et al., 2015; Soutullo et al., 2016); and (c) home and school partnerships are necessary for the education of K-3 students during the C-19 pandemic (Bhamani et al., 2020; Mahmood, 2020; Pajarianto et al., 2020). What was not known was early childhood teachers' and parents' perspectives on PI in the home during the C-19 pandemic for rural Title I schools serving K-3 students.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this basic qualitative study with interviews was to explore early childhood teachers' and parents' perspectives on PI in the home during the C-19 pandemic for rural Title I schools serving K-3 students. The study's results might provide data to K-3 teachers and parents about forming partnerships to strengthen learning in the home through enhanced communication. The qualitative approach followed in this study could potentially be expanded to other Title I schools and provide data about parents' and teachers' continued efforts to foster learning at home to close the achievement gap for children in rural Title I schools in the southern region of the United States. A constructivist research paradigm was used in this research to examine individual perspectives to reach a consensus around their collective experiences (see Guba & Lincoln, 1994).

Research Question

One research question guided this study:

Research Question 1 (RQ1): What are the perspectives of K-3 teachers and parents of K-3 children about parent involvement in the home during the COVID-19 pandemic in a rural Title I school?

Conceptual Framework

PI is a multispectral process involving different stakeholders. For this reason, I chose two primary theories to frame this study. These concepts are as follows: (a) Bronfenbrenner's micro/mesosystems from his bio-ecological systems theory of human development, and (b) Epstein's typology of *learning at home* and *communicating* from her model of six types of PI as presented in Epstein et al. (2001). The concepts of learning at home and communicating with teachers take place in the micro/mesosystems (see Bronfenbrenner, 1994; see Epstein et al., 2001).

Early childhood teachers' and parents' perspectives are very important for investigating the research variable of PI during the C-19 pandemic. For this reason, I explored PI at the microsystem and the mesosystem levels of influence. Although the focus in this study is on the micro/mesosystems, it is important to recognize there are relationships among all levels of the theory that are at play for students enrolled in Grades K-3 in Title I schools. Bronfenbrenner's bio-ecological systems theory is focused on the child's experiences in the environment, which determine the influences of systems in the environment on the child's development. Bioecological systems' theory is important to consider when seeking an understanding of how PI affects K-3 students. Bio-ecological systems theory guides the methodology and research questions within the

environments of the home and school (microsystem), the influences of the connections between parents and teachers (mesosystem), the structure of the Title I school in the community (exosystem), and the laws governing Title 1 schools (macrosystem). The microsystem, mesosystem, and the exosystem are the systems that frame the study because of the direct influences of parents and teachers on the development of the child (microsystem), interactions among the family and members of the school community (mesosystem), and the influences on the child from attending a Title I school (exosystem).

Though all types of Epstein's model of PI influence PI in the home, for this study I focused on PI in the home and communication that occur between school personnel and families. All six types of PI (listed in alphabetical order: collaborating with the community, communicating, decision making, learning at home, parenting, and volunteering) take place within the child's microsystem and mesosystem. Epstein's two types of PI that make up the conceptual framework for this study are *communicating* and *learning at home* (Epstein et al., 2001, p. 1). Epstein's model informed this study's open-ended research questions to explore early childhood teachers' and parents' perspectives on PI in the home during the C-19 pandemic for rural Title I schools serving K-3 students. Bioecological systems theory and Epstein's model of PI together provide the lens for development of the interview instrument, the research design, and collection and analysis of data for this basic qualitative study with interviews. A more detailed presentation of the conceptual framework is provided in Chapter 2.

Nature of the Study

In this basic qualitative study with interviews, I explored early childhood teachers' and parents' perspectives on PI in the home during the C-19 pandemic for rural Title I schools serving K-3 students. PI is a viable resource in education and is considered an essential component of educational reform (Morrison et al., 2015; Yazan, 2015). Yazan (2015) investigated the need for partnerships between parents and school representatives and emphasized that parent and family involvement is a key area of concern in improving the educational system and positive student outcomes. Understanding early childhood teachers' and parents' perspectives of PI in the home may provide insights into effective strategies for promoting PI in the home based on Epstein's criteria for PI through communicating and learning at home take place in the microsystem and mesosystem as outlined by Bronfenbrenner.

Qualitative study methodology is based on researchers using multiple approaches to explore a broad range of perspectives (Yazan, 2015). According to Yazan, a qualitative approach is suitable when exploring social interactions, processes, and or systems. I collected data through semistructured interviews with 16 volunteers (eight early childhood teachers, eight parents) on two different campuses serving K-3 students. According to Merriam and Tisdell (2016), interviews with several stakeholders, who bring different perspectives, are appropriate in a basic qualitative study. Further, giving stakeholders time for reflection during the interview process adds to the potential for rich thick data (Rubin & Rubin, 2012). Digitally audio-taped interviews were transcribed,

coded, and analyzed by me following an inductive process to reveal emerging patterns, categories, and themes. No discrepant data were found. Chapter 3 presents a more detailed description of the methodology.

Definitions

Agency: Agency is the power to influence and shape the trajectory of our lives through the actions we take, which is considered part of human identity (Bandura, 2018).

COVID-19: According to Medscape.com (2020), the coronavirus is defined as "illness caused by a novel coronavirus now called severe acute respiratory syndrome coronavirus 2 (SARS-CoV-2; formerly called 2019-nCoV), which was first…reported to the World Health Organization on December 31, 2019" (para. 1). The WHO declared the COVID-19 outbreak a global health emergency in January 2020.

Every Student Succeeds Act: Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) is a 2015 primary law for American public education (K–12). It came after the No Child Left Behind Act with major impact likely to be felt from 2017–2020 school years (McGuinn, 2016).

Member checking: According to Harper and Cole (2012), member checking is a quality control process by which a researcher seeks to improve the accuracy, credibility, and validity of what has been recorded during a research interview (Harper & Cole, 2012).

Motivation: According to Komarraju and Nadler (2013), motivation refers to the self-regulatory process by which individuals act on external behaviors and implement learning activities while pursuing goals.

Parent engagement: Parent engagement is a shared responsibility in which schools are committed to reaching out to engage parents in meaningful ways, and parents are committed to actively supporting their children's and adolescents' learning and development (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, 2012).

Parent involvement (PI): PI indicates the level of participation of parents and family members in the child's schooling and development. As opposed to Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) 2015, in which PI is different from parent and family engagement, this study uses the term PI as synonymous to parent and family engagement.

Primary grade students: Primary grade students are typically those children enrolled in first through third grades. This study includes teachers and parents of kindergarten through primary grade children who are enrolled as K-3 students in primary schools. Early childhood teachers and parents who will be interviewed have direct contact with these children (see Kimaro & Machumu, 2015).

Public Health Emergency: On the 30th of January in 2020, the World Health Organization declared that COVID-19 presented an international public health emergency following identification of the first cluster of people in China (World Health Organization, 2020).

*Socioeconomic (SES) diversity***:** This term is used in the study to talk about the status of students at local schools in a rural Title I elementary school. The schools serve children from homes with different level of income (middle to low-income), social status, as well as racial, cultural, and ethnic groups (Morrison et al., 2015).

Title I: Based on the U.S. Department of Education, these are schools enacted in 1965 under the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) characterized by large concentrations of low-income students. The schools receive supplemental funds for meeting students' educational goals (McGuinn, 2016).

Student engagement: This term is used to describe student behaviors when they are actively involved in participating in the learning process (Halverson & Graham, 2019).

Assumptions

As defined by Marshall and Rossman (2016), assumptions are the elements, and circumstances of the study that a researcher considers to be true. This study was conducted under the assumptions that teachers and parents, who volunteered to participate in the study, would provide honest responses to the interview questions. Second, I assumed that parents and teachers have experiences with PI during C-19 and, therefore, have the knowledge to share their perspectives. Third, I assumed that early childhood teachers' and parents' responses to interview questions and my analysis of the data collected from interviews would answer the research question. The participation of teachers and parents was imperative because they had firsthand knowledge about

experiences with PI during C-19 and the knowledge to share their perspectives. These assumptions were essential because having first-hand knowledge of participants and having them honestly answer provides credibility to the collected data.

Scope and Delimitations

The scope of this basic qualitative study was confined to perspectives of K-3 teachers and parents of children enrolled in K-3 schools in two rural Title 1 primary schools during the C-19 pandemic. The aim of my study was to explore early childhood teachers' and parents' perspectives on PI in the home during the C-19 pandemic for rural Title I schools serving K-3 students. The study was delimited to include only eight parents of K-3 students and eight K-3 teachers from rural Title I primary schools in a district located in the southern United States. The study did not involve any teachers' or parents' outside of the two schools. It was necessary to explore perspectives of early K-3 educators as these are the grades for foundational learning for students to be successful as they move forward to higher grades of learning. According to Merriam and Tisdell (2016), transferability is the degree to which the results of qualitative research can be transferred to other context or settings. The ultimate goal of transferability is that readers can apply the findings to other contexts (Cohen & Crabtree, 2006; Merriam & Tisdell, 2016; Trochim, 2020). I wrote rich, thick descriptions based on participants' responses to interview questions that included detailed quotes (see Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). I included a thorough detailed description of the settings and findings of the interview for

this study to allow transferability. Transferability refers how the results can be generalized or transferred to other contexts (Trochim, 2020).

Limitations

Limitations for this study include the small sample size. This basic qualitative study had limitations pertaining to 16 volunteers from two rural Title I schools located in the southern United States. I used purposeful sampling from among a pool of K-3 teachers and parents of K-3 students (see Etikan et al., 2016). I accepted the first eight individuals in each group who responded to my invitation and were willing to consent to the confidential interview process (see Palinkas et al., 2013) to better understand PI in the home during C-19. Since the study was conducted with a small number of parents and teachers, findings were for these individuals only. The perspectives of teachers and parents of this study may not be transferrable to other rural Title I primary schools. Korstjens and Moser (2018) provided a transferability judgment by communicating that the responsibility of the researcher is to provide a thick description of the participants and the research process to enable the reader to assess whether or not the findings of the study are transferrable to the reader's setting.

Because I, as researcher, was the one and only collector of the data, to minimize bias in the study, it was important that I acknowledged my personal bias that parents do participate in the education of their children while learning at home. Therefore, it was important that I stayed conscious of my bias so that it did not express my personal opinions during the data collection and data analysis processes (see Moustakas, 1994). I

followed an interview protocol with all participants. This assisted me in establishing that interviews would be conducted in a consistent manner, that interviews were accurately recorded on a digital audio recording device, and they adhere to my ethical role and responsibilities. Although I have been an early childhood educator in a rural Title I school, this study was conducted in a school in a neighboring district where I have no affiliation which was helpful in minimizing any bias I may have as a researcher.

Significance

Because of its importance to healthy and productive communities, researchers have investigated types of PI (Cano et al., 2016; Ma et al., 2016; Morrison et al.), ways parents are involved (Rothman et al. 2018), benefits of PI to school stakeholders (Edwards & Compton-Lilly, 2016; Fernández-Alonso et al., 2017), inhibitors to PI (Al-Zoubi & Younes, 2015), and ways teachers support parents' as they work with children at home during the C-19 pandemic (Bhamani et al., 2020; Pajarianto et al., 2020). Gazaway (2019) found that parents in the southern United States have had difficulty helping students because most parents or family members had to relearn how to help their children under Common Core Standards (CCS), which was new from the time many parents had attended school. When parents work with their children in the home, they are challenged to think, perform, and grow to a higher skill level (Catapano & Snell, 2016).

Findings from this study may result in an initiative to build the skills of parents to work more effectively with their children. Findings from this basic qualitative study may address a local problem and a gap in the research on practice on a broader scale and result

in gaining the attention of policy makers regarding PI at home to support parents of K-3 students enrolled in rural Title I schools. Findings from this study have the potential to impact positive social change by creating greater understanding of the perspectives of each other regarding learning in the home during the C-19 pandemic. Findings could result in stronger partnerships between teachers and parents to support positive student outcomes. Likewise, as a result of this study, insights may be gained by policy makers that will result in policies to strengthen PI in the home by improvements in communication methods between the home and school.

Summary

Chapter 1 describes a basic qualitative study with interviews that sought to address both the local problem of low PI in the home and the broader issue of low levels of engagement at home for schools that serve families who live at or below the FPL during the C-19 pandemic. Chapter 1 also introduces the background, problem statement, purpose, research questions, conceptual framework, nature, definitions, assumptions, scope and delimitations, limitations, and significance for the study. Chapter 2 presents an overview and synthesis of the current literature related to PI in the home in general and during the C-19 pandemic.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

Parents play critical roles in the early development of children; therefore, their involvement in their children's education has a major impact locally and nationally (Morrison et al., 2015). Parents' involvement in their primary grade children's education is vitally important to successful learning outcomes for young children in school and at home (Tobin, 2017). Matthews et al. (2017) found that educators and parents working together plays a major role in children's academic success. Al-Zoubi and Younes (2015) found that parents' understandings about education quality and the importance of their involvement in their children's learning at home strengthens school partnerships and elevates levels of quality in education. According to McQuiggan and Megra (2017), some common ways parents are involved in learning at home are the result of attending general school activities or organizational meetings, participating in parent-teacher conferences, and attending events sponsored by the school or their child's teacher. Mahmood (2020) suggested that it is especially important for teachers to be concerned about PI during C-19, when "engaging our students means engaging their families" (para. 1). Researchers have suggested PI and learning at home look different from learning in school in low-income schools (Malczyk & Lawson, 2019; Peterson et al., 2018; Soutullo et al., 2016). Matthews et al. (2017) found that when parents work with teachers and school staff to provide learning at home, children receive the family's emotional support, motivation to learn, quality instruction by reinforcing what was learned at school. Additionally, Baker et al. (2016) and Li and Fischer (2017) suggested that students are more engaged in their

learning at school when parents are involved in the home because parents provide motivation and reinforce learning in the classroom. Mahmood (2020) suggested that PI in the home and in the lives of families are a result of factors such as beliefs, values, cultures, prior experiences, roles, and responsibilities.

Chapter 2 is divided into sections. I began the chapter with a concise synopsis of the literature and now proceed with the literature search strategy, conceptual framework based on Bronfenbrenner's bioecological systems theory and Epstein's types of PI (learning at home, communicating). I then follow with a literature review related to key concepts and variables. The review of the current literature on PI establishes the relevance this study and its purpose. The chapter ends with a summary and conclusion.

Literature Search Strategy

I first conducted an in-depth search to find journal articles from the 2015-2019 years based on key topics, terms, and variables of the study. An additional search was conducted to updated publications that had been published in scholarly works between during 2020-2021. With the support of the Walden University librarians, resources have been accessed through the Walden Library, as well as other relevant sources, in order to examine PI in rural Title I primary schools. Key search terms included *community services, COVID-19 pandemic, teaching during a pandemic, technology in the pandemic, parent participation*, *PI, family involvement, elementary education, primary education, early learning, elementary teaching, parent engagement in rural elementary schools, parent engagement problems*, *PI in Title I schools,* and *family engagement challenges*. I

used these key terms to retrieve articles from five electronic databases: ERIC, PsycINFO, Professional Development Collection, Academic Search Premier, Google Scholar, and Teacher Reference Center. The use of different databases was helpful in identifying and obtaining access to peer-reviewed articles relevant to the research topic. Similarly, the use of varied key terms enabled retrieval of materials with information that revealed the necessary components of building close relationships between parents and school personnel where children's learning is supported by home-school partnerships. Search terms related to qualitative and quantitative features of different studies also helped surface titles, abstracts, and select studies focusing on inclusion of all students, including students in underserved rural communities. Because there is relatively limited research about parent involvement in the home during C-19, I attempted to identify as much current literature as possible. With the assistance of the Walden librarian, during 2020-2021, I conducted searches related to *COVID-19 pandemic and schools* and *COVID-19 and teaching and learning* in the Education databases.

Conceptual Framework

The concepts being explored in this basic qualitative study are early childhood teachers' and parents' perspectives on PI in the home during the C-19 pandemic for rural Title I schools serving K-3 students. I used two theoretical models to frame this study. The two models are Bronfenbrenner's bioecological systems theory model and two types of PI from Epstein's model, communicating and learning at home. Both Bronfenbrenner's and Epstein's models fall under the classification of ecological models.

Bioecological Systems Theory

Bronfenbrenner's bioecological systems theory places the child at the center of the model and indicates how various systems influence the child's growth and development (Bronfenbrenner & Ceci, 1994). Understanding these systems is key to my research and the examination of the interconnectedness of parent and school partnerships, as well as the governance laws. Bronfenbrenner's (1977, 1994) bioecological systems theory of human development includes various levels of systems as they relate to an individual: microsystem, mesosystem, exosystem, macrosystem, and chronosystem. Although I acknowledge that there are influences from the macrosystem and chronosystem that affect a child's development, I will, however, focus on the microsystem, mesosystem, and exosystem. In this study, the microsystem focuses on a child's immediate surroundings. This level involves those individuals closest to the child such as the parents and teachers. It also includes events and interactions in the natural setting that most directly affect the child. For instance, meaningful learning opportunities tend to occur during events and interactions between the child and the immediate family and teachers. Families may support learning when cooking dinner (such as measuring ingredients) and doing chores (such as sorting laundry into lights and darks). Literacy development may also be supported by pointing out and reading signs while riding in the family car or public bus, as well as by reading labels out loud to the child while shopping at the supermarket. The mesosystem includes the relationships between family members and educators and educator to educator that affect the child. The mesosystem covers the microsystem and

includes the school environment and school personnel. The exosystem is a layer that influences the child's microsystem and mesosystem. PI based on learning in the home in this study will include teachers and parents, who are individuals most closely associated with influence on the child in the child's microsystem and mesosystem.

Epstein's Six Types of PI

For several decades, Epstein conducted research using a model of PI based on Bronfenbrenner's social-ecological model (Erdener & Knoeppel, 2018). The components of Epstein's model used in this study are communicating and learning at home. Epstein et al. (2001) other types of PI included parenting, volunteering, decision-making, and collaborating with the community. Epstein emphasized that PI is linked to many aspects of students' education including assessments, instruction, and curriculum. I used components of communicating and learning at home from Epstein's framework to explore early childhood teachers' and parents' perspectives on PI in the home during the C-19 pandemic for rural Title I schools serving K-3 students. In the section below, I describe all components of Epstein's model because each of the other components influences communicating and learning at home.

The first type of PI in Epstein's model is parenting. In this component, members of the school community creating a support system for parents in the home environment. This takes place in the child's microsystem, mesosystem, and exosystem based on Bronfenbrenner's bioecological systems theory. Epstein's parenting includes trainings such as family literacy workshops and technology training (see Sharkey et al., 2016). The

second type is comunicating; communication is ideally two-way from home to school and vice versa to allow children to progress. In some instances, communicating involves bringing in translators for non-English speakers and organizing parent conferences on a regular schedule. For adequate communication, clear information, policies, and transitions must exist. Parents who do not understand English or the language used for school communications must be helped through the two-way channel. The third type of Epstien's PI is volunteering. This type is where parents are organized and recruited to support and help student development (Edwards & Compton-Lilly, 2016). Annual post card surveys and school programs can improve opportunities for volunteering. However, the process of volunteering requires flexible schedules and adequate training. For Epstein, a fourth type of PI is related to learning at home, which is more likely when school personnel provide platforms where students can learn at home and do their homework through curriculum-related activities. Learning at home requires adequate planning and decision-making regarding regular home schedules which then requires PI. The process involves having a home calendar, skills, policies, and participation (Edwards & Compton-Lilly, 2016). The fifth type is decision-making by stakeholders including parents, and school personnel. Last, the sixth type of Epstien's parent involvment refers to collaborating with the community and strenthening school programs through resources and services (Epstein & Sheldon, 2016). Collaborating encompasses integrating the skills and talents of family and social support and facilitating cooperation between stakeholders and access to appropriate services. Challenges of integration include limited funds,

isolated responsibilities, and matching community contributions to school needs (Epstein & Sheldon, 2016).

Studies Informed by Epstein's Model and Bronfenbrenner's Theory

Sharkey et al., (2016) used Epstein's types of parental involvement to ground their study which identified challenges within each of the six categories. For each involvement type, they recommended strategies for mitigating problems of noninvolvement. For instance, Sharkey et al. recommended that elementary educators include various srategies within the academic curricula to enhance family-child, teacher-family, and community partnerships. These researchers suggested further research on teacher and family relationships would help to build stronger connections between teachers and families, which may potentially result in increased parent engagement.

Adams (2019) applied Epstein's six types of PI to investigate the use of school websites to increase family and community engagement in physical education activities. Each step was viewed as a key component regarding family and community involvement (Adams). Adams found that school websites need to be made more attractive and more easily accessible by families and community members.

Cano et al. (2016) also applied Epstein's six types of PI in a study of parents and students and found that PI results in student success. Likewise, Tully et al., (2017) used Epstein's six types of parental involvement and found that parents played an important role in influencing academic achievement of children during elementary school years (grades kindergarten though grade six). Tully et al. recommended the use of practical

strategies to encourage both parent and community involvement in children's education by school personnel. Further, Tully et al. found that engaging the community in the education process is important to student success.

Epstein and Sheldon (2016) used Epstein's theoretical model, which was developed based on the influences of different systems from Bronfenbrenner's biological systems theory, to identify three perspectives that can guide practicioners and researchers in their thinking about relationship between home and school. Epstein and Sheldon enumerated three guiding perspectives which include: separate responsibilities of schools and families; shared responsibilities of schools and families; and sequential responsibilities of schools and families (Epstein & Sheldon, 2016).

Literature Review Related to Key Concepts and Variables

This section includes current literature on PI and focuses on the contexts of communicating and learning at home to form home and school partnerships. Influences of technology and public awareness campaigns on engaging families in early education are identified. Literature reviewed and presented in this section include types of PI and benefits and inhibitors to PI, and ethical responsibilities of school personnel to families. Information about PI during the C-19 pandemic is embedded throughout relevant parts of this section. Chapter 2 ends with a summary and a conclusion.

Home and School Partnerships

Researchers have suggested that parents can build meaningful partnerships that result in positive family and educator engagement during their children's early years

(Koralek et al., 2019; McDowell et al., 2018). McDowell et al. (2018) examined best practices for developing integrated school family partnerships at the early childhood level. Researchers found that school personnel who created a welcoming school environment, fostered multidimensional relationships, and enhanced parents' knowledge and understanding about school, were successful in creating partnerships that fostered student success (Koralek et al., 2019; McDowell et al.). Ma et al. (2016) found relationships between teachers and families lead to high levels of PI during their early childhood years. Edwards and Compton-Lilly (2016) found that relationships between teachers and families lead to high levels of PI and are supportive of students' progress in primary elementary grades. McDowell et al. pointed out that successful multidimensional home and school engagement opportunities went far beyond parents just being present at activities, conferences, and occasional volunteering.

Evans and Sims (2016) recommended that schools implement programs that encourage engagement of parents in the schooling of their children. Li and Fischer (2017) found that parents want to participate in shaping the academic progress of their children. Likewise, Orkin et al. (2017) found that parents cared about the education system and wanted to be more engaged; however, many parents reported that they did not receive information from schools to guide their understanding about how to be involved, or about the importance of their involvement. Tully et al. (2017) found that when parents had knowledge of curriculum and pedagogy, they are motivated to become involved in children's educational programs. When parents understand educational quality and realize

the importance of their involvement in their children's learning, then home and school

partnerships are strengthened, which results in greater levels of program quality (Al-

Zoubi & Younes, 2015). Evans and Sims (2016) investigated the influence of home and

school partnerships on academic performance of students. Researchers found a direct

connection between contributions of parents in education and improved academic

performance of students (Evans & Sims, 2016). Evans and Sims explained that schools

should identify an approach that facilitates family-to-school collaboration to encourage

positive attitudes in students and improve their academic performance. Communication is

essential in establishing partnerships between home and school (Epstein & Sheldon,

2016). Effective communication provides opportunities for teachers and parents to

understand each other's perspectives regarding the importance of PI so they can work

together in partnership to benefit students. Erdener and Knoeppel (2018) found that

parent and teacher relationships that involve two-way communications are important in

strengthening PI. With the C-19 pandemic, homelife changed and parents were put into

the role of educators to promote learning experiences at home (Spinelli et al., 2020)

making communication between teachers and parents critical to students' learning (Borup

et al., 2020). Although researchers identified an increased need for communication

between teachers and parents was necessary for successful learning outcomes for

students, researchers did not report on an increase in parent and teacher communication

during the C-19 pandemic (Borup et al., 2020).

Fernández-Alonso et al., (2017) highlighted the importance of communication in forming home and school partnerships in the home among members of the household to support students' engagement in learning. The term "student engagement" is used to describe student behaviors when they are actively involved in learning activities. It relates to the level at which students are involved, which includes interactions with their teachers and peers, or their level of involvement in school (Nguyen et al., 2018). When students are engaged in learning, they display motivation to learn, exhibit on task behaviors, interact appropriately with peers and adults, and persist in their learning (Estévez et al., 2021). Parent involvement with at home learning activities promotes student engagement (Epstein, 2001).

Role of Technology

Erdener and Knoeppel (2018) stressed the importance of regular discussions between teachers and parents to identify and resolve difficulties that families face while trying to take part in academic processes. Sanders (2016) found that technology supports communication and mediates obstacles by allowing for updates on learning activities -- sometimes instantly. To enhance communication between school and home, teachers and administrators in some districts have combined communication efforts. According to Borup et al. (2020), some efforts included the following examples that were enhanced by technology: offered translations in different languages; requested that parents receiving messages communicate with educators to make sure that two-way communication is occurring; and provided online supports to enhance students' understanding of the lessons

provided from school personnel. Fan and Yost (2019) reported an increase in the use of technology in early childhood programs and schools in the United States and internationally. Early childhood educators and parents have used a variety of social media to both share and receive instant feedback about young children, which researchers suggested tended to strengthen teacher-parent relationships on behalf of children (Fan & Yost, 2019). Sanders (2016) found that use of technology through social media can help bring teachers and parents into virtual classrooms to address challenges they face meeting the needs of students. Fan and Yost found that social media tools fostered partnerships between schools and homes when both synchronous and asynchronous communication was available for collaboration in virtual spaces. More recently, researchers found that teachers have attempted to be as flexible as possible during the pandemic by using technology to check in with parents on a weekly basis (Borup et al., 2020; Wolfe & McCarthy, 2020).

Role of Public-Awareness Campaigns

Learning at home involves providing information and ideas families need to know about helping students (Epstein et al., 2001). Public awareness campaigns have provided activities that help parents assisting their children. According to Sparks (2016), many parents have become more involved in early education because of public engagement campaigns throughout the United States. For instance, organizations like Zero to Three and Reading is Fundamental, which are advocacy groups that promote PI and engagement in their young children's learning, have seen an increase in PI. Parents of

low-income families participated in interviews with Sanders (2016) to express their interest in understanding how young children learn through technology, as well as their need to know how to access to the Internet.

Home and School Collaboration

McDowell et al. (2018) investigated collaborative relationships among stakeholders while focusing on PI, parents' responsibility, parents' social capital, and parents' involvement in school committees. These researchers explained that collaboration between families and school representatives is a main issue in reforming education (McDowell et al., 2018). Researchers recommended further studies around collaborative relationships among stakeholders (McDowell et al., 2018).

Boonk et al. (2018) proposed that collaboration between educators and students' families contributed to comfortable learning environments so that students are happy to learn at school and at home. Boonk et al. found that what parents understand is easily transferred to children, and therefore reflected in students' performance. Boonk et al. suggested the reverse is true -- poor parent-to-teacher and student-to-teacher relationships that are found in education settings can have a negative impact on student achievement. Boonk et al. explained that parents' collaboration includes their participation in problem identification with teachers. When parents express an interest in helping their children with strategies to overcome their problems and improve their skills, Boonk et al. found that their children have increased motivation to learn at school. McDowell et al. (2018) found that parents were attracted to programs that worked with them to motivate children

to have high levels of performance at school. Parents liked programs that encouraged children's development of social-emotional skills at home and at school (McDowell et al.). McDowell et al. reported that home-based parenting activities have higher and more positive connections with children's academic success because children felt more secure in learning when their parents knew and understood what they were learning. McDowell et al. recommended research that investigated how parenting behaviors in the home are positively connected to their children's academic success of children when families are from low-SES.

Importance of Communication to Collaboration

Researchers found when school personnel use both one way and two way means of communication with parents to emphasize the importance of parents' contributions to students' success, parents are willing to be involved (Gu et al., 2017; Ma et al., 2016; Mahaffey & Kinard, 2020; Orkin et al., 2017). Orkin et al. (2017) suggested that communication between school and home increases collaboration between parents and teachers that supports learning at home. Orkin et al. found that lack of parent-teacher communication hinders collaboration between teachers and parents. When parents have information about PI opportunities that support them in helping their children learn at home, parents are instrumental in improving their children's academic success (Orkin et al., 2017).

Since the C-19 pandemic, parents reported that they have felt pressured with student academics and realized they had to depend on the teachers a lot more than before

the pandemic (Pajarianto et al., 2020). Additionally, it was reported that teachers realized

they had to be more collaborative with parents for students to be successful while not

being in the original classroom setting. Black et al. (2021) and Pajarianto et al. (2020)

both noted that the pandemic brought about changes in teacher-parent relationships. A

cooperative and collaborative relationship cycle began to develop and was based on co-

teaching practices because teachers in schools became essential partners (Pajarianto et al.,

2020). As collaborative co-teaching relationships were built by teachers and parents

during the pandemic, researchers found school personnel must work together with

families to continue with these kinds of partnerships (Black et al. 2021; Pajarianto et al.,

2020). Learning at home was supported by teachers and parents who built collaborative

working relationships with each other during the C-19 pandemic while increasing

communication to support learning at home (Pajarianto et al.,2020). Teachers saw a need

for PI during the C-19 pandemic and began reaching out using multiple ways of

communication to encourage parents' involvement in their child's educational platform

through methods of coteaching for student success (Black et al. 2021). Researchers found

that parents willingly began communicating with teachers' more by asking for training so

they could support learning at home for their child during the C-19 pandemic (Mahaffey

& Kinard, 2020).

Types of Parent Involvement

In this section, I describe types of formal and informal PI recognized by a variety

of researchers by following the framework of Epstein as presented in Epstein et al.

(2001). Parents are involved in schools in numerous ways, which include formal participation (such as volunteering on fieldtrips, in lunchrooms and in classrooms by reading to children, making books, tutoring and constructing bulletin boards) and informal participation (such as discussing television viewing, discussing school activities, and providing quiet workplaces for their children) (Erdener & Knoeppel, 2018; González et al., 2006; Sharkey et al., 2016). As a result of the C-19 pandemic, parents are involved in numerous ways when their circumstances allow (Borup et al., 2020; Masonbrink & Hurley, 2020) The different types of involvement recognized by the researchers involve parenting, communicating, volunteering, learning at home, decision making, and collaborating with the community (Epstein et al., 2001). I focus on communicating and learning at home and how these types of PI influence all types identified by Epstein et al. (2001).

Communicating

Effective forms of home-to-school and school-to-home communications about school programs and children's progress should be designed by school personnel (Epstein et al., 2001). Mahaffey and Kinard, (2020) indicated that there has been an increase in forms of communication between teachers and parents during C-19. Teacher conferences with all parents, with follow-ups as needed, are suggested (Ma et al., 2016). Additionally, it is important to send home weekly or monthly folders of student work for review and comments, which is increasingly important with the need of parents providing education in the home (Epstein et al., 2001). There should also be regularly scheduled

communication through memos, phone calls, notices, newsletters, and other communications. Gu et al. (2017) discussed the importance of school websites as a tool that increases parents' connections with their children's teachers. Currently, in the C-19 pandemic, communication has occurred most frequently through technology (Mahaffey & Kinard, 2020; Wolfe & McCarthy, 2020).

Role of Communicating in Collaborating with Communities

According to Wolfsohn (2020), there has been an outpouring of resources from the private sector in various communities that benefit families during the C-19 pandemic, as well as an increase in virtual volunteering. The Center for Disease Control (CDC) offered guidance for community-based organizations to continue their work to "play a vital role in maintaining community morale and cohesion" (Center for Disease Control, 2020, para 1). Epstein et al. (2001) include collaborating with communities as a type of PI because community resources strengthen family practices, school programs, and student learning and development. Cano et al. (2016) suggested that information provided by community agencies for families and students include resources for social support. In addition, families can be made aware of the community's cultural, recreational, health, and other programs or services that are available (Cano et al., 2016). Moreover, parents should also have information on community activities linking their talents to volunteer and service opportunities (Cano et al., 2016). Seminal work by González et al. (2006) identified the importance of considering minority families' and community members'

funds of knowledge to encourage involvement in the schools and how to recognize

learning at the home based on family members' funds of knowledge.

Role of Communicating in Decision Making

This section focuses on PI in decision making. It is important to include parents in

decision making about school issues, developing parent representatives and leaders

(Epstein et al., 2001). Epstein et al. recommended that there should be active parent

organizations such as Parents and Teachers Associations (PTA) or Parents and Teachers

Organizations (PTO), advisory councils, or committees for parent leadership and

participation, as well as district-level committees and councils for family and community

involvement. Parents' involvement in decision making processes in schools is viewed as

an important component of educational reform (Gross et al. 2020). Since C-19 emerged,

parents are involved in decision making efforts primarily through technology (Mahaffey

& Kinard 2020). According to Mahaffey and Kinard (2020), one example involves

parents' participation in electronic surveys to give their input on decisions that were

being made on behalf of their children. Gross et al. (2020) focused on the impact of PI in

decision making processes related to early childhood education during the pandemic and

found that further studies are needed in regard to PI in leadership decisions (Gross et al.,

2020). Tully et al. (2017) investigated the importance of parents' engagement in making

academic decisions affecting their children. Researchers recognized that an objective of

parent engagement in decision making is to influence major reform, because it

determines academic success of students (Tully et al., 2017). As trusting relationships are

formed between teachers and parents, and parents become engaged in decision making they develop a sense of agency in supporting their children's ability to learn independently, which Winthrop (2020) describes as "student agency" (para. 1). PI promotes parents' abilities and interests in contributing to decision making about rules and events of the educational system (Tully et al., 2017).

Learning at Home

Ideas and information should be provided to families about how to assist the students with homework, planning, decisions, and other curriculum-related activities, decisions, and planning at home (Epstein et al., 2001). For instance, families should be provided with information on the required skills for students in each subject at each grade (Karl, 2016). In addition, information on homework policies and the recommended ways of monitoring and discussing schoolwork at home should be given to the parents.

The closure of schools due to the C-19 pandemic led to parents and guardians being given more responsibility for their children's learning (Garbe et al., 2020). As the COVID-19 pandemic continued to disrupt all lives, Bhamani et al. (2020) stressed that it is important for teachers and parents to keep an open line of communication for the success of all students, which was confirmed by Mahaffey and Kinard, (2020). Bhamani et al. noted:

It is understandable that this wave of innovation in learning is not always convenient, especially given the fact that the transition has been abrupt rather than

gradual. Hence, parents are concerned about the challenges that remote learning has brought for them and their children. (p. 18)

Garbe et al. (2020) reported that parents described having struggles when educating their children at home. "Parents described having difficulties with balancing responsibilities, learner motivation, accessibility, and learning outcomes" (p. 45). When working with teachers to provide education for children online in the home, Liu et al., (2010) suggested that parents enter unfamiliar roles and responsibilities and often struggle. Moreover, Goodall (2016) reported that teachers are not given guidance on improving parent involvement when using technology. This is especially true when parents lack an interest in using technology (Beckman et al., 2019) or when parents have low levels of self-efficacy with supporting their children through online learning (Povey et al., 2016).

Role of Parenting in Learning at Home

Parenting helps all families in establishing home environments for supporting children as students (Epstein et al., 2001). This makes it necessary for home conditions supporting learning at each grade level. Some of the necessary tools include computerized phone messages, workshops and videotapes on child rearing and parenting at each age and grade level. With the new roles that parents, and guardians play because of C-19, Garbe et al. (2020) suggested teachers and learning coaches should remain in communication with parents to provide encouragement and supports with parenting skills. Suggestions that help parents stay organized and responsive to their children's

learning are needed during C-19 (Garbe et al., 2020). Borup et al. (2020) found that parents scaffold their children's learning online in the home by giving attention to children's schedules, by motivating children to stay engaged with online learning, and by nurturing online interactions with teachers and peers. Fox (2020) suggested that there are benefits from school to home literacy practices in the early childhood virtual classroom that are strengthened by effective parenting skills**.**

Role of Volunteering in Learning at Home

According to Harris and Keith (2016) there should be recruitment and organization of parent help and support in place to help administrators, students, teachers, and parents (Harris & Keith, 2016). Epstein et al. (2001) suggested that there should also be annual postcard survey for identifying all available times, talents, and locations of volunteers. Wolfsohn (2020) identified the importance of virtual volunteerism to help teachers and parents during the pandemic. Parents volunteer to read stories to groups children which makes it possible for teachers to work with children in small groups during the pandemic (Fox, 2020).

Ethical Responsibilities of Educators to Families

The National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC)'s *Code of Ethical Standards and Statement of Commitment* (2011) includes a section on ethical responsibilities to families. NAEYC's statement acknowledges the responsibility of educators to "bring about communication, cooperation, and collaboration" between the home and school (p. 3). As the premier member organization for early childhood

professionals, NAEYC's position statement on family engagement has emphasized that parent and teacher partnerships should be based on mutual trust, respect, and cooperation in support of student success.

Researchers (Cano et al., 2016; Ma et al., 2016) have suggested that PI in the education of their children during the early years enhances children's development in all domains of learning, their academic competence, and their social skills. Early childhood care, development, and education refers to processes by which children grow and thrive, physically, socially, emotionally, mentally, and morally from birth to 9 years (National Association for the Education of Young Children, n.d.). PI during early childhood years, birth to 8 years, benefits not only the child but also the entire family and the school staff (Epstein & Sheldon, 2016). PI and parent child relationships are both related to positive outcomes in the education of children. Fernández-Alonso et al. (2017) indicated that as parents work with their children, they see what their children are learning, and the methods used by teachers. Parents develop an understanding about the importance of their role is in the education of their children (Fernández-Alonso et al.). Parents have opportunities to nurture the growth and development of their children in the home as students are virtually learning at home. Parents are giving positive affirmations to their children during this time of the pandemic as students are concerned about their health as well. The National Association for the Education of Young Children (2016) emphasized that parents create meaningful relationships and partnerships with teachers by being involved in the education of their children, and this enables them to advocate continually

for their child in addition to providing them the best care possible. Building strong relationships between parents and teachers allows children to see strong partnerships between parents and teachers, which allows for students to feel supported during the pandemic (Bhamani et al., 2020; Mahaffey & Kinard, 2020).

Roles of School Personnel

All school personnel have a role in helping parents develop an awareness of the importance of engagement with the schools where their children learn (Boonk et al., 2018; National Association for the Education of Young Children, n.d.). Boonk et al., (2018) found that school-based interventions support parents and empower them with appropriate skills for contributing to their children's learning during the early childhood development stages. According to Boonk et al., all school personnel would benefit from professional learning opportunities about the importance of PI.

Counselors

According to Martin (2017), school counseling personnel often attract parents to school programs benefitting their children; therefore, counselors need relevant skills that meet their roles in the school's context. The need for counselors to be more involved with teachers and parents during the pandemic has increased (Pincus et al., 2020). Pincus et al. noted that "schools are facing unprecedented concerns with mental health and behavioral issues related to the COVID-19 stay-at-home orders…" (p. 242). Among many issues related to the pandemic that counselors address with children, families, and teachers are home issues such as family dysfunction, trauma, and technology addiction (Wan, 2020).

Counselors are key personnel in PI and function in many roles (Martin, 2017) and frequently act in the role of parent and family liaison in Title I schools. School counselors offer trainings for families ranging from topics related to children's healthy growth and development to intense mental health services (Lenares-Solomon et al., 2019). Martin suggested that when counselors engage with students' families, it promotes the establishment of counseling services to meet the needs of children and families.

Teachers

Mandarakas (2014) studied the importance of teachers' viewpoints about partnering with parents, including how such factors affect their professional experience when working with the parents. Mandarakas suggested the need to understand ways school personnel in the academic system promote relationships with families. It was recommended that teachers need development to work closely with parents and adopt strategies that will ensure the effectiveness of the home-school partnerships. Many teachers were not used to interacting with parents on a daily basis and had to immediately change focus to now interact and communicate daily with parents and students to ensure an understanding of the lessons and how things were going with students on a weekly basis and to let parents know they were available if needed. Tully et al., (2017) examined how beliefs of educators affected engagement and mediation in disagreements among families, institutions, communities, and educational programs. Teachers had to now let go of the images they had so long been holding onto on parents not wanting to be involved to now getting parents more involved as this pandemic moved across the country rapidly

(Bhamani et al., 2020; Garbe et al., 2020). Teachers were now trying to get parents to understand how learning was going to take place and reassure them that they would be there to assist them and their children with the learning (Borup et al., 2020). School personnel and families face uncertainty related to C-19 and there is dissonance surrounding the issue in reopening schools (Bhamani et al., 2020). Teachers continue to learn new ways to interact and engage their students with creative ways of learning during C-19 (Ferdig et al., 2020; Gross et al., 2020). "Teachers are also focusing on awareness regarding the pandemic. They teach students about the various preventive measures and emphasize on why they are important, hence making parents' job of keeping the children indoors much easier" (Bhamani et al., 2020, p.18).

Administrators

The preparation of school administrators includes working with families and communities (Boonk, 2018). Fernández-Alonso et al., (2017) investigated principals' efficacy in supporting school support programs (SSPs) designed to encourage home and school relationships and found that principals trained in PI are aware of appropriate practices to incorporate to improve PI. Fernández-Alonso et al., found that the effectiveness of the school principal increased adoption of strategies that resulted in improvement in performance of the school related to increased PI. In investigating how school administrators and teachers work together to promote PI, Jeynes (2018) found that both groups -- school leaders and teachers -- need to accept parents' participation, as well as parents desire to become involved in their children's education. Jeynes (2018)

suggested that home and school partnerships are based on the need to work together to reach family-based and school-based goals. Borup et al. (2020) found that during the pandemic there is a greater need for parents and school staff to work toward the same goals. School administrators have recognized pressures that parents are experiencing as a result of the pandemic, and as a result, have encouraged their teaching staff to reach out to parents often (Borup et al., 2020). Researchers from the University of Plymouth (2019) stressed the importance of communication for strong home-school partnerships. Children's positive learning outcomes occurred regardless of their socio-economic status when school personnel and parents work together on behalf of students' success (University of Plymouth, 2019).

Challenges to Parent Engagement

There are various challenges to PI that include parents' lack of awareness of their need to participate, poor interactions between teachers and families, inadequate support from the school leadership, parents' busy work schedules, shortage of financial resources, lack of transportation means, a habit of non-response to school invitation, lack of communal unity, and socioeconomic or cultural relations (Edwards & Compton-Lilly, 2016). School leaders actively promote strong family-school and parent-teacher relationships through culturally sensitive strategies that prioritize school invitations and teacher invitations to encourage contributions from the students' families (Faber, 2016); however, during the pandemic, barriers were found to exist for low income families (Garbe et al., 2020). Faber (2016) and Ishimaru (2019) found that prior to the pandemic,

appropriate school-based PI strategies solved barriers that result from personal life experiences of the parents. These PI strategies include incorporating a more reliable and timely system of communication, such as the use of social media or text messaging; arranging school events or meetings at multiple times; and helping parents implement strategies that support their child's achievement (Edwards & Compton-Lilly, 2016). During the pandemic parents had difficulties "with balancing responsibilities, learner motivation, accessibility, and learning outcomes" (Garbe, 2020, p. 45).

Benefits of Parent Engagement

Researchers revealed that PI results in measurable gains in student achievement as parents reassure, understand, encourage, and motivate their children to perform better (Fernández-Alonso et al., 2017; Rothman et al., 2018; Sharkey et al., 2016; Stark & Stark, 2016). Sharkey et al., (2016) noted that more PI in schools leads to more academic support for children. Children look to their parents for reassurance that they have done a good job, which motivates children to want to do their best. Parents' praise for their children is highly motivational to students who want to be successful and want their parents to be proud of them (Sharkey et al., 2016). When PI is promoted by school leaders, parents' abilities, and interests in contributing towards formulation of rules and events of the education system will be beneficial for students (Sharkey et al., 2016). Stark and Stark (2016) suggested that family members should assume a greater role in their children's education because they are the closest and most influential individuals to children; therefore, families can promote children's interests and engagement in learning.

Rothman et al. (2018) considered the dimensions of "school enabling," "sense of welcome," and "parent support for student learning" in their study seeking ways to measure why parents become engaged in schools (p. iv-v). As parents dialogue with educators to communicate their beliefs and concerns, parents better understand what their children are being taught and the methods used by teachers (Fernández-Alonso et al., 2017). When teachers communicate with parents about the state standards for what students are learning, parents can see the evidence of work performed by students and their teachers. Based on this communication, teachers show parents how to help their children engage in learning, enabling them to know how to carry out an educational learning experience. Furthermore, Rothman et al. found that parents need to feel a sense of community resulting from opportunities and support for their successful engagement with schools on behalf of their children's academic success (Rothman et al., 2018).

Inhibitors of Parent Engagement

Ma et al., (2016) found that when there is minimal use of PI, students do not progress; therefore, it is important to investigate what may inhibit parent participation. Several inhibitors to PI have been suggested by both school personnel and family members (Boonk et al., 2018). Moreover, some parents feel disconnected from schools and unwelcomed in educational institutions, while other parents do not value education or consider it important enough to allocate their time to it. Boonk et al. (2018) found that many schools have not adopted the strategies aimed at encouraging PI. As a result of this oversight, family members do not know that they have an important role in supporting

their children's academic progress in the schools and at home (Ma et al., 2016).

Furthermore, some families who live at or below the poverty level are reluctant to

participate in PI due to feelings of social apprehension based on their own academic

achievement and social competence. The following section discusses the inhibitors of

resources, income levels, language, and family background.

Resources

Mahaffey and Kinard (2020) found that resources are needed to promote the

home-school connection when teaching during the C-19. Without access to the resources

of computers and the internet, students cannot participate in remote learning (Lake &

Makori, 2020). Soutullo et al. (2016) identified that a lack of resources has adverse

effects on children's education. Soutullo et al. (2016) investigated challenges to family

and school partnerships and found that a lack of resources was linked to family members'

poor PI and their responses to communications from the school. A lack of adequate

resources causes parents to be reluctant to participate (Soutullo et al.). Lake and Makori

(2020) documented that low-income families in rural areas have had limited access to

instruction during the C-19 pandemic due to the digital divide.

Income Levels

Low-income levels and poverty are some of the reason's families feel they lack

resources to contribute significantly to the education of their children (Masonbrink &

Hurley, 2020). Many parents have lost their jobs due to the C -19 pandemic and do not

have adequate resources to help their students when it comes to distance learning (Garbe

et al., 2020; Masonbrink & Hurley, 2020). Masonbrink and Hurley (2020) reported that parents in poverty are facing stressors related to such things as unemployment and at-risk jobs. As a result of the dilemma, parents under stress may lack time or resources, or both, to support their child's use of remote learning. According to Masonbrink and Hurley, and Wang et al. (2016), low-income parents felt their active involvement would require them to provide funds or purchase school items for their children; and since they did not have enough money for such expenses, they avoided becoming involved.

Language and Literacy

Lack of literacy and language proficiency in English as a primary language can also be a challenge to PI (Johnson et al., 2016; Ramos, 2017). Johnson et al. (2016) noted that Hispanic mothers reported that they understood that the parenting role means assisting with their children's learning process and instilling proper behaviors; however, they are not comfortable taking active roles in the school. The Hispanic mothers revealed that they were involved in educating in the home but felt limited by their low proficiency in the English language, when it came to teacher and parent partnerships. Ramos (2017) found that the way teachers presented lessons can be confusing to parents when the language used is incomprehensible. Many parents do not understand the terms being used by teachers and do not perceive what teachers are telling them as useful (Ramos).

Family Background

Many different family structures exist today (Blessing, 2020). Researchers found an association between the type of family that students come from and the families'

abilities to form partnerships with teachers (Boonk et al., 2018; Fernández-Alonso et al., 2017). Boonk et al. suggested that the state of teacher's relationships with students and parents impacts the teacher's ability to develop connections that contribute to collaboration between student-to-teacher and parent-to-teacher, which then impacts academic goals for the student during the coming years (Boonk et al., 2018). Povey et al. (2016) found that a family's culture and living conditions impact PI. Boonk et al. revealed that when comparing African American, Hispanic, and Caucasian children and parents, African American children had the least supportive relationships with teachers. Boonk et al. concluded that lower achievement of African American students in early grades contributed to poor relationships with teachers. Povey et al. examined experiences of migrant students and found that families' cultures impact how families engage with schools. For instance, a culture that assigns family duties based on gender can also prevent a parent's involvement (Povey et al., 2016). Tully et al. (2017) found that in low-income families, mothers took a more active role in issues that concern children than fathers did. However, when fathers contributed efforts toward family involvement, there were gains in children's academic outcomes (Tully et al., 2017). Pajarianto et al. (2020) stressed the importance of activities that will enhance students learning in the home during the pandemic.

Summary and Conclusions

In Chapter 2, I presented a review of the literature covering the topic of PI in general and investigated PI during the C-19 pandemic in K-3 schools serving children

during their early childhood years. The review began with a literature search strategy

detailing how, where, and techniques I followed while gathering information over a 2-

year period. In this chapter, I elaborated upon Bronfenbrenner's bioecological model and

Epstein's model PI, while focusing on *learning at home* and *communicating*, by including

information provided by several researchers who applied both models in their research.

Most importantly, it was vital that I dig deeper into current literature related to key

concepts and variables of this study and did so with the assistance of the Walden

librarians. Researchers' beliefs about the importance of PI were critical to the

development of parent-to-teacher interactions and sharing of information that promoted

parents' engagement in the education of their children in the home. In Chapter 3, I present

the methodology I wish to follow to answer the research question.

Chapter 3: Research Method

The research problem that was addressed in this study was low levels of PI in the home for rural Title I schools serving K-3 students during a global pandemic. The purpose for this basic qualitative study was to explore early childhood teachers' and parents' perspectives on PI in the home during the C-19 pandemic. This research is important because of its potential contribution to the field of early childhood education by increasing understanding of school stakeholders related to low levels of PI in the home during the C-19 pandemic. Chapter 3 contains the research design and rationale, and the role of the researcher. The methodology section is comprised of the following sections: participant selection, instrumentation, procedures for recruitment of volunteers, participation by volunteers, and data collection and analysis. Additionally, procedures for ensuring the trustworthiness of the data and ethical procedures are presented in this chapter.

Research Design and Rationale

One research question guided this study:

RQ1: What are the perspectives of K-3 teachers and parents of K-3 children about parent involvement in the home during the COVID-19 pandemic in a rural Title I school?

The central concepts under investigation were teachers' and parents' perspectives on PI in two rural Title I primary schools serving K-3 students during the C-19 pandemic. Bronfenbrenner's microsystem and mesosystem and two types of PI based on Epstein's model – communication and learning at home - informed this study. The research

tradition selected for this study was a basic qualitative approach with interviews in order that I may explore teachers' and parents' perspectives using narrative techniques such as semistructured interviews (see Patten & Newhart, 2017; see Yin, 2016). For this study, interviews were appropriate to glean teachers' and parents' perspectives because participants can respond freely and share their points-of-view (see Patton, 1987). I assumed that the best information concerning PI would be gathered by interviewing teachers and parents who interact with K-3 students in two rural Title I primary schools. By interviewing teachers and parents of K-3 students, I collected rich, thick, and descriptive data that revealed teachers' and parents' perspectives (attitudes, beliefs, and experiences) about the central phenomenon (see Creswell & Poth, 2018). A case study approach was not considered for this exploration because it would have involved an examination in an individual setting using multiple data sources (see Creswell, 2012). I chose interviews as my only data source. I also did not consider a phenomenology approach because my study involved PI by communicating and learning at home rather than focusing on a single aspect of an intense human experience (Merriam, 2009).

Role of the Researcher

According to Tracy (2013), the researcher is the primary instrument in research; therefore, my role as the researcher is as the primary instrument in this study designed to explore PI in rural Title I primary schools during the C-19 pandemic. In this basic qualitative study with interviews, I was directly involved in recruiting study participants and conducting interviews to collect data. According to Musante and Dewalt (2011), the

researcher discovers multiple viewpoints and gains insights into participants' perspectives using interviews. It was my intention to seek volunteers from two different schools in the same rural Title I district that serve K-3 students. I live and work in a neighboring community to the location that is the setting for this study. I have no personal or professional involvement in the school district, with teachers or educational leaders in the district, or with the families of K-3 students who attend the schools. Teachers and parents may view me as a teacher from a neighboring school district, but I assured volunteers that due to my role as the researcher, I was bound to confidentiality and ethical practices. It was my aim to help the participants feel comfortable about being interviewed by me and freely share information without feeling intimidated.

I acknowledge my personal biases because I believe that parents are involved in education in the home, but that their involvement may not be recognized as important by teachers. It was important to recognize and address my biases before my research begins (see Moustakas, 1994). My knowledge of the issues related to C-19 and parental involvement could be biased and I wrote my thoughts in a research journal to keep my biases in check. I followed an interview protocol by using the same semistructured questions that were validated by an expert on rural Title I family engagement at the district level. By using the protocol and following it, I was better able to stay on track with my questions, with the aim of reducing the likelihood of introducing researcher bias through the interjection of inappropriate questions during the interview. As a professional educator, I was guided by a professional code of ethics. I was conscious of multiple

relationships and roles and the potential for coercion and was guarded against all areas

that were of concern ethically. I informed volunteers about the study and receive each

volunteers' informed consent to participate via e-mail before conducting each interview.

Each volunteer was aware that he or she may stop and/or discontinue participation at any

time with no threat of coercion or penalty. At that time, there was no requirement that I

apply for Institutional Review Board (IRB) approval within the district. Each participant

did receive a $10.00 gift card to a local store to acknowledge their contribution to this

research.

Methodology

Participant Selection

A purposeful sample of 16 volunteers (eight teachers, eight parents) who were

knowledgeable about the phenomenon was recruited to volunteer for the study.

Purposeful sampling was justified because the goal of the research was not to establish a

general perspective from the population, but to gain insights from a phenomenon,

individuals, or events (see Onwuegbuzie & Leech, 2007). Purposeful sampling was used

to identify individuals who were knowledgeable about the phenomenon of parent

involvement rural Title I K-3 schools where parents and teachers are affiliated. My goal

was to recruit eight volunteers from each school and check that each grade level was

represented by two parents and two teachers from each grade level in the K-3 grades.

According to Palinkas et al. (2013) purposeful sampling is used in qualitative studies to

help the researcher identify participants who are familiar with a study's phenomenon and

because of their knowledge and experience their responses to interview questions are meaningful. In general, sample sizes in qualitative research should not be too large that it is difficult to extract thick, rich data (Onwuegbuzie & Leech, 2007).

Following Walden University's IRB approval, I recruited K-3 teacher and parent volunteers for the study from two rural Title I schools that serve K-3 students in the same district. These schools have reported low levels of PI over the previous three years. This problem intensified with the onset of the C-19 pandemic during the spring of 2020 and has continued to the present day in spring of 2021. The two schools have been identified as high-poverty schools; and at the time of the study, students will have been taught via a hybrid model with two days in the schools each week and three days in the home. For this study, my goal was to recruit 16 participants comprised of eight teachers and eight parents of children enrolled in two rural Title I K-3 schools in the same district located in the southern United States, for a total of 16 participants. In this section, I presented criteria for participation in this study by teacher and parent volunteers. There are two criteria for recruiting teachers for this study: (a) employed in grades K-3 and (b) have taught for a minimum of 1 year. I used each school's website that lists employees' names and positions with their e-mail addresses for the 2019-2020 and 2020-2021 academic year. I highlighted teachers' names that met the two selection criteria.

There were criteria for recruiting parent volunteers for this study. Parent volunteers was non-school employees or spouses of non-school employees. Parents had to have at least one child enrolled grades K-3. Parents were recruited by email through

the school's website. I used parents' e-mails from each schools' website where Parent

and Teacher Organization (PTO) contacts and home-room parent volunteers names are

listed. Being a member of the PTO or a classroom volunteer was not a requirement for

participation in the study. The names and e-mail addresses of home-room parent

volunteers were listed on the website by grade level. My goal was to recruit a total of

eight parent volunteers from both schools for students enrolled in grades K-3. Parents

were asked to provide the grade level for their child when responding to the invitation to

participate in the study.

My goal was to recruit a total of 16 volunteers for this study from four grade

levels (K-3) in two rural Title I schools. I did not give preference to any gender, race,

language, or ethnicity. Volunteers who met the criteria for this study were accepted on a

first come basis.

To contact and recruit participants, I sought cooperation from the superintendent

of the district. I did contact the superintendent by e-mail for permission to conduct this

study (see CITE training). In the e-mail I informed the superintendent about my study

and listed the topic, purpose, and need for a total of 16 participants, and of the benefits of

participation from two schools serving K-3 students in the district and a Letter of

Cooperation I followed up with a copy of the email message via U. S. Post Office and, if

still no response, a telephone call.

I requested permission from the superintendent to contact the principals of both

schools requesting their cooperation allowing me to recruit and conduct my study with

eight K-3 teachers and eight parents of K-3 students in each of the schools after school hours. Upon receiving approval from the Walden University's IRB, I did send e-mail requests to teachers and parents to recruit potential volunteers/participants for my study by using the school websites for teachers' and parents' email contact. The email request to teachers and parents did include the invitation and the letter for informed consent. Teacher and parent volunteers did have the invitation to participate with brief information about the purpose of this study, criteria for participation, sample questions, participants' rights, including the right to confidentiality and freedom to stop the study and/or terminate their participation. If participants felt they had enough information to give their informed consent, they did so by responding to the e-mail and stating that they consented to participate. Volunteers were able to access my email address and telephone number as needed because it was included on all correspondence. I allowed two weeks for responses from study volunteers to set up telephone interviews at a time and place where the participants' identities were protected. This basic qualitative research study with interviews was conducted with a small sample size, which was appropriate according to Merriam (2009) and Creswell (2012). I anticipated that this small sample size would allow me to collect deep, rich, and thick data from teachers and parents with a focus on communication and learning at home (see Creswell, 2012).

Instrumentation

The instrument I created for data collection in this basic qualitative study was a two-part interview protocol with one part for parents and one part for teachers to answer

the RQ: "What are the perspectives of K-3 teachers and parents of K-3 children about parent involvement in the home during the COVID-19 pandemic in a rural Title 1 school?" In this study, a purposeful sample was used because the sample is knowledgeable about the phenomenon. The reasons for the two-part interview were to obtain teachers' communication on the academics being implemented during C-19, how well students were learning at home, and to obtain parents' perspectives on their child's learning at home. The interview questions and probes were guided by Bronfenbrenner's microsystem and mesosystem and two types of PI based on Epstein's model – communication and learning at home. Merriam and Tisdell (2016) noted that in semistructured interviews that all questions are flexibly worded, or the interview is a mix of more and less structured questions. For my study, interview questions were open-ended and allowed the participant to specifically answer each research question. According to Creswell (2012), open-ended questions make it possible for collecting data from participants who give meaningful answers. Follow-up and/or probing questions were listed for each question of the interview to elicit clarifying and in depth responses. An expert on rural Title I family engagement at the district level for Title I primary grade schools reviewed the questions. Asking an expert to review the interview questions for both parents and teachers was necessary to understand if questions and prompts in the instrument were valid. I wanted to ensure that all questions had been completely and clearly written so those being interviewed would understand what was in the instrument

and I would be able to address the research questions. The purpose of content validity is to understand what is in the instrument.

Procedures for Recruitment, Participation, and Data Collection

Once I received approval from Walden University's Institutional Review Board (IRB) and the school district's superintendent, I began the recruitment process. I contacted the building principals of two rural Title I schools serving K-3 students via email requesting each principal's permission to contact teachers and parents who are listed on the schools' websites. In case I did not receive a response to my email, I followed up with a telephone call to introduce myself, explain the study using the email request as a prompt for the discussion, and requested permission to recruit participants as needed. Because email addresses for teachers and parents are available through the campus websites, I did not need contact information from each principal. I used lists of teachers and parents that are posted on campus/district websites to recruit participants by e-mail. Secondly, the recruitment email message to K-3 teachers and parents of K-3 students included the title of study, purpose of the study, the criteria for volunteers to participate in the study, and my contact information as the researcher. I provided the informed consent letter through e-mail which included the details of the study, the volunteers' rights as participants, the length of time for the interviews, and anticipated length of time to participate in member checking. Volunteers were given the option to contact me for further information and express an interest in participating or if they have unanswered questions. Volunteers were asked to respond to my e-mail with the words "I

consent." Volunteers were informed that there would be one digitally recorded telephone interview that would last between 45-60 minutes and would be made at a mutually convenient time where each volunteer's confidentiality would be maintained. Participants were informed that the time for member checking of their interview data summaries would take them approximately an hour and would be conducted via e-mail. Each participant did receive a $10.00 gift card for a local store following the member checking process.

Volunteers were given the opportunity to read the Informed Consent, which was an attachment to the invitation to participate. If the volunteer felt that he or she had enough information to participate, he or she could respond to e-mail with the words, "I consent to participate in the study." Each volunteer emailed me with three choices of times when he/she were available for a 45-60 minute digitally audio-recorded phone interview and communicated the times. I contacted each participant via email to confirm a mutually agreed time for the interview.

The phone interviews were conducted in the following manner. I called the participant during the agreed upon time and date. I started with a preliminary greeting to the participant. I reminded volunteers that their participation in the study was voluntary, and comments made during the interview would remain confidential. I asked each participant whether I have permission to record the interview. I also reiterated that they could withdraw from the study at any time. I informed the participant that my next step was to ask interview questions. I asked one question at a time, and a total 15 questions

related to the framework and relevant literature, including follow-up or probing questions. At the end of each interview, I thanked each participant for his/her participation and let each participant know that a summary of the findings upon completion of data analysis. Participants were given one week to complete the member-checking process which should take no more than one hour. A gift card was mailed to the address provided by each participant at the time member checking was completed. Participants could request to read the study after it is published; and if they so desire, they may request that I send them a link to the study.

Data Analysis Plan

The interview protocol was designed to answer the research question. Interview questions were written to include communicating and learning at home and the microsystem and macrosystem of Bronfenbrenner's bioecological systems theory. Literature related to these constructs were included in the interview questions.

I used inductive analysis to review codes and themes that are revealed during analysis. Inductive analysis was appropriate for this study because analysis involves interpreting data and gaining meaning based on what was said by participants (see Lodico et al., 2010). Inductive analysis goes beyond simple summary of data to include interpretation and making sense of the collected data (Collier et al., 2017). Themes that are most relevant to the research question will emerge and will be described in the final report.

According to Saldaña (2016), data analysis and coding follow a process. First, I transcribed the data verbatim by eliminating filler words such as "ah," "um" and so forth. This step was necessary for purposes of accuracy, to provide a holistic perspective of the participant answers, and to understand better the context by which the participant may be answering the questions. Second, I checked each transcription by listening to the digital audio recording numerous times to ensure the accuracy of the transcription. Each transcription was checked with the recording to ensure accuracy of the data. Then I read the transcriptions multiple times to become familiar with the data. During multiple readings I wrote comments in the margins that are related to the transcripts. The coding process that I followed began with using a priori codes from both frameworks that included microsystem, mesosystem, and exosystem (Bronfenbrenner, 1979) and communicating and learning at home (Epstein et al., 2001). I proceeded with open coding by reading and re-reading to search for words and phrases that were in common in the data. I used open coding for concepts and repeated words and phrases. I assigned a label to similar groups that give meaning to the group. Within each group, I was able to see patterns of codes from open coding, which were collapsed because of repetition of codes. I used axial coding to further refine data and categories were formed. I followed the process outlined by Creswell and Poth (2018) and examined for pattern which I used to create temporary themes or subthemes from the data (see Creswell & Poth, 2018). Elements of data that contradicted the themes and patterns found in the data analysis process are identified as discrepant cases. Although searching for discrepant cases helped

me refine the analysis by seeking an explanation that accounted for the cases, I was not able to locate discrepant cases.

Trustworthiness

Trustworthiness for this basic qualitative study with interviews was established by looking through the lenses of credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability (see Connelly, 2016). According to Merriam and Tisdell (2016), trustworthiness is established when data have been collected, analyzed, and then interpreted rigorously and ethically. An audit trail was used to document this study's key stages and reflect the major research methodology decisions I made (see Cypress, 2017). The audit trail made it possible to trace information about the study from the initial stage to the final stage as I explored the perspectives of teachers and parents about communicating and learning at home during C-19.

Credibility

Reflexivity was used to ensure credibility. Reflexivity involves knowing how the researcher affects and is affected by the research (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). I kept a reflexive journal to establish links between subjective data gathered and the data gathered during the research process. This was beneficial to establish integrity of the research processes and to remain aware of my own ethical conduct throughout the study (see Merriam & Tisdell, 2016).

I ensured credibility by maintaining a consistent interview process by following an interview protocol, which made it possible for me to use interview questions and

prompts to elicit the thoughts and the experiences of participants regarding communicating and learning at home. I carefully listened to the responses given by participants to the interview questions; and did listen multiple times before, during, and after writing the transcripts of the interviews. I carefully and thoughtfully summarized each interview transcripts for each teacher and parent participant.

Member checking was used to ensure accuracy of the data collected (see Harper & Cole, 2012). I specifically used transcript checking to establish accuracy of my data summaries from study participants. Harper and Cole (2012) suggested using the researcher's transcription and summary of interviews to check for accuracy of the information to improve credibility and validity of the data collected.

Transferability

Transferability of findings is established when readers identify that the purpose of the research and the resulting findings may be applicable in other contexts, situations, and populations (Cypress, 2017; Yin, 2016). Transferability of findings from the study did depend on the reader's determination that what was found in my study can be transferred to the reader's context. For example, if a K-3 teacher read my study and determined that something I found would apply in his or her K-3 setting related to parent and teacher communication. As I wrote, I used rich thick descriptions to provide contextual information that will help readers determine whether findings can be transferred to their various contexts (see Merriam & Tisdell, 2016).

Dependability

Dependability sets the research findings as consistent and applicable. According to Connelly (2016), when the data are stable over the conditions and the time of the study, then data may be considered dependable. I ensured dependability through an audit trail that included writing detailed notes and digitally recording interviews to ensure transparency in the research process. Based on information about dependability from (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). I maintained detailed documentation by using alphanumeric codes for participants to organize and keep track of my analysis procedures using an audit trail. An audit trail is a detailed account of the research process from beginning to end and includes a description of steps taken to collect and analyze the data. I detailed all steps taken by me in collecting and analyzing data.

Confirmability

Confirmability refers to the degree of neutrality in the reporting of findings (Ravitch & Carl, 2016). This criterion deals with the confidence level that the findings of the research study are based on the narratives and words of the participants rather than potential researcher biases. Confirmability helps in verifying that the findings are shaped more by participants rather than by the researcher. Findings from this study was based on interview responses of participants, and responses did not represent my opinions or biases. Further, I kept a reflective journal which did help me identify if I needed to minimize my own reflections about parent involvement in the home through

communicating and learning at home during C-19, as I interacted by telephone and video conferencing with participants during data collection and member checking.

Ethical Procedures

The first step in ethical procedures for this study was obtaining approval from Walden University's IRB to conduct this study. After receiving approval for this proposal to conduct a study, I did complete an IRB form which is an application to conduct a study. To identify the district within which to conduct a study, I sought permission from the superintendent of the district by asking for a Letter of Cooperation. When I received approval from the IRB, I began to conduct the study as my objective was to establish ethical protection of all participants. As a courtesy, I did contact the building principals of the two rural Title I primary schools, asking their cooperation in allowing me to recruit teachers and parents for my study. I obtained all e-mail addresses from the websites of the two schools.

I provided a letter of informed consent to potential volunteers, which outlined the purpose of the study, explained participants' roles in the study, and describe what would happen during the telephone interview and the member checking processes. Participants who volunteered for this study did receive a copy of the informed consent form via e-mail at the time of their recruitment. I followed the IRB's recommendation for obtaining informed consent during the C-19 pandemic. Informed consents from participants were gained through email by each participant after he or she was informed of his or her rights related to the process. Participants were informed that there would be no penalty for not

participating in the study and that at any time they may cease participating without penalty for any reason.

A total of 16 participants, comprised of eight parents with K-3 students and eight teachers who taught K-3 students from two rural Title I schools located in the southern region of the United States were recruited. Purposeful sampling was used to recruit and select participants to participate in this study. The interview protocol document lists the interview questions and probes. The interview questions and probes were reviewed by an expert in PI in a rural Title I school in a neighboring district to the setting where the study will be conducted. The interviews were digitally audio recorded at an agreed upon time and place. Participants were assured that steps would be taken to safeguard their confidentiality (see Patten & Newhart, 2017; see Yin, 2016). I maintained a strict ethical stance, confidentiality obligations, and protect information from unauthorized disclosure. Participants were informed that they may stop their participation at any time and may withdraw from participation without any consequences. Participants were offered a $10.00 gift card at the time member checking was completed, which was mailed to participants using the U.S. postal service to an address provided by the participant. All data of participants was stored on a password protected computer to which only I have access.

I was solely responsible for conducting interviews, collecting data, and analyzing interview data. In doing so, I adhered to Walden University's IRB and code of ethics for research. To the greatest extent possible, participants' confidentiality was protected.

Participants were given alpha numeric codes and any documents that contained their names was securely stored on my password protected laptop to which only I have access. Their real names do not appear in any form or any interview transcript or recording. They were simply identified via the codes assigned to them. This prevented the identity of the participants. The codes were used in the findings as each code did represent the participant. At the end of five years beyond completion of my study, all data will be destroyed following Walden University's procedures. Any hard copies of data were stored in my home office in a locked file cabinet to which only I have access to the key. The study was conducted in a rural school district where I am not personally or professionally known, nor do I have an affiliation with personnel of the school district or families that are served by the schools. Participants were provided a $10.00 gift card to acknowledge their contribution to this study. Teachers and parents who participated were volunteers who did not receive no pressure to participate.

Summary

The purpose of this basic qualitative study with interviews was to explore teachers' and parents' perspectives on parent involvement in the home in primary schools serving K-3 grade students during the COVID-19 pandemic. In Chapter 3, I outlined the research design and rationale, methodology, ethical conditions, data analysis plan as well as participant selection procedure. The study did follow a basic qualitative study with interviews. This approach accommodates varying perspectives and interpretations between researcher and study participants. The research used semistructured interviews

as the means of collecting data. The data analysis did include the coding of data and the corresponding presentation of findings. Chapter 4 will report findings of this study that did result from analysis and interpretation of data that was collected for this basic qualitative study with interviews.

Chapter 4: Results

The purpose of this qualitative study with interviews was to explore early childhood teachers' and parents' perspectives on PI in the home during the C-19 pandemic for rural Title I schools serving K-3 students. I used purposeful sampling to recruit early childhood teachers and parents of children in primary grades. I used semistructured interview questions to answer the leading research question in this study, as follows: What are the perspectives of K-3 teachers' and parents of K-3 children about parent involvement in the home during the C-19 pandemic in two rural Title I schools? In Chapter 4, I present findings from my research. I identify the research setting, participants' demographics, data collection and analysis, and findings. Next, I explain evidence of trustworthiness. I then add a comprehensive analysis of the teachers' and parents' responses regarding their perspectives on communication and learning at home based on the conceptual framework for this study for rural Title I schools during the C-19 pandemic.

Setting

The two schools identified for this study were rural Title I schools serving K-3 students. These schools are in a community where residents are diverse in such factors as family background, education level, language, sex, race, culture, and socioeconomic status. All teachers who participated in this study live within their communities. At the time of the C-19 pandemic, there was a lot of uncertainty by members of the school community about student learning. The district superintendent made decisions about the

closing of schools that had a dramatic effect on the work of teachers. Due to C-19, families needed to provide an active role to help students learning at home. The superintendent was not in favor of closing the schools and made the decision that schools would remain open, and that teachers, staff, and students would follow C-19 guidelines for mask wearing, social distancing and increased sanitization and handwashing, with teachers providing for students' learning. The settings for this study involved the school site setting and homes of approximately 120 K-3 students. Teachers and parents or family members engaged in parent involvement during the C-19 pandemic by increasing parent-teacher communication to facilitate students' learning at home. Teachers communicated that most students learned at home because parents were fearful that their children might become ill with C-19. Teachers and parents collaborated on providing an online virtual environment for communication and learning at home.

Participant Demographics

Participants of this study included a total of eight primary teachers and eight parents from the two rural Title I primary grade schools in the district. There were criteria for teacher volunteers which were that teacher participants would be currently employed as a K-3 classroom teacher for a minimum of 1 year. Parent volunteers had to be non-school employees or spouses of non-school employees and have at least one child enrolled in grades K-3 during the study. There were eight female teacher participants and eight female parent participants. All 16 participants responded to the study invitation by both email and phone. There were four teachers who represented School 1 and four

teachers who represented School 2. Teacher participants are presently working in an

elementary school with 2 to 24 years of teaching experience at the K-3 grades. Five

participants had bachelor's degrees, two participants had master's degrees, and one had

an education specialist degree. Two participants had less than 5 years in teaching

experience, and six participants had more than 5 years of teaching experience, with three

participants having over 20 years teaching experience. All parent participants were

current parents of students who attended one of the two school sites of this study. Parents

and teachers from School 1 had children or students in Grades K-1. Parents and teachers

from School 2 had children or students in Grades 2-3. Demographic information is

exhibited in Table 1 and Table 2.

Table 1

Teacher Demographics

Teacher	Teaching Position	Years Teaching - School	Education Highest Degree Earned
T.K.1	Kindergarten	21 – Sch. 1	MA
T.K.2	Kindergarten	3 – Sch. 1	BA
T.1.1	First	23 – Sch. 1	MA
T.1.2	First	2 – Sch. 1	BA
T.2.1	Second	7 – Sch. 2	BA
T.2.2	Second	16 – Sch. 2	MA
T.3.1	Third	24 – Sch.2	Ed.S.
T.3.2	Third	7 – Sch. 2	BA, MA

Note: T = Teacher, Grade (K, 1, 2, 3), and Teacher's Number (1, 2).

Table 2

Parent Demographics

Parent Participants	Student's Grade School	Work Status	Parent/Teacher Organization
P.K.1	Kindergarten 1	Full Time	Yes
P.K.2	Kindergarten 1	Full Time	No
P.1.1	First 1	Full Time	Yes
P.1.2	First 1	Work at home	Yes
P.2.1	Second 2	Work at home	No
P.2.2	Second 2	Full Time	Yes
P.3.1	Third 2	Work at home	Yes
P.3.2	Third 2	Full Time	Yes

Note: P = Parent, Child's Grade and School, Parent Number Work, PTO Member.

Data Collection

Data Collection

The process of data collection began as soon as I received Walden University's IRB approval. The IRB approval number for this qualitative study is 06-18-21-0518137. I corresponded with each of the 16 participants via email and phone to acquire consent and schedule phone interviews. I answered volunteers' questions and explained the interview process and ethical requirements. All volunteers who met the criteria agreed to the consent form. Participants indicated their preferred day and time for the interview. All

participants replied in a timely manner and interviews were scheduled. The time frame taken to complete the phone interviews was approximately two weeks.

Data were collected from teachers and parents in two schools. At the time of this study, all K-1 grade teachers were based at one school (School 1) and all 2-3 grade (School 2) teachers were based at another school. At the beginning of each telephone interview, I reviewed the consent form and explained that they could stop the interview at any time. I built rapport with warm-up questions, then I asked the 14 interview questions. I paused after asking the question to give participants the opportunity to respond or make additional comments. During the interview, I followed an interview protocol and asked 14 open ended questions on teachers' and parents' perspectives on parent involvement in rural Title I schools during the C-19 pandemic. I also used open ended questions and prompts for further clarification if participants gave an answer that I did not understand.

Following the interviews, I transcribed the audio files. Transcription of interviews took me 2 weeks to complete. I only had to contact three participants for clarification because I experienced technical difficulties that interrupted my hearing details of their responses. After listening to digitally recorded interviews several times and transcribing the data from phone interviews, I asked participants to participate in a review of the interview transcript summaries to check for accuracy and confirm or clarify their responses. All participants responded that their summaries were accurate. Once I received confirmation, I mailed participants gift cards at addresses they provided.

All participants' names were removed as participants were assigned an alphanumeric code to protect their identities. I used an alphanumeric system with the letter "T" as the initial identifier for "teacher," and I assigned a number for each teacher. I followed the same alphanumeric system with the letter "P" as the initial identifier for "parent," and I assigned a number. All telephone interview recordings were assigned T1…T8 and P1…P8. It was not necessary to separate groups by schools because all teachers and parents of children who attended Grades K-1 were at one campus (School 1); and all teachers and parents of children who attended Grades 2-3 were at the other campus (School 2).

In this basic qualitative study, the data were collected through semistructured interviews with kindergarten and first grade teachers and parents based on one campus (School 1) and second and third grade teachers and parents based on another campus (School 2). Data were collected through telephone interviews with follow-up emails for clarification of their interview transcript summaries. There were no unusual circumstances surrounding the data collection phase of the study. There were no variations in data collection from the plan presented in Chapter 3. The qualifying participants were within the final number and within the original parameter proposed for the study.

Data Analysis Plan

As the researcher, I conducted data analysis in the following steps: transcribe the interviews, organized the data, coded the data, grouped data, found patterns, labeled data,

generated themes, and wrote the findings. I completed analysis of data as the researcher

of this study and did not use data analysis software. The first step during data analysis

was to transcribe the interviews. After completing each interview, I transcribed the

interviews by listening to each audio recording several times and writing verbatim each

word. Transcribing each interview verbatim allowed me to familiarize myself with the

data. I reread the transcripts to guarantee that no recognizable information could be

located, I then reread a final time to ensure my familiarity with the data. I labeled and

organized interview transcripts by alphanumeric codes for identification of participants

per the confidentiality agreement. The next step in the data analysis process was coding

the data.

Data analysis was completed by using inductive analysis to review codes, group

for patterns, and reveal subthemes for parents and teachers, and then themes emerged

from this data. I followed the inductive analysis process which goes beyond simple

summary of data to include interpretation and making sense of the collected data (see

Collier et al., 2017). To organize the data, I created two tables. The first table I created

organized data by a priori codes (see Appendix B). The five a priori codes were based on

the conceptual framework of Bronfenbrenner's, specifically the microsystem,

mesosystem, and exosystem, and Epstein's communication and learning at home. Next, I

began open coding by repeatedly reading through the data and finding repeated words,

phrases, and concepts. I used the research question to guide my search of the data for

open codes and raw data, which enabled me to recognize groups and patterns. Codes that

were repeated more than two times were grouped as recurring patterns (see Saldaña, 2016). I reviewed and highlighted these open codes using different colored markers and was able to recognize patterns in the data. Initially, there were 178 codes with a lot of repetition. Then, I reduced data by combining similar codes and deleting others to reveal groups across participant data that answered the research question (see Appendix C). Once groups were formed, they were labeled and from these labeled data four themes emerged (see Creswell & Poth, 2018). Themes were named by reviewing codes, groups, and labels, and identifying the significance of each theme (see Braun and Clarke, 2006). There were no discrepant cases found during the data analysis process in this study. Data were consistent and did not contradict themes found in the data analysis (see Creswell, 2012).

Results

In this section, I present findings from this basic qualitative study with interviews. Findings were derived from analyses of participants' responses to semistructured interview questions and prompts that were based on the one research question of the study: What are the perspectives of K-3 teachers and parents of K-3 children about parent involvement in the home during the C-19 pandemic in rural Title I schools? Parents and teachers were interviewed with interview questions that were aligned to the research question. The conceptual framework guided this study. Epstein (2001) made the case that parent involvement occurs by communicating and learning at home, which depends on a reciprocal process between teachers and parents on behalf of the child. Epstein (2001)

and the Center for Disease Control and Prevention (2012) recognized that parent

involvement leads to parent engagement when schools are committed to reaching out to

actively involve parents in meaningful ways, and parents are committed to actively

supporting their children's learning and development. Parent involvement is also a

service provided by teachers and other school personnel (Center for Disease Control and

Prevention, 2012). Therefore, both teachers and parents are involved in parent

involvement activities. In this study, teachers and parents were involved in

communicating and learning at home to ensure children were learning. While providing

this service to actively involve parents through communication and learning at home,

teachers were instrumental in the mutually beneficial goals of home and school.

Based on the results four themes emerged to answer the research question: (a)

Teachers and parents communicated in multiple ways to promote learning at home; (b)

Teachers and parents collaborated in multiple ways to motivate students while learning at

home; (c) Teachers and parents shared resources with stakeholders to promote

engagement in teaching and learning processes; and (d) Teachers and parents discovered

their increased agency from challenges while learning at home. In the following

narrative, I will discuss each theme and provide evidence from the transcripts for support.

Theme 1: Communicating in Multiple Ways

Teachers and parents communicated in multiple ways to support student

engagement while learning at home. Parents or other family members and teachers

communicated using telephone calls, text messages, emails, videos, video conferencing,

webinars, podcasts, chat rooms, and virtual learning platforms. Parents acknowledged

that communication between the home and school was a key element in their

involvement in their children's learning at home during the C-19 pandemic students

communicated as they respond to teachers and parents to learn academic content and

communicated as they developed the skills to use the tools to access the content at home.

Parents made telephone calls, sent text messages and emails, participated in video

conferencing, responded to chats in webinars and podcasts, talked or wrote dialogue in

chat rooms, and attended interactive sessions on virtual learning platforms to learn skills

to facilitate their children's learning at home. Teachers engaged in communication with

students, and parents or family members by making telephone calls, sending text

messages and emails, participating in video conferencing, responding to chats in

webinars and podcasts, talking or writing dialogue in chat rooms, and attending

interactive sessions on virtual learning platforms.

Teachers and parents used one-way and two-way communication. Teachers used

one-way communication to send newsletters, videos, and other information through

media or print It is unknown who the recipient(s) and the purpose of the communication.

Teachers and parents or other family members used two-way communication that

included dialogue and provided opportunities for each individual to be responsive when

communicating to meet their respective needs in reciprocal and collaborative ways so

children were able to learn at home. Communication differed in multiple ways based on

what was developmentally appropriate for the students, what would be possible given the

various learning environments in the home, and strategies that could be used to engage students in learning because of resources available to students in the home.

Teachers used communication to involve parents so their children would become engaged students while they were learning in the home. Teachers used audio, video and audio, or text messages to build relationships on behalf of the students. A second teacher of grade two (T.2.2) shared a representative comment about the importance of two-way communication to build a relationship with a parent of one of her students:

I had to build that relationship with my parents as if they were one of my students in the classroom. I had to show empathy, compassion, and most of all listen to them because they too were experiencing a lot with students not being in school and being on lock down.

Several teachers expressed themselves in similar ways. A representative comment was made by the first teacher of grade one (T.1.1), "It has motivated me to stay in contact as much as possible to let them know I'm here if they need me and to make sure, they understood that the lines of communication will remain open."

Subtheme 1.1: Family Members Communicated with Teachers

Parents described communication as a type of parent involvement which is necessary for children to be successfully engaged in the learning process at home. All eight parents stated that they had an "open line of communication" with their child's teachers or other school personnel during the time their children were learning at home in a virtual environment, and that communication was facilitated through technology.

Parents or family members made telephone calls, sent text messages and emails, participated in video conferencing, responded to chats in webinars and podcasts, talked or wrote dialogue in chat rooms, and attended interactive sessions on virtual learning platforms to learn skills to facilitate their children's learning at home. The second parent of a kindergarten student (P.K.2) reported:

> His teacher communicates through Class Dojo, and she offers support by reaching out and informing me of his progress through email. She lets me know if he does not understand and that she will meet after [the session] to dive deeper into what he does not get.

P.1.1 and P.2.2 both mentioned several types of electronic communication tools they used when communicating with their child's teacher. P.2.2 said, "My child's teacher [communicate using technology in] multiple ways: Class Dojo, email, Google Classroom, telephone, and Zoom for parent meetings." P.3.1 shared, "My child's teacher and I had great communication." P.1.1 stated, "I reached out immediately via one of the provided communication platforms to let the teacher know if I had a concern." Parents expressed that if there was an urgent request and they needed assistance from the teacher to promote their child's engagement in the learning process, they would reach out using one of the various means of communication available to them.

Subtheme 1.2: Teachers Communicated with Family Members

Teachers used email, Class Dojo, Zoom, Google Classroom, Google Speak, and Google Voice, text messaging, and telephone calls to communicate with family member

with the intent of encouraging parental involvement. Teachers found that many times

they were communicating with family members such as grandparents, aunts, siblings of

the student, a neighbor, and not always directly with the parent. All teacher participants

reported using typical one-way communication such as newsletters or bulletins, but that

they also made efforts to establish two-way communication between family members and

themselves to promote student engagement. Teachers reported that they want to talk with

parents to help them support their children and promote student engagement while they

are learning at home. T.1.1 admitted, "You want to talk to the parents more, keep them

more updated as to what is going on because they can't be in the building. It makes you

want to stay even more available to communicate with them now." T.2.2 stated: "I have

increased my calling to parents to at least three times a week. I email those parents I

cannot reach by phone or by Class Dojo. All teachers suggested that communication with

parents increased since the COVID-19 pandemic because communication was necessary

to promote student engagement in learning while they were in the home. T.3.2 stated,

"My communication has increased more. I use Google Voice and Class Dojo a lot to

communicate with parents; and this is helpful."

Theme 2: Collaborating in Multiple Ways to Motivate Students

Teachers and families were involved in parent involvement as they collaborated

in multiple ways to promote student engagement while they were learning at home during

the COVID-19 pandemic. Both teachers and parents mentioned that they collaborated to

motivate students while they were learning at home. They worked together when

"helping with schoolwork," "focusing on reading and math," and "trying many ways to motivate students to learn in a virtual environment" or "motivating children to learn when they were at home without access to the Internet." Teachers and parents shared ways motivate student learning by brainstorming strategies that could be used in the home.

Subtheme 2.1: Teachers Collaborated with Family Members

All teachers used parent involvement collaborate with families. Teachers appreciated the increased parent involvement leading to communication and collaboration with family members, and each commented that collaboration became stronger as they worked together during C-19. Teachers shared that they "form[ed] bonds with family members" and even "create[d] small communities of learning" within the home learning environment to collaborate with parents. Collaboration to motivate students took place through phone calls, zoom meetings, google meets, and parent teacher conferences in break out rooms during zoom conferences. T.1.1 stated, "I always leave … different ways parents may contact me to collaborate each time I post to the platform to make sure that parents knew I was available for collaboration – we have to work together if the students are going to be successful." T.1.2 indicated willingness to increase collaboration for student motivation. She said, "I learned the needs of the families and made sure that I was being accessible when parents have concerns about their children's motivation to learn and to better understand the families' expectations for children's learning." Teachers expressed their views that during these unprecedented times, teachers and families needed to share their expectations and to collaborate with

one another to address students' motivation to learn. Teachers and parents discussed

student motivation and identified strategies that might motivate students on Zoom.

Teachers expressed the need to make the Zoom classroom more like a school setting.

Teachers talked about the need to communicate more frequently to show work together

as a collaborative partnership to address problems of student motivation that may have

developed and coming up with solutions to address the problem of lack of student

motivation.

Subtheme 2.2: Family Members Collaborated with Teachers

P.K.2 described parent involvement in the home that occurred when

communication resulted in family members collaborating with teachers to motivate

students. Parents found in working with their children that if they did not understand

assignments, their children were not motivated to complete the assignments. P.K.2 stated,

"I would reach out to his teacher and ask her to explain the directions to me or get clarity

on what he was supposed to do." This parent's collaboration with the teacher helped her

to clarify the assignment and motivate her child to complete the assignment.

Family members collaborated with teachers to motivate their students to learn by

attending Zoom meetings. During these meetings, ideas were shared such as keeping a

calendar and reporting children's learning behaviors that were useful in motivating a

reluctant child. P.2.1 stated, "I would either call the teacher, unmute on the live Zoom

parent meeting and ask the question, or send a Class Dojo message, or I would

communicate in the Zoom chat box." Parents collaborated with teachers by learning how

to present lessons to their children. P.2.2 shared, "I reviewed the assignment that was taught by the teacher. I also reviewed any skills that the teacher would reference." When parents were current on what was required, students were more motivated to follow through with their schoolwork.

Some parents brainstormed with their child's teacher ways to keep their children motivated during the pandemic. When collaborating with the teacher, some parents found that hiring a tutor suggested by the teacher would help the child stay motivated. P.1.1 said, "I also hired a tutor for my child to help me help her with her schoolwork." Several parents shared that when their child did not know the task, and although it may have been a strenuous task at first, when parents collaborated with the teacher on finding ways to offer support, children became more motivated and successful at completing tasks while learning at home.

Theme 3: Shared Resources with Stakeholders to Promote Student Learning

With challenges of C-19, resources that promoted student engagement while learning at home became very important. Teachers and parents jointly understood that human resources were necessary for student learning. School personnel, local communities, and many families were actively involved in sharing needed physical resources with families. Stakeholders provided good nutrition for learning, distributed school supplies, delivered teaching tools and supplies for parents and other family members, and provided access to technology tools and Internet connectivity.

Subtheme 3.1. Teachers Shared Resources

Teachers were also involved in sharing food resources by communicating with school personnel and volunteers to deliver breakfast and lunch to students. Teachers accepted this task so that students had the proper nutrition and were fed breakfast and lunch during the school week while learning at home. Many teachers did what they thought was necessary to use parent involvement to keep students engaged while they were learning at home. T.1.1 stated,

> I would send home additional reading and math resources just for them to practice. It boosted me to send home extra practice materials so students could practice with parents and that gave parents another opportunity to be involved as well.

Teachers made many decisions all while adjusting lesson preparation and having the difficult task of making sure they reach all students by providing resources to help parents with reading and mathematics skills for students to practice at home. Those resources consisted of literacy (websites for students to practice reading comprehension, sight words, responding to reading), mathematics (manipulatives, worksheets, projects), and educational websites.

Teachers shared resources with parents and other family members who would be facilitating the teaching and learning process to keep students engaged in learning. When asked about sharing resources with families, T.K.1 said,

I have done a lot of teacher made videos this year through VRSPOT (video

platform for teachers to create videos to upload) to help the parents understand

what I am teaching giving step by step examples as if the student is in class with

me. I sent the videos to the parents.

Teachers shared that they shared resources to motivate students and sustain

student engagement by allowing the student to view the videos and participate through

watching the lesson presented by the teacher and completing the activity at home. Parents

went to the school or to the school district's central office to pick up a student learning kit

that consisted of academic work for weeks 1-5 just to make sure students are doing their

work to keep up with what we are doing in the classroom.

T.K.2 stated, "Materials such as pencils, crayons, paper, reading books, math

manipulatives and educational website resource printed pages were delivered to the

homes, so they were readily accessible to students and their parents." T.3.1 shared,

I provided them with choice board activities and supply kits that included pencils,

crayons, paper, scissors. For tech problems such as Google Classroom, I provided

them with videos from YouTube to walk them through the process of frequently

asked questions of problems they may be having with navigating through Google

Classroom.

T.3.2 also sent items home with students, "I sent home hard copies of the lessons

and color coded them to reflect what we are doing each day." Having to do this allowed

the students to be engaged with the lessons that were being taught in person. Teachers

held weekly zoom meetings with parents and students to review the material taught that week so that students had time to be actively involved and engaged with the teacher teaching the lesson.

Teachers were unsure how they were going to contact their students. They were aware that some families did not have access to the Internet, may have conflicts with work commitments, or no means of transportation to collect schoolwork. Teachers shared resources (work packets, mathematics manipulatives, reading books, and educational websites newsletters) so students would have the tools they needed. Teachers and parents had to make the transition from face-to-face to learning at home. T.1.2 said,

> I support my students' parents while their children are learning at home by sending videos of skills for parents to watch while their children are learning at home and being available after class to speak to parents if they have a concern about a skill or lesson that was taught.

Subtheme 3.2. Parents Shared Resources

Parents communicated with teachers to share essential classroom resources with other students in the neighborhood. Some parents opened their homes to groups of the neighborhood children and distribute school supplies. Sharing resources was not restricted to the home environment. Teachers, who were working with students at school, received "care packages" from parents. Care packages included hand sanitizer, masks, Lysol, wipes, and tissues. Parents felt that they should share resources with teachers to keep students and teachers safe during face-to-face instruction. P.K.1 stated, "Although

my child was at home learning, I felt a need to still supply the teacher with things to help

keep the classroom sanitized just in case my child had to do face to face learning." P.2.2

answered, "I supplied the teacher with as many cleaning items to keep the class sanitized

although my child was not there, I felt I should still supply some items because

eventually my child would return to face to face." P.2.2 also shared the following

information, "I supplied classroom materials such pencils, crayons, glue sticks, Kleenex

tissues, sanitizing wipes, and hand sanitizer for use by all students not just my own." The

comments of several indicated that they felt that C-19 is an ongoing life change for all,

and teachers and families are finding ways to not just be there for students but be there

for each other during these unprecedented times we are facing.

Theme 4: Discovered Increased Agency from Challenges

Participants discovered increased agency from challenges. At the time of this

study, the superintendent was not in favor of closing the schools and did not close the two

schools during this study. Several teachers shared the information summarized in the

statement by T.1.1: "Our superintendent was 100% against virtual learning. He was eager

to promote face-to-face learning even during a pandemic even at the height of it. We

never even had a virtual option for parents."

Both teachers and parents acknowledged the work and skills they developed from

the onset of C-19. Teachers reported that there were a range of challenges to keeping

students motivated and engaged in the learning process. Teachers reported that they were

challenged by receiving no support from the superintendent, not being prepared for

distance learning, educational background of some parents, minimal participation from some parents and students, technology glitches, and could not reach all students. However, teachers demonstrated their agency by working with families on behalf of the students.

Several teachers mentioned they were the ones who researched and found what would work with their students who were learning at home. Teachers expressed that they were challenged with new technology and that their increased skills with technology were many times a result of collaborating with other educators and parents who were skillful in using computers and apps. Teachers' discussed changes they made to empower parents to be more involved in their child's learning at home. Participant T.2.2 explained:

> I will say the videos work best because students are more engaged to the advancement of technology. I made the content more engaging when it came to reversing the outcome so children can learn at home by making it more fun and challenging them to challenge me at different times of the lessons I taught.

Parents found they had to trust teachers and communicate and collaborate to help their children develop agency.

Subtheme 4.1: Teachers Discovered Increased Agency

Many teachers confided that they personally have come a long way in their own skill levels in working with technology, teaming with their colleagues, and interacting with parents. Teachers discovered increased agency as they addressed challenges they faced with technology. Teachers worked to find ways to encourage parents to be on

camera and communicate with them. Teachers indicated that some parents would shy away from the camera when it came to Zoom meetings with parents, and they learned to be encouraging with the parents. Teachers' discussed changes they made to empower parents to be more involved in their child's learning at home. T.K.1 said, "I have empowered parent/family involvement by calling parents and by doing weekly zoom meetings to keep parents informed on what their child should be learning." The response by T.3.1 summarized what several teachers expressed related to their modeling for parents how to teach a topic or skill to children. "I also complete the parent session by demonstrating what I would normally do in the classroom."

With the many changes that came with the C-19 pandemic, teachers also had many decisions to make while adjusting lessons. Teachers overcame the challenge of not having their classroom as the center for learning, teaching at different times of the day, not being able to maneuver technology, not being able to reach all students at the same time, working longer hours and sometimes neglecting their families. T2.2 stated:

> You're teaching somewhat on a virtual level; you don't have the big board used in the classroom in front of you. You have to upload different content for the students and parents to be able to see and know what is being taught. You can't really see what the student is understanding being that it is virtual through google classroom as to seeing their facial expressions face-to-face.

T.3.2 explained that "one of the biggest challenges is to stay on top of lesson plans and materials that students need. Work ahead when planning and making sure you

reach all students ability levels even outside the classroom. Take time to teach technology so students can feel comfortable with completing independent work. Teachers' also addressed ways that they assisted in learning at home. T.1.1 said:

> I didn't want to overwhelm parents and students with sending material home, but I would send home things we were learning in class. I would send home additional resources just for them to practice. It challenged me to create additional lessons and boosted me to send home extra practice materials so students could practice with parents and that gave parents another opportunity to be involved as well.

T.K.1 shared:

> I send home information through my newsletter, so parents know what's going on. I also use have a weekly Zoom parent meeting to inform parents on what students are learning. I also use this time to answer any questions that parents may have.

> T.1.1 mentioned, "I used Google Classroom, and Google Meets so that we could have some type of face-to-face contact when working with student to help with assignments." T.K.2 said, "When talking with parents or other family members, I stressed the importance of being involved during this pandemic, providing an understanding, and overall being patient because everything is a learning experience". T.1.2 stated:

> The changes I have made in the ways I have advocated/empowered parent/family involvement is by learning the needs of the families and being assessable when

parents have a concern about their child's learning. It was challenging as a teacher

to be more accessible than before and listening to parents and their concerns. I

have also made changes in how I listen to the parents and how I respond when

they have a problem.

T.3.2 spoke about her challenges of being prepared to weekly support parents, and

said:

One challenge was to make sure that weeks of work was available to parents with

pick/up and drop/of scheduled on Fridays. I gave hard copies to students so that

parents can transport students and classwork if/when they had to shift during the

week. That way parents could assist as needed; they could text me to find out

what assignments needed to be completed if they can to take their child to work

with them.

Teachers shared that they had not been prepared or received professional

development for virtual learning or technology usage. Given the best training, they could

not be prepared for not reaching all students. They expressed that learning how to

collaborate with parents contributed to student motivation and engagement and increased

agency. Some teachers indicated that they spent more time planning and preparing

lessons for both parents and students. Many expressed how much they learned in

addressing the challenges of both face-to-face and virtual learning. For teachers, in

meeting challenges, they found they could be successful. T.K.2 said the following:

Some challenges I overcame by trying new strategies include motivating students who were not being attentive, creating a background being distraction free, dealing with students not completing assignments or students not having proper materials to complete certain activities or assignments. I have overcome these challenges by not stressing situations, using what the students have at home, and making turning in assignments as simple as possible for all students.

T.1.2 stated:

The challenges I have experienced are getting the students motivated and keeping their attention throughout the lessons. I don't think I have overcome those challenges because there are still a few students who I have to consistently motivate to stay focused and be involved in the learning.

T.2.2 stated:

Some of the challenges I have experienced with children spending more time learning at home is that it's kind of hard to keep everybody focused over a computer screen versus you being face to face with them in the classroom.

Teachers relied on parents to help keep their children focused on learning. T.3.2 shared how she overcame some challenges:

My challenges included students' occasional lack of focus due to internet issues and/or difficulty with their learning style because students needed more peer-to-peer and hands on learning. I tried to overcome those by setting the stage for what we will be learning and when we would take our breaks. I did small groups in

breakout room to encourage student led sessions. I also did 1:1 for students who

needed more individualized time with me.

T.1.2 stated:

Having to teach during COVID-19 has really been a struggle for me as a teacher. I

not only had to rethink how I teach but I also had to get creative with the lessons

and learn different ways to communicate with parents. Having to communicate

with parents more during this time has allowed for me to come out of my comfort

zone and really see how parents feel when trying to help students with learning at

home. This time has also allowed me to reflect on my teaching and ways that I

can improve so if this was to happen again while I'm still teaching, I will be

prepared.

Subtheme 4.2 Parents Discovered Increased Agency

The pandemic brought challenges to parents. Parents expressed that the health and

safety of their children was their primary concern. They also expressed that they were

challenged by how to negotiate having their children at home and how they could support

their learning. Parents overcame challenges because parents took the initiative to

collaborate with others, research, and find resources that would motivate their children

and keep them engaged in learning. Parents recognized they were able to make decisions

about what tools their children needed to develop skills. P.K.1 said:

By using what the teacher has uploaded or even by locating a worksheet or

reading a book and having my child to answer the questions that I ask from the

book. I also try and reinforce by using the videos the teacher may put up for the students.

P.1.1 described learning at home by stating, "Aside from the assignments we would have in google classroom, we had workbooks, I would print worksheets from Teachers Pay Teachers and Education.com, and we would read. I stressed to her [my child] how important it was for her to read." P.2.2 stated, "I reviewed the assignment that was taught by the teacher. I also reviewed any skills that the teacher would reference too. Reading was the most important of all along with math facts."

Evidence of Trustworthiness

Trustworthiness in qualitative research includes credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability. These factors of trustworthiness are discussed in this section. Participants received a consent form that explained the purpose of the study, the importance of confidentiality, and that participants could stop or withdraw from the study at any time, which was also explained prior to each interview.

Credibility

I ensured credibility by maintaining a consistent interview process by following an interview protocol. I digitally recorded all interviews and transcribed them verbatim after the interview process ended. I ensured accuracy of each participants' data by using transcript review to establish the accuracy of my data summaries from participants in the study. I also conducted member checking by returning the findings to the participants for them to check the findings for accuracy of their data (see Harper & Cole, 2012). Some

participants contacted me to express their agreement with the findings of the study, as well as their appreciation for being included in my study so they could share their perspectives of their experiences. Participants did not offer further clarification of their interview responses.

Transferability

Transferability refers to how results are transferred to other contexts or settings. Merriam and Tisdell (2016) stated that the most common strategy is "the use of rich, thick description" (p. 256). I ensured transferability by using rich thick descriptions that illustrate a comprehensive picture of the perspectives on parent involvement in Rural Title I schools during the COVID-19 Pandemic, allowing the reader to determine any relation between this basic qualitative study and experiences of their own. These descriptions add detail to characterize the voices, actions, feelings, and meanings transmitted by the speaker, giving a precise account of the experiences and perspectives of the interviewed participants.

Dependability

I have ensured dependability with an audit trail that included writing detailed notes and digitally recording interviews to ensure transparency in the research process (see Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). I maintained detailed documentation by using alpha-numeric codes for participants to organize and keep track of my analysis procedures. I followed up each interview by sending a summary of the interview transcript for

participants to review and provide feedback. Following my analysis, I sent a summary of my findings for each participant to complete the member checking process.

Confirmability

Confirmability refers to the degree of neutrality in the reporting of findings (Ravitch & Carl, 2016). Findings from this study were based on interview responses of participants. I kept an organized and detailed audit trail that documented the steps and the decisions made during the research process. I kept a reflective journal in which I wrote entries to document my decision-making process. I interacted by telephone with participants during data collection, by email during transcript reviewing, and by email for the member checking process.

<p style="text-align:center">**Summary**</p>

In Chapter 4, I describe the setting, data collection process, analysis, and results, and evidence of trustworthiness. In this basic qualitative study with interviews, I explored K-3 teachers' and parents' perspectives on PI through communication and learning in the home during the C-19 pandemic. Participants were eight teachers of K-3 students, and eight parents of students enrolled in K-3 classrooms in two rural Title I schools located in the southern region of the United States. Data were coded and analyzed to reveal patterns, categories, and themes guided by the conceptual framework, which was a combination of Bronfenbrenner's (1976) bioecological systems theory and two of Epstein et al.'s (2001) types of PI (communication and learning at home). Themes that emerged from synthesis of data collected in interviews were: (a) Teachers and parents communicated in multiple

ways to promote learning at home; (b) Teachers and parents collaborated in multiple ways to motivate students while learning at home; (c) Teachers and parents shared resources with stakeholders to promote engagement in teaching and learning processes; and (d) Teachers and parents discovered their increased agency from challenges while learning at home. In Chapter 5, I will focus on my interpretation of the findings, limitations of the study, recommendations, implications for social change, and my conclusions.

Chapter 5: Discussions, Conclusions, and Recommendations

Introduction

The purpose of this basic qualitative study with interviews was to explore early childhood teachers' and parents' perspectives on PI in the home during the C-19 pandemic for rural Title I schools serving K-3 students. Findings of this basic qualitative study with interviews may contribute to better understanding about PI in the home during the C-19 pandemic and ways teachers and families communicated and worked together to promote learning at home. There are limited data on PI in the home during C-19 and how this pandemic has affected families and schools because of C-19. I attempted to address this gap in the literature on practice by answering the research question for this study: What are the perspectives of K-3 teachers and parents of K-3 children about parent involvement in the home during the COVID-19 pandemic in a rural Title I school? Data were collected from eight teachers and eight parents in rural Title I schools. Semistructured interviews were conducted to gain insights into early childhood teachers' and parents' perspectives on PI in the home during the C-19 pandemic for rural Title I schools serving K-3 students. Data were collected, organized, analyzed, and four themes emerged. Teachers and parents had similar feedback on PI through communication and learning in the home during the C-19 pandemic. The findings described interview responses of participants and how both groups of participants had similar feedback on parent involvement during C-19. Teachers focused predominately on students' educational needs as their goals, but this need expanded over to the importance of parents

being involved. While most parents indicated the desire to safely return to a brick-and-mortar education for their children, parents were committed to do what they could to support their children's learning in the home. Participants communicated using one-way and two-way communication to keep students engaged while they were learning.

Findings of this study revealed that both teachers and parents had roles in communicating, collaborating, sharing resources, and discovering they had agency in addressing issues that arose because of C-19. Themes that emerged from synthesis of data collected in interviews were as follows: (a) Teachers and parents communicated in multiple ways to promote learning at home; (b) Teachers and parents collaborated in multiple ways to motivate students while learning at home; (c) Teachers and parents shared resources with stakeholders to promote engagement in teaching and learning processes; and (d) Teachers and parents discovered their increased agency from challenges while learning at home. Findings helped me answer the research question and fill a gap in practice regarding early childhood teachers' and parents' perspectives on PI in the home during the C-19 pandemic for rural Title I schools serving K-3 students.

Interpretation of the Findings

My interpretation of the findings builds upon the literature and conceptual framework of the study. This basic qualitative study was framed by Bronfenbrenner's bio-ecological theory of human development and two of Epstein's six types of parent involvement frame this study. The study was guided by one research question: What are the perspectives of K-3 teachers and parents of K-3 children about parent involvement in

the home during the COVID-19 pandemic in a rural Title I school? In Chapter 2, I reviewed the current literature that is pertinent to the four identified themes and subthemes.

Teachers and parents in this study acknowledged the importance of students learning at home during the C-19 pandemic. Bronfenbrenner's bioecological systems theory aligned within the child's microsystem as Epstein's two types of PI -- communication and learning at home -- occurred within the child's immediate surroundings. The microsystem level involved those individuals closest to the child such as the parents and teachers. It also included events and interactions in the natural setting that most directly affect the child. Teachers worked to involve parents and keep them involved throughout the C-19 school year. Teachers described communication tools they used to work with parents on behalf of their children. Parents and teachers experienced challenges due to C-19 and discovered their increased agency in overcoming their challenges while learning at home lack of technology, and work schedules as challenges to PI, were identified by one participant. At the same time, parent participants in the study revealed an understanding of their role in encouraging children's learning at home during the C-19 pandemic. This was connected to factors including lack of resources, time constraints, and motivation. Themes that emerged from synthesis of data collected in interviews with parents and teachers about their perspectives of parent involvement were as follows: (a) Teachers and parents communicated in multiple ways to promote learning at home; (b) Teachers and parents collaborated in multiple ways to motivate students

while learning at home; (c) Teachers and parents shared resources with stakeholders to promote engagement in teaching and learning processes; and (d) Teachers and parents discovered their increased agency from challenges while learning at home.

Theme 1: Communicated in Multiple Ways

Study findings revealed that teachers and families communicated in multiple ways to keep students encouraged and motivated. This aligned with researchers who found that parents are willing to be involved when school personnel made efforts to communicate (Gu, 2017; Mahaffey & Kinard, 2020). Teachers in the study mentioned the importance of both one-way and two-way communication, which aligned with Orkin et al. (2017) who stressed the importance of using both one-way and two-way communication between home and school. These findings aligned with the work of Erdener and Knoeppel (2018) who found that parent and teacher relationships that involve two-way communications are important in strengthening PI. Likewise, because homelife changed and parents were put into the role of educators, communication between teachers and families became critical to students' learning as discussed by Spinelli et al., (2020) and Borup et al., (2020).

Theme 2: Collaborated in Multiple Ways

Study findings revealed that collaborating in multiple ways became a strong point as participants worked together during C-19. Both teachers and parents stated how important it was to collaborate and identify the different ways students were motivated to

learn. Teachers and parents became creative at enhancing lessons at home to get students motivated.

Both teachers and parents grew to respect each other. Bonds were created between teachers and families of their students from the increase of collaboration. This increased respect and high regard for the roles that each played in motivating and engaging the children. This theme is supported and aligned with the findings of Evans and Sims (2016). Evans and Sims found that teachers grew in their respect for parents and parents grew in their appreciation for the work of teachers when they communicated and worked together to identify ways to encourage positive attitudes in students and improve their academic performance. Several teachers and parents mentioned that they worked together in a collaborative manner to solve the problem of lack of student motivation and student engagement in learning. In the review of the literature, Boonk et al. (2018) explained that parents' collaboration included their participation in problem identification with teachers. Parents in the study expressed an interest in helping their children with strategies to overcome their difficulties in learning material and to improve their skills. Parent participants expressed their appreciation for the teachers working with them, which was supported by McDowell et al. (2018). Researchers found that parents were attracted to programs that worked with them to motivate children and encouraged children's development of social-emotional skills at home (McDowell et al., 2018). Findings of my study also confirmed what McDowell et al. reported that home-based parenting activities have higher and more positive connections with children's academic

learning because children felt more secure in learning when their parents knew and understood what they were learning.

Theme 3: Shared Resources

Findings revealed that teachers became more strategic in attaining resources to students for academic purposes. Teachers created many videos with step-by-step examples for students to follow and provided materials that were readily accessible for students to use. As found in the literature, teachers in this study learned new ways to interact and engage with their students using creative learning methods during C-19 (Ferdig et al., 2020; Gross et al., 2020) and based some of their lessons on items found in the home or easily accessible to families. Teachers and parents in this study reported what Bhamani et al., (2020) found in their study, that teachers and parents focused on awareness regarding the pandemic by teaching students about various C-19 preventive measures and emphasizing why prevention is important. Parents shared resources that would help keep students safe in the classroom as some students were learning in person at school. Parents provided cleaning items to keep the classroom sanitized while some parents kept their child at home. Some parents provided classroom materials such as pencils, crayons, sanitizing wipes, and hand sanitizer. These resources were needed to achieve success with students and their academics (Mahaffey & Kinard, 2020).

Theme 4: Discovered Increased Agency

Findings revealed that teachers had an increased awareness of their skills when working with technology, colleagues, and parents. Many changes came about when

teachers and parents worked together to use technology. This idea is also supported by Wolfe and McCarthy (2020). Parents discovered untapped skills in using technology and were more involved with their child's learning at home. Teachers faced challenges but found ways to overcome those challenges by employing creative methods to engage and motivate student learning (see Bandura, 2018). Findings revealed that some teachers had to withdraw preconceived ideas about parents not wanting to be involved in student learning to parents who are willing to be involved (see Bhamani et al., 2020; see Garbe et al., 2020). Teachers in this study were now teaching parents to understand how learning would take place and assure parents of teacher assistance for parents and student learning (see Borup et al., 2020).

Context of the Conceptual Framework

The conceptual framework combines Bronfenbrenner's microsystem, exosystem, and mesosystems from his bio-ecological systems theory of human development, and Epstein's *learning at home* and *communicating* from her model of six types of PI as presented in Epstein et al. (2001). The concepts of learning at home and communicating between parents and teachers took place in each child's microsystem and mesosystem (see Bronfenbrenner, 1994; see Epstein et al., 2001). Data included an example of the child's exosystem. Central office personnel worked with the teachers to collect and distribute food and school supplies to help children learning at home. I explored PI at the microsystem, mesosystem, and exosystem levels of influence and found that teachers, parents, and family members collaborated in multiple ways, shared resources, and

discovered they had increased agency as they effectively communicated and provided for learning at home.

Limitations of the Study

I ensured trustworthiness through following the interview process using my researcher produced interview protocol. Eight teachers and eight parents were interviewed following the same format, including (a) a review of the study's purpose, participants' rights, and permission to record the interviews, (b) the semistructured interview, and (c) a debriefing following the interview. The interviews were accurately recorded on a digital audio recording device. Data collection was restricted to the perspectives of the 16 study participants over a 2-week time frame from June 19, 2021, through July 2, 2021.

Recommendations

Eight K-3 teachers and parents of students from grades K-3 participated in this basic qualitative study with interviews. Based on the findings in this study, I recommend that future research replicate this study with modifications, using a larger group of participants to gain a greater understanding of teachers' and parents' perspectives of parent involvement in the home during C-19. Parents and teachers mentioned ways they communicated and collaborated for student learning at home. I recommend exploring additional ways of communication and collaboration using technology to promote learning at home. Teachers and parents identified that they discovered their increased agency in communication skills with each other and in motivating students to learn at

home. I recommend further research to have a deeper understanding about how teachers and parents increase agency by understanding how parents accommodated and supported children learning at home. Teachers and parents discussed sharing resources to support student engagement. I also recommend further studies to identify resources that benefit school parent involvement to promote student motivation and learning at home.

Implications

The purpose of this study was to explore parents' and teachers' perspectives on parent involvement in the home in two rural Title I primary schools serving K-3 grade students during the COVID-19 pandemic. The results from my research suggest possible implications for positive social change. This study can result in positive social change by increasing school stakeholders' understanding of the importance of parent and teacher communication and parent and teacher involvement in children's education in the home in rural Title I primary schools during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Conclusion

The purpose of this basic qualitative study with interviews was to explore early childhood teachers' and parents' perspectives on PI in the home during the C-19 pandemic for rural Title I school that serve K-3 students. Four themes emerged from synthesis of the interview data with parents and teachers: (a) Teachers and parents communicated in multiple ways to promote learning at home; (b) Teachers and parents collaborated in multiple ways to motivate students while learning at home; (c) Teachers and parents shared resources with stakeholders to promote engagement in teaching and

learning processes; and (d) Teachers and parents discovered their increased agency from challenges while learning at home. Based on the findings and supported by my review of the current literature with the constructs of the conceptual framework, this study can result in positive social change by increasing school stakeholders' understanding about the importance of parent and teacher communication and parent and teacher involvement in children's education in the home in rural Title I primary schools during the COVID-19 pandemic.

References

Adams, V. (2019). Steps to increase family and community engagement in elementary

school. *Strategies*, *32*(4), 29. https://doi.org/10.1080/08924562.2019.1608733

Al-Zoubi, S. M., & Younes, M. A. B. (2015). Low academic achievement: Causes and

results. *Theory and Practice in Language Studies*, *5*(11), 2262-2268.

http://dx.doi.org/10.17507/tpls.0511.09

Baker, T. L., Wise, J., Kelley, G., & Skiba, R. J. (2016). Identifying barriers: Creating

solutions to improve family engagement. *School Community Journal*, *26*(2), 161-

184. http://www.schoolcommunitynetwork.org/SCJ.aspx

Bandura, A. (2018). Toward a psychology of human agency: Pathways and reflections.

Perspectives on Psychological Science, 13(2), 130-136.

https://doi.org/10.1177%2F1745691617699280

Beckman, K., Bennett, S., & Lockyer, L. (2019). Reproduction and transformation of

students' technology practice: The tale of two distinctive secondary student cases.

British Journal of Educational Technology, 39, 346.

https://doi.org/10.1111/bjet.12736

Bhamani, S., Makhdoom, A. Z., Bharuchi, V., Ali, N., Kaleem, S., & Ahmed, D. (2020).

Home learning in times of COVID: Experiences of parents. *Journal of Education

& Educational Development, 7*(1), 9-26.

http://dx.doi.org/10.22555/joeed.v7i1.3260

Black, E., Ferdig, R., & Thompson, L. A. (2021). K-12 virtual schooling, COVID-19,

and student success. *JAMA Pediatrics,* 175(2), 119-120.

https://doi.org/10.1001/jamapediatrics.2020.3800

Blessing, M. (2020). Types of family structures. *Love to Know.*

https://family.lovetoknow.com/about-family-values/types-family-structures

Boonk, L., Gijselaers, H. J. M., Ritzen, H., & Brand-Gruwel, S. (2018). A review of the

relationship between parental involvement indicators and academic

achievement. *Educational Research Review*, *24*, 10-30.

https://doi.org/10.1016/j.edurev.2018.02.001.

Borup, J., Jensen, M., Archambault, L., Short, C. R., & Graham, C. R. (2020). Supporting

students during COVID-19: Developing and leveraging academic communities of

engagement in a time of crisis. *Journal of Technology and Teacher*

Education, *28*(2), 161-169. https://www.learntechlib.org/primary/p/216288/

Bronfenbrenner, U. (1977). Toward an experimental ecology of human

development. *American Psychologist, 32*(7), 513-531.

https://doi.org/10.1037/0003-066X.32.7.513

Bronfenbrenner, U. (1994). Ecological models of human development. *International*

Encyclopedia of Education, *3*(2), 37-43.

http://www.psy.cmu.edu/~siegler/35bronfebrenner94.pdf

Bronfenbrenner, U., & Ceci, S. J. (1994). Nature-nurture reconceptualized in

developmental perspective: A bioecological model. *Psychological Review,*

101(4), 568-58. https://doi.org/10.1037/0033-295X.101.4.568

Cano, K. J., Cape, M. G., Cardon, J. M., Miot, C., Pitogo, G. R., & Quinio, C. M. (2016).

    Perceptions of barriers to parental involvement: Epstein's six types of parental

    involvement. *The Online Journal of New Horizon in Education, 6*(4), 143-150.

    https://www.tojned.net/journals/tojned/articles/v06i04/v06i04-16.pdf

Catapano, J., & Snell, L. R. (2016). Rigor redefined: Building a culture of high

    expectations in Georgia schools and classrooms. *Georgia Department of*

    *Education.*https://www.gadoe.org/School-Improvement/School-Improvement-

    Services/Documents/Events%20and%20Conferences/ILC%20Metro%20February

    %202017/Rigor%20Redefined%20Handouts.pdf

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. (2012). Parent engagement: Strategies for

    involving parents in school health. Retrieved from

    https://www.cdc.gov/healthyyouth/protective/pdf/parent_engagement_strategies.p

    df

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. (2020, August 5). Considerations for

    community-based organizations. https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-

    ncov/community/organizations/community-based.html

Chenail, R. J. (2011). Interviewing the investigator: Strategies for addressing

    instrumentation and researcher bias concerns in qualitative research. *The*

    Qualitative Report, 16(1), 255-262. https://doi.org/10.46743/2160-

    3715/2011.1051

Cohen, B., & Crabtree, B. (2006, July). *Qualitative research guidelines project*.

http://www.qualres.org/

Collier, M., Kingsley, K. V., Ovitt, B., Lin, V., & Benavidez, J. R. (2017). Fostering collaboration with families of children with disabilities: Online professional development for K–12 teachers. *The Teacher Educator*, *52*(2), 138-154. https://doi.org/10.1080/08878730.2016.1273421

Connelly, L. M. (2016). Understanding research: Trustworthiness in qualitative research. *Medical and Surgical Nursing, 25*(6), 435-436. https://www.proquest.com/openview/44ffecf38cc6b67451f32f6f96a40c78/1?pq-origsite=gscholar&cbl=30764

Creswell, J. W. (2012). *Educational research: Planning, conducting, and evaluating quantitative and qualitative research* (Laureate custom ed.). Pearson Education.

Creswell, J., & Poth, C. (2018). *Qualitative inquiry and research design: Choosing among five approaches* (4th ed.). Sage. https://uk.sagepub.com/en-gb/afr/qualitative-inquiry-and-research-design/book246896

Cypress, B. S. (2017). Rigor or reliability and validity in qualitative research: Perspectives, strategies, reconceptualization, and recommendations. *Dimensions of Critical Care Nursing*, *36*(4), 253-263. https://doi.org/10.1097/DCC.0000000000000253

Dove, M. K., Neuharth-Pritchett, S., Wright, D. W., & Wallinga, C. (2015). Parental involvement routines and former Head Start children's literacy outcomes. *Journal of Research in Childhood Education*, *29*(2), 173-186.

https://doi.org/10.1080/02568543.2015.1011360

Edwards, P., & Compton-Lilly, C. (2016). New ways to engage parents: Strategies and

tools for teachers and leaders, K–12. Teachers College Press.

Epstein, J. L., & Sheldon, S. B. (2016). Necessary but not sufficient: The role of policy

and advancing programs of school, family, and community partnerships. *Journal*

of the Social Science, *2*(5), 202-219. https://doi.org/10.7758/rsf.2016.2.5.10

Epstein, J. L., Sanders, M. G., Simon, B. S., Salinas, K. C., Jansorn, N. R., &

VanVoorhis, F. L. (2001). School, family, and community partnerships: Your

handbook for action, second edition. Corwin Press, Inc.

https://www.govinfo.gov/content/pkg/ERIC-ED467082/pdf/ERIC-ED467082.pdf

Erdener, M. A., & Knoeppel, R. C. (2018). Parents' perceptions of their involvement in

schooling. *International Journal of Research in Education and Science, 4*(1), 34

https://www.ijres.net/index.php/ijres/article/view/321

Estévez, I., Rodríguez-Llorente, C., Piñeiro I., González-Suárez, R., & Valle, A. (2021).

School engagement, academic achievement, and self-regulated learning.

Sustainability, *13*(3011), 3011. https://doi.org/10.3390/su13063011

Etikan, I., Musa, S. A., & Alkassim, R. S. (2016). Comparison of convenience sampling

and purposive sampling. *American Journal of Theoretical and Applied Statistics*.

5(1), 1-4. https://doi.org/10.11648/j.ajtas.20160501.11

Evans, R. R., & Sims, S. K. (2016). *Health and physical education for elementary*

classroom teachers: An integral approach. Human Kinetics.

http://www.humankinetics.com/products/all-products/health-and-physical-education-for-elementary-classroom-teachers-ebook-with-web-resource

Faber, N. (2016). Connecting with students and families through home visits. *Education Digest*, *81*(8), 32–39. https://www.aft.org/sites/default/files/ae_fall2015faber.pdf

Fan, S., & Yost, H. (2019). Keeping connected: Exploring the potential of social media as a new avenue for communication and collaboration in early childhood education. International *Journal of Early Years Education, 27*(2), 132-142. https://doi.org/10.1080/09669760.2018.1454301

Ferdig, R. E., Baumgartner, E., Hartshorne, R., Kaplan-Rakowski, R., & Mouza, C. (2020) (Eds.), *Teaching, technology, and teacher education during the COVID-19 pandemic: Stories from the field. Association for the Advancement of Computing in Education*. https://www.learntechlib.org/p/216903/

Fernández-Alonso, R., Álvarez-Díaz1, M., Woitschach, P., Suárez-Álvarez, J., & Cuesta, M. (2017). Parental involvement and academic performance: Less control and more communication. *Psicothema*, *29*(4), 453-461. https://digibuo.uniovi.es/dspace/bitstream/handle/10651/45250/Parental.pdf?sequence=1

Fox, K. R. (2020). Bidirectional benefits from school to home literacy practices in the early childhood virtual classroom. In R. E. Ferdig, E. Baumgartner, R. Hartshorne, R. Kaplan-Rakowski, & C. Mouza (Eds), *Teaching, technology, and teacher education during the COVID-19 pandemic: Stories from the field,*

(pp.133-140). Association for the Advancement of Computing in Education (AACE). https://www.learntechlib.org/p/216903/

Garbe, A., Ogurlu, U., Logan, N., & Cook, P. (2020). COVID-19 and remote learning: Experiences of parents with children during the pandemic. *American Journal of Qualitative Research, 4*(3), 45-65. https://doi.org/10.29333/ajqr/8471

Gazaway, W. (2019). Georgia state leaders make moves to change education standards. WTOC. https://www.wtoc.com/2019/07/25/georgia-state-leaders-make-moves-change-education-standards/

González, N., Moll, L. C., & Amanti, C. (Eds.). (2006). *Funds of knowledge: Theorizing practices in households, communities, and classrooms*. Routledge.

Goodall, J. (2016). Technology and school-home communication. *International Journal of Pedagogies & Learning, 11*, 118-131. https://doi.org/10.1080/22040552.2016.1227252

Gross, D., Bettencourt, A. F., & Taylor, K. (2020). What is parent engagement in early learning? Depends who you ask. *Journal of Child & Family Studies, 29*, 747–760 (2020). https://doi.org/10.1007/s10826-019-01680-6

Gu, L. (2017). Using school websites for home: School communication and parental involvement? *Nordic Journal of Studies in Educational Policy, 3*(2): 133-143 https://doi.org/10.1080/20020317.2017.1338498

Guba, E. G., & Lincoln, Y. S. (1994). Completing paradigms in qualitative research. In N. K. Denzin & Y. S. Lincoln (Eds.), *Handbook of qualitative research* (pp. 105-

117). Sage.

Harper, M., & Cole, P. (2012). Member checking: Can benefits be gained to group

therapy? *The Qualitative Report,* 17(2), 510-517. https://nsuworks.nova.edu/tqr/

Harris, A., & Keith, R. (2016). A new framework for understanding parental

involvement: Setting the stage for academic success. *The Russell Sage*

Foundation Journal of the Social Sciences 2(5), pp. 186-201.

https://www.muse.jhu.edu/article/633742

Halverson, L. R., & Graham, C. R. (2019). Learner engagement in blended learning

environments: A conceptual framework. Online Learning, 23(2), 145–178.

https://doi.org/10.24059/olj.v23i2.1481

Ishimaru, A. M. (2019). From family engagement to equitable collaboration. *Educational*

Policy, *33*(2), 350–385. https://doi.org/10.1177/0895904817691841

Jeynes, W. H. (2018). A practical model for school leaders to encourage PI and parent

engagement. *School Leadership & Management*, *38*(2), 147-163.

https://doi.org/10.1080/13632434.2018.1434767

Johnson, S. B., Arevalo, J., Cates, C. B., Weisleder, A., Dreyer, B. P., & Mendelsohn, A.

L. (2016). Perceptions about parental engagement among Hispanic immigrant

mothers of first graders from low-income backgrounds. *Early Childhood*

Education Journal, *44*(5), 445-452. https://doi.org/10.1007/s10643-015-0728-z

Karl, A. (2016). Is it family or school? Getting the question right. *The Russell Sage*

Foundation Journal of the Social Sciences 2(5).

https://doi.org/10.7758/RSF.2016.2.5.02

Kimaro, A. R., & Machumu, H. J. (2015). Impacts of PI in school activities on academic

achievement of primary school children. *International Journal of Education and*

Research, 3(8), 483-494. http://ijern.com/journal/2015/August-2015/40.pdf

Komarraju, M., & Nadler, D. (2013). Self-efficacy and academic achievement: Why do

implicit beliefs, goals, and effort regulation matter? *Learning and Individual*

Differences, *25*, 67- 72. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.lindif.2013.01.005

Koralek, D., Nemeth, K., & Ramsey, K. (2019). *Families and educators together:*

Building great relationships that support young children. NAEYC.

https://www.naeyc.org/resources/pubs/books/families-educators-together

Korstjens, I., & Moser, A. (2018). Series: Practical guidance to qualitative research. Part

4: Trustworthiness and publishing. *European Journal of General Practice*, *24*(1),

120-124. https://doi.org/10.1080/13814788.2017.1375092

Lake, R., & Makori, A. (2020, June 16). The digital divide among students during

COVID-19: Who has access? Who doesn't? *The Lens.* https://crpe.org/the-digital-

divide-among-students-during-covid-19-who-has-access-who-doesnt/

Leadership Conference Education Fund. (2016). Parent and family engagement

provisions in the Every Student Succeeds Act.

http://civilrightsdocs.info/pdf/education/ESSA-Parent-Family-Engagement.pdf

Lenares-Solomon, D., Brown, M. H., & Czerepak, R. (2019). The necessity for school-

based mental health services. *Journal of Professional Counseling: Practice,*

Theory & Research, 46(1/2), 3-13.

https://doi.org/10.1080/15566382.2019.1674074

Li, A., & Fischer, M. (2017). Advantaged/disadvantaged school neighborhoods, parental networks, and parental involvement at elementary school. *Sociology of Education, 90*(4) 355–377. https://doi.org/10.1177/0038040717732332

Liu, F., Black, E., Algina, J., Cavanaugh, C., & Dawson, K. (2010). The validation of one parental involvement measure in virtual schooling. *Journal of Interactive Online Learning, 9*(2), 105-132. https://www.semanticscholar.org/paper/The-Validation-of-One-Parental-Involvement-in-Liu-Black/b7bbb6c862fc86b10d808360217b3635f4e5aedd

Ma, X., Shen, J., Krenn, H., Hu, S., & Yuan, J. (2016). A meta-analysis of the relationship between learning outcomes and parental involvement during early childhood education and early elementary education. *Educational Psychology Review, 28,* 771-801. https://doi.org/10.1007/s10648-015-9351-1

Mahaffey, F. D., & Kinard, W. (2020). Promoting the home-school connection during crisis teaching. In R. E. Ferdig, E. Baumgartner, R. Hartshorne, R. Kaplan-Rakowski, & C. Mouza (Eds), *Teaching, technology, and teacher education during the COVID-19 pandemic: Stories from the field*, (pp. 235-238). Association for the Advancement of Computing in Education (AACE). https://www.learntechlib.org/p/216903/

Mahmood, R. (2020, April 27). Rethinking family engagement during school closures.

Teaching Tolerance, https://www.tolerance.org/magazine/rethinking-family-engagement-during-school-closures

Onwuegbuzie, A. J., & Leech, N. L. (2007). Sampling Designs in Qualitative Research: Making the sampling process more public. *Qualitative Report*, *12*(2), 238-254. http://doi.org/10.46743/2160-3715/2007.1636

Malczyk, B. R., & Lawson, H. A. (2019). Family focused strategies for student engagement. *Preventing School Failure*, *63*(3), 211–219. https://doi.org/10.1080/1045988X.2019.1565752

Mandarakas, M. (2014). Teachers and parent—School engagement: International perspectives on teachers' preparation for and views about working with parents. *Global Studies of Childhood*, *4*(1), 21-27. https://doi.org/10.2304/gsch.2014.4.1.21

Marshall, C., & Rossman, G. B. (2016). Designing qualitative research (6th ed.). Sage

Martin, D. M. (2017). School counselors' perceptions of family systems perspectives. *The Family Journal*. *Educational Psychology Review, 28,* 771-801. https://doi.org/10.1177/1066480717711109

Masonbrink, A. R., & Hurley, E. (2020). Advocating for children during the COVID-19 school closures. *Pediatrics*. https://doi.org/10.1542/peds.2020-1440

Matthews, A., McPherson-Berg, S. L., Quinton, A., Rotunda, R. S., & Morote, E. S. (2017). The school-parent relationship across different income levels. *Journal of Leadership and Inclusion, 16*(1), 15-21.

https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/EJ1159887.pdf

McDowell, K., Jack, A., & Compton, M. (2018). PI in pre-kindergarten and the effects on student achievement. *The Advocate. 23*(10). https://doi.org/10.4148/2637-4552.1004

McGuinn, P. (2016). From No Child Left Behind to the Every Student Succeeds Act: Federalism and the education legacy of the Obama administration. *Publius: The Journal of Federalism*, *46*(3), 392-415. https://doi.org/10.1093/publius/pjw014

McQuiggan, M., & Megra, M. (2017). Parent and family involvement in education: Results from the National Household Education Surveys Program of 2016 (NCES 2017-102). National Center for Education Statistics. U.S. Department of Education. https://nces.ed.gov/pubsearch/pubsinfo.asp?pubid=2017102

Medscape. (2020). *What is COVID-19?* https://www.medscape.com

Merriam, S. B. (2009). *Qualitative research: A guide to design and implementation.* Wiley & Sons.

Merriam, S. B., & Tisdell, E. J. (2016). *Qualitative research: A guide to design and implementation*. Wiley & Sons.

Minick, N. (2017). *The development of Vygotsky's thought: An introduction to thinking and speech.* In *Introduction to Vygotsky* (pp. 35-58). Routledge.

Morrison, J. W., Storey, P., & Zhang, C. (2015). Accessible family involvement in early childhood programs. *Dimensions of Early Childhood Development, 39*(3), 21-26. https://learning.hccs.edu/faculty/jose.lopez2/cdec-202411446/bilingual-cda-

iii/week-3/Morrison%20Family%20Involvement.pdf

Moustakas, C. (1994). *Phenomenological research methods*. Sage.

Musante, K., & Dewalt, B. R. (2011). *Participant observation: A guide for fieldworkers*. AltaMira Press.

Nadeem, E., Kataoka, S., Chang, V., & Stein, B. (2016). School personnel experiences in notifying parents about their child's risk for suicide: Lessons learned. *Journal of School Health*, *86*(1), 3-10. https://doi.org/10.1007/s10488-016-0735-4

National Association for the Education of Young Children. (2016). *Research news you can use: Family engagement and early childhood education*. Center for Applied Research https://www.naeyc.org/content/researchnews-family-engagement

Nguyen, T., Nham, T. P., Froese, F. J., & Malik, A. (2019). Motivation and knowledge sharing: A meta-analysis of main and moderating effects. *Journal of Knowledge Management*. https://doi.org/10.1108/JKM-01-2019-0029

Onwuegbuzie, A. J., & Leech, N. L. (2007). Sampling designs in qualitative research: Making the sampling process more public. *The Qualitative Report,* 12(2) 238-254. https://doi.org/10.46743/2160-3715/2007.1636

Orkin, M., May, S., & Wolf, M. (2017). *How parental support during homework contributes to helpless behaviors among struggling readers*. Reading Psychology. Routledge. https://doi.org/10.1080/02702711.2017.1299822

Pajarianto, H., Kadir, A., Galugu, N., Sari, P., & Februanti, S. (2020). Study from home in the middle of the COVID-19 pandemic: Analysis of religiosity, teacher, and

parents support against academic stress. *Journal of Talent Development and Excellence*, *12*(2s), 1791-1807. https://www.semanticscholar.org/paper/Study-from-Home-in-the-Middle-of-the-COVID-19-of-Pajarianto-Kadir/6a0116a2b38a633a0ab166fd7a8b40248e900237

Palinkas, L., Horwitz, S., Green, C., Wisdom, J., Duan, N., & Hoagwood, K. (2013). Purposeful sampling for qualitative data collection and analysis in mixed method implementation research. *Administration and Policy in Mental Health, 42*. https://doi.org/10.1007/s10488-013-0528-y

Patten, M. L., & Newhart, M. (2017). *Understanding research methods: An overview of the essentials*. Routledge.

Patton, M. Q. (1987). *How to use qualitative methods in evaluation.* Sage.

Peterson, J., Bruce, J., Patel, N., & Chamberlain, L. J. (2018). Parental attitudes, behaviors, and barriers to school readiness among parents of low-income Latino children. *International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health*, *15*(2). https://doi.org/10.3390/ijerph15020188

Pincus, R., Hannor-Walker, T., Wright, L., & Justice, J. (2020). COVID-19's effect on students: How school counselors rise to the rescue. *NAASP Bulletin,* 104(4), 241-256. https://doi.org/10.1177/0192636520975866

Povey, J., Campbell, A. K., Willis, L., & Haynes, M. (2016). Engaging parents in schools and building parent-school partnerships: The role of school and parent organization leadership. *International Journal of Educational Research*, *79*(1),

128-141. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ijer.2016.07.005

Ramos, A. M. (2017). How's and whys of parental involvement in a National 'Neoliberal Laboratory': Aspirations, values and beliefs in relation to children's education among Chilean urban lower-middle-class parents. *Compare: A Journal of Comparative and International Education*, *1*(17), 5-60. https://doi.org/10.1080/03057925.2017.1375849

Ravitch, S. M., & Carl, N. M. (2016). *Qualitative research: Bridging the conceptual, theoretical, and methodological.* Sage.

Rothman, S., Ozolins, C., & Doyle, J. (2018). Measuring parent engagement. https://research.acer.edu.au/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1020&context=early_childhood_misc

Rubin, H. J., & Rubin, I. S. (2012). *Qualitative interviewing: The art of hearing data* (3rd ed.). Sage.

Saldaña, J. (2016). *The coding manual for qualitative researchers. 3*(2), 22-26.

Sanders, J. M. (2016). Focus on family: Teachers as parents: Using technology to facilitate PI. *Childhood Education, 92*(1), 95-96

Sharkey, J., Olarte, A., & Ramírez, L. (2016). Developing a deeper understanding of community-based pedagogies with teachers: Learning with and from teachers in Colombia. *Journal of Teacher Education, 67*. https://doi.org/10.1177/0022487116654005

Soutullo, O. R., Smith-Bonahue, T. M., Sanders-Smith, S. C., & Navia, L. E. (2016).

Discouraging partnerships? Teachers' perspectives on immigration-related

barriers to family-school collaboration. *School Psychology Quarterly*, *31*(2), 226-

240. http://dx.doi.org/10.1037/spq0000148

Sparks, S. D. (2016). Are poor students more ready for kindergarten? *Education Week,*

36(2), 8. https://www.edweek.org/leadership/are-poor-students-more-prepared-

for-kindergarten/2016/08

Spaulding, D., & Voegtle, K. (2010). *Methods in educational research: From theory to*

practice (2ⁿᵈ ed.). Wiley & Sons.

Spinelli, M., Lionetti, F., Pastore, M., & Fasolo, M. (2020). Parents' stress and children's

psychological problems in families facing the COVID-19 outbreak in Italy. *Front*

Psychological 11.1713. https://doi.org/10.3389/fpsyg.2020.01713

Stark, D. R., & Stark, F. H. (2016). *Equity starts early: How children will build high-*

quality early education. Washington, DC: Council of Chief State School Offices.

https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/ED580947.pdf

Tobin, B. (2017). Understanding the direct involvement of parents in policy development

and school activities in a primary school. *International Journal for*

Transformative Research, 4(1)25-33. https://doi.org/10.1515/ijtr-2017-0004

Tracy, S. J. (2013). *Qualitative research methods: Collecting evidence, crafting analysis,*

communicating impact. Wiley-Blackwell.

Trochim, W. M. K. (2020). *Research methods knowledge base* (2ⁿᵈ ed).

http://www.socialresearchmethods.net/kb/qualmeth.php

Tully, L. A., Piotrowska, P. J., Collins, D. A., Mairet, K. S., Black, N., Kimonis, E. R.,

    Hawes, D. J. Moul, C., Lenroot, R. K., Frick, P. J., Anderson, V., & Dadds, M. R.

    (2017). Optimizing child outcomes from parenting interventions: Fathers'

    experiences, preferences and barriers to participation. *BMC Public Health*, *17*(1),

    550. http://dx.doi.org/10.1007/s10578-017-0733-0

University of Plymouth. (2019, September 19). Parental involvement plays key roles in

    children's academic attainment, research shows: Parent engagement has a positive

    effect on a child's academic attainment – regardless of age or socio-economic

    status. ScienceDaily.

    https://www.sciencedaily.com/releases/2019/09/190919095220.htm

Walther, A., Warth, A., Ule, M., & du Bois-Reymond, (2015). 'Me, my education and I':

    constellations of decision-making in young people's educational trajectories.

    International Journal of Qualitative Studies in Education, 28(3), 349-371.

    https://doi.org/10.1080/09518398.2014.987850

Wan, W. (2020, May 4). The coronavirus pandemic is pushing America into a mental

    health crisis: Anxiety and depression are rising: The U.S. is ill-prepared, with

    some clinics already on the brink of collapse. The Washington Post.

    https://www.washingtonpost.com/health/2020/05/04/mental-health-coronavirus/

Wang, Y., Deng, C., & Yang, X. (2016). Family economic status and parental

    involvement: Influences of parental expectation and perceived barriers. *School*

    Psychology International, *37*(5), 536-553.

https://doi.org/10.1177/0143034316667646

Winthrop, R. (2020). Can new forms of parent engagement be an education game

changer post COVID-19? *Brookings Report.*

https://www.brookings.edu/blog/education-plus-development/2020/10/21/can-

new-forms-of-parent-engagement-be-an-education-game-changer-post-covid-19/

Wolfe, Z., & McCarthy, J. (2020). Engaging parents through school-wide strategies for

online instruction. In R. E. Ferdig, E. Baumgartner, R. Hartshorne, R. Kaplan-

Rakowski, & C. Mouza (Eds), *Teaching, technology, and teacher education*

during the COVID-19 pandemic: Stories from the field, (pp. 141-149).

Association for the Advancement of Computing in Education (AACE).

https://www.learntechlib.org/p/216903/

Wolfsohn, E. (2020, April 9). Community service during COVID-19: Volunteerism goes

virtual. CONE. https://www.conecomm.com/research

World Health Organization. (2020). Emergency: Coronavirus (COVID-19) disease.

http://www.who.int

Yazan, B. (2015). Three approaches to case study methods in education: Yin, Merriam,

and Stake. *The Qualitative Report*, *20*(2), 134-152. Retrieved from

http://nsuworks.nova.edu/tqr/vol20/iss2/12

Yin, R. K. (2016). *Qualitative research from start to finish.* Guilford Press

Appendix A: Research and Interview Questions Alignment

Research Question	**Teacher Interview Questions**	**Parent Interview Questions**
What are the perspectives of K-3 teachers and parents of K-3 children about parent involvement in the home during the COVID-19 pandemic in a rural Title I school?	In your role as a teacher, how do you promote parent involvement in the home (PI) during the COVID-19 pandemic? In your own words, please describe how supported your students' parents while their children are learning at home. In your role as a teacher, what changes have you made in the ways you have advocated/empowered parent/family involvement	What concerns do you have about the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on your child's education? How has COVID-19 affected your child's learning at home? Please describe how you are helping your child learn at home? Describe any changes that you have made to help your child learn as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic and your children learning at

	in their child's education during the COVID-19 pandemic?	home.
		How have you worked with your child's teacher to reinforce what is taught at school?
	What challenges have you experienced because children are spending more time learning at home instead of your classroom? How have you overcome those challenges?	Is your child expected to use a computer to learn at home? If yes, please explain what your child was learning and what your child did on the computer.
	How have you assisted parents to help their children learn at home? Which of these methods worked best? Which of these methods didn't work? What did you do to reverse that outcome so children can learn at home?	Is your child expected to use social media to learn at home? This might be Facebook or writing a blog, or sharing pictures, or watching a video? If yes to any of these platforms,

| | Do you expect children to use a computer to learn at home? If yes, please explain what they were learning and what they had to do on the computer.

Do you expect children to use social media to learn at home? This might be Facebook or writing a blog, or sharing pictures, or watching a video? If yes to any of these platforms, please explain what they were learning and what they did.
What benefits have children experienced from learning at home since the beginning of the pandemic? What barriers, if any, have you experienced | please explain what your child was learning and what your child did.

How has your child benefited from learning at home since the beginning of the pandemic? What barriers, if any, have you experienced in helping your child learn at home? How might these barriers be overcome?

Are there any community organizations that supply needed resources to help with your child learning at home? If yes, what are they and how do they help? |

	from children learning at home? How did you overcome those barriers?	What is one thing you would like to share about your child learning at home that your teacher might not know?
	Have you recommended any community organizations that supply needed resources to help with children learning at home? If yes, what are they and how did they help?	How does your child's teacher communicate with you to offer support while your child is learning at home?
	How has your communication with parents changed as a result of COVID-19 pandemic?	Please describe the benefits related to communication with your child's teacher while your child is learning at home. What challenges related to communication with your child's teacher have you experienced? How could these challenges be
	Describe ways you communicate with your students' parents during the COVID-19 pandemic.	

	What challenges have you experienced in communicating with parents? How did you overcome those challenges?	overcome?
		As a parent, in what ways have you communicated with school personnel to advocate for your child's education during the COVID-19 pandemic?
	Describe changes to instruction and/or communication you have made as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic to help student(s) learning at home.	How has your communication with school personnel changed as a result of COVID-19 Pandemic?
	Is there anything further that you would like to add?	If you were unsure what your child was supposed to do in a learning activity at home, how did you communicate that concern with your child's teacher?

		Is there anything further that you would like to add?

Appendix B: A Priori Coding

A priori code	Categories-Excerpts Constructs	Participants T = Teacher/P =Parents	Representative Excerpts
Communication In the Students' Microsystem & Exosystem	Parental Involvement based on Epstein's types of PI & Bronfenbrenner's Ecological Systems Theory in the Microsystem and Exosystem	T.K.1; T.K.2; T.1.1; T.1.2; T.2.1; T.3.1; T.3.2	*I use my **google classroom** where I have set up the kids' information and parents have to go to the classroom and let them do their work. *I use video conferencing where they [parents] get on **Zoom** where I talk about certain things that the children need to know. *I promoted parent involvement by

staying in contact via an educational platform called **Class Dojo**, and I used that platform for posting important information, things that were happening in the school, different events, assignments, and reminders.

* I kept in contact with my parents through **text messaging,** parent sessions on **google meets** and **google voice**. Parents were given a google meet

link to login to do conferences with me or just to learn how to complete a skill we were working on.

* I send home information through my **newsletter**, so parents know what's going on. I also use have a weekly zoom parent meeting to inform parents on what students are learning. I also use this time to answer any questions that parents may have.

* I have empowered parent/family

	involvement by **calling parents** more and by doing weekly zoom meeting to **keep parents informed** on what their child should be learning. I
P.K.1; P.K.2; P.1.1; P.1.2; P.2.1; P.2.2; P.3.1; P.3.2	also complete the parent session by **demonstrating** what I would normally do in the classroom. *My communication has changed by **being more assessable to parents** when and if needed either by telephone at an

appropriate time for the parents and myself or by zoom at a time that has already been scheduled.

* I did not experience many challenges with parents about communication. My parents were available on Zoom during class time, or I would set up an appointment with those that were working if I needed them. They were always quick to respond to texts,

those that were not

working.

*I help my child by

creating an

environment that is

distraction free,

providing him with

materials that he

will need to be

successful at home

while learning, as

well as reviewing

lessons he has

learned for the day.

* I make sure that I

keep an open line of

communication with

her teacher to make

sure I am doing all I

can to help

consistent daily

schedule to give my

child structure. her

in any way.

* I would sit with

my son during the

lesson and after he

got off the

computer. I help

him to read and

complete his

assignments.

*I practiced

multiplication with

my daughter by

having her to write

them out and we

used flash cards to

do quick reviews. I

also had her to read

to me out loud and I gave her questions relating to what she read to see if she was remembering what she read. I had her to practice writing summaries on what she read.

* By using what the teacher has uploaded or even by locating a worksheet or reading a book and having my child to answer the questions that I ask from the book. I also try and reinforce by using the videos the

			teacher may put up for the students. * I kept an open line of communication with my child's teacher via Class Dojo which is a school communication platform. I also check my child's Google Classroom for any important updates.
Learning at Home in the Microsystem & Exosystem	Parental Involvement based on Epstein's Types of PI & Bronfenbrenner's Ecological Systems	T.K.1; T.K.2; T.1.1; T.1.2; T.2.1; T.2.2; T.3.1; T.3.2;	*I send home a lot of **resources** such as **websites** they can visit with their child. The resources that we use in

| Theory in the Microsystem and Exosystem | school that their name is attached to such as: Footsteps for friends, something that their name is attached to. So, when the kids are working on their assignment, and they don't know the material it will stop them, so they don't move forward with the next lesson. * I have assisted parents by doing the tutoring sessions and for the parents who can't attend the **tutoring session**, I send home through |

goggle **classroom study** notes and videos on skill we were learning in the classroom.

* I have assisted parents to help their children at home by **providing materials**, setting up conferences to tutor students if needed the assistance, I also provided conferences with just **parents so they can learn the material** to teach their students as well as record

videos of me

teaching lessons so

students and parents

could have access to

the videos to go

back and review

anything they might

have missed.

* I provided

parents with choice

board activities

and supply kits.

For tech problems

such as with Google

Classroom, I

provided them with

videos to walk them

through the process.

*We were able to

send links to

parents to use at

home with students as well. They were a lot of videos we used that **made learning engaging**, videos with music to them and give them another avenue to learning at home worked equally. *The benefits of learning at home are children are **safe, comfortable, and able to enhance their technology skills and become tech savvy students.** Some barriers include internet connection,

P.K.1; P.K.2; P.1.1; P.1.2; P.2.1; P.2.2; P.3.1; P.3.2

materials not being available, or the environment is not distraction free.

* Benefits students have from learning at home during the pandemic, it really gave **parents an appreciation for teachers**. It has been a good thing to hear parents and educators that are parents say they appreciate all the hard work that we as teachers do because they just can't teach their children at home or

just be their teacher because it's hard. *The one benefit students have expressed that they like was **not getting up too** early and being able to eat breakfast as they worked. The **frequency of breaks**. The barriers would be not having time to socialize and getting to know each other. The sense of loneliness with some because their siblings were on a different schedule

than them so they could not play with anyone during their breaks. In some instances, they were an only child so a great lack of social interactions. I created breakout room for students who just wanted to speak and "hangout" with each other. I moved around the breakout room to just monitor and make sure all were being polite.

* My child had a difficult time staying on task using the computer so as a parent I had to do what was best for him. I had to **go and pick up the work packets from the school or the Board** office for him to complete the work. He seemed to do better in school on the computer than at home.

* They used **Google Classroom** a lot of the time along with other materials needed for that day.

She was expected to log in and complete work that was assigned and turn it in. It was a struggle because she wasn't used to being at home doing schoolwork; but we made it work.

* My child was expected to use a computer to complete assignments, **watch videos** sent by the teacher and to send completed work back to the teacher. I helped my child because it was also

expected to use the

computer to connect

via Zoom with the

teacher on some

assigned days or if

my child was having

a problem with a

task.

* I used my **phone**

to pull up videos on

YouTube to help

with skills being

learned.

Appendix C: Open Coding

Data Labels	Participants	Excerpts from Raw Data	Theme
One Way Communication Facilitated by Technology	T.3.1, T.3.2	Teachers wrote Newsletters, Parent Calendars, Weekly	Communicating in multiple ways
	T.K.1, P.K.1, P.1.1	Parent Letter, Robo calls Google Classroom (Home Page)Worksheets, Reading, Math	Communicating in multiple ways
	T.K.1, T.K.2, T.1.2, T.2.1, T.2.2, T.3.1	Directions Video for Training	Communicating in multiple ways
Two Way Communication Facilitated by Technology	T.K.1, T.K.2, T.1.1, T.1.2, T.2.1, T.2.2, T.3.1, T.3.2 P.K.1, P.K.2, P.1.1, P.1.2, P.2.2, P.3.1,	Google Classroom Zoom (Break Out Rooms), Video Conferencing, Class Dojo, Google	Communicating in multiple ways Collaborating in multiple ways

	P.3.2	Meets, Google Voice, Text Messaging, Email,	
Resources from Teachers - Mesosystem	T.K.1, T.K.2, T.1.1, T.1.2, T.2.1, T.2.2, T.3.1, T.3.2	Teachers created Student Work Packets, Videos, Choice Boards, Reading Books, Math Materials, Lesson Plans, Educational Websites	Sharing resources to promote student engagement
Resources from School System - Exosystem	T.K.1, T.K.2, T.1.1, T.1.2, T.2.1, T.2.2, T.3.1, T.3.2	Schools provided Meals, Bus Service	Sharing resources to promote student engagement
Resources from Parents – Microsystem	P.K.1, P.K.2, P.1.1, P.2.2,	Parents shared School Supplies and Resources Items to	Sharing resources to promote student engagement

Mesosytem		Sanitize	
Empowerment of Parents & Children – Microsystem & Mesosystem	T.K.1, T.K.2, T.1.1, T.1.2, T.2.1, T.2.2, T.3.1, T.3.2, P.K.1, P.K.2, P.1.1, P.2.2	Parents & Teachers Created Activities, Worksheets, Games for Learning at Home	Discovering their increased agency
		Parents Communicated and Led Circles/ Participated in Break-out Rooms; Parents & Teachers found New Ways to Communicate, Collaborate, Share Resources, Teach, Mentor, Coach, Empower	