2022

Understanding the Involvement of Parents of Children With Disabilities in Island Rural Communities

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Abstract

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MEd, University of Sheffield, 2004

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Dissertation Submitted in Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

Special Education

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Abstract

Research shows that parental involvement in children's school life has a positive impact on children's academic and social success, especially for children with disabilities (CWD), and even more so for CWD in island rural communities. The involvement of parents of CWD in primary schools in rural communities in Trinidad and Tobago has not been studied previously. This qualitative case study was conducted to gain a deeper understanding of why parents of CWD in three primary schools in adjacent rural southern communities in an education district in Trinidad do or do not become involved in their children's education. At the same time, the ways in which these schools inhibit, support, and sustain parental involvement were also sought. Hoover-Dempsey and Sandler's original model of the parental involvement process, and Vygotsky's sociocultural theory provided the conceptual framework for the development of this study. Interview data were collected from 10 participants: three principals, three teachers, and four parents of CWD through purposeful random selection. Data were analyzed in two rounds of coding to identify patterns and themes. Key findings suggest that parents of CWD are significantly involved in the three primary schools, and that schools have a major influence on parents' decisions about their involvement. This study contributes to positive social change by providing principals and teachers in rural communities in Trinidad and Tobago with information they can use to better design programs to strengthen parent-school relationships and improve home-school practices for CWD. It also provides details that may serve as inspiration for policymakers to fulfill unmet educational needs in Trinidad and Tobago.

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Dedication

This dissertation is dedicated to my late husband, beloved mother, and other family members. I thank you for supporting me along this journey. Your prayers and unstinting support have enabled me to soar. Since I am in my sixties, I want everyone to know that age is just a number and not an obstacle. Also, as the first of our family's generation to graduate with a PhD, I had to leave a legacy in the hope that my tenacity will motivate those younger than me to achieve their goals in life. I pray for God's blessing for all of you.

Acknowledgments

It took me a long time to complete this work, due to several extenuating circumstances. I could not have completed the work without the guidance and motivating force of my very dear chair, Dr. Peggy Locke, my methodologists, Dr. Paula Dawidowicz and Dr. Cheryl Burleigh, and my university research reviewer, Dr. Charlotte Redden. Thanks to you, I was able to complete the journey of the road less traveled. I am truly grateful for all you have done!

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Chapter 1: Introduction to the Study

Parental involvement within educational settings generally refers to active parent participation in all aspects of their children's social, emotional, and academic development (Castro et al., 2015). The lack of a clear definition of the concept of parental involvement, combined with the specifics regarding whether the extent of parental involvement occurs at home or at school, has led to a variety of research problems. These research problems continue to be reflected in different study methods, research questions, operationalizations, and findings (Boonk et al., 2018). Moreover, Epstein (2018), Epstein et al. (2018), Sezer (2016), and Sheldon and Epstein (2005) contend that the positive effects of parental involvement on student and school success cannot be underestimated, regardless of whether the parental involvement dimension occurs at home or at school. These researchers collectively concurred parental involvement shapes the academic, behavioral, and social triumphs of students and schools.

Numerous studies provide evidence of the benefits that parental involvement has on children without disabilities when parents choose to be involved (Anthony & Ogg, 2019; Boonk, et al., 2018; Castro et al., 2015; Crosby et al., 2015; Dotterer & Wehrspann, 2016; Đurišic & Bunijevac, 2017; Epstein et al., 2018; Erdener, 2016; Park et al., 2017; Thomas et al., 2015). In comparison, significantly fewer studies have explored parental involvement of parents of children with disabilities. An even smaller number of studies have focused on obtaining an understanding of the involvement of parents of children with disabilities in rural settings, including island rural communities. The dearth of research literature on this topic shows that it has not yet been sufficiently

researched and represents a research gap. In addition, the need to uncover the issues and challenges that impede parental involvement of parents of children with disabilities in rural Trinidad and Tobago, as well as the need to increase parental involvement to improve students' behavioral, social, and academic outcomes, justified the study.

What is more, several research studies (e.g., Burke, 2017; Garbacz et al., 2016; Hoover et al., 2019; Huscroft-D'Angelo et al., 2018; Hyassat, 2016; Rice, 2017) conducted in the continental U.S. focused on parents who have children with disabilities and their involvement in their children's education, but no such studies have been conducted specifically in Trinidad and Tobago's island rural community. Trinidad is the larger and more populous of the southernmost twin island nation, Trinidad and Tobago. These twin islands of the Caribbean archipelago comprise 5,128 square kilometers of land with a population of approximately 1.2 million people (Central Intelligence Agency US, 2019). With a literacy rate of 99% in 2015, the twin islands of Trinidad and Tobago enjoy a high reputation in education (Central Intelligence Agency US, 2019). Despite this reputation, there is little research on the educational process and environment. As of 2011, Paul's (2011) observation that Trinidad and Tobago, unlike many other nations where education is paramount, remains true because there are still no studies on the progress and outcomes of students and youth with disabilities.

In the 2011-2015 Education Sector Strategic Plan of the Trinidad and Tobago Ministry of Education, it was explicitly stated the government of Trinidad and Tobago recognized a particular challenge of the lack of parental involvement in students' education (Government of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago, Ministry of Education,

2012). Plans by the policy makers of the Ministry of Education, were suggested "to develop community-based programs to deepen parental involvement in the learning process and the development of schools; and to conduct research to ascertain the issues and challenges confronting parents" (Government of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago, Ministry of Education, 2012, p. 23). Yet, the challenge of the lack of parental involvement still endures as there has not been any real follow-through to alleviate the issue. There continues to be only a policy statement proposal to engage in and promote research initiatives focused on parental involvement (Government of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago, Ministry of Education, 2018). Therefore, this study's exploration was an attempt to determine the issues and challenges of the lack of parental involvement of parents of children with disabilities in adjacent rural communities of Trinidad and Tobago.

This chapter includes 12 sections. The chapter begins with the background, which summarizes the scope of the study, describes a knowledge gap in the discipline, and states the reason for the need for the study. The chapter then continues with the problem statement, which indicates that the problem is current, relevant, and important to the discipline. The purpose of the study section then provides a statement that reconciles the problem to be addressed and the focus of the study. Then, the research questions are formulated. The next section explains the conceptual framework underlying the study. Following, the choice of research design is justified and the methodology is summarized in the nature of the study section. Also included are sections on definitions, assumptions, scope and delimitations, limitations of the study, significance, and finally the summary,

in which the main points of the chapter are summarized and a transition is provided to Chapter 2.

Background

Parents can be involved in their children's education in numerous ways, whether at home or at school (Li & Fischer, 2017). Studies by Đurišic and Bunijevac (2017), Erdener (2016), Park et al. (2017), and Thomas et al. (2015) were explicit in their analyses of the positive outcomes of parental involvement; to be precise, increased student success, enhanced parent and teacher satisfaction, and improved school climate were all found to be linked to parent involvement in schools. Further, these studies highlighted the responsibilities of principals and teachers in developing ways to increase parental involvement and illustrated the relationships between effective parent involvement programs and increased parental involvement.

Augmenting the understanding of these studies was an earlier study undertaken by Hayakawa et al. (2015), and a systematic review of research by Watkins and Howard (2015). These researchers provided strategies to increase parental involvement, such as, parent workshops, teacher professional development, family-school-community partnering, and collaboration between teachers and parents. Although they presented differing views aimed at improving rural and economically-disadvantaged children's school success, they cited educators' disparities and challenges in engaging rural parents and recommended that further studies associated with the success of children from rural communities and from low-socioeconomic status families were needed.

Further research indicated that parents of children with disabilities were influenced by multiple, complex factors when making decisions about their involvement practices in their children's education. Fishman and Nickerson (2015), Hirano et al. (2018), and Love et al. (2017) suggested that specific school structures and institutionalized procedures may regularly exclude parents of children with disabilities from decision making and collaboration. As with families of children with disabilities, families from culturally and linguistically diverse (CLD) backgrounds have different needs. Research by Burke (2017), Gonzales and Gabel (2017), and Parsons et al. (2018) addressed the intricacies of parental involvement for CLD parents and described the factors that may inhibit their involvement. In addition, the researchers shed light on the implications for policy and practice when working with this population, as there are misconceptions about why these CLD parents may be less involved in their children's education and, as such, further research is needed.

Like much of the rest of the world, in Caribbean Island communities, parental involvement in education has continued to be a problem that the education stakeholders have been assiduously seeking to address. Even though, adjacent Caribbean Island communities are well ahead in pursuing possible solutions to improve parental involvement, a gap in the research continues to exist. In Jamaica, a Parental Involvement Program was designed by a multidisciplinary psychological consultancy to improve parental involvement, as this is a major concern of its government (Oates-Blake, 2017). Relatedly, in Barbados, researchers Blackman and Mahon (2016) conducted exploratory research to present preliminary findings on teachers' perspectives about parental

involvement and made a call for further research; to understand how parents of children with special needs construed their roles in their child's education, and how this influenced parental involvement. The need to unearth factors that might impact parental involvement of parents of children with disabilities in Caribbean Island rural communities, and more so in Trinidad and Tobago, was evident. As such, this qualitative case study proved useful in understanding why parents of children with disabilities engage in three primary schools in adjacent rural southern communities in an education district in Trinidad, and the ways in which these schools inhibit, embrace, and sustain parental involvement.

Problem Statement

The problem studied was the lack of knowledge of why parents of children with disabilities do or do not get involved in three primary schools in adjacent rural southern communities in an education district in Trinidad. Significant research (e.g., Anthony & Ogg, 2019; Boonk et al., 2018; Castro et al., 2015; Crosby et al., 2015; Dotterer & Wehrspann, 2016; Đurišic & Bunijevac, 2017; Erdener & Knoeppel, 2018; Park et al., 2017) shed light on parental involvement and its range of enhanced influences on student success. Other studies (e.g., Erdener, 2016; Park et al., 2017) have explained a high level of parental involvement as one of the key characteristics of high-performing schools. Yet Goss (2019) argued that parents face varying degrees of difficulty with getting involved in their children's education and schools.

In contrast to the large number of studies that have directed their investigations of parental involvement on parents of children without disabilities, fewer studies have

considered parental involvement of parents of children with disabilities. Those researchers who have studied the importance of parental involvement in improving the academic performance and motivation of children with disabilities have concluded that, in practice, parents of children with disabilities were not sufficiently involved in their children's school life. The parents of children with disabilities also had a poorer relationship with their child's teacher than did parents of children without disabilities (Balli, 2016; Bariroh, 2018; Jigyel et al., 2018, 2019). Furthermore, emphasis was made of the lack of research on parental involvement of parents of children with disabilities, and future research was recommended to continue to examine why some parents of children with disabilities participate in their children's education, while others do not (Garbacz et al., 2016; Hyassat, 2016; Lendrum et al., 2015; Rice, 2017).

What is more, an even smaller number of studies (e.g., Duppong Hurley & Huscroft-D'Angelo, 2018; Huscroft-D'Angelo et al., 2018; Stanley, 2015) have explored the involvement of parents of children with disabilities in rural communities. These studies reported findings which also indicated that the involvement of parents of children with disabilities was lower than the involvement of parents of children without disabilities. The said studies conducted by Duppong Hurley and Huscroft-D'Angelo (2018), Huscroft-D'Angelo et al. (2018), and Stanley (2015), went further to explain the basis for low involvement of parents of children with disabilities in rural communities included a lack of services available to them, as well as the many obstacles they face in rural communities such as transportation barriers, limited access to resources, and parental supports. However, the existent knowledge of the various factors that may be

responsible for the low involvement of parents of children with disabilities in rural communities remains incomplete. Research on the involvement of parents of children with disabilities in primary schools in rural communities on the twin islands of Trinidad and Tobago has not been conducted. This includes an explanation of ways in which primary school activities may inhibit, embrace, and sustain parental involvement. There is no recorded study of parents of children with disabilities and their involvement in their children's education and schools in rural communities in Trinidad and Tobago, although parental involvement of parents of children with disabilities in primary schools in some rural communities on the island still appears to be low.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this qualitative exploratory single case study was to attempt to gain a deeper understanding of why parents of children with disabilities in three primary schools in adjacent rural southern communities in an education district in Trinidad do or do not become involved in their children's education. At the same time, the ways in which these schools inhibited, supported, and sustained parental involvement were also sought. Emerging evidence may help policymakers, school leaders, teachers, and parents better understand the nature of low participation among parents of children with disabilities in rural communities in Trinidad and Tobago. Consequently, this understanding by leaders may aid their successful planning for future involvement of parents of children with disabilities. The new findings also contributed to the literature in the field of special education. Even more, this study helped to fill the gap in the literature that still exists regarding the involvement of parents of children with disabilities, CLD

parents, and rural and economically-disadvantaged parents by providing a more global picture of insights of parental involvement in three of Trinidad's rural southern communities.

Considering that the conceptual framework of this study was based on Hoover-Dempsey and Sandler's (1995, 1997) model of the parental involvement process, and Vygotsky's (1978) sociocultural theory, the findings of this study shed light on the stimuli for the involvement decisions of parents of children with disabilities in these rural communities. The findings could improve home and school practices for children with disabilities in rural communities and also inform and improve policy debates about special education in Trinidad and Tobago. Thus, the findings offer good prospects for ultimately leading to positive social change.

Research Questions

In this study answers were sought to two key parallel questions. This study was guided by the following research questions:

Research Question 1: How are parents of children with disabilities participating in three primary schools in adjacent rural southern communities in an education district in Trinidad?

Research Question 2: How do three primary schools in adjacent rural southern communities in an education district in Trinidad inhibit, support, and sustain parent-school partnerships for parents of children with disabilities?

Subquestion 1: What factors motivate parental involvement of parents of children with disabilities in three primary schools in adjacent rural southern communities in an education district in Trinidad?

Subquestion 2: What factors are barriers to parental involvement of parents of children with disabilities in three primary schools in adjacent rural southern communities in an education district in Trinidad?

Conceptual Framework for the Study

According to Merriam and Tisdell (2016), the conceptual framework of a qualitative study is identified and established by the literature that is reviewed and frames the study. The conceptual framework determines how the problem statement and purpose of the study are shaped. The conceptual framework also helps researchers anticipate and make sense of data collection methods, data analysis, and data interpretation (Merriam and Tisdell). Mertiz and Anfra (2015, as cited in Merriam & Tisdell, 2016) asserted that a researcher's "theoretical or conceptual framework both reveals and conceals meaning and understanding" (p. 88) of a study.

The conceptual framework of this study was based on Hoover-Dempsey and Sandler's (1995, 1997) model of the parental involvement process and Vygotsky's (1978) sociocultural theory. According to the seminal work of Hoover-Dempsey and Sandler, three main constructs are thought to influence the variety and frequency of parents' basic involvement decisions. Each construct appears to provide part of the solution to the dilemma parents face when making decisions about involvement in their children's education (Hoover-Dempsey & Sandler, 1995, 1997). The first major construct, parents'

self-construction of their role, refers to parents' beliefs about what they were supposed to do with respect to their children's education and educational progress. Parents' role construction also appears to be influenced by parents' beliefs about child rearing in general. Parents' sense of efficacy predisposes their choice to have or not have an active involvement in the child's education (Hoover-Dempsey & Sandler, 1995, 1997; Hoover-Dempsey et al., 2005).

The second major construct of the parental involvement process is the general invitations, demands, and opportunities for parental involvement, which refers to parents' perception that the child, the child's teacher, and school want them to be involved. These invitations to participate by significant others are key motivators for parents' decisions to get involved. Furthermore, these invitations may be especially relevant to parents whose role construction is rather passive and whose sense of efficacy is rather weak. (Hoover-Dempsey & Sandler, 1995, 1997; Hoover-Dempsey et al., 2005).

The third major construct underscores parents' self-perceived skills and knowledge, and self-perceived time and energy. If parents believe they have skills and knowledge that will be helpful in specific domains of involvement activity, they will be motivated to engage in involvement activities. Likewise, parents' thinking about involvement is also influenced by their perceptions of other demands on their time and energy, particularly in relation to other family responsibilities and varied work responsibilities or constraints (Hoover-Dempsey & Sandler, 1995, 1997; Hoover-Dempsey et al., 2005). This qualitative exploratory single case study was substantiated by Hoover-Dempsey and Sandler's (1995, 1997) model of the parental involvement process.

These theorists believe that the three constructs interact in a generally additive manner to create the likelihood of a positive decision by parents to participate in their child's education.

In addition to Hoover-Dempsey and Sandler's model of the parental involvement process, Vygotsky's (1978) sociocultural theory also supported the design of this study. Vygotsky's sociocultural theory states that our psychological growth is guided by the people in our lives and that adults are an important source of cognitive development, but so are culture and beliefs. The roles that parents play shape their children's development. Parents who believe that social interactions are critical to learning will use this belief to make decisions about their child's education.

The constructs of the parental involvement process model and the perspectives of sociocultural theory provided the focus for analyzing participants' answers to the research questions, in addition to the generation of a researcher-developed data collection instrument. As well, the constructs of the model and the sociocultural perspective guided my interpretation and understanding of the data I collected. Further explanation of this conceptual framework can be found in Chapter 2.

Nature of the Study

This study was an exploratory single case study design. Qualitative research is consistent with the intent of acquiring an in-depth understanding of a case in a real-life setting (Yin, 2018). According to Creswell (2017), a case study is chosen to study a case with clear boundaries. In this instance, the phenomenon, the parental involvement of parents of children with disabilities, was studied through the case or unit of analysis

which was one education district in Trinidad and was bounded by time and place. My study's parameters were a time period of approximately 12 weeks for data collection and simultaneous and sequel data analysis, while the site was three primary schools from adjacent island rural communities of the district. A single case study gave me a chance to conduct a broad examination of the phenomenon in a specific area, from which a detailed understanding emerged.

The data collection for this exploratory case study drew on multiple sources of information within the district, as suggested by Creswell (2017). Interviews with principals, interviews with teachers, and interviews with parents of children with disabilities served as sources for triangulation. The education district where the issue of level of parental involvement of parents of children with disabilities was explored comprises several rural communities, situated south of the island of Trinidad, which is the larger and more populous of the twin islands of Trinidad and Tobago. In the purposefully selected education district, there are 49 public primary schools (Government of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago Ministry of Education, 2018).

Since this was a single case study, the data analysis focused on an analysis of themes. The case study report ends with the data interpretation that presents substantiation of my findings. In the discussion, clear, credible, and convincing evidence is provided to show the connection between the case study and the conceptual framework and practical issues in the field. As suggested by Creswell (2017), no generalizations were made as they may not be appropriate due to the small sample size of 10 participants.

Definitions

In this study, several expressions needed to be clearly defined so that they could be understood in the context in which they were written. The following words and terms were used repeatedly throughout the study:

Island rural communities: Island rural communities are areas which encompass all population, housing, and territory not included within an urban area on an island (IndexMundi, n.d.).

Parent: A person who brings up and cares for a child. A parent does not necessarily have to be biological, a parent can take on different forms, such as stepparent, grandparent, legal guardian, or a combination (Merriam-Webster dictionary, n.d.).

Parental involvement in school: Parental involvement in school or school-based involvement often includes volunteering at school, involvement in school governance, helping with afterschool and extracurricular activities, and communication (e.g., parent-teacher conferences and newsletters) (Hill et al., 2018).

Primary school: Seven-year elementary institutions which cater to the academic achievement of children from ages 5 to 12 years old or older through a curriculum comprising of the traditional subject content; for example, mathematics, english language arts, science, and including the visual and performing arts, physical education, societal and cultural events, and health and family life education (Government of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago, 2015).

Rural primary schools: These are primary schools in rural communities usually with school populations under 100 students (Government of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago, 2015).

Student with disability: A student who encounters difficulties in any or all three areas of human functioning: that is, impairments in body functions, for example paralysis or blindness; activity limitations, for example walking or eating; and/or participation restrictions, for example transportation inaccessibility (World Health Organization, 2011).

Assumptions

According to Leedy and Ormrod (2016), "assumptions are so basic that, without them, the research problem itself could not exist" (p. 62). In this study there were some assumptions that were critical to the meaningfulness of the study. First, I assumed participants provided honest, open-ended responses during the interviews. Because each participant and the researcher signed an informed consent form explicitly describing the assurance of identity confidentiality and my confidentiality agreement, the data collected will remain private and will only be used for this study. Second, I assumed participants were a representative sample of the rural school district's population. The final assumption was that participating principals and teachers did not influence my study by recommending individuals as participants based on what they wanted me to discover. These assumptions ensured the research progressed as planned.

Scope and Delimitations

The scope of this case study was three adjacent rural southern communities in the island of Trinidad. The study employed purposeful maximum variation sampling, a design in qualitative research which documents diverse variations of individuals and discloses different views on the problem (Creswell, 2017). The participants in this study included the principal, one teacher, and one or two parents of children with disabilities from each school. Altogether, there were 10 participants from three schools. The participants were asked open ended interview questions that assisted in bringing an in-depth understanding to the problem of lack of knowledge of the involvement of parents of children with disabilities in island rural communities. There is much to learn from understanding the involvement of parents of children with disabilities in any economically-disadvantaged island rural community, whether in Trinidad or elsewhere. For example, I sought to identify the factors that motivate these parents to become involved, the factors that hinder these parents from involvement, and the ways in which the island rural community schools inhibit, support, and sustain parent-school partnerships for these parents.

The scope of this study incurred some constraints. Not only was the study delimited by the number of participants, but also by time, location, culture, and resources. The data were collected over a 7-week period from three adjacent rural southern communities in one education district in the island of Trinidad. Equally important was the reality that in some island rural communities, residents may have their own unique culture. How parent participants of these rural communities interpreted parental

involvement may not necessarily be typical or representative of other parent participants in other communities. In addition, a single student researcher has limited resources. Therefore, a more comprehensive examination of the question of the level of parent involvement in rural primary schools was not possible, so the generalizability of the findings in this qualitative study likely has little validity (Creswell, 2017).

<div align="center">**Limitations**</div>

The limitations of any study are usually related to its design. Since this study was a qualitative single case study, some limitations were bound to occur. First, the sample size-the number of willing participants who were parents of children with disabilities at each school-was small. It proved difficult for parents of children with disabilities to avail themselves for the interview at an agreed venue and time because of their individual work schedules or lack of transportation, and the need to provide caregiving at the requisite time. However, ways were found for some parents to participate. A proposal was made to parents of the options to participate via telephone or Zoom due to the COVID-19 restrictions. In total, there were four parents of children with disabilities from three schools. This meant limited data were collected from the small sample size. However, given the purpose of the study and the time available for data collection, I expected that the quality of the data collected would adequately cover the phenomenon.

Second, certain limitations were met by the design of the single-case study. Data were collected in three adjacent rural southern communities in one education district on the island of Trinidad. The results of this study may not be representative of other rural communities in the same education district.

Third, the bias in participants' responses could be due to the methodology used to recruit participants. Teacher and parent participants were asked by the school principal participants to volunteer for the study. The school principal participants may have selected individuals who they believed would provide the desired responses, creating the possibility of bias.

This study offered me the prospect of a deeper understanding and insight into the phenomenon. The aforementioned limitations may have affected the generalizability of the results to other contexts. However, several measures were taken to ensure the credibility of the study, which are detailed in Chapter 3 and Chapter 4.

Significance

This study was of significance as it filled a gap in the literature on parental involvement of parents of children with disabilities in island rural communities. What is more, this study added to the discourse on this topic both internationally and locally, as it provided an understanding of why parents of children with disabilities got involved or chose not to be involved in their children's education and schools in three rural southern communities in Trinidad. This study was unique because it addressed an under researched area, since no local study had so far investigated the factors that consider the information on parents of children with disabilities and their involvement in education and schools in island rural communities.

The findings of this study provided much needed insights to researchers, principals, team leaders, teachers, and parents with the information required to define parents' roles and responsibilities within primary schools in rural community settings and

served to generate strategies for involvement and sustainability specific to primary

schools in island rural communities. Furthermore, given that the study addressed the

problem of continuous low parental involvement of parents of children with disabilities

with primary schools in some rural communities in Trinidad, the findings of this study

may contribute greatly not only to the benefit of the primary schools on this island, but

may also find favor with the primary schools in other like island rural communities.

Considering that the findings of this study may improve local rural home-school

practice for children with disabilities, and it may inform and improve policy debates in

special education in Trinidad and Tobago, the findings hold solid prospects of leading

to positive social change. Moreover, this study supports stakeholders in realizing the

mandates of Trinidad and Tobago's local Inclusive Education policy (Government of the

Republic of Trinidad and Tobago, Ministry of Education, 2009), in addition to those of

the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO, 2017),

and the recommendations of the Organization for Economic Co-operation and

Development (OECD, 2012).

Summary

Chapter 1 included a comprehensive introduction to this study. The research

problem of continuous low parental involvement of parents of children with disabilities

with primary schools in some island rural communities in Trinidad, and the importance of

addressing this issue were presented. The background of the study summarized literature

related to the topic and described the gap which was addressed. The local problem was

identified, and evidence was provided to affirm its significance. Also, in this chapter, the

purpose of the study, the research questions, and the conceptual framework which

grounded the study were detailed. This chapter also included a description of the

assumptions, scope and delimitations, and limitations of the study. To conclude Chapter

1, the study's significance and social change implications were elaborated.

In Chapter 2, a review of the literature consisting of the most current information

on parental involvement, along with information surrounding rural parental involvement

related to the problem and purpose of the study are offered. In addition, Chapter 2

includes a discussion of how the conceptual framework for this study was utilized.

Finally, current research and the major themes and gaps that emerged from the review are

summarized.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

The focal point of this qualitative exploratory single case study was the problem of a lack of knowledge about the continuous low parental involvement of parents of children with disabilities with primary schools in some rural communities in Trinidad. As such, I sought to obtain a deep understanding of why parents of children with disabilities get involved or choose not to be involved in their children's schools in some island rural communities. Furthermore, the study's findings shed light on the ways in which some rural schools inhibit, support, and sustain parental involvement, which will help rural education districts in planning for the future.

Many researchers have consistently declared the benefits of parental involvement in children's education (Boonk et al., 2018; Đurišic & Bunijevac, 2017; Erdener, 2016; Gonzales & Gabel, 2017; Jafarov, 2015; Reininger & López, 2017; Thomas et al., 2015). Additionally, several American states have issued recommendations and documents that support parental involvement as an essential organizational component for effective schools and successful students (Epstein & Sheldon, 2016). Yet, with all the apparent advantages and ways to boost parental involvement, there has still been a lack of professional preparation given to educators on the information they needed in order to understand, conduct, and maintain parent–school partnerships (Epstein & Sheldon, 2016). Moreover, barriers to parental involvement have continued to persist not only from parents, but from schools as well (Fishman & Nickerson, 2015; Hirano et al., 2018; Love et al., 2017). Observably, such conflicting practices presented one of the main reasons to delve further into this topic.

In this chapter, I first outline my literature search strategy. This section is followed by an examination of the conceptual framework, which for my study was based on Hoover-Dempsey and Sandler's (1995, 1997) theoretical model of the parental involvement process and Vygotsky's (1978) sociocultural theory. Then I review the literature pertinent to my research questions. Themes are employed to structure the review, which helps to establish coherence and clarity. The themes which are included are defining parental involvement, importance of parental involvement, motivations of parental involvement, barriers to parental involvement, and rural involvement versus urban involvement. The final section of this chapter constitutes a summary and conclusions.

Literature Search Strategy

My search strategy was rigorous. Several databases were used to locate the most recent peer-reviewed research articles and dissertations. The databases included (a) Academic Search Complete, (b) Education Research Complete, (c) EBSCO Databases, (d) Dissertations and Theses at Walden University, and (e) ProQuest Central. Whenever possible, it was ensured that the articles that were chosen were current, that is, published within the past 5 years, 2015 - 2020. The keywords used, either individually or in combination included *parental involvement, parental engagement, parent participation in schools, family involvement in schools, parent–teacher partnerships, parent–teacher relationships, parent–school relationships, school–family partnerships, parents of children with disabilities, rural elementary schools,* and *rural districts.*

Resources were chosen based on their relevance to this study's population and the geographic location of schools. I sought to build an understanding of existing research on the parental involvement of parents of children with disabilities from both rural as well as urban settings. Notably, with no local research on this topic, I directed my attention to the few international studies and dissertations which aligned with the culture and context of developing islands like Trinidad and Tobago. I also reviewed several other related studies conducted throughout the United States.

Conceptual Framework

In this exploratory case study, Hoover-Dempsey and Sandler's (1995, 1997) original model of the parent involvement process provided structure to the entire study. At the same time, the sociocultural theory posited by Vygotsky (1978) served as the means by which I systematically gathered, analyzed, and represented people's stories as told by them. According to Hoover-Dempsey and Sandler's seminal work, three major constructs are believed to influence the variety and frequency of parents' basic involvement decisions: (a) the parent's construction of his or her role in their child's life, and parental self-efficacy for helping the child succeed in school; (b) the parent's perceptions of invitations to involvement, including general invitations from the school and specific invitations from teachers and children; and (c) the personal life context variables that influence the parent's perceptions of the forms and timing of involvement that seemed achievable, including the parent's skills and knowledge for involvement, and time and energy for involvement. Each construct appears to offer some portion of the solution to the dilemma of parents' involvement decisions in their children's education.

The first major construct, parents' self-construction of their role, refers to parents' beliefs about what they are supposed to do with respect to their children's education and educational progress (Hoover-Dempsey & Sandler, 1995, 1997; Hoover-Dempsey et al., 2005; Vygotsky, 1978).

Parents' role construction also appears to be influenced by parents' beliefs about child rearing in general. Parents' sense of efficacy predisposes their choice to have or not have an active involvement in the child's education. Parents with a strong, positive sense of efficacy for helping children succeed in school are likely to choose involvement. On the other hand, parents with a weak sense of efficacy for helping children succeed in school are likely to choose not to be involved (Hoover-Dempsey & Sandler, 1995, 1997; Hoover-Dempsey et al., 2005).

The second major construct which is the general invitations, demands, and opportunities for parental involvement, refers to parents' perception that the child, the child's teacher, and school want them to be involved. For example, invitations, demands, and opportunities consist of a child's open pronouncement of the importance of parental approval and participation, teacher behaviors that are welcoming and facilitating, and a school climate that is inviting and responsive (Hoover-Dempsey & Sandler, 1995, 1997; Hoover-Dempsey et al., 2005).

The third major construct underscores parents' self-perceived skills and knowledge, and self-perceived time and energy. If parents believe they have skills and knowledge that are helpful in specific domains of involvement activity, they are motivated to engage in involvement activities. Likewise, parents' thinking about

involvement is also influenced by their perceptions of other demands on their time and energy, particularly in relation to other family responsibilities and varied work responsibilities or constraints. Hoover-Dempsey and Sandler (1995, 1997) and Hoover-Dempsey et al. (2005) believe that the three constructs function together in a generally additive fashion to create the likelihood of a parent's positive decision to become involved in their child's education.

Moreover, the framework of the constructs is viewed from Vygotsky's (1978) sociocultural theory which argues that reality is socially constructed by individuals and this social interaction leads to changed and broadened knowledge. Vygotsky (1978) suggested that parental beliefs and social contexts could influence parental motivational decisions to become involved in their children's learning at home and in school (Freund et al., 2018).

Furthermore, Hoover-Dempsey and Sandler's (1995, 1997) theoretical framework and Vygotsky's (1978) sociocultural perspective aligned with my research questions and research design as they effectively manifested in a case study. According to Creswell (2017), such a case study will a) focus on a single concept or phenomenon, b) study the context or setting of participants, c) bring personal values into the study, d) involve the researcher collaborating with participants, and e) require the researcher to interpret the data. Altogether, Hoover-Dempsey and Sandler's (1995, 1997) and Hoover-Dempsey et al.'s (2005) conceptual framework and Vygotsky's (1978) sociocultural worldview that I have selected for my study offered the theoretical bases for understanding, analyzing, and designing ways to investigate the problem (Grant & Osanloo, 2014).

Literature Review

Defining Parental Involvement

The term parental involvement is one which is discussed quite often by educators and may be perceived unconsciously as the relationship between parents and their children's education or those that provide the education. However, deliberate consideration of the term through a review of the literature reveals that there are differing perceptions of this value-laden term from educators, parents, and researchers (Gonzales & Gabel, 2017; McDowall & Schaughency, 2017). As such, defining the term parental involvement was critical.

Differing Perceptions of the Term From Teachers and Parents

Many educators often view parental involvement as parent participation in general school-related aspects such as attending meetings, conferences, visits, volunteering at school events, and providing all the requisites that foster academic success for their children (Marschall & Shah, 2016). On the other hand, parents may think of parental involvement as only those parenting behaviors which are executed at home (Jafarov, 2015). The perception of parents regarding their involvement in various activities in school, including the education of their children, varies. Hasnat (2016) conducted a study to examine the perception of parents regarding their involvement in various school activities in Bangladesh. Using a qualitative approach, Hasnat (2016) found that a majority of parents often feel uncomfortable to get actively involved in various school activities. According to the researcher, most parents do not see their role of being involved as being actively engaged in the education of their children, especially in

school. Such parental beliefs and attitudes about involvement are due to a lack of information and knowledge about their role in their children's education.

One study done by Huscroft-D'Angelo et al. (2018), which engaged participants from rural regions across the USA, highlighted the challenges that schools and professionals experience when working with parents of children with emotional and behavioral disorders (EBD) who attend rural school settings. The researchers' purpose for this study was to better understand how to improve family support and engagement for parents of children with EBD in rural settings. They found that low parental involvement was highly due to the minimal direct mental health support for children and parental health support for parents of children with EBD within the school setting. Other barriers to the involvement were transportation, childcare, and time due to parental employment demands. According to the researchers, it is particularly important for districts to implement specific parental involvement programs for improving parents' engagement in school and mental health services for their child.

Likewise, Reininger and López (2017) examined the reasons parents decide to become involved in their child's education in municipal schools in Chile. They discerned that factors such as parental sense of self-efficacy, a child's grade level, parents' income, and a child's invitation for involvement (that is, a child asking and actively seeking their parents' participation at school events) are directly linked to parental involvement both in school and at home. Reininger and López also noted that the lack of time and energy were deterrents for parental at-school involvement. Additionally, these researchers advised that understanding the significance of parental involvement as a protective factor

in children's mental health will enable the designing of strategies and provide knowledge for maintaining parent involvement in their child's education.

Furthermore, Jafarov's (2015) evaluation and analysis of literature on the factors affecting parental involvement in education concluded that there are many aspects influencing parental involvement or the level of parental involvement. Some of these aspects included students' achievement levels, parents' beliefs about their skills to develop learning, and school staff attitudes and environment. These aspects were identified as either being student-related, parent-related or school-related, which easily induce researchers to think of the multidimensionality of the concept of parental involvement.

Multidimensional Nature of Parental Involvement

Researchers neither uniformly define nor measure parental involvement (Castro et al., 2015; Fisher, 2016; Marschall & Shah, 2016). However, they usually consider the multidimensional quality of parental involvement, that is, the wide range of activities that subsume nearly every aspect of schooling, such as school-based activities (e.g. attending PTA meetings or volunteering at school events), home-based activities (e.g. helping with homework or involving children in enrichment activities like the local community sports club) (Fishman & Nickerson, 2015; Marschall & Shah, 2016), and home–school connections (e.g. parent–teacher relationships) (Lang et al., 2017).

The multidimensional perception of parental involvement is explicit in Fisher's (2016) study; he noted that four key elements constitute parental involvement. These elements include activities that pertain to the school's welfare (e.g. organizing school

fairs), activities that pertain to the improvement of school resources (e.g. fundraising for

the school), activities that pertain to the pedagogy and wellbeing of the school (e.g.

attending teacher–parent meetings), and activities that pertain to control over school

procedures and outcomes (e.g. familiarity with the curriculum). Fisher presented the view

that parental involvement in children's education can be actively or passively expressed

in the context of school as an organization and in the context of a parent's individual

child. He declared that this understanding enables schools and parents to decide together

whether or not, where, when, and how they want to be involved.

Relatedly, the view that parental involvement should be deliberated from various

perspectives including race/ethnicity, family structure, and socioeconomic status of the

family was put forward in Fishman and Nickerson's (2015) study. Simultaneously, the

researchers investigated whether various involvement choices of parents of students in

special education were predicted by the motivational variables in Hoover-Dempsey et

al.'s (2005) model of parent involvement. They observed that most parents got involved

in their children's education only if their children requested their involvement in home or

school-based activities. Fishman and Nickerson concluded parental involvement in

children's learning, especially children with disabilities, required teachers' invitations.

Equally important, in Lang et al.'s (2017) study, they examined exactly how

parent–teacher relationships were associated with parental home, school, and home–

school involvement. As well, they assessed parents' perceptions of parent-teacher co-

caring relationships. As a result, they reiterated that understanding the multifaceted

nature of the parent–teacher relationship is important and can help practitioners to

interact with families in different ways that can significantly influence parental involvement. They claimed that the conceptualization of parental involvement may differ depending on the focus of study–whether one is immersed in the educational literature of family relations or child development literature.

However, according to Gonzales and Gabel's (2017) assertion, parental involvement is even more dynamic among culturally and linguistically diverse parents. These researchers conducted a two-step qualitative study in which they first examined data regarding parental involvement for culturally and linguistically diverse parents in the USA and the ways their involvement impacts their children's success. Then, they used critical theories in education to highlight how educational practice and school climate impact both parental involvement and school achievement. The researchers claimed there are certain aspects that teacher educators need to know and consider in order to adequately prepare classroom teachers for enabling such parents to get involved in their children's education. Gonzales and Gabel noted that teachers' education should consider teachers' perspectives, educational praxis, and school climate, all of which significantly impact school achievement and parental involvement for children who are culturally and linguistically diverse.

The concept of parental involvement requires empirical and theoretical consideration (McDowall & Schaughency, 2017). They explained that the schools' efforts toward parental engagement may be conceptualized similarly to school-wide, multitiered models of service delivery. McDowall and Schaughency (2017) recognized that some families and school personnel may require more support in their engagement

efforts than others. As such, they suggested that systems to enhance the likelihood as well as the success of parental involvement are needed to guarantee parents' involvement in their children's education.

The term parental involvement is often used interchangeably with other expressions such as parental engagement, parental participation, and now, family engagement, because of the recent Every Student Succeeds Act amendment to the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965 (U.S. Department of Education, 2016). However, for this study, I used the generic term 'parental involvement' and defined it similarly to the definition by some of the aforementioned researchers, that is, parents' interactions with children and schools that are intended to promote school-based activities, home-based activities, and home–school connections. Moreover, I allayed my biases by keeping the perspective of McDowall and Schaughency (2017), that families and school personnel require varied levels of support to engage each other.

Importance of Parental Involvement

As evident, all scholars agree that parental involvement is important. Several researchers have conducted studies to critically examine parental involvement and its benefits (Đurišic & Bunijevac, 2017; Erdener & Knoeppel, 2018; Jeynes, 2016; Lara & Saracostti, 2019; Ma et al., 2016; Park et al., 2017; Thomas et al., 2015). One explanation of the importance of parent involvement is that it augments the school to home link, through consistent emphasis on educational goals and expectations regarding educational attainment (Curry et al., 2016). Another explanation is that "without the positive

cooperation of family and school, it is not possible to reach the high standards set for educational outcomes by a demanding society" (Castro et al., 2015, p. 34).

What is more, the studies which were conducted to examine the benefits of parental involvement articulated that its importance can be looked at from differing standpoints. The first stance maintains the student and family benefits of parental involvement, while the second one supports the benefits of parental involvement to the school and the community.

Benefits to Students and Families

Parental involvement generates positive benefits for both students and their families. Gonzales and Gabel (2017) argued that parental involvement is directly linked to the academic performance of culturally and linguistically diverse students. Parents play a pivotal role in boosting their children's achievements. In turn, parental participation enhances teachers' interaction with families and such interactions have positive effects on students' academic performance (Lang et al., 2017).

Simultaneously, parental involvement can influence the perception of parents regarding the academic performance of their children, which can, in turn, enhance the academic performance of a child. Li and Fischer (2017) examined the relationship between parental networks and parental school involvement during the elementary school years. As such, they argued that high levels of parental networks are closely associated with parental school involvement and this tends to have a significant impact on the performance of students. The benefit of parental networks is that they enhance school involvement in activities that bring parents, teachers, and students together (Li & Fischer,

2017). Parental networks also benefit the family by allowing them to participate in parent–teacher organizations and volunteering in various school programs that can impact their children's academic performance. Li and Fischer (2017) further argued that parental networks have a positive effect on parental involvement in school and such effects are stronger in families with children attending schools in disadvantaged localities. They suggested that well-connected parental networks can improve situations in disadvantaged school neighborhoods and encourage parents to actively take part or get involved in school activities.

The study conducted by McNeal (2015) expanded on the above-mentioned opinions. McNeal (2015) investigated how ecological context might strengthen or weaken the parent involvement-student performance relationship. He concluded that the performance of students and the relationship between students' performance and parental involvement are contingent on the ecological context in which they occur. He emphasized that even those children who come from homes with non-involved or disengaged parents would benefit by simply being in a school with high rates of parental participation. Recognizing the interchange between parents, students, and the school context and recalling these benefits to both students and parents were of significance as I wrote my memos after field work.

Benefits to Schools and Communities

Parental involvement does not only benefit students and families but also schools and the community at large. Epstein's (2018) overlapping spheres of influence model demonstrates the relationships between the school, family, and community for a child's

success in school. Erdener and Knoeppel (2018) expanded on this notion. Their study was primarily undertaken to investigate Turkish parents' perceptions of their involvement in schooling at elementary grades in rural areas of Turkey. These scholars noted that in a community where parents are actively involved in the education of their children, those children, without a doubt, become successful in life and transform the whole society at a later age. This implies that parental involvement has a broader dimension which does not merely benefit the children and their families. The benefits of parental involvement go much beyond the students themselves to encompass parents, educators, schools, and communities.

Additionally, several cases of research have reaffirmed that parental involvement is an undertaking that should be considered for the enhancement of children's educational attainment (Curry et al., 2016; Fajoju et al., 2016; Hamlin & Flessa, 2018; Li & Fischer, 2017) and particularly, children with disabilities (Francis et al., 2019; Goldman & Burke, 2017; Gonzales & Gabel, 2017; Hirano & Rowe, 2016). Parent–school partnerships are important for enhancing the general performance of students and are key to transforming the school and the society at large.

Motivators of Parental Involvement

Factors That Motivate Parents of Children Without Disabilities to Become Involved

Though it was not the central focus of this study, I would have been remiss not to mention the factors that motivate parents of children without disabilities to become involved. According to Hoover-Dempsey and Sandler's (1995, 1997) and Hoover-Dempsey et al.'s (2005) models of the parental involvement process, and seminal

breakthrough work upon which this study was framed, parents are motivated by three constructs. One, the parent's construction of his or her role in their child's life, and parental self-efficacy for helping the child succeed in school; two, the parent's perceptions of invitations to involvement, including general invitations from the school and specific invitations from teachers and children; and three, the personal life context variables that influence the parent's perceptions of the forms and timing of involvement that seem achievable, including the parent's skills and knowledge for involvement, and time and energy for involvement. Several researchers have validated Hoover-Dempsey and Sandler's (1995, 1997) and Hoover-Dempsey et al.'s (2005) constructs by utilizing this theoretical framework in their studies for understanding why and how parents become involved in their child's education (Freund et al., 2018; Kim, 2019; Reininger & López, 2017; Wehrspann et al., 2016).

In particular, results from Reininger and López's (2017) study of data from parents of children in the first and fourth grades who attended public municipal schools in Chile identified a number of factors that motivate parents of children without disabilities to become involved. These factors include children's invitations for involvement, parental sense of self efficacy, income, childcare, transportation, children's grade level, parents' time and energy, and family demographics.

In Java, Indonesia, although it may be on the opposite side of the world from Chile, there are commonalities for parents' aspirations for their children's education. The study carried out by Yulianti et al. (2018) explored the factors that motivate parents from different socioeconomic status and educational levels to be involved in their children's

education. The researchers found that regardless of parent's education or their geographical context, they had high aspirations for their children's education.

Factors That Motivate Parents of Children With Disabilities to Become Involved

Certain factors influence the involvement of parents of children with disabilities in their children's academic life. However, these factors are unknown to many people. Fishman and Nickerson (2015) conducted a study to critically examine the extent to which motivational factors from the Hoover-Dempsey and Sandler's (1995, 1997) and Hoover-Dempsey et al.'s (2005) models of parental involvement predicted the school-based, home-based, and special education involvement among parents of elementary school students in special education. The study was conducted in suburban schools in New York. In this study, Fishman and Nickerson (2015) noted that among many factors (parent role activity beliefs, parent efficacy, general school invitations, specific teacher invitations, specific child invitations, perceived knowledge and skills, and perceived time and energy), teachers' invitations play a significant role as a motivating factor for parental involvement in education, particularly for parents of children with disabilities. According to Fishman and Nickerson (2015), parents with a low socioeconomic status often feel disengaged and less involved in their children's education. Similarly, race and ethnicity also influence parental involvement. The problem is even worse for parents of children with disabilities. This study revealed that parental involvement in children's education, especially of those children with disabilities, is motivated by socioeconomic status and the family structure. Families with stable socioeconomic status are often not

ashamed of being involved in the academic life of their children with disabilities as opposed to families who come from poor backgrounds.

Relatedly, research done by Blackman and Mahon (2016) from the adjacent Caribbean island, Barbados, utilized a case study strategy to investigate teachers' perspectives of parental involvement at four case sites in Barbados. This research corroborated the findings of Fishman and Nickerson (2015) when they explained how parents sought to collaborate with schools and teachers with regard to parents' financial resources, levels of education and work commitments. These researchers concluded their study by highlighting a concern that some teachers felt that parents were not coping with the nature of their child's disability. The parents of children with disabilities in Trinidad whom I selected as my participants, like parents of children with disabilities in the aforesaid studies, were subjected to similar contextual circumstances. Therefore, my study yielded the same findings.

Furthermore, the findings of research conducted by Francis et al. (2019) proved useful as I encountered parent participants whose children would be transitioning from the primary to the secondary level. These researchers investigated how parent involvement and parent–professional collaboration influence positive transitions from school into adult life among young adults with disabilities from a post-secondary education program in the United States. The researchers concluded that there were six strategies for professionals to support parent involvement in parent–professional relationships during transition to adulthood: (a) establish and align high expectations, (b)

demonstrate commitment and care, (c) provide emotional support, (d) facilitate family networks, (e) provide information, and (f) collaborate with family units.

Of equal significance, was another study done by Duppong Hurley and Huscroft-D'Angelo (2018). These researchers took into account the challenges rural schools face for supporting students with EBD and their families and created a parent-to-parent support intervention called Parent Connectors. This intervention is one in which more experienced parents of a child with EBD (i.e., peer parents) provided weekly calls to a current parent of a child with EBD. The goals of the calls were to provide emotional support, social support, informational support, and instrumental support. These supports were meant to improve parental involvement in their child's education and mental health services. This intervention seems simple and practical to use in rural districts in Trinidad; it was phone-based, for which there were no transportation worries and no need to locate childcare, and at the same time helped to reduce stigma.

What Can Be Done Differently to Increase Parental Involvement?

Parental involvement in children's education is a requirement under the USA law and it is applied across all students including students with disabilities. However, various studies in the literature have focused more on parental involvement in general education with little emphasis on parental involvement in the education of children with disabilities. Goldman and Burke (2017) investigated exactly what can be done differently to ensure that parents of children with disabilities are actively involved in the education of their children. In their descriptive synthesis of the literature, Goldman and Burke (2017) recommended training interventions as one of the ways that could be used to enhance

parental involvement in children's education, especially children with different forms of disabilities. Additionally, they further evaluated the effects of such interventions using meta-analysis and claimed that novel interventions can significantly enhance the participation of parents in IEP meetings. Goldman and Burke (2017) also recommended that future researchers should offer studies that focus squarely on parental involvement in the context of children with disabilities.

Hirano et al. (2018) corroborated the findings of Goldman and Burke (2017) when they noted that research on parent involvement for children with disabilities is lacking, although it is an important predictor of post-secondary education attainment and employment outcomes. By adopting the Hoover-Dempsey and Sandler (1995, 1997) model of parental involvement, the researchers indicated eight motivational factors—parental expectations for the future, specific child invitations, specific teacher invitations, general school invitations, parental role construction, parental self-efficacy for helping the child, knowledge and skills, and time and energy—that play a significant role in increasing family involvement in the education of children with disabilities. The researchers further acknowledged the use of Motivators of Parent Involvement (MPI) scales as an effective guide for interventions for parental and family involvement in the education of children with different forms of disabilities.

Likewise, Reininger and Santana López (2017) examined the reasons parents decide to become involved in their child's education in municipal schools in Chile. They concluded that it would benefit schools to obtain a greater understanding of parental motivations for involvement. This understanding would allow schools to tailor more

effective invitation strategies and provide key knowledge with regard to maintaining parents' engagement in their child's education. They suggested that organizing weekend activities, evening meetings, childcare arrangements, and childcare solutions were all concrete examples of ways in which greater parental engagement in education could be facilitated. In affiliated studies, Erdener and Knoeppel (2018), Gonzales and Gabel (2017), Huscroft-D'Angelo et al. (2018), Hyassat (2016), and Lang et al. (2017) highlighted the necessity of including interventions for parental involvement of parents of children with disabilities within the curriculum of teacher education programs.

All of the aforesaid suggestions for increasing parental involvement are of import, more so, the recommendation of teacher training intervention is one that is currently heeded in the Bachelor of Education program with specialization in special education at the University of Trinidad and Tobago. The aspect of professional and parent partnerships is integrated into several courses. Additionally, with lesser emphasis on parental involvement in the education of children with disabilities in the island rural communities of Trinidad and Tobago, the findings of all of the listed factors proved useful. As I attempted to achieve my practical goal, to change the situation of incessant low parental involvement of parents of children with disabilities in island rural communities, these factors were used for evaluating if the schools were doing what was necessary to motivate parents of children with disabilities.

Barriers to Parental Involvement

Factors That Hinder Parents of Children Without Disabilities From Becoming Involved

Several studies have revealed quite a few factors that hinder parents from becoming actively involved. For instance, Baker et al. (2016) focused on identifying barriers and creating solutions to improve family engagement at six schools in a Midwestern state of the USA. They noted that the lack of opportunity for involvement, the lack of communication between teachers and parents, the lack of incorporation of families into the school building, and the lack of active parental engagement were some factors that curbed parents from becoming involved.

Similarly, Hornby and Blackwell (2018) conducted a study with the purpose to investigate barriers to parental involvement in education. The researchers identified four major barriers to parental involvement, including individual parent and family barriers, parent–teacher factors, child factors, and societal factors. According to Hornby and Blackwell (2018), individual parent and family barriers such as parents' beliefs about involvement, parents' current life context, parents' perceptions of invitations for involvement, and parents' class, ethnicity, and gender, especially for parents of children with a disability, lead to parental disengagement from a child's education. Concerning the child factors, Hornby and Blackwell (2018) noted that children with disabilities experience lower levels of parental involvement in their education compared to children without disabilities. Similarly, children with behavioral problems tend to discourage their parents from being actively involved in their education. Hornby and Blackwell (2018)

also noted that the lack of parent–teacher cooperation results in the lack of parental engagement, and consequently in the lack of parental involvement in children's education. Furthermore, Hornby and Blackwell (2018) cited the lack of societal motivation as a predictor of parental disengagement, and consequently the lack of parental involvement. Therefore, these factors can determine whether a parent will be actively involved or not.

Comparably, in Hamlin and Flessa's (2018) study, one purpose was to assess how well Epstein's typology of parental involvement reflects parent-identified areas of need for enhancing parental involvement across public schools in Ontario, Canada. They acknowledged that parental involvement was key in a child's academic attainment but also highlighted an array of barriers to parental involvement. Hamlin and Flessa (2018) uncovered that barriers for many parents included time and resource constraints, cultural differences, a lack of familiarity with the school system, and challenges communicating with staff. They also observed that low-income parents faced difficulty navigating school structures and communicating with teachers and administrators, as well as severe time and resource constraints related to irregular work schedules or employment insecurity. Immigrant and minority parents often encounter linguistic and cultural obstacles when attempting to participate in their children's education. And rural parents tend to face difficulty communicating with schools, gaining access to school services and resources, and engaging their children in learning at home. Hamlin and Flessa (2018) concluded Epstein's parental involvement typology concealed prominent aspects of parental involvement and recommended a modified model of parental involvement as a guide for

enhancing parent participation which included supports for parents to engage in their

children's learning at home, supports for parents to help their children navigate mental

health challenges (e.g., mental health, fitness, nutrition, and safe use of technology use),

accessibility to resources and services as a need, supports to encourage home–school

relationships and parent–parent networks by celebrating cultural diversity, and supports

for parent–child communication.

Factors That Hinder Parents of Children With Disabilities From Becoming Involved

Parents of children with disabilities should be at the forefront of involvement in

their children's education, however this is not always the situation. Love et al. (2017), in

their study of parents' experiences in educational decision making for children and youth

with disabilities, acknowledged that families should remain focused and influential in

championing the inclusion of students with disabilities. The researchers highlighted the

reality that this is not the case for the majority of parents of children with disabilities. The

researchers admitted that a majority of such parents feel that there is no active and

effective collaboration between the school and themselves.

Similarly, Odongo (2018) in his study of barriers to parental/family participation

in the education of a child with disabilities in Kenya, concluded that parents of children

with disabilities often feel excluded from key educational decision-making processes (for

example, decisions concerning the placement of and services for their children). Some

parents feel that schools deny them the opportunity and the independence to take

responsibility for their children's learning and make key decisions that can shape the

education services their children receive.

Additionally, Al-Dababneh (2018) investigated the barriers to parental involvement in Jordanian mainstream schools from the parents' perspective. In her study, like the studies by Love et al. (2017), and Odongo (2018), she found that many parents of children with disabilities were frustrated with the lack of communication with school administrators. The researchers proposed that teachers and school staff should focus more on building effective communication circles with the parents of children with disabilities and accept parents as partners.

Factors That Hinder Parents Living in Rural Communities From Becoming Involved

Parents from rural communities face certain barriers that prevent them from becoming actively involved in their children's education. According to Stanley (2015), whose study was to gain an understanding of the advocacy experiences of low-income, African American mothers of children with disabilities in rural special education, parents are not always aware of their rights or the services to which their children may be entitled. Other barriers Stanley (2015) reported related to rurality were a lack of local options available for care and services for their children, limited public transportation options in the rural areas, the absence of a formal support group for mothers of children with disabilities, a lack of formal social networks to help mothers with making educational decisions for their children, and residing in a rural area also can cause parents to be reluctant to voice their concerns.

Huscroft-D'Angelo et al. (2018) in their study to gain a better understanding of characteristics and barriers unique to rural settings from administrators' perspectives, participants supported the view that rural districts usually experience a low level of

parental involvement. According to Huscroft-D'Angelo et al. (2018), the barriers to rural parental involvement include inconvenient meeting times, no childcare, not feeling welcomed by the school, problems with transportation, communication problems because parents speak a language other than English whereas meetings are conducted only in English, family members not getting time off from work, and lack of communication from the school.

Additionally, according to Duppong Hurley and Huscroft-D'Angelo (2018) whose study concentrated on strategies for improving parental involvement for improving outcomes for students with EBD, there are certain barriers that arise which prevent the much-needed positive interaction between schools and parents. Duppong Hurley and Huscroft-D'Angelo (2018) identified those barriers as ineffective home–school communication; limited access to resources (e.g. mental health support); and access barriers, such as distance, financial means, waitlist, and stigma.

These researchers recommended making parental involvement the responsibility of the entire school by building relationships with parents and by making resources available, and also by taking into consideration the familial context during the planning stage of school-based programs and other activities, which enhances parental involvement. The rural communities in which I carried out this study presented barriers as described above. As such, these recommendations were helpful to me, so that I could make them known to my twin islands' policy makers, district leaders, school leaders, teachers, and parents to assist them in successfully planning for the future.

Rural Involvement Versus Urban Involvement

Is Parental Involvement Different in Rural School Districts Than in Urban School Districts?

According to Johnson's (2015) review of literature on parental involvement from urban contexts, there is no significant variation in parental involvement between rural school districts and urban school districts. He highlighted that although there is a notion that parents in urban district schools are involved in their children's academic life, the operationalization of parental involvement is not as expected by most of the parents in this setting. Some of the parents in urban district schools argue that there is a need to always be informed about their child's school life. According to Johnson, lack of engagement between schools and homes is one of the major challenges of parental involvement in urban district schools. Additionally, some factors interfere with parental participation both in rural and urban district schools. For instance, the author declared that despite their socioeconomic status (SES), urban district schools' parents also encounter racism in their effort to advocate on behalf of their children. In the same literature review, he reiterated a plethora of scholarship on the lack of parental involvement among rural district schools, particularly parents from low-income background. Furthermore, he argued that educators in rural district schools often assume parents from these areas are mainly black parents, whose values, norms, and culture do not complement or support the culture of education. Most of the policymakers and educators have the idea that black parents are less concerned about their children's educational development, when this may not actually be so. As a result, Johnson

recommended that the voice of low-income parents should be considered to enhance their involvement in their children's education.

Yulianti et al.'s (2018) research focused on gaining insight in the involvement of Indonesian parents in their children's education, and asked the question: How are parents with diverse socioeconomic backgrounds involved in their children's education? On the contrary, the findings of their research demonstrated in urban schools, highly educated parents showed higher levels of involvement in volunteering, decision making and collaborating with community than low educated parents. In contrast, in rural school settings, parents with low education showed higher involvement than their highly educated counterparts. The researchers believed this finding could be explained by the fact that parents with high education who live in rural areas may be working long-hour weeks and double jobs that makes it difficult for them to be participating at school. The suggestion by these researchers that schools can help to increase parental involvement by engaging in "two-way, collaborative dialogues about each party's needs, hopes, and expectations related to family-school relationships and their lived realities" (Posey-Maddox & Haley-Lock, 2016, p. 25) was worthy of consideration as I got into my study.

Home-Based Challenges Inhibiting the Effective Participation of Pupils in Rural Public Primary Schools

Pupils from rural areas encounter many challenges that impact their active participation in primary schools. Mwanik and Orodho (2016) examined the home-based challenges that inhibit the effective participation of pupils in rural primary schools in Narok County, Kenya. They noted that low value attached to education, poverty,

language barrier, poor health of the children, absenteeism, and insufficient parental involvement in their children's education were among the factors that inhibited rural school children from actively participating in school. According to the authors, school management and parents should make concerted efforts to break down the barriers that threaten the home-based involvement that affects children's education in rural areas. It was important to note, the rural district in which I carried out my study was easily comparable to the one in this study by Mwanik and Orodho . Therefore, I came upon some similar challenges.

Differences in Parental Involvement Between Urban and Rural Families of Children With Disabilities

Children with disabilities have special educational needs. Burke (2017) examined the empowerment and family-school partnerships among rural and urban Latino families of children with disabilities and noted that there were contextual barriers to advocacy, which was a major challenge for rural children with disabilities. The researcher acknowledged that racism and discrimination were some of the major hindrance factors to parental involvement, especially for rural parents of children with disabilities. However, in an urban setting, the major barrier was the lack of parent advocacy training.

Stanley (2015), while examining the experiences of African American mothers of children with disabilities in rural special education settings, found that parental involvement in rural school districts is lacking and has remained one of the major concerns for administrators. According to her, rural parents of children with disabilities have lower participation rates in IEP meetings than do parents in urban and suburban

areas, often due to transportation barriers. Besides, there is limited access to resources and services which impedes rural school districts' abilities to build and maintain ongoing collaborative relationships with parents. In addition, limited or no access to parent support centers, educational libraries, and parental advocates tend to leave parents in rural areas feeling inadequate to challenge the "professional dominance" (Stanley, 2015, p.6).

In contrast, in Jigyel et al.'s (2018) study in which they explored the experiences of communication and collaboration of parents with the teachers of their children with special educational needs, the main finding showed that most parents, 21 of 26 participants, whether from urban, semi-urban, or rural regions in Bhutan, were found to have either minimal or no communication or collaboration with the school that their children with disabilities attended. The parents reported their jobs as the main barriers for parent-school collaboration.

These studies highlight the fact that cultural differences impact parental involvement for urban and rural families of children with disabilities in different ways. So too, my study of parental involvement of parents of children with disabilities at three primary schools in adjacent rural communities in one education district was unique as it incorporated its own idiosyncrasies.

Summary and Conclusions

In this study I focused on acquiring an in-depth understanding of parental involvement of parents of children with disabilities in three primary schools in adjacent rural communities in one education district in Trinidad. Parental involvement is critically linked to school effectiveness and student outcomes (Marschall & Shah, 2016).

Implementing and sustaining programs for increased involvement are surefire ways of transforming education. Though research has been done in the USA and other locations of the world, there was still a lack of knowledge if these findings would be the same in island rural communities.

Additionally, all children regardless of their background could benefit from parents who expect them to do well in school (Boonk et al., 2018). Lack of involvement of parents, especially parents of children with disabilities, adversely affects the educational outcome of these children. There is a need to reconceptualize parental involvement by creating partnerships between schools and parents for the enhancement of social, emotional, and academic growth of children. However, as noted in the above literature review, there are several factors that inhibit parents from being actively involved in their children's education, some of which are non-welcoming schools, lack of parent-teacher communication, poverty status, and lack of invitations by the teachers and students. On the contrary, the factors that motivate parents from different countries of the world to become involved in their children's academic life are teacher invitations, socioeconomic status, and family structure.

This study filled the gap in the literature by providing an understanding of why parents of children with disabilities got involved or chose not to be involved in their children's schools in island rural communities. This was achieved by focusing specifically on the discovery of factors that served as connections, motivators, or barriers to parental involvement in three primary schools in adjacent rural communities in one education district of Trinidad. Additionally, the findings extended the knowledge in the

discipline because it addressed an under researched area, as no local study had so far investigated the factors that considered the information on parents of children with disabilities and their involvement in schools in island rural communities. The results of this study provided the much-needed insights to researchers, principals, team leaders, teachers, and parents with the information required to define parents' roles and responsibilities within primary schools in island rural communities, as well as to generate strategies for involvement and sustainability specific to primary schools in rural communities in Trinidad. Altogether, the findings of this study may improve the local rural home–school practice for children with disabilities and inform and improve policy debates in special education in Trinidad and Tobago.

In building the vision and moving ahead, an appropriate research design and rationale is presented in Chapter 3. In addition, this chapter includes the methodology, data collection procedures, data analysis, descriptions of the issues of trustworthiness, and ethical considerations.

Chapter 3: Research Method

This exploratory case study was conducted with two purposes in mind: one, to obtain a deep understanding of why parents of children with disabilities in three primary schools in adjacent rural southern communities in an education district in Trinidad do or do not become involved in their children's education, and two, to explore the ways in which these rural schools inhibit, embrace, and sustain parental involvement. There can be many benefits to conducting such a study. Understanding why parents of children with disabilities do or do not become involved in their children's education benefits all areas of the educational system. Students with disabilities, parents of children with disabilities, teachers, school administrators, and even policy makers can gain information to maximize the potential of students with disabilities.

In this chapter there is an explanation of the research methodology that was used in conducting this study. I begin with the research design and rationale, then address the role of the researcher. This is followed by a detailed description of the methodology, which includes the logic of participant selection, a description of the instruments used, the procedures for recruitment, the participants, data collection, and a plan for data analysis. The chapter ends with a description of the issues of trustworthiness, the ethical procedural measures, and finally, a summary.

Research Design and Rationale

The research questions are the heart of a research study as they connect all the components of the study's design (Maxwell, 2013). This study was guided by the following research questions:

Research Question 1: How are parents of children with disabilities participating in three primary schools in adjacent rural southern communities in an education district in Trinidad?

Research Question 2: How do three primary schools in adjacent rural southern communities in an education district in Trinidad inhibit, support, and sustain parent-school partnerships for parents of children with disabilities?

Subquestion 1: What factors motivate parental involvement of parents of children with disabilities in three primary schools in adjacent rural southern communities in an education district in Trinidad?

Subquestion 2: What factors are barriers to parental involvement of parents of children with disabilities in three primary schools in adjacent rural southern communities in an education district in Trinidad?

For the purpose of this study, to explore the factors which impact why parents of children with disabilities do or do not get involved with three primary schools in adjacent rural southern communities in an education district in Trinidad, as well as explore the ways in which these rural schools inhibit, support, and sustain parental involvement, I used a qualitative research approach. However, it was important to consider if other research approaches may have been just as suitable for this study. One such consideration was a quantitative approach. According to Creswell (2018b), a quantitative approach is one for testing objective theories by examining the relationship among variables. In quantitative research, data collection happens using structured methods, such as surveys, polls, and questionnaires, and are conducted on large samples that represent the entire

population. A quantitative approach may be one in which the researcher is concerned

with the development and testing of hypotheses and the generation of models and

theories that explain behavior (Hoy & Adams, 2016). In a quantitative study, the

researcher is concerned with discovering facts about social phenomenon and assumes a

fixed and measurable reality (McLeod, 2019). For example, I could have assumed that

parents of children with disabilities in primary schools in rural communities do not get

involved with their children's schools because the principals and teachers at these schools

do not assist parents to increase their knowledge about the nature of disabilities, and to

strengthen their skills to support their children's work and studying at home. Then I could

have set out to prove my hypothesis by collecting survey data. However, in this way, I

would not have been able to go beyond this premise, as this experimental research would

have been about proving whether the statement was true or false.

In a qualitative approach, however, I was interested in understanding human

behavior from the informants' perspectives. Semistructured, one-on-one interviews

allowed me to dig deep to gather thick, rich data and hear the voices of participants. I

gained a deeper understanding of the involvement of parents of children with disabilities

in rural communities that illuminated much more than I had anticipated. Through a

qualitative approach, I was able to understand how individuals subjectively perceive and

give meaning to their social reality (Creswell, 2017; Patton, 2015).

The rationale for selecting a qualitative research approach was based on the

considerations of several prominent qualitative methodologists. Creswell (2017)

explained that qualitative research is an approach for exploring a social or human

problem with the intent of acquiring an in-depth understanding of the real-life issue. In this study, I sought an in-depth understanding of the real-world problem of low parental involvement of parents of children with disabilities in primary schools in island rural communities.

Marshall and Rossman (2016) asserted that the use of qualitative methodology can be justified by its strength and value in conducting several types of studies, including research that explores novel, ignored, or often-marginalized populations. In this instance, the often-marginalized population was the parents of children with disabilities from adjacent rural southern communities on the island of Trinidad.

Maxwell (2013) noted qualitative research as a reflexive process that is flexible and inductive and promotes the attainment of personal, practical, and intellectual goals. By choosing a qualitative research approach, I held the prospects of achieving at least two of these goals. One, my personal goal, was to satisfy my curiosity about the phenomenon of parental involvement of parents of children with disabilities in island rural communities. Two, my intellectual goal, was to gain a deep understanding of the issue of incessant low parental involvement of parents of children with disabilities and why this was happening. For the above-mentioned reasons, a qualitative design rather than a quantitative design was chosen.

According to Patton (2015), purpose is the controlling force in research, and decisions about the design are dependent on the purpose. The purpose of qualitative applied research is to illuminate a societal concern and contribute knowledge. Therefore,

this study drew attention to the problem, as well, and may help policy makers and school leaders to better understand the nature of this problem in order to intervene.

Yin (2016) aptly described what distinguishes qualitative research with his suggestion of five characteristics. These characteristics are, first, exploring the meaning of people's lives in real-world settings; second, representing the views and perspectives of participants, not those of the researcher; third, reporting the contextual conditions in which people live; fourth, explaining events through existing or emerging concepts; and fifth, collecting, integrating, and presenting data from multiple sources of evidence. These five features encapsulated the intent of this study and fully supported the sound choice of carrying out a qualitative research approach to better understand the problem of incessant low parental involvement of parents of children with disabilities in primary schools in adjacent rural southern communities in an education district in Trinidad.

Notably, there are several designs to qualitative inquiry. Common qualitative designs that I believed were appropriate for conducing this study included phenomenology, grounded theory, ethnography, and case study. According to Creswell (2017), phenomenology is used when a researcher needs to describe the common shared meaning for several participants of their lived experience of a phenomenon. A phenomenological study depicts the essence or core meaning mutually understood through a phenomenon that is commonly experienced (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). For this study, the phenomenon, parental involvement, was not an affective, emotional, or intense human experience and may not have been experienced in the same way by all the participants. Therefore, a composite description cannot be made of the essence of the

experience of parental involvement for all the participants, as such, a phenomenological design would not have been suited for the purpose of this study.

Grounded theory, another qualitative design, focuses on building or discovering theory of a process, an action, or an interaction shared and shaped by the views of a large number of participants (Creswell, 2017; Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). Corbin and Strauss (2015) explained that the theory that is constructed is derived from extensive data collected during the research process, and too, the initial data that are collected and analyzed form the basis for subsequent data collection. While the procedures of this methodological design may have helped to reveal the beliefs and meanings that underlie the parents' action for low involvement at their children's rural schools, a grounded theory study would be too long winded and also, my end goal was not theory construction.

Another common qualitative design, ethnography, focuses on an entire culture-sharing group. In an ethnographic design, the researcher looks for, describes, and interprets patterns of rituals, customary behaviors, social organization, and ideational systems of a culture-sharing group of individuals. The research involves engaging in extensive field work and results in an understanding of the group's way of life (Creswell, 2017; Merriam & Tisdell, 2016; Patton, 2015). Although I contemplated this design, it was not selected as the parents of children with disabilities proposed for this study could not be described as a culture-sharing group of individuals, nor could their decisive actions of parental involvement be described as ritualistic.

Yet, another qualitative design is the case study. As stated by Stake (1995), "case study is the study of the particularity and complexity of a single case, coming to understand its activity within important circumstances" (p. xi). However, according to Gaikwad (2017), a case study poses several design issues that should be clarified by the researcher. Therefore, for this study, the case, or focus of inquiry in the study, was parental involvement of parents of children with disabilities, while the boundary was three primary schools from adjacent rural southern communities, and the unit of analysis was one education district in Trinidad. A qualitative case study research design allows for a holistic and comprehensive approach to the problem (lack of knowledge of parental involvement in rural communities), as well as explores areas not yet thoroughly researched (how primary schools in island rural communities support and maintain parent- school connections; Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). Therefore, this research design seemed to be the most suitable for the study that took place.

Case Study Design

For this research, I conducted an exploratory single case study as a form of qualitative inquiry. According to Yin (2018), when conducting a case study, the researcher conducts a comprehensive, holistic, and in-depth investigation of a complex issue in context, where the boundary between the context and the issue is unclear and contains many variables. In this study, the complex issue was parental involvement of parents of children with disabilities and the context of the study was the three primary schools in rural southern communities in an education district in Trinidad. Merriam and Tisdell's (2016) account of the attributes of a case study substantiated Yin's (2018)

definition when they explained that a qualitative case study is a search for meaning and understanding. A qualitative case study is an inductive, investigative strategy that allows the researcher to be the primary instrument of data collection and analysis and its end product is richly descriptive.

Gaikwad (2017) described the common suggested four areas of case study uniqueness. Case study research is more concrete, meaning relatable to personal experience; more contextual, in that the information generated is rooted in a context; more developed by reader interpretation; and based more on reference populations determined by the reader. With my intended choice of a case study design, I was able to articulate a rich, in-depth description and an inductive analysis of low parental involvement of parents of children with disabilities in this rural district. Furthermore, the uniqueness of case study research assisted in explaining the "how" aspect more effectively than other types of qualitative research (Yin, 2018).

Role of the Researcher

Upon receiving approval for this study from Walden's University Research Reviewer (URR) and Institutional Review Board (IRB), and subsequently from the Trinidad and Tobago Educational Planning Division, I worked with my network connections to gain access to the participants, collected the data, transcribed the data, reviewed the data, analyzed the data, and reported the findings. I was the key instrument, collecting the data myself, in the natural setting. I conducted one-on-one, semistructured interviews with parents of children with disabilities, principals, and teachers of three primary schools in adjacent rural communities in one education district to collect data.

After data collection, I transcribed, then reviewed, and made sense of the data by organizing the data into a comprehensive set of themes through inductive logic and complex reasoning. After this analysis, I reported the findings of the data. I kept my focus on the multiple perspectives the participants held about the problem. While performing the above steps, I was mindful, according to Creswell (2017) and Patton (2015), that my original plan for this qualitative study could be altered, because the research process is emergent and requires reflexivity and a holistic view.

I am employed as a teacher educator at the national university in Trinidad and Tobago and I am founder and president of the Association for Family Empowerment for Children with Special needs (AFECS). As a teacher educator, I am a discipline leader and instructor of many courses in the special education specialization of the Bachelor of Education program offered to both full time and part time students at the Centre for Education Programs of the university. Additionally, I am practicum advisor to prospective special education teachers on their final practicums. I also have the responsibility of placement of the prospective special education teachers at primary schools for their final practicums. As such, I am familiar with the teaching communities in several education districts, so I had been made aware of the current levels of parental involvement within the schools from my network connections. However, no conflict of interest existed as I did not have any supervisory influence over anyone in the schools in those districts that may have affected my relationships with prospective participants. Accordingly, gaining a deep understanding of parental involvement practices in adjacent rural communities in Trinidad was very intriguing.

As the founder and president of AFECS, I continue to have the opportunity to interact with parents of children with disabilities from various geographical locations and socioeconomic backgrounds. I have become conversant with the aspects of rural living such as socioeconomic status, poverty, and lack of job opportunities. My familiarity with some parents of children with disabilities, some rural communities, and some ways of rural living was an unavoidable bias that was considered and factored into the participant selection, my interactions with participants during the interviews, and analysis of the data. I did not interview people with whom I had a relationship, nor did I place any pressure or expectation on acquaintances to participate. I dismissed any biases or preconceptions by practicing reflexivity and bracketing. As part of reflexivity, I kept a field journal during the time I was conducting the research and interviews. I frequently evaluated myself by questioning my own taken-for-granted assumptions so that I did not twist data and make biased interpretations or jump to conclusions. By bracketing, I set aside my personal notions of the topic and of the previous research findings about the topic. I did this by keeping a reflexive journal throughout the data collection and analysis process, and too, I did include what was bracketed in my final research report (Miles et al., 2020).

For this study, I was ethically bound to remain impartial and open, to listen with empathy, and to ask questions that revealed information that assisted in gaining a better understanding of the problem. In addition, multiple strategies for validation were necessary to demonstrate the accuracy of the information. As such, I used member

checks, triangulation of data sources, peer debriefing (with my university colleagues), and transparent reporting of my findings.

Methodology

In this section I include the rationale for the selection of participants; the instruments I used for data collection; the procedures I considered for recruitment, participation, and data collection; and a thorough data analysis plan. In each subsection there were sufficient details about the processes, the protocols, and issues involved in the data collection and analysis that researchers will be able to easily replicate or extend the study.

Participant Selection Logic

To better understand the complex issue of low parental involvement of parents of children with disabilities within island rural communities, 10 volunteers from three primary schools, one each from three adjacent rural southern communities in one education district were selected as participants. The focus was kept on the factors that enhance or inhibit parental involvement and what principals and teachers did to promote and sustain parent-school partnerships at the three primary schools in these rural communities. Because the contexts of settings differ, representative participants were carefully chosen to describe, detail, and to best understand the problem and make interpretations. According to Creswell (2017, 2018b) and Marshall and Rossman (2016), one of the core characteristics that define qualitative research is the researcher's attention to participant selection.

I used purposeful sampling of principals, teachers, and parents of children with disabilities to develop a detailed understanding of parental involvement of parents of children with disabilities within three primary schools in adjacent rural southern communities in one education district. The specific sampling strategy was maximum variation sampling. According to Creswell (2018a) and Patton (2015), maximum variation sampling is used to capture a wide range of perspectives relating to the phenomenon that is being studied. Via this strategy, I gained insights into involvement of parents of children with disabilities within primary schools in rural communities by looking at it from all angles, namely, through the lens of the principals, the teachers, and the parents themselves. This helped me to identify common themes that were evident across the sample.

The criteria for the participation of the principals were: (a) they were principal of one of the primary schools in three adjacent rural communities in the southern education district in Trinidad for at least the last 3 years, (b) they had enrolled children with disabilities at the school during the last 3 years, and (c) they were available and willing to participate in the study. Similarly, for the participation of the teachers it was: (a) they had worked for at least 3 years at the schools where the principals were participating in this study, (b) they had a child or children with disabilities in their classes within the last 3 years, and (c) they were willing to participate in the research study. For the participation of parents of children with disabilities, it was: (a) they had a biological or adopted child or children with disabilities who presently and/or for the last 3 years, attend(ed) the

schools from which the principals and teachers were participating, (b) they, themselves, did not have a disability, and (c) they were willing to participate.

The eligibility criteria for participation ensured that participants were the most knowledgeable source that could purposefully provide an understanding of the phenomenon and best help me understand the research problem (Creswell, 2018b; Maxwell, 2013; Patton, 2015). By establishing the criteria for each participant group, I ensured that all participants had experienced the problem and provided the information needed to answer the research questions. I guaranteed a deeper understanding of the research problem by applying the above criteria, which ensured that participants had been involved with the situation long enough to have a clear understanding of the research problem. The sample size for this research study consisted of the principal, one teacher, and one or two parents of children with disabilities each from three primary schools located within three adjacent rural communities in one southern education district in Trinidad. In total, the sample was 10 participants, three or four participants each from three schools.

Marion (2017) selected a total of 11 participants (five parents, five teachers, and one principal) to explore the problem of low parental involvement at an inner-city school in the northeast region of the United States. Hasnat (2016) successfully conducted a qualitative case study which was similar to this study with a much smaller sample size. He selected five parents from five different schools within the same area, to explore the phenomenon of parental engagement within the context of rural Bangladesh. Therefore,

the number of participants I selected appeared large enough to yield the information I
needed to answer my questions.

According to Creswell (2017), for an in-depth perspective, sample size should be
small so that the level of detail is not diluted. Miles et al. (2020) supported this notion in
their statement, "qualitative researchers usually work with small samples of people,
nested in their context and studied in-depth" (p. 27). However, Fusch and Ness (2015)
recommended that it may be best to think of data in terms of rich and thick, rather than
the size of the sample. They suggested that the researcher choose the sample size that has
the best opportunity to reach data saturation, which is not about the numbers per se, but
about the depth of the data. Data saturation is the point of no new data, no new themes,
no new coding, and ability to replicate the study.

Instrumentation

The data collection instruments used in this study were three different interview
protocols, one for the parents of children with disabilities, a second for the principals, and
a third for the teachers. The combined interview protocol (see Appendix A) was produced
by me, the researcher. According to Yin (2018), the in-depth interviews of open-ended
questions will resemble guided conversations rather than structured queries. In addition to
this, as described by Rubin and Rubin (2012), the interviews were built around main
questions, follow-up questions, and probes. The main questions began a discussion about
each of the research questions. The follow-up questions sought detailed information on
the topics that were introduced, while the probes were used to obtain additional
information and helped to manage the conversation. Consistent with Rubin and Rubin's

line of reasoning, probing questions are usually not created prior to data collection because questions depend on the response of participants and do not interfere with the response process. Although time consuming, the reason for this method was so that the participants could answer at length and in vivid detail and it allowed me to focus more narrowly on the planned items that spoke to the research questions.

While there was no previous research on this topic done solely about parents of children with disabilities from primary schools in rural communities in Trinidad, there are comparable studies conducted internationally. Similar to those studies (Hasnat, 2016; Huscroft-D'Angelo et al., 2018; Marion, 2017), these interview protocols were designed with the groups of participants and their context in mind, and principally for answering the research questions. Guided by the work of Colombo-Dougovito (2019), Croix et al. (2018), and Rubin and Rubin (2012), the data collection instrument was designed to take approximately 90 minutes. Moreover, the interview questions were reviewed and approved by my Walden university supervisory committee of qualitative experts.

I devised the interview questions to include the following elements: (a) start with the basics, (b) be open-ended, (c) be sequential, (d) ask the easy questions before the difficult or controversial ones, (e) use neutral wording, (f) word clearly with terms particular to the respondents' culture, (g) avoid double-barreled questions, (h) be cautious when asking "why" questions, (i) ask big, expansive questions and, (j) use prompts. In keeping with the assertions of Colombo-Dougovito (2019), Croix, et al. (2018), and Yin (2018), open-ended interview questions ask for both facts and opinions from participants

and are considered flexible to be adjusted during the interviews to accommodate the interview situation (see Appendix B).

Procedures for Recruitment, Participation, and Data Collection

In this exploratory case study, participants and sites were purposefully selected (Creswell, 2018a; Patton, 2015). Institutional Review Boards (IRBs) ensure the protection of the participants in research studies (Creswell, 2018a). As such, when I received Walden University's IRB approval for this study, I applied to the Trinidad and Tobago Ministry of Education, Educational Planning Division for approval to collect the data. It was anticipated that over a 3-week period, I would contact, identify, and recruit the three principals. I began recruiting by obtaining permission from the district supervisor, to call the district's school principals. During the phone calls, I informed the principals about the study and their rights as participants and invited them to volunteer. I answered questions about the study to build trust and shared my email address so principals who were interested in participating could email me privately. Three responding principals, one each from three primary schools that met the criteria, were selected as participants. Then, the principals and I arranged dates and times that suited them to participate in the interviews from home via Zoom.

During the time that the principals were volunteering to participate, I identified three teachers from the principals' schools to interview. Participating teachers were also identified via electronic invitations. I asked principals to distribute electronic invitations to teachers in their schools who met the criteria. If teachers were interested, they completed the invitation and responded via telephone, or responded via email. The first

teacher from each school to respond was informed about the study and their rights as participants and asked to volunteer to participate. Teachers, one from each school, who participated in the study, as participating principals, were interviewed individually at a date and time of their choosing. Interviews were conducted from home via Zoom and recorded with the camera turned off to keep the identity of participants confidential. This ensured the safety of all participants during the COVID -19 restrictions. Interviews with teachers were conducted over the five-week period following the principal participants' interviews.

Similarly, to identify parent participants, I asked the principals and teachers for recommendations with the assumption that they would not bias my study by indicating parents based on what they wanted me to discover. If the recommendations did not yield the required number of participants, I intended to pursue the remaining participants through parent participant snowballing. The notification would have explained the study and invited parents to volunteer as participants.

However, a total of four parents responded to the invitations. Subsequently, I contacted them by telephone and discussed with them their willingness to participate. During the course of the discussions, I determined their eligibility and set an interview date and time. The participants were allowed to choose interview methods that were accessible to them. Like the interviews for the principal and teacher participants, amid the COVID-19 restrictions, parent participants opted to do their interviews from their homes via Zoom.

If I was lucky enough to have received more than enough participants than I required, I would have informed them that they may be needed later for the study, and I would contact them if the need arose, for example, if any of the participants dropped out of the study, or if data saturation was not reached after the interviews were completed. It was expected that the recruitment and interviews with the four parents of children with disabilities would occur over a seven-week period. This time frame included time for setbacks and unseen eventualities.

Prior to the data collection, each participant received an emailed soft copy from me of a thorough description of the study and a consent statement form which explicitly indicated participants' willingness to participate, participants' right to withdraw at any time, participants' right to refuse to answer any question, and participants' right to change any prior response when reviewing the interview transcript. I also offered confidentiality assurance that names would not be used, nor any information that would identify participants in the research report, along with a declaration of confidentiality that the data collected would remain private and be used only for this study. Interviews only took place after I arranged to obtain the signed informed consent statement forms, as emailed soft copies from each of the participants.

For a period of 7 weeks, I conducted semistructured, one-on-one, in-depth interviews with principals, teachers, and parents of children with disabilities of three primary schools of adjacent rural southern communities in one education district in Trinidad. At the start of each interview, I thoroughly went over a description of the study and the information on the consent statement forms and assured participants that

participation was completely voluntary, and they had the right to stop the interview at any time, they could refuse to answer any question, and their identities would be always kept confidential. As well, I reminded them and made sure they could ask any questions they thought of between signing the consent form and the actual interview date.

I interviewed a total of three principals, three teachers, and four parents. These were one principal, one teacher, and one or two parents from three schools, all in one-on-one interviews. I audiotaped questions and responses of only one participant in the study at a time using appropriate recording procedures. Each interview with participants consisted of open-ended questions asked in the order in which they were listed on the interview protocol. I maintained confidentiality by changing participants' names and school locations and giving them specific identifiers. The alphanumeric identifiers for the principals and their schools were determined by the first letters of the words principal and school and in the order in which the principals volunteered to participate in the study. For example, the identifier for the first participating principal and their school was Pr1- S1. The second participating principal and their school was Pr2- S2, and so on. The alphanumeric identifiers for teachers and parents also matched their respective principals and the schools where they worked or where their child attended. For example, the identifier for the teacher who worked at the first principal's school was T1- S1, and the identifier for the parent whose child with a disability attended the first principal's school was P1- S1. These identifiers were used to ensure confidentiality of data collection and anonymity of reported data.

Each interview lasted about 90 minutes or so. I allowed participants to arrange interview times that were suitable to them. Adhering to the COVID-19 stay at home restrictions, the interviews were done from participants' homes via Zoom. In the case of participants who may not have had internet connectivity at their homes, I would have considered telephone interviews. I would have also allowed participants the option to have the interviews completed in one or two sittings according to their preferences.

I adhered to Rumrill et al.'s (2011) recommendation that when each interview was over, I debriefed by collaborating with participants to thoroughly understand their responses, so the meanings and future use of the research findings accurately represented their perceptions or realities. I also did as Creswell (2018a) advised: I was courteous and professional, thanking each participant for his or her cooperation and participation. However, if by chance, I was unable to make sense of something in the interview, I would have checked back with the participant for clarification. Patton (2015) opined that that can often be done over the telephone, and such follow-ups are appreciated by participants because they indicate to the participants the seriousness with which their responses were taken.

Data Analysis Plan

Once the data were collected, I began the analysis process. The analysis process was done both electronically and manually. I was directed by the guidelines of Creswell (2018a), Merriam and Tisdell (2016), and Patton (2015). Immediately after conducting each interview, I typed my field notes and wrote memos. According to Merriam and Tisdell (2016), memos were short notes that captured the essence of what was learned in

the interview, my reflections, tentative themes, hunches, ideas, and things I might pursue

if I had a next round of interviews. Following this, I manually transcribed each interview.

As I worked through this step, I conducted transcription verification with the study

participants. I got copies of the transcripts back to the participants for reviewing and

confirmation that they were happy with the way they responded. As I reflected on the

interviews, I continued writing memos in my reflexive journal to improve the reliability

of my research and remove bias and summarized the contents of each interview in my

field journal as the interviews proceeded. This practice was useful for remembering the

key issues and for beginning the process of coding.

I used open coding as the initial step in my analysis of the data. The transcripts

were coded manually, by breaking down data and capturing any data with a word or

phrase that seemed to be responsive to my research questions. As described by Merriam

and Tisdell (2016), for the codes I sometimes repeated participants' exact words, or used

terms or concepts that reflected their exact words. Some of the coding was

straightforward. Next, from all of the transcribed interviews, I found the excerpts marked

with the same code and sorted them into a single data file, then again, I summarized the

contents of each file. I continued to sort and resort the material within each file,

comparing the excerpts between different subgroups, and summarizing the results of each

sorting.

As I coded more and more data, it was difficult to remember all the codes, so I

created a codebook as well. According to Creswell (2018b), a qualitative codebook is to

provide definitions for codes and track how one code relates to other codes in the

analysis. At this stage, I went on to establish categories and, ultimately, themes, which, according to Merriam and Tisdell (2016), can be somewhat challenging. I did so by consolidating codes into categories, themes, and patterns through a constant comparative method of relating similar categories, themes, and patterns. This process was repeated over and over until categories, themes, patterns were sufficient to include all the various pieces of evidence to the point when new or relevant data no longer seemed to be emerging from the data. After considering different versions of categories, themes, patterns and the relationship among categories, themes, patterns had been clearly established without any overlapping, I integrated emerged categories, themes, patterns in new ways, by making connections between them to create a complete picture with all my findings.

To give actual names to the categories, themes, patterns in my study, just as in coding, I gave terms or conceptual labels that captured the essence of the data cluster. As I did this, I was mindful of Marshall and Rossman's (2016), and Merriam and Tisdell's (2016), assertion that the formation of these categories, themes, patterns begins as a highly inductive process. Therefore, I initially began with all the data, next I moved on to data units which seemed to go together, then I constructed tentative names for each of the data clusters. These methodologists further claimed that as the researcher moves through the data collection and analyzing process and reaches saturation, toward the end of the study they will shift to a deductive mode. Consequently, the ultimate names of categories, themes, patterns I used were compatible with the emphasis of the study. With regard to the discrepancy, the data was rigorously examined, along with supporting data, to

determine whether categories and themes were to be retained or modified. Rumrill et al. (2011) argued that the qualitative researcher must be diligent in the examination of discrepant data to avoid prematurely dismissing relevant data that do not fit with existing conclusions. Moreover, I reported the irreconcilable discrepant data in the results.

In addition, since my study was a single case study, my data analysis ended with an interpretation of the data which was represented in a discussion in which I verified the significance of the categories/themes/patterns and my findings. I sustained Creswell's (2017) claim as I endeavored to provide clear, credible, and conclusive evidence to show the connection between the case study and the conceptual framework and practical issues in the field. With regard to the discrepant case, I thoroughly explained the participant's responses within his or her individual context and in relation to other participants' responses in the study. According to Saldaña (2021), this contextualization can prove to be helpful in connecting emerging themes.

Finally, although I had access to the computer-assisted qualitative data analysis software, NVivo, which helped me organize my data to code and categorize better, noted scholars (Patton, 2015; Yin, 2018) have expressed strong cautions. They warn that the software may serve as an able assistant and reliable tool, but it is the researcher who must still be prepared to be the main analyst who develops rich and detailed explanations, and good descriptions of the cases.

Issues of Trustworthiness

In qualitative research, issues of trustworthiness usually arise. Therefore, appropriate strategies to establish credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability were thoroughly examined and are here described.

Credibility

To ensure credibility, I first and foremost chose participants who were knowledgeable about the research problem (Yin, 2018). In this instance, those individuals were the principals, teachers, and parents of children with disabilities from three primary schools in adjacent rural southern communities in Trinidad. When I collected interview data, I produced accurate transcriptions of the interviews and engaged participants in member checking; this ensured that participants were given the opportunity to provide feedback concerning data interpretations and preliminary conclusions (Rumrill et al., 2011). Triangulation of data sources was used to add validity to the interpretations of the data by my comparing and cross-checking the consistency of information; this was done in four ways. One, I engaged in member checking, I offered participants the opportunity to review and then respond to their interview transcripts for their verification. Two, I checked for the consistency of what participants said about the same thing over time, for example during the interview, then again when I double checked for clarification. Three, I compared the perspectives of people from different points of view, for example triangulating principal views, teacher views, and parent views. Four, I checked and rechecked interviews against my field notes and reflexive memos to distinguish between interpretive information and actual descriptions of fact (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016; Patton,

2015). Additionally, I used multi-forms of data analysis to provide more rigor. I used

manual coding, manipulating, collapsing, and aggregating of the data, inputting data into

NVivo software for comparison and deeper interpretation; all of which provided details

for comparing and contrasting the validity of information (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016;

Patton, 2015; Yin, 2018).

Verifying the credibility of the study was through external peer reviews

conducted by some of my colleagues at work- faculty of the University of Trinidad and

Tobago; this helped to reduce researcher bias and reactivity (Creswell, 2018a; Maxwell,

2013; Rumrill et al., 2011). Yet, another means of verifying the credibility of the study

was through the field notes and reflexive memos which I maintained to keep records of

the rich, thick descriptions of data which were generated from the interviews (Patton,

2015; Rumrill et al., 2011). Finally, according to Merriam and Tisdell (2016), and Patton

(2015), because the researcher is the instrument in a qualitative study, a qualitative report

should include some information about the researcher. As such, the reporting of any

personal and professional information that may affect data collection, analysis, and

interpretation – negatively or positively – establishes investigator credibility which in

turn enhances the study's credibility.

Transferability

Transferability refers to the quality of determining if the qualitative findings can

be transferred or applied to another setting. I achieved this through the rich, thick

descriptions of the setting and participants' data that was collected while maintaining

confidentiality Another strategy by which I promoted transferability was through the

thorough explanation of the discrepant case that arose. Data from a participant's responses was explained within the individual's context and in relation to other participants' responses in the study. This contextualization proved to be helpful in connecting emerging themes (Saldaña, 2021).

Dependability

Dependability in qualitative research substantiates the study's findings as consistent and repeatable. Dependability may be established by paying close attention to the idea that there is no single reality on which all would agree, as people make meaning of their experiences in very diverse ways, and meaning is made within the context that experiences occur (Rumrill et al., 2011). Therefore, one significant technique that I used to attain dependability in this study was to keep an audit trail. An audit trail is a "systematically maintained documentation system" (Rumrill et al., 2011, p. 170) that in this study consisted of (a) raw data, including audiotapes, interview notes, and memos; (b) products of data reduction and analysis, including coding procedures; (c) products of data reconstruction and synthesis; and (d) process notes. Another strategy that I employed was using my university faculty peers as peer reviewers, and methodological experts also from my faculty, to examine the research plan and execution.

Confirmability

Confirmability deals with whether another researcher outside of the study could independently confirm the findings of this study. Among other things, I achieved this by triangulating with multiple data sources, keeping an audit trail, thoroughly examining conflicting data, and using reflexivity and bracketing. Reflexivity is maintaining a

reflective journal in which I reflected on what was happening in the research process, with regard to my assumptions, personal values, interests, and beliefs (Rumrill et al., 2011). Bracketing implies putting aside all personal biases of the topic, and of the previous research findings about the topic, that emerged during each phase of data collection, analysis, and interpretation (Miles et al., 2020; Yin, 2016).

Ethical Procedures

Since there are ethical issues that are considered in any study that collect data from people, it was necessary to consider the ethical procedures in every step along the way. I first obtained consent from Walden University Institutional Review Board (approval number 04-07-21-0263182), then The Trinidad and Tobago Educational Planning Division to collect current and pertinent information for this research study. During the recruitment process, all potential participants were given written objectives of the study, told how the information or data was collected and used, and ultimately what effect the study would have on their lives. All participants were given the right to refuse to participate and those who agreed to be part of the study were given the right to withdraw at any time with or without explanation. Equally important, participants were informed that all interviews were anonymous and information that was shared which was unrelated to the study would be kept confidential. When potential participants consented to be a part of the study, they each received a Letter of Invitation and Consent Form, which explained the purpose, nature of the study, role of all participants, and provided contact information.

The transcripts, summaries, and research results will be kept in multiple hard and soft copies in my home office in a locked file cabinet for a minimum of 5 years. Keys to the file cabinet will be kept securely with my personal belongings. After 5 years, the soft copies will be deleted from their storage media and the hard copies will be shredded. Research will be published only through academic publishers, academic journals, and approved presentations by researchers. In addition, all participants will receive a copy of the final approved study.

Summary

The purpose of this study was twofold. First, I attempted to obtain a deeper understanding of why parents of children with disabilities do or do not get involved in three primary schools in adjacent rural southern communities, specifically, in one education district in Trinidad. And second, I explored the ways in which the three primary schools in these rural communities inhibit, embrace, and sustain parental involvement. In this chapter, the methodology of the research was detailed. An exploratory case study was conducted with the aim of addressing the research questions. The following chapter will discuss the results of the research.

Chapter 4: Results

The purpose of this qualitative exploratory single case study was to gain a deeper understanding of why parents of children with disabilities do or do not get involved in adjacent rural southern communities in an education district in Trinidad. At the same time, I also examined the ways in which these schools inhibit, support, and sustain parental involvement. Therefore, I explored and described the participation of parents of children with disabilities in adjacent rural southern communities in an education district in Trinidad from the perspectives of school principals, teachers, and the parents of children with disabilities.

The two main questions that guided this qualitative study were: First, how are parents of children with disabilities participating in three primary schools in adjacent rural southern communities in an education district in Trinidad? Second, how do the three primary schools in the adjacent rural southern communities in an education district in Trinidad inhibit, support, and sustain parent-school partnerships for parents of children with disabilities? Two subquestions were also asked: First, what factors motivate parental involvement of parents of children with disabilities in three primary schools in adjacent rural southern communities in an education district in Trinidad? Second, what factors are barriers to parental involvement of parents of children with disabilities in three primary schools in adjacent rural southern communities in an education district in Trinidad? In this chapter, I report in detail on the data collection process, including the setting of the study, participant demographics, data collection, and analysis. I also discuss the evidence of trustworthiness and present the results of the research.

Setting

Interviews with all participants were conducted from their homes, which were located in the same three rural communities as the primary schools in this study, via Zoom, with cameras turned off to keep the identities of the participants confidential. Personal or organizational conditions that impacted participants or their experiences at the time of the study, and that could potentially influence interpretation of study results, were in adherence to the World Health Organization's health restrictions and protocols due to the global COVID -19 pandemic. For example, participants reported being: (a) stressed by hospitalization and death of relatives and friends; or (b) burdened by the ever-changing variables and additional responsibilities created by school and business closures, working from home, and the nationwide curfew. These circumstances may have had a negative impact on the emotional well-being of participants and may have influenced responses to the interview questions.

Demographics

I confirmed the demographics in this study by inviting participants to participate in the study and ensuring that everyone met all the criteria required for the study during the initial phone calls or emails with participants. The demographic criteria used for this study were as follows: Participating principals were: (a) a principal of one of the primary schools in three adjacent rural communities in the Southern Education District for at least 3 years, (b) had children with disabilities enrolled in the school in the past 3 years, and (c) were available and willing to participate in this study. Similarly, for teachers to participate: (a) they had worked for at least 3 years at the schools where the principals

were participating in this study, (b) they had a child or children with disabilities in their classes in the past 3 years, and (c) they were available and willing to participate. The same criteria applied to participation by parents of children with disabilities: (a) they had a biological or adopted child or children with disabilities currently and/or in the past 3 years attended the schools where the principals and teachers participated in this study, (b) they themselves did not have a disability, and (c) they were willing to participate. Of the 10 individuals who volunteered to be participants, three were principals, three were teachers, and four were parents of children with disabilities. Seven participants were female, three were male, and they fell into the age categories of young adult (18-35) and middle-aged adult (36 to 55). The alphanumeric identifiers for the principals and their schools were determined by the first letters of the words *principal* and *school* and in the order in which the principals volunteered to participate in the study. For example, the identifier for the first participating principal and their school was Pr1- S1. The second participating principal and their school was Pr2- S2, and so on. The alphanumeric identifiers for teachers and parents also matched their respective principals and the schools where they worked or where their child attended. For example, the identifier for the teacher who worked at the first principal's school was T1- S1, and the identifier for the parent whose child with a disability attended the first principal's school was P1- S1. These identifiers were used to ensure confidentiality of data collection and anonymity of reported data (see Table 1).

Table 1

Participant Demographic Information

Identifier	Role/School	Age Range	Sex	Interview Type
Pr1- S1	Principal /1	36-55	F	Zoom/ Cameras off
Pr2- S2	Principal /2	36-55	M	Zoom/ Cameras off
Pr3- S3	Principal /3	36-55	M	Zoom/ Cameras off
T1- S1	Teacher /1	36-55	F	Zoom/ Cameras off
T2- S2	Teacher /2	36-55	M	Zoom/ Cameras off
T3- S3	Teacher /3	18-35	F	Zoom/ Cameras off
P1- S1	Parent /1	18-35	F	Zoom/ Cameras off
P2- S2	Parent /2	18-35	F	Zoom/ Cameras off
P3- S2	Parent /2	18-35	F	Zoom/ Cameras off
P4- S3	Parent /3	18-35	F	Zoom/ Cameras off

Data Collection

Obtaining Approval

To begin data collection, Walden's IRB had to obtain a signed letter of
cooperation from the Director of the Educational Planning Division of the Trinidad and
Tobago Ministry of Education. This step took much longer than I had anticipated. I
expected to receive the signed letter from the director within 2 weeks, but it took 3
months. After receiving conditional IRB approval (approval no. 04-07-21-0263182), I
filled out the required paperwork and submitted it to the Trinidad and Tobago Ministry of
Education. After 2 days, I received an email telling me that my application was
incomplete because the application form was supposed to include a list of schools from

which data were to be collected. I immediately called the official who had sent me the email and told her that I was unable to provide the list of schools. I would have to get the principals who had volunteered to be participants in order to list those schools. She told me to do what I had to do and get back to her with the completed form and assured me that I would receive the letter of cooperation.

Adhering to my study proposal, I contacted one of the school supervisors of the education district to be invited to the monthly district principals' virtual meeting. He informed me that the district's principals had held almost no monthly meetings during the previous school year. The district was divided into three clusters and each cluster had a leader and its own way of working together, mostly through WhatsApp chat groups. These monthly meetings were redundant, as principals were in frequent contact with each other now more than ever. Nevertheless, the district supervisor gave me permission to contact principals, but warned me that principals would not be motivated to volunteer because they were burdened with the ever-changing sociodemographic (age, gender, and income level) and medical variables associated with the increase in deaths and infections with the COVID -19 virus, as well as the impact and additional tasks brought on by the pandemic. Therefore, I engaged a former colleague, now retired as a principal, to serve as gatekeeper. She called principals from the school district to tell them about my study and invited them to take a call from me to get more details. There were 14 principals who agreed to take my call. I called, introduced myself, explained my study, and emailed them the consent form to get more details and clarity, but only one principal agreed within two days. After waiting two weeks, I sent the same email again, and two more principals

agreed within the following 2 weeks. This allowed me to send the Ministry of Education the names of the schools from which the data would be collected.

Even though I had met all the requirements for applying to the Department of Education, I again encountered more stumbling blocks. I was told that all research applications are only processed on the 15th and 30th of each month. My application had been received on the 17th, and the 30th of the month was a public holiday. This meant I had to wait until the 15th of the following month. When the 15th came, I did receive an authorization and a confidentiality agreement from the Department of Education to sign and return, but still not the letter of cooperation. Since the officials were working from home and the letter had to be signed manually by the director before it was sent, I had to wait until he came to the office to receive the letter. I received the letter of cooperation on the 29th of the same month and the full IRB approval 3 days later. The transition from conditional approval to full approval took 3 months.

Selection of Participants

The original plan was to have between nine to 12 participants in my study. After receiving approval from three school principals to participate in the study, I asked them to distribute electronic invitations to teachers and parents of children with disabilities at their school who met the criteria. The first teachers at the schools that responded to the invitation were called and further informed about the study, and the privacy section of the consent form was thoroughly reviewed. My considerations included that all information provided would be kept confidential. I explained that the personal information would not be used for any purpose other than this research project, nor would I include their name

or anything that might identify them in the study reports. I reminded them that I would use alphanumeric identifiers in place of their names and their school names to maintain confidentiality of data collection and anonymity of reported data. I also clarified that the data would be kept secure by password protection and the use of their assigned unique identifiers. I informed them that the data, in hard and soft copies, would be retained in a secured location for a period of at least 5 years, as required by the university. Then after 5 years the data would be destroyed. The hard copies will be deleted from their storage media and the soft copies will be shredded. Finally, in the phone conversation, I asked them to voluntarily participate in the study and told them that they could give their consent by responding to the email I sent them by typing the words "I consent" in the box at the bottom of the consent form. Like the teachers, the parents who responded to the invitation were called and informed about the study and privacy issues. They were asked to voluntarily participate in the study and give their consent by responding to the email I sent them by typing the words "I consent" in the box at the bottom of the consent form.

Participant Response

Ten people responded to the email I sent them and agreed to participate in my study. They were three principals from three primary schools in adjacent rural southern communities in an education district in Trinidad; three teachers, one from each of the schools as the principals; and four parents of children with disabilities, one from the first school, two from the second school, and one from the third school as the principal and teacher. Each volunteer agreed to participate in an individual interview at a date and time of their choosing.

Participant Scheduling

After discussing the details of my study with potential participants in an initial phone call and receiving informed consent from volunteers with the words "I consent" each was assigned a unique identifier. To schedule a time to conduct the interview, I called participants and arranged a date and time of their choosing. Using my Google calendar, I kept track of the dates and times. Two days before the agreed upon date for the interview, I scheduled a Zoom meeting and emailed the invitation link to each participant. On the scheduled dates, the semi-structured interviews were conducted in a quiet location in the participants' homes via Zoom and recorded with the camera turned off to keep the participants' identities confidential. Having the interviews via Zoom also ensured the safety of all participants during the COVID -19 health restrictions.

Interviewing–Data Collection

The individual interviews took place over a period of 7 weeks to accommodate the schedules of the study participants. Each interview lasted approximately 90 minutes. Interviews were recorded via Zoom on my personal computer (PC), which is password protected. The recordings were also downloaded to an external data drive, which is also password protected. After downloading, the original recordings were then deleted from the Zoom app and from my PC to ensure data security and participant confidentiality.

Interviews were semi-structured to capture the unique experiences and particular stories of each participant (Stake, 1995). Each category of participant was asked the same open-ended questions in the order they were listed on the interview instruments to structure the data collection (see Appendix A). The questions consisted of main

questions, probes, prompts, and clarifying questions. During the Zoom interviews, with the camera off, participants gave the impression that they were comfortable and interested, which was due to their occasional giggles, balanced pace, and tone of their speech. After each interview, I debriefed by working with participants to thoroughly understand their responses so that the meaning and future use of the research findings accurately reflected their perceptions or realities (Rumrill et al., 2011). I was also courteous and professional in thanking each participant for their cooperation and participation (Creswell, 2018a).

Data Analysis

I began the analysis as soon as I completed my first interview. I wrote memos in both my reflexive journal and field journal capturing the essence of the interview, and I transcribed the interview manually. I then contacted the participant to send them the transcript for review, that is, to verify and confirm that they were satisfied with the way they had responded. As the interviews progressed, the transcripts piled up, so I decided to use technology to assist with the transcriptions. I signed up for Otter.ai, an assistive technology that makes information from recorded conversations instantly accessible and usable. However, I still had to do a lot of manual transcription because of the Trinidadian accent, as the app could not capture all of those language differences.

By the time I conducted the interviews with the first three principals, wrote memos, and transcribed the interviews, I had already begun the coding process. I jotted down preliminary words or phrases for codes in my field journal to refer back to later. These were just ideas for analytical consideration as the study progressed (Saldaña,

2021). Coding qualitative data creates a framework for organizing and describing the data collected during fieldwork and provides a foundation for the interpretive phase (Patton, 2015). I read and reread the transcripts and began manual open coding. Although there were 10 transcripts in total and the coding process was lengthy and tedious, even frustrating at times, the process was manageable.

On a large table, I systematically laid out the printed interview transcripts in categorized rows according to participant groups. On these printed raw transcripts, I marked double-spaced common words, phrases, or ideas mentioned by more than one participant on the left-hand side and wrote them down as codes. In the wide right margin, I made notes in different colors, creating in vivo and inductive codes that seemed appropriate for my research questions (Saldaña, 2021). The coding process consisted of two rounds. In the first round, important words, phrases, or ideas that "jumped out" were extracted from the interview transcripts and highlighted in the transcript printouts and italicized in the soft copies and presented as in vivo codes. These in vivo codes, words, phrases, or ideas were examined for essential ideas and repetitive words that captured the essence of the entire excerpt and were then presented as inductive codes.

In the second round, the original number of recurring codes from the first round was reduced to a smaller number because I reanalyzed the data and found that larger sections of text lend themselves better to just one key code than to several smaller ones (Saldaña, 2021). I used the process of organizing the data as "lumper" coding, which was a more appropriate method (see Appendix C). Next, I looked at the two codes I created to identify patterns between them and began to develop themes. According to Creswell

(2018b), the final number of major themes or concepts should be limited to a small

number, for example, five to seven, so that the analysis remains comprehensible.

Therefore, I subsequently grouped the 38 final codes of the second round into themes

with some subthemes. In addition, the names I formulated for each theme and subtheme

were concise and easy to understand to ensure a useful and accurate representation of the

data set. Over time, I reviewed and revised my themes to merge two similar themes and

removed one theme that did not have enough data. In the end, I had six themes and seven

subthemes (see Table 2).

Table 2

Turning Codes Into Themes and Subthemes

Interview probe questions	Codes	Themes	Subthemes
What does parental involvement mean to you?	Child support, Collaboration	Significance of Parental Involvement	
What are the ways parents of children with disabilities are involved?	Attendance to meetings, financial support, homework support, parent-literacy programs, online sessions, regular school contact/visits, and social activities	Parents of Children with Disabilities: Ways of Participation in School	Recurring school related efforts
How do the schools demonstrate evidence of partnership?	Principle of partnership- commitment, principle of partnership-communication, principle of partnership-equality, principle of partnership-respect, principle of partnership-professional competence, principle of partnership-trust	Supporting Actions for Parent/School Partnerships	Staff demonstration of partnership principles
How do the schools partner for sustainability of involvement of parents of children with disabilities?	Providing extra school support, local community financial support, local community material/other support, connection to the Ministry of Education and social services	Sustaining Actions for Parent/School Partnerships	School partnership with community
What are some involvement activities that parents of children with disabilities find most effective?	Commitment, communication and awareness, motivational support, destigmatization and understanding children's needs, increased overall parental participation, increased partnership and relationship, financial aid, involvement in school activities, volunteer activities, education and training, sports and cultural event	Motivators for Parental Involvement	School-initiated involvement stimuli Parent-inclined involvement stimuli
What are some things that prohibit the involvement of parents of children with disabilities?	Personal unwillingness to be involved, work commitments, poor communication and access to information, lack of technology and technology skills, limited education and skills, financial constraints, lack of commitment of teacher or parent, lack of trust	Barriers to Parental Involvement	Parent related barriers School related barriers

Description of Emergent Themes and Subthemes

The initial coding and combination of similar and overlapping codes resulted in 38 final codes in round two. Through continued manipulation, peer review by experts, and multiple levels of analysis, I combined the 38 final codes from round two into six general descriptive themes. The themes were significance of parental involvement, parents of children with disabilities: ways of participation, supporting actions for parent/school partnerships, sustaining actions for parent/school partnerships, motivators for parental involvement, and barriers to parental involvement. These six themes resulted in a total of seven subthemes. The subthemes were recurring school related efforts, staff demonstration of partnership principles, school partnership with community, school-initiated involvement stimuli, parent-inclined involvement stimuli, parent related barriers, and school related barriers. Participants' exact wording from the interviews on the themes and subthemes is explained under each research question in the results section.

Theme 1

Significance of Parental Involvement. This theme was derived from data collected through participants' responses to the probe question, "What does parental involvement mean to you?" Participants' responses were resoundingly similar. They emphasized that parental support for the child's education and parent-school teaming were important components of parental involvement. These responses were coded as child support and collaboration.

Theme 2

Parents of Children with Disabilities: Ways of Participation in School. The name of this theme was taken directly from the data provided by parent participants' responses to the interview probe question, "What have been your involvement efforts with your child's school over the years?" Overall, parent responses indicated that they had been involved in several recurring efforts at the school. These included meeting attendance, financial support, homework assistance, parent-literacy programs, online sessions, regular school contacts or visits, and social activities.

All parent participants also indicated that regular contact with the school via phone calls or WhatsApp group chats or in-person visits were the most common forms of their involvement. Teachers' and principals' responses to the question, "How do you involve parents of children with disabilities?" also coincided with those of parents. Regular school contact via phone calls, WhatsApp group chats, or in-person visits was one of the main ways principals and teachers encouraged parents of children with disabilities to participate in their schools. From this theme, the more specific subtheme-recurring school related efforts - was derived as this was the particular focus of the theme.

Theme 3

Supporting Actions for Parent and School Partnerships. This theme emerged from participants' responses to the data collected for the interview question, "How do teachers and principals demonstrate evidence of the principles of partnership in their interactions with parents of children with disabilities?" The partnership principles of

commitment, communication, professional competence, respect, equality, and trust were described as in place by staff across schools. Participants indicated that the communication principle was by far the most indicative of the partnership principles. All of the supporting actions for parent and school partnerships focus on one notable specific element, staff demonstration of partnership principles, which has been identified as a subtheme.

Theme 4

Sustaining Actions for Parent and School Partnerships. This theme is an offshoot of theme three, which emerged from the data collected for the interview probe question, "How do the schools partner for sustainability of involvement of parents of children with disabilities?" Participants' responses indicated that schools provide additional support in a variety of ways for the ongoing involvement of all parents. In addition, I recognized all the participants' descriptions of the schools' accomplishments in working with village residents, the local business community, various non-governmental organizations, and the ministries of education and social services as codes. This theme represents the deliberate and positive actions taken to maintain the involvement of parents of children with disabilities. In particular, the subtheme, school partnership with the community, was the notable factor in sustaining the involvement of parents of children with disabilities.

Theme 5

Motivators for Parental Involvement. This theme emerged from responses to the interview probe question, "What are some involvement activities that parents of

children with disabilities find most effective?" Study participants identified numerous

activities that they believed had been effective in engaging parents of children with

disabilities over the years. These activities were coded as commitment, communication

and awareness, motivational support, destigmatization, and understanding of children's

needs, increased overall parental involvement, increased partnership and relationship,

financial aid, involvement in school activities, volunteer activities, education and

training, and sports and cultural events. Two aspects of this theme that stood out were

school-initiated involvement stimuli and parent-inclined involvement stimuli. These

aspects became the subthemes.

Theme 6

Barriers to Parental Involvement. Like the previous themes, this theme was

named directly after the responses to another of the probing questions, "What are some

things that prohibit the involvement of parents of children with disabilities?" Participants

identified several factors that prevent parents of children with disabilities from being

involved in their children's education. The factors were coded as follows: personal

unwillingness to engage, work commitment, poor communication and access to

information, lack of technology and technological skills, limited education and skills,

financial constraints, lack of teacher or parent commitment, and lack of trust. Through

categorical aggregation and my direct interpretation, the eight codes were combined to

comprise this specific theme. It was evident from the codes that some of the factors

described by the participants were parent-related barriers, while others were school-

related barriers. Therefore, these two different facets of the theme became the subthemes.

Discrepant Case

As I collected and organized the data from the interviews, I always paid careful

attention to inconsistencies or unique discrepancies in the data. According to Creswell

(2018b), a deviant case contradicts the general perspective of a topic. In my data

collection on the question, "How do teachers and principals demonstrate the principles of

partnership in their interactions with parents of children with disabilities?", one parent

participant's response contradicted the responses of the teacher and principal participants

of that school. This parent participant emotionally recounted her negative experiences

with her child's principal and one teacher when her child was in an early childhood class.

This data did not match the rest of the data I had collected. I noted these data as inhibiting

factors for parent-school collaboration. However, there was no other similar or

supporting data to address this as an issue. Nevertheless, these data were no less

important as a source for identifying a contradictory case that did not fit emerging

patterns (Patton, 2015). The participant's exact wording from the interview that relates to

the data is discussed under the corresponding research question in the results section.

<div style="text-align:center">Evidence of Trustworthiness</div>

Credibility

To ensure credibility, I sought and engaged school principals, teachers, and

parents of children with disabilities as participants from adjacent rural southern

communities in an education district in Trinidad who were familiar with the research

problem (Yin, 2018). After collecting data based on the interview protocol that ensured

each category of participants was asked the same questions, I created accurate transcripts

of the interviews using technology and involved participants in member checking. I gave participants the choice of doing the transcript reviews via email or Zoom, and they all opted for the latter. Although the participants' choice posed a problem for me because in some cases it took them two reminders to get the transcript review done, they were willing to clarify the reports they had previously provided.

I paid attention to the triangulation of the data in three ways. First, I checked the consistency of people's statements about the same thing over time, e.g., during the interview, and then again when I asked them again for clarification. Second, I compared people's different perspectives, e.g., triangulating the views of principals, teachers, and parents. Third, I repeatedly cross-checked the interviews with my reflexive memos to distinguish between interpretive information and actual descriptions of facts.

Another way to check the credibility of the study was through external peer reviews. After manually coding the data and looking for patterns in the codes, I converted 38 codes into six themes and seven subthemes and created a table with the details. To improve the accuracy of the table, I invited two of my university faculty colleagues as expert peer debriefers to review and critique my data organization. During the peer debriefing session, they asked questions and provided feedback so that the study resonated with them. This process added validity to the study and helped reduce bias and reactivity (Creswell, 2018b; Maxwell, 2013; Rumrill et al., 2011).

In addition, although I only knew one of the 10 participants, I bracketed my emotions and thoughts to further reduce bias. I limited my emotions to my notes and used each participant's exact words in the appropriate data section under each research

question and theme. Overall, I used multiple forms of data analysis to ensure more rigor. I manually coded, manipulated, summarized, aggregated, and entered the data into the NVivo software for comparison and interpretation. For the NVivo analysis, I hired an experienced NVivo user, and provided them with all the requisite data from the study and the codes I created for input into the system. The resulting NVivo output was used for comparison with the hand-coded results and the results of peer reviews conducted by my faculty colleagues. In addition, the NVivo output provided a contrast to ensure the validity of the information.

Transferability

I have increased the possibility of transferability to other contexts and situations through the rich, extensive, and detailed descriptions of the setting, the demographics of the participants, and the topics I have covered in this chapter. In addition, by using the same open-ended questions to the different categories of participants, I was able to provide different but interconnected perspectives that the reader can use to transfer information to other settings. Another strategy I used to promote transferability was the detailed explanation of the discrepant case in the results section of this chapter. Data from one participant's responses were explained in the context of the individual and in relation to the responses of other participants in the study (Yin, 2016).

Dependability

Dependability in qualitative research proves that the results of the study are consistent and repeatable. An important technique I used to achieve dependability in this study was to maintain an audit trail. The audit trail is a "systematically guided

documentation system" (Rumrill et al., 2011, p. 170) that consists of (a) raw data, including tape recordings, interview notes, and memos; (b) data reduction and analysis products, including coding procedures; (c) data reconstruction and synthesis products; and (d) process notes. Another strategy I employed was to use some of my colleagues at work- faculty of the University of Trinidad and Tobago as peer debriefers and methodological experts to review the research plan and implementation. Equally important, the interview questions I formulated were reviewed and approved by my Walden university supervisory committee of qualitative experts.

Confirmability

Confirmability is about whether another researcher outside the study could independently confirm the results. I achieved this through triangulation, using multiple sources of data from the different categories of interview participants, creating an audit trail, being thorough in examining contradictory data, and using reflexivity and bracketing. I was aware of the risk that my perspective might unknowingly influence interviewees' responses, so I kept a reflective journal in which I reflected on what was happening in the research process. At the same time, at each stage of data collection, analysis, and interpretation, I carefully set aside any personal biases toward the topic and previous research findings on the topic (Miles et al., 2020; Yin, 2018).

<div align="center">

Results

</div>

In this section, I discuss the results in relation to each of the research questions. The four research questions were answered through coded data segments from the interview transcripts and emergent themes. I began the analysis of my data by "playing"

with the data. I looked for patterns, insights, or concepts that seemed promising.

Throughout, I relied on the conceptual framework that underscored the research questions

and shaped my plan for data collection, data analysis, and data interpretation. Through

manual coding, manipulating, summarizing, and aggregating the data, entering the data

into NVivo software for comparison and deeper interpretation, and expert feedback from

the debriefing, 38 codes emerged from the transcribed data. These 38 codes were

aggregated into six major themes and seven subthemes. The mapping of the aggregated

themes and subthemes to the research questions underlying the discussion of the results

can be seen in Table 3.

Table 3

Aligning Research Questions with Themes and Subthemes

Research questions	Themes	Subthemes
RQ1- How are parents of children with disabilities participating in three primary schools in adjacent rural southern communities in an education district in Trinidad?	Significance of Parental Involvement Parents of Children with Disabilities: Ways of Participation in Schools	Recurring school related efforts
RQ2- How do three primary schools in adjacent rural southern communities in an education district in Trinidad inhibit, support, and sustain parent-school partnerships for parents of children with disabilities?	Supporting Actions for Parent/School Partnerships Sustaining Actions for Parent/School Partnerships	Staff demonstration of partnership principles School partnership with community
SQ1- What factors motivate parental involvement of parents of children with disabilities in three primary schools in adjacent rural southern communities in an education district in Trinidad?	Motivators for Parental Involvement	School-initiated involvement stimuli Parent-inclined involvement stimuli
SQ2- What factors are barriers to parental involvement of parents of children with disabilities in three primary schools in adjacent rural southern communities in an education district in Trinidad?	Barriers to Parental Involvement	Parent related barriers School related barriers

Research Questions and Associated Themes and Subthemes

The results of the responses to the research questions and related themes and subthemes are presented in this section. Each theme and subtheme is supported by segments of the data. Research Question 1 addressed how parents of children with disabilities participated in three primary schools in adjacent rural southern communities in an education district in Trinidad. To obtain answers to this question, participants were first asked what parental involvement meant to them. The theme derived from the coded data was Significance of Parental Involvement. The second probe asked participants to share how parents of children with disabilities are involved in the schools. From participants' similarly coded responses, one theme emerged, Parents of Children with Disabilities: Ways of Participating in School, and a sub-theme, Recurring School-Related Efforts.

Theme 1

According to the participants, parental involvement of parents of children with disabilities was about child support and collaboration. Child support meant supporting a child with disabilities in a number of ways. One of the ways was to motivate the child to be better and do more. It was also to avoid negative statements that would demoralize the child. One parent expressed "You always behind him, you push him to do something positive and good. You do not try to bring them down, like telling them they stupid and dumb or whatever, you always try to motivate them" (P4-S3). A second way to support a child with a disability was to be involved in all aspects of education and to help the child with schoolwork, both at home and at school. This support meant helping the child with

homework and reviewing class material. A third type of support was the willingness for the child to attend class. Parental involvement meant that parents should ensure that their children attend school regularly and on time. They were to provide them with necessities, uniform, and stationery. Another parent opined, "Parental involvement to me is being involved with a child's education and everyday life…being there for your children, or child" (P3-S2). And another, "Parental involvement means you are there for your child in anyway and helping him do his work and stuff like that" (P1-S1). An additional possibility mentioned by participants was teaching the child life skills such as cooking and general personal hygiene. "Even preparing healthy meal, and, you know, assisting the child where necessary. For me, that is what parent involvement involves… just, you know, assisting, a child preparing a meal for a child and all these sorts of things" (T1-S1).

Collaboration means working together with someone to produce something. According to some participants, parental involvement also meant working with teachers and other parents. Parents were the most important stakeholders and therefore collaboration with teachers was important. Participants pointed out that the lack of partnership between parents and teachers leads to failure and the child's suffering. "I believe that in education, parents are one of our greatest stakeholders. Right? You must have that relationship with parents, and we must have the partnership with parents, teachers, school, and any child" (Pr1-S1). And from another principal,

> Well, parental involvement is a critical component to allow a balance and harmony between the efforts at the school level and also at the home level. In collaboration with the Parent Teacher Association, sometimes we use

different strategies to bridge the gap (Pr2-S2).

Some parents deny that their child has a disability. Therefore, partnering with

teachers can help motivate and teach parents how to care for their child. On the

other hand, parents who admit that their child had a disability ask teachers for

help.

> If some parents are in denial, sometimes about their charges having any
>
> issues with learning, and they take quite a long time in coming to terms
>
> with that… that's one group of parents. Another group would recognize
>
> the challenges that they have been experiencing with their children, from
>
> as early as preschool, and before that, and they, when they come across
>
> into the primary school system now, they indicate that they need help for
>
> their children (Pr2-S2).
>
> Parental involvement is very important to me because I don't believe that
>
> educating children is the teacher's job only, in that, to me, parents are their
>
> child's first teacher. So, I like to have a good working relationship with
>
> parents and to actually know where some of their challenges are in
>
> parenting, as well as in the education reaching their particular child (T3-
>
> *S3).*

Theme 2 and Subtheme

Participants reported that parents of children with disabilities actively participated

in schools. Parents of children with disabilities participated in numerous recurring school-

related efforts. One of these undertakings was attendance at meetings. Parents of children

with disabilities attended school meetings to learn about their child's progress and receive information from teachers. Parents visited schools regularly, either at the request of a teacher or by showing up in person. There were also virtual meetings attended by parents of children with disabilities. "I have never missed a meeting or event" (P4-S3). Another parent and a principal articulated,

> I used to go to PTA meetings. If I got a call to come in, I would go in. Since my son is going to that school, there was only one sports day and that year we attended. Any events that they are having, like Christmas concert or anything, we go (P2-S2).
>
> Parent is spot on in terms of being able to work hand in hand with the school, very cooperative, attends meetings, sometimes we have online meetings with student support services, with the parent teacher association, Student Support Services aide and special education instructor. So, these are done at various points in times…any information requested, that parent is so cooperative, interested in whatever is required (Pr2 -S2).

Another way in which parents of children with disabilities participated was through their recurring financial support. Parents of children with disabilities supported their children and the schools financially. Parents made sure to support any activity that required money, such as field trips and sports. Parents collected donations or made donations to the schools. From one parent, "I donate" (P1-S1), and another, "With the PTA we have done movie shows for the children…and other fundraisers." (P3-S2). A third parent voiced,

Mostly donations with money. Like, he likes sports, so I will put out for that and little outings you know. Donations when there's going to be a treat, or if, like they need to get a table fixed or something like that…I will contribute to that (P4-S3).

Parents and teachers of children with disabilities were recurringly providing homework support. Parents helped their children with disabilities by assisting them with their homework. In addition, during the COVID-19 pandemic, teachers began online learning and asked parents to help their children participate in class and complete homework. However, some parents did not support their children as teachers expected. A principal and teacher reported,

Prior to the pandemic, in 2019, as we realized that the children were not doing homework, we were able to get the assistance of KISS, and so in 2019, we would have started our KISS homework center. So the parents who themselves were not able to support their children, those children were, then able to get support at the homework center. So, we would have had about 40 children in the homework center. You know, who would get that assistance (Pr1-S1).

If I would just reflect on my last academic year, where we had online teaching. Well, with infants, I suggested that parents be there…right, on the online sessions with my students. And there were instances where there were some children in my class who did not have that parental support (T1-S1).

Principals reported that one more way parents of children with disabilities were participating was by their recurring attendance to parent-literacy programs. Principals noted that parents of children with disabilities responded well to the literacy programs

they arranged for them. The main goal of these programs was to empower parents so that they could successfully support their children. "… So those persons in the SSSD although they've been given a small training, they work with the teacher, and me and the parent, to try to come up with some sort of program that would best help the child (Pr3-S3). And another principal suggested,

> We would have also realized within the past year that there are parents who were not able to support their children because they themselves have literary needs, you know? So, as a result of that, we are working with NALIS now to get support from ALTA for these parents (Pr1-S1).

> Participating teachers stated that parents of children with disabilities are now actively involved in the education of their children in the COVID -19 pandemic. Parents demonstrated their recurring involvement by being present when their children participated in online learning. Parents took on the roles of teachers: reading, receiving and sending assignments, helping with printing, and creating audio and video recordings. One teacher explained, "I decided, you know what, I'm going to send work via WhatsApp, and send, you know, like, videos on whatever and ask them to create, like, a video recording or audio recording or video recording of the child (T1-S1). And another teacher,

> Now in the pandemic, they would be present to assist their child when a child needed the assistance. And I would also send resources over technology for the parents to read or to print. Well, any assistance that they need, answer any questions that he had, point them in directions where I could not help (T3 -S3).

Parents of children with disabilities participated through their recurring contacts and visits to the school. Participants reported that parents of children with disabilities regularly contacted or visited the schools. Parents called the schools to inquire about school matters or to make appointments with their children's teachers. Parents were welcomed into the schools to sit down with teachers and their children and receive a report on their children's performance. Teachers and principals kept the doors open for parents to speak with them if they had a concern. Nothing prevented parents from making an appointment to meet with principals and teachers. Most parents had something to say about this: "I will call the teacher or I will go in the school and talk to the principal" (P1-S1), "…Or, if I had to find out anything, I will call the principal, or just go in" (P2-S2), "I will call…I would go to the school, talk to the principal, who would take me to the teacher and the aide. The process was welcoming" (P3-S2), and finally, "Once the principal or the vice principal is there, they invite me into the office, we'll sit down and talk, and they'll call the teacher alongside with my son" (P4-S3).

Another type of involvement of parents of children with disabilities was their recurring participation in social activities. Parents attended social activities such as movie shows, cultural activities, and sporting events. They funded and attended events to support their children. As stated by two different parents, "With the PTA, we have done movie shows for the children (P3-S2), and "I donate and I help when the school have a curry cue, or bazaar or Christmas treat (P1-S1).

Research Question 2

Research question 2 addressed how three primary schools in adjacent rural southern

communities in an education district in Trinidad inhibit, support, and sustain parent-

school partnerships for parents of children with disabilities. Two themes and two

corresponding subthemes were developed in response to that question. Based on the

responses to the first probe question of research question 2: How do schools demonstrate

evidence of partnership? The first theme that emerged was Supporting Actions for

Parent/School Partnerships, and the corresponding subtheme was Staff Demonstration of

Partnership Principles.

Theme 1 and Subtheme

Participants indicated that staff adhered to promises made to parents and children.

Staff adhered to the projects they said they would do to support children with disabilities.

According to one parent and principal, "If they make a promise to you, they keep their

promise to you and the children" (P1-S1), and "So in terms of commitment, I would state

that as a staff, we would show that we are committed when or being responsible as well

when we honor our commitment to do certain projects with the children" (Pr1-S1).

According to participants, staff were in constant communication with parents.

Staff ensured that the flow of information was seamless and effective. If there was a

problem with the children, the teachers or principals contacted the parents. Prior to the

COVID-19 pandemic, communication occurred through face-to-face meetings. During

the pandemic, virtual meetings, phone calls, or text messages became the means of

communication. Teachers also visited children's homes whose parents could not be

reached through phone calls or messages. Two parents stated, "The school contacts us, if there is a problem. They set up things so that the Guidance Officer will contact us and have talks with the parents who have any children with disabilities" (P2-S2), and "The principal and the teachers would call me in to have, say, like, every month; they would call me in to have a conference about her overall academic performance" (P3-S2). One teacher said,

> I will do the phone calls; I would send SMS messages. I document these things. Yes, I do document when I call and even if I call and do not get a response, I would still document it as well. Yes, I do make home visits. And there are times when I would have to ask the parent to come in school and meet with me in the school as well (T1-S1).

One principal commented,

> In the pandemic, now, we have been making calls, but before the pandemic, usually we would have face-to-face conferencing. If we cannot get the parent to come in physically, well, only then we'll just have to rely on the telephone call (Pr1-S1).

> Parents said they were treated equally and respectfully by teachers and principals. Parents did not feel out of place when discussing problems with staff. One parent said, "They treat me as an equal, very, very, very, nicely" (P3-S2), while another commented, "The teachers do treat the parents with respect" (P1-S1).

A school principal shared that the teacher of the child with a disability, at this school, was continuing to learn, as they continued to tailor instruction to meet the child's individual needs. The teacher's new knowledge and skills would also allow for the

provision of the appropriate supports and services necessary for the child's success. The teacher's professional competence was evident, "The school-based intervention team will look at strategies to help the teacher in addressing issues concerning the child. If after having tried those, the teacher was unsuccessful, then we do the external referral to the student support services" (Pr2-S2).

Trust was an additional principle of partnership that another principal participant brought to the forefront. The principal claimed that enrollment numbers had increased because parents viewed the school as more reliable with her at the helm. "I would say the rise would have been in terms of more parents trusting the school, so you will see a great enrollment" (P1-S1).

Theme 2 and Subtheme

In answering the second research question, another probe question was used: How do the schools partner for sustainability of involvement of parents of children with disabilities? Responses to this question were coded and the round two, final codes were combined into theme two, Sustaining Actions for Parent/School Partnerships, and the corresponding subtheme was School Partnership with Community.

Participants reported that staff supported children by providing technological devices and resources. Staff worked with advocacy groups to provide children with needed learning materials.

So, by basically providing that support, so I can tell you, especially during the pandemic, we have this child, one of the children who is one sighted, to ensure that

he had a device, priorities would have been put in place for him. Then we have

another child who is autistic and would have written SEA (Pr1-S1).

Staff also assisted parents of children with disabilities by advising them on the best

options for caring for their children. Staff provided parents with information about

available services and facilities to assist their children. According to another principal,

My role too, sometimes would be, to liaise with parents and advise them of the

services available to choose Student Support Services. Then, try to inform them as

to what the process involves, so that they will know how to operate (Pr2-S2).

Schools provided financial support to needy families in the local communities.

Schools assisted parents of children with disabilities with finances for medical expenses

and upkeep. Teachers approached local businesses to support parents in raising money

for children with disabilities. The community came together to help the needy amongst

them. Financially abled parents also supported poor parents. As one parent said, "They

look for donations to help the needy families" (P3- S2). A teacher and principal also

explained,

I would let them know I have a child that needs to get a reading book or whatever,

and that person will either buy the book, I would probably just tell them what book

it is, or they would give me the money, and I would purchase the book and give the

child (T1-S1).

It mostly happens with the parent group. Outside of the parent group, when we

have to, like raise funds for a particular call, let's say to assist a parent with medical

expenses due to injuries or stuff like that for the children, we liaise with those

persons in the business community for donations of items (Pr2-S2).

Participants pointed out that parents supported each other. The less fortunate received donations of food and clothing from other parents. Schools worked with local businesses to provide food and clothing hampers.

> If they don't have food, I try to link them with all the organizations to get, if they
> don't have clothes, I try to get them clothes. I do what I can. I think, with the
> organizations that God bless blessed me to cross paths with … it's to help others,
> not just myself (T3-S3).

> Yes, also, we have been partnering with FEEL. It's an, I want to say, an ongoing
> project. I don't know if it will continue into this new academic year. So, there's
> FEEL…Yeah, so we try to provide a lot of assistance for them. Especially like
> now, we got hampers from FEEL, we got hampers from FEEL plus we got a lot
> of…we always get a lot of other stuff from FEEL that we try to give out to these
> parents, in need…foodstuffs, clothes, a lot of things (Pr3-S3).

One school also provided internet to the local community. Some of the households had poor internet connections or could not afford the internet. The children and the community at large were able to attend the school and access the internet.

> Presently, what we're trying to do as well is have this school as a cybercafé,
> because we're aware that in a lot of the homes they do not have good connectivity.
> And if we can partner with a stakeholder, we can then be able to get a very strong
> bandwidth, and therefore, our children, children of the school, and even our past

students, and so on can come to the school, so that they can then be able to do

further learning, so we are working on that presently (Pr1-S1).

Participants reported that once teachers noticed that a child had a disability, they

referred that child to the Ministry of Education. Schools worked with the Ministry to

provide assistance to students with disabilities. According to one parent, "I see the school

has partnered with the Ministry of Education to get student aides, and guidance officer

and some of the textbooks" (P1-S1), and another, "If the principal and teachers recognize

a child with a disability in school, they will refer that child to the ministry, and the

ministry will then get back to the parent of the child with the disability" (P3-S2).

Children with disabilities also received assistance from social services. Social service

officers were attached to the schools to help students with their care.

> The support of the student support services, you see that, that is something that
>
> works for us in our school. We have a good relationship with the team of
>
> personnel that are attached to our school, that whole school management team;
>
> they support us (T2-S2).

Subquestion 1

Subquestion 1 addressed the factors that motivate parents of children with

disabilities to become involved in three primary schools in adjacent rural southern

communities in an education district in Trinidad. The one probe question that deepened

and clarified responses to this sub-question was: what are some involvement activities

that parents of children with disabilities find most effective? Participant responses were

coded and categorized into the theme, Motivators for Parental Involvement, and two

subthemes, School-initiated Involvement Stimuli, and Parent-inclined Involvement

Stimuli.

Theme and Subthemes

Participants reported that parents of children with disabilities were motivated to

become involved in their children's education and school by the engagement they saw in

teachers. Teachers sent class assignments for students via parents' phones. In this way, it

was easy for parents to monitor their child's progress and know whether or not they had

completed the classwork. "The teacher sends work for my son on my phone. So, I am

able to know if my son did his work or not…so, I make sure to get him to do it" (P1-S1).

There was efficient communication between teachers and parents. If there was a

problem, the teachers always informed the parents. Teachers were always in contact with

parents to make sure students were doing their homework. Parents attended meetings to

discuss their children's performance. "The teacher always keeps in touch with me. If he

didn't do all his homework, the teacher will let me know. If he is not focused, the teacher

will let me know" (P1-S1). And from a teacher, "I will also like parents to know, we need

to share information with them, so they need to come and sit in and talk and analyze

children's performances, now, sometimes their behavior will affect their academic

performances" (T2-S2).

It was advisable for parents to provide motivational support to children with

disabilities and avoid discouraging words around them. Also, teachers should show more

understanding to parents and students.

And make sure you give them that support. You know, you push them. Don't try to

bring them down and do everything possible to make them get involved in other activities other than the schoolwork. So, they will have other things they could do other than schoolwork if they're lacking in that area (P4-S3).

Parents should understand their children's needs and accept their conditions. The stigma attached to children with special needs must be eliminated. It is important that parents understand that a child with a disability learns differently. Parental understanding can increase involvement.

I think it's important for the parents to understand what special need their child has, so that, the teacher could give them tools or point them in the right direction of the avenues that could help… I think if parents could shift those mindsets, and come away from that stigma, I think that it will improve things a lot more (T3-S3).

There was a domino effect: participation by some parents convinced other undecided parents to participate as well. Participation also increased when parents felt they could trust those in charge at the schools. The three principals explained:

There is a positive correlation. I would say the rise would have been in terms of more parents trusting the school, so you will see a great enrollment… And when we had PTA meetings, we saw a greater percentage of attendance (Pr1-S1).

So that I must say, parents, once they realize that they can trust you, at least in the rural villages, okay. Once they realize that they can trust… once they realize that the school has their children's interests at heart or that we care about them, there's increased participation (Pr1-S1).

So, let's say we have the school social worker doing a presentation. Right, or a

parenting program, which they have done in the past. We look forward to improved or enhanced responses, from parents towards how they play their roles in the lives of their charges (Pr2-S2).

There were groups of parents with children with disabilities who supported each other. In these groups, parents shared how they dealt with their children's problems. In this way, parents with children with similar disabilities received ideas for dealing with their own children. As expressed by a parent, "Well, as I said before, joining the group with parents who had similar problems that really helped" (P4-S3). Even in cases where an aide was involved, the teacher acted as a liaison between the parents and the aide. Thus, it was important for a teacher to work with the parents. A parent and teacher expounded,

My relationship with other parents in the class. So, like in case the aide didn't come a day, a parent would send the work to me and I will forward it to the aide and the aide will then break it down and then I will have to explain it to her (P3-S2).

I would like to see all parents involved and asking questions and you know, what can I do to ensure that my child learns a particular concept or whatever, you know… because sometimes I would send work home. I try to do whatever I could do in the classroom, but the child needs to revise at home as well (T1-S1).

Participants indicated that it is important for parents to support their children financially. A child with a disability brings a great financial burden, so it is the parents' duty to provide for it. On the other hand, if they received financial support, it was the

parents' responsibility to ensure that the money was only used for the intended purpose. "Some things that can help parents to be more involved, I will say is having, like financial backup, to push your child forward" (P4-S3). And from a teacher,

The grants that government affords parents who are low-income earners or unemployed… they get them from the Ministry of Social Development. I am concerned that some of the parents do not utilize the funds to support their children in the way that the grant is supposed to support them (T2-S2).

Teachers felt that if parents would just take the first step to get involved, they would be motivated to always get involved. Teachers also felt that parents should see themselves as partners in their children's education. "I always tell them, we are partners in education, we have to work together, especially in this time where we are in virtual school, we have to work together for our children" (T1-S1). And from another teacher,

I would like parents with children with disabilities in my class to visit the class regularly, when I say regularly not every day, but as the teacher sees fit. I have had parents come in and sit in on lessons and observe their children with disabilities alright, and observe them for constructive reasons, you know (T2-S2).

Parents were involved in various volunteer activities. Parents helped in cutting grass at the school grounds. Parents did the gardening at the school. A group of women helped clean and paint the school furniture. Parents also helped with the renovation of the school. According to one principal, "We have a women's URP group, they would have assisted us in painting and painting the furniture" (Pr2-S2). And a teacher found, "Sometimes we are doing a gardening project, and you will get some of the fathers to

come. That is the hardest thing… to get the fathers to come, because they always say they have to work" (T2-S2). From another principal,

Presently, we have a problem with the grass being cut at the school, we have to rely on CEPEP and we want our parents to be able to come forward and volunteer their services, you know, and say, Okay, this is our school, since we are utilizing the school in the community, we want give back. The parents should be able to help cut the grass or plant gardens in the school, you know, and we don't have that. Right now, we are working on that (Pr1-S1).

Training sessions were organized for students and parents. Parents were trained on how to support students at home. The Ministry of Health also gave lectures on puberty to students. Through the Parent-Teacher Association, the community police also came and gave lectures. Commented one principal, "We would have had presentations by the Ministry of Health officials mainly to target the student body population for educating them about adolescents and that kind of thing" (Pr2-S2). And by a parent,

I have been given advice on how to work with him. They know how he does get frustrated fast and thing, so they tell me not to push him, give him like a half an hour of work, and then give him a fifteen minutes' break. They also tell me like in the writing of sentences, if is ten, you give him five, you always break it down (P2-S2).

Students were allowed to participate in sports. Parents were invited to participate in sports and cultural events. Parents passed on their sports skills to the children. Parents also covered the cost of sports. "One was definitely a movie night. That was special

because on that day, the entire school came out…the teachers, the principal, even the

cleaners, parents, and students came together" (P3- S2).

> Well just basically when we have a sports event or any event, parents can come in
>
> and probably share their skill and teach the children a skill or talent and it can be
>
> for all children. I mean when we were having live classes, yeah. Actually, I
>
> realized that we could still do things like dance, right, but we're not able to get
>
> everybody involved (Pr1-S1).

There were cultural performances and concerts where the students showed their talent.

The parents supported this by providing the necessary materials or being present

themselves.

> One area of involvement is from a cultural perspective. When we have concerts or
>
> shows demonstrating the talent of the students, we have full parental involvement
>
> and support in that regard. In the area of dance, well, the visual and performing
>
> arts as well, generally. So like the Best Village performances, we have full parent
>
> support, there (Pr2-S2).

Subquestion 2

Subquestion 2 addressed the factors that impede parental involvement of parents

of children with disabilities in three primary schools in adjacent rural southern

communities in an education district in Trinidad. There was one probe question that

clarified participants' responses to this sub-question: what are some things that prohibit

the involvement of parents of children with disabilities? Participant responses were coded

and grouped into a theme, Barriers to Parental Involvement, and two corresponding subthemes, Parent-related Barriers, and School-related Barriers.

Theme and Subthemes

Participant responses indicated that there are several factors that prevent parents of children with disabilities from being involved in their children's school life. Participants said some parents were unwilling to commit to their children. Some parents said they did not have time. Other parents did not want to share their knowledge about their child's disability. Also, some parents neglected their children because they did not want to be seen as parents of children with disabilities. "I have heard other parents say they can't be as involved as me because they don't have the time" (P3-S2).

> Some parents may not want to be involved because of pride. They don't want other parents to realize that their child has a disability. So, they stay away because they don't want to be noticed? You know, being present means that something is wrong with your child (T2-S2).

Participants emphasized that it was difficult for parents to be involved because of their work commitments. Some of the parents had full-time jobs, so it was difficult for them to be fully involved in their children's activities. "I was working for a few months" (P2-S2), from one parent, and "Some of them say work; they have to work, right? I really appreciate that one, because some of them really do have to work and they are working for people, and the hours are not flexible (T2-S2) from a teacher. And a principal responded, "I think one could be their availability in terms of work. That is definitely a factor. So, they may not have the time" (Pr2-S2).

Communication between parents and teachers was poor. Some parents did not understand the information conveyed to them by teachers. Due to the low level of education of some parents, they did not understand some information, which made communication less effective.

> Some of them like just don't understand what we were asking. So, we would send out letters, communication letters, and all of that. And even during the pandemic, I realized … you send out our WhatsApp messages to them, and parents will turn around and call because they don't understand what was communicated to them (Pr1-S1).

In rural areas, parents did not have devices that could be used for communication during the pandemic, or they did not have internet connections. Some parents also kept changing their phone numbers, making it difficult to reach them. In addition, some parents did not answer teachers' calls. One principal noticed, "During the pandemic, pretty much like at other rural schools, not having any devices, not having internet access prevent parents from participating in Zoom meetings" (Pr2-S2). And a teacher commented, "After that, again, you know, you're calling, calling, calling, and they're not responding, they're not answering, they're not returning your calls or anything like that" (T1-S1).

Living in a rural community has several disadvantages. Some of these disadvantages may include lack of access to technology and poor internet connectivity. In addition, residents usually have a low socioeconomic status. Therefore, they may not own technological devices, nor do they consider it important to acquire technological skills.

Said one parent, "Like now, the hardest thing is the online work. If I am not around, my older daughter will help my son" (P1-S1). A teacher described,

> …because of the area in which she lives. There is low connectivity, sometimes they will get some kind of internet connection in the night. I think it's only one phone in the house, or sometimes you would call, and the father has the phone, and he has gone to work. You know, those are the types of things also (T1–S1).

And one of the principals commented,

> Part of the problem sometimes seems to be having one device, which the parent carries with him or her, and when they return, they try to get a child to do the work, and they submit several days after it is due. Or another part of the problem would be like, lack of internet…that also creates a problem (Pr2-S2).

Many parents gave birth to their children at a young age and therefore did not have the necessary skills to deal with their children's conditions. They lacked parenting skills. In addition, the educational level of some parents was low, so they had limited knowledge. It was difficult for them to understand what they were being taught to adequately support their children. "My level of education is not high, so that is one reason" (P1-S1), said one parent. Teachers also reflected on this, "The education level of the parents, that is surely a barrier to their involvement and then there is their parenting skills" (T3-S3) and,

> Whereas the mother, she is a very young mother, right. She is very, very young. And sometimes I would talk to her, and I will tell her what she needs to do with

her son. And sometimes I believe that she doesn't even understand what I am telling her what she needs to get done (T1-S1).

Participants reported that a limitation to parental involvement was lack of financial resources. Some of the parents were not employed or made little money, making it difficult to meet all of their children's needs. "Low finances… sometimes, my husband is out of work, and I had to leave my work to care for him" (P4-S3). And a principal explained, "Sometimes financial, too, because in the past, there were times when we have had to provide some financial assistance to some parents to come out, even to come out to meetings. Yes, we've done it" (Pr3-S3).

One of the participating parents reported that some teachers lack commitment. The participant stated that they had to beg a teacher for homework for their child. Conversely, some teachers distributed books for other students to work on.

I had to actually beg her to send home homework for him. So, say for instance, like every week, I might be up in the school twice for the week when that teacher was there because I find her input was as if she didn't care (P4-S3).

On the other hand, some parents did not fully engage in their children's progress. Parents did not support their children with homework or provide them with the necessary learning materials. Parents did not monitor their children's attendance in class.

Some parents have not really engaged fully, in terms of having their children attend to the various sessions. So, there's a disparity there. We keep reaching out to these parents to ensure that each child is in attendance, but part of the problem sometimes seem to be having one device, which the parent carries with him or

her, and when they return, they try to get a child to do the work, and they submit

several days after it is due (Pr2-S2).

Some parents did not have confidence in some teachers and principals. Schools

had organized fundraisers, but parents did not trust that the money would be used well, so

they did not participate.

The number one would have been a source of distrust. Apparently, parents, like

they just did not trust the school. When I first came there about 10 years ago, you

know, the school would have tried to do fundraisers, and so on, and we realized,

you know, the parents not participating (Pr1-S1).

A participating teacher expressed that some parents may not have confidence in some

teachers but believe they will lose their children to the authorities if they voice their

concerns. So, they stay away and do not get involved. "I don't know, sometimes, I believe

they feel threatened by authority, or they feel threatened that they would lose their child.

So that they try to keep you at arm's length (T3-S3).

Discrepant Case

During one of the interviews with a parent participant, I noticed that her response

to the question, "How do teachers and principals demonstrate evidence of the principles

of partnership in their interactions with parents of children with disabilities?" challenged

the responses of the other participants. This parent participant specifically shared her

negative experiences with one particular teacher of her child when he was in the

Kindergarten class.

Well, that was when he was in first year. When I buy his books, I will never see

his textbooks until the term ends. I always had to be asking the teacher where are

my son's textbook. And like when I finally get them, some other child was

writing in them. And like, I had to actually beg her to send home homework for

him. So, say for instance, like every week, I might be up in the school twice for

the week when that teacher was there because I find her input was as if she didn't

care (P4-S3).

The participant was also very emotional when she talked about her experience with the

school principal.

The rest of teachers were okay, just that sometimes I find the principal himself, he

like would tell me to move my son to a special school. I find he not too courteous

about the situation. He is not sympathetic about it either. He just frank. He'll say

things like blatantly in front of anyone. He wouldn't think about what he is saying

before he says it. He would just say anything concerning my son. And that is a

hiccup for me also (P4-S3).

This data did not fit with the rest of the data I had collected, but I could not disregard it. I

found that this data hindered the parent-school partnership and was a barrier to parent

involvement. However, there was no other similar or supportive data to make this an issue.

Summary

In this chapter, I provided the details of data collection, data analysis, and the

results of my study of how parents of children with disabilities participated in three

primary schools in adjacent rural southern communities in an education district in

Trinidad. I also described how the three primary schools inhibited, supported, and

sustained parent-school partnerships for parents of children with disabilities. First, I

described how data were collected through semi-structured interviews via Zoom with 10

participants with the camera off. Participants thoughtfully, thoroughly, and willingly

answered all interview protocol questions (see Appendix B). Once the interviews were

transcribed, I discussed how the rich, thick data were analyzed through continuous

manipulation of two rounds of coding and multiple levels of merging and aggregation. I

then aggregated 38 final codes from the second round into six broad descriptive themes

and seven subthemes. Finally, I presented the analysis of the findings by addressing the

research questions and sub-questions with their associated themes and subthemes.

Summary of the Answers to the Research Questions

This exploratory case study was guided by two research questions and two

subquestions. The questions were:

Research Question 1

How are parents of children with disabilities participating in three primary schools

in adjacent rural southern communities in an education district in Trinidad? From the

participants' responses, it was clear that they unanimously agreed that parental

involvement includes all kinds of support, such as academic, emotional, and even

personal support for the child in daily life, as well as collaboration between the school

and parents. The data collected also indicated that parents of children with disabilities at

three primary schools in adjacent rural southern communities in an education district in

Trinidad are significantly active participants in their children's education and recurring school-related efforts.

Research Question 2

How do three primary schools in adjacent rural southern communities in an education district in Trinidad inhibit, support, and sustain parent-school partnerships for parents of children with disabilities? The majority of participants responded that there were very few barriers to parent-school partnerships in these rural schools. The schools supported the inclusion of parents of children with disabilities by having staff model a set of partnership principles. These principles included communication, commitment, equality, respect, professional competence, and trust. In addition, schools su the involvement of parents of children with disabilities through various parent-school partnerships. Schools partnered with the community to provide additional school support, financial support, material and other support, and a connection to the Ministry of Education and Social Services.

Subquestion 1

What factors motivate parental involvement of parents of children with disabilities in three primary schools in adjacent rural southern communities in an education district in Trinidad? The data collected show that there are numerous influences that parents of children with disabilities find effective. These motivators for parental engagement could easily be divided into two categories: school-initiated stimuli for engagement and parent-intentional stimuli for engagement.

Subquestion 2

What factors are barriers to parental involvement of parents of children with disabilities in three primary schools in adjacent rural southern communities in an education district in Trinidad? Participants' statements highlighted both parent-related and school-related issues that may hinder parental involvement of parents of children with disabilities, such as work commitment, financial constraints, level of knowledge, and their lack of trust of teachers in primary schools in rural communities.

In Chapter 5, I apply Hoover-Dempsey and Sandler's (1995, 1997) original model of the parent involvement process and Vygotsky's (1978) sociocultural theory to the data analysis. This application leads to a discussion of the interpretation of the findings, limitations of the study, recommendations, and implications for positive social change.

Chapter 5: Discussion, Conclusions, and Recommendations

Due to the lack of knowledge about the persistent low involvement of parents of children with disabilities in primary schools in island rural communities, this exploratory case study was designed and conducted to gain a deeper understanding of why parents of children with disabilities do or do not get involved in three primary schools in adjacent rural southern communities in an education district in Trinidad. At the same time, the study design allowed for an examination of the ways in which these schools inhibit, support, and sustain parental involvement. The literature reviewed revealed that there was a gap in research studies that examined factors that considered information about parents of children with disabilities and their engagement in schools in island rural communities. This study was guided by two research questions and two subquestions:

Research Question 1: How are parents of children with disabilities participating in three primary schools in adjacent rural southern communities in an education district in Trinidad?

Research Question 2: How do three primary schools in adjacent rural southern communities in an education district in Trinidad inhibit, support, and sustain parent-school partnerships for parents of children with disabilities?

Subquestion 1: What factors motivate parental involvement of parents of children with disabilities in three primary schools in adjacent rural southern communities in an education district in Trinidad?

Subquestion 2: What factors are barriers to parental involvement of parents of children with disabilities in three primary schools in adjacent rural southern communities in an education district in Trinidad?

I interviewed 10 participants from three adjacent rural southern communities in an educational district in Trinidad. Interviews were tape-recorded, transcribed, and analyzed in two rounds of hand coding and NVivo software. Key findings indicated that parents of children with disabilities in three primary schools in adjacent rural southern communities in an education district in Trinidad are significantly involved in their children's education and in recurring school-related efforts. In addition, there were few barriers to parent-school partnerships in these rural schools. In addition, the schools worked with the community to provide additional academic, financial, material, and other support and to connect with the Ministry of Education and Social Services. There are numerous motivators for the engagement of parents of children with disabilities that they find effective. Conversely, there were both parent and school-related issues that may hinder parental involvement of parents of children with disabilities in primary schools in rural communities. In addition, the findings add to the body of knowledge in the field of special education, by addressing an under-researched area, as no local study to date has examined factors that account for information about parents of children with disabilities and their involvement in schools in rural communities on the island of Trinidad. In this chapter, I provide an interpretation of the findings, limitations of the study, recommendations for action and future research, implications for social change, and a conclusion.

Interpretation of the Findings

Hoover-Dempsey and Sandler's (1995, 1997) original model of the parental involvement process as well as Vygotsky's (1978) sociocultural theory, provided structure to the study. These concepts were helpful in gaining a deeper understanding of why parents of children with disabilities do or do not get involved in three primary schools in adjacent rural southern communities in an education district in Trinidad, and in examining the ways in which these schools inhibit, support, and sustain parental involvement. Hoover-Dempsey and Sandler's model of the parent involvement process offered a decidedly psychological perspective on parent involvement that explains why parents choose to be involved. Hoover-Dempsey and Sandler believed that the three overarching constructs of Level 1 of the model interact as psychological factors and are the most important primary triggers of motivation for parent involvement.

The first main construct, parents' motivational beliefs, is defined as parents' role construction and parents' self-efficacy to help the child succeed in school. The literature and data collected in the interviews suggest that this construct is one of the reasons parents of children with disabilities are likely to choose to participate, as their child's uniqueness and individuality should be nurtured and their potential realized (Erdener & Knoeppel, 2018; Fishman & Nickerson, 2015; Freund et al., 2018; Kim, 2019; Reininger & López, 2017; Wehrspann et al., 2016). Parental role construction, in conjunction with parents' sense of efficacy, appears to be critical to more positive outcomes, emphasizing parenting- and partnership-oriented behaviors in everyday experiences as well as within the decision-making aspects of life (Hoover-Dempsey & Sandler, 1995, 1997).

The second main construct, parents' perceptions of invitations to participate by others, is explained as parents' perceptions of specific or general invitations by the child, the child's teacher, and the school inviting them to participate. Both the literature and the data collected show that parents of children with disabilities are spurred by the general invitations, demands, and opportunities for parental involvement that affect their child (Fishman & Nickerson, 2015; Li & Fischer, 2017; Reininger & López, 2017).

The third important construct, parents' perceived life context, is identified as parents' perceptions of their specific knowledge and skills and the time and energy available for their involvement. The literature also highlights this construct as another reason for parents' involvement decisions (Baker et al., 2016; Boonk et al., 2018; Hamlin & Flessa, 2018; Hornby & Blackwell, 2018; Reininger & López, 2017; Stanley, 2015). The correspondence between the three main constructs of the Hoover-Dempsey and Sandler (1995, 1997) model of the parental involvement process (Level 1) with the research questions (RQs) and subquestions (SQs) and themes that emerged from the data are illustrated in Table 4.

Table 4

Aligning Conceptual Framework With Research Questions and Themes

Parental Involvement Process (Level1)		Research Questions	Themes
Parents motivational beliefs	Parents' role construction	RQ 1	Significance of Parental Involvement
	Parents' self-efficacy for helping the child succeed in school	RQ 1	Parents of Children with Disabilities: Ways of Participation in School
Parents perceptions of invitations for involvement from others	Perceptions of general school invitations	RQ 2	Supporting Actions for Parent/School Partnerships
		SQ 1	Sustaining Actions for Parent/School Partnerships
	Perceptions of specific child invitations	SQ 1	Sustaining Actions for Parent/School Partnerships
	Perceptions of specific teacher invitations	RQ 2	Supporting Actions for Parent/School Partnerships
		SQ 1	Sustaining Actions for Parent/School Partnerships
Parents perceived life context	Self-perceived knowledge and skills	RQ 1	Parents of Children with Disabilities: Ways of Participation in School
		SQ 1	Sustaining Actions for Parent/School Partnerships
		SQ 2	Barriers to Parental Involvement
	Self-perceived time and energy	SQ 2	Barriers to Parental Involvement

In general, participants expressed very similar views about why parents of children with disabilities do or do not get involved in three primary schools in adjacent rural southern communities in an education district in Trinidad. The themes suggest that parents of children with disabilities in these rural communities are doing what they should be doing in terms of their children's education and educational progress. The

parents who had skills and knowledge that were helpful in specific areas of involvement and those who had a strong sense of efficacy in helping their children succeed in school readily chose to be involved. The opposite was true for parents who had only a low sense of efficacy of how they could help their child succeed in school. The welcoming and open-minded climate in the rural schools and the friendly demeanor of the participating teachers at the three primary schools in adjacent rural southern communities in an education district in Trinidad also made it easy for participating parents to get involved. In addition, parents' involvement was influenced by the demands on their time and energy. Parents' work commitments and financial constraints were given as reasons for their low involvement from time to time.

Moreover, the framework of the constructs was also considered from the philosophical perspective of Vygotsky's (1978) sociocultural theory. Vygotsky suggested that parental beliefs and social contexts may influence parents' motivational decisions to engage in their children's learning at home and at school (Freund et al., 2018). A central concept in Vygotsky's theoretical framework is that learning occurs as a result of social interactions with family, friends, teachers, and peers in a particular cultural setting (Bates, 2019). One school principal, Pr1- S1, described this concept as a factor that motivates involvement of parents of children with disabilities in primary schools in rural communities. The abovementioned principal participant, Pr1- S1, explained the involvement of some parents convinces many others to get involved as well.

Overall, these constructs provided an invaluable framework to support my conclusions and answer the research questions of my study. From the results, I conclude

that principals and teachers have a considerable influence on parents' decision to engage in their children's school life. The interpretation of the results based on the specific themes and subthemes in relation to each of the research questions and subquestions is explained in more detail below:

Research Question 1

Research Question 1 focused on how parents of children with disabilities were participating in three primary schools in adjacent rural southern communities in an education district in Trinidad. In answering this question, it was important to know what parental involvement meant to participants, as the conceptual arguments in the literature are not clear. As a result, the first theme, Significance of Parental Involvement, was derived from the consolidated inductive codes. Parent participants in this study agreed that while parental involvement meant supporting their child in every way possible, it also meant working with teachers and the school to ensure some level of academic success for their child. That is, the parents of children with disabilities in this study had similar motivational beliefs as parents of children without disabilities (Đurišic and Bunijevac (2017), Erdener (2016), Park et al. (2017), and Thomas et al. (2015).

A second theme, Parents of Children with Disabilities: Ways of Participation in School, also emerged from participants' responses to the question. Consistent with Fisher's (2016) study, the parent participants from the primary schools in adjacent rural southern communities in an education district in Trinidad were highly engaged through four main activities: activities related to improving resources, activities related to monitoring school operations and outcomes, activities related to pedagogy and the well-

being of the school, and activities related to the school's welfare. In the context of the conceptual framework, when parents are so engaged, it is a sign of their strong self-efficacy in helping their children succeed in school. Parents view their role and involvement in the above ways as important, necessary, and permissible for their own actions and for those of their children (Hoover-Dempsey & Sandler, 1995, 1997; Hoover-Dempsey et al., 2005). This hearty involvement can only lead to positive outcomes for students, parents, teachers, and the school (Đurišic & Bunijevac, 2017; Erdener, 2016; Park et al., 2017; Thomas et al., 2015).

Research Question 2

Research Question 2 focused on how three primary schools in adjacent rural southern communities in an education district in Trinidad inhibited, supported, and sustained parent-school partnerships for parents of children with disabilities. Two themes emerged from the interview data. First, supporting actions for parent-school partnerships and second, sustaining actions for parent-school partnerships. These themes were consistent with the perceptions of participating parents, who were invited by principals, teachers, and their children to visit the school and participate in various school activities. Supportive parent-school partnership activities were highlighted by rural school staff who demonstrated the principles of partnership. Stanley (2015) stated the importance for school leaders to encourage their staff to build open, caring, and honest relationships with parents. Stanley went on to state that when parents experience such relationships, not only do positive parent-school partnerships improve, but the injustices and inequities that occur when parents are not informed of all their rights can be eliminated.

Moreover, it is not enough for principals and teachers to merely support parent-school partnerships; they should also act to sustain those partnerships. Duppong Hurley and Huscroft-D'Angelo (2018) recommend for sustainability, making parent involvement a whole-school responsibility, providing resources, and considering the family context when planning school-based programs and other activities that promote parent involvement of parents of children with disabilities.

Subquestion 1

Subquestion 1 focused on the question of what factors motivate parental involvement of parents of children with disabilities in three primary schools in adjacent rural southern communities in an education district in Trinidad. Two themes were derived from the data, school-initiated involvement stimuli and parent-inclined involvement stimuli. Overall, participants' responses reflect that parents become involved when they feel their skills and knowledge are appropriate and are more likely to participate positively in their children's education (Hoover-Dempsey & Sandler, 1995, 1997; Hoover-Dempsey et al., 2005). Conversely, when parents perceived their skills and knowledge to be inadequate, their involvement decreased. Both the literature and interview data support these findings (Blackman & Mahon, 2016; Fishman & Nickerson, 2015). In addition, Fishman, and Nickerson (2015) found that parental involvement in children's education, particularly children with disabilities, is motivated by socioeconomic status and family structure. My findings also corroborated these data. One parent participant, P1- S1, disclosed that her low level of education prevented her from becoming involved in her child's school life. Therefore, it is important for school leaders

and teachers to be aware of family structure and circumstances and to offer suggestions to support children's learning that are compatible with family structure and circumstances. School personnel should also emphasize that all parents, regardless of their educational background, can support their children's academic success.

Subquestion 2

Subquestion 2 focused on what factors impede parental involvement of parents of children with disabilities in three primary schools in adjacent rural communities in an education district in Trinidad. This question, like subquestion 1, was guided by the variables of time and energy of parents perceived life context of the parental involvement process identified by Hoover-Dempsey and Sandler (1995, 1997) and Hoover-Dempsey et al. (2005). To understand the barriers to parental involvement of parents of children with disabilities in primary schools in rural communities, it is not only parents' knowledge and skills that should be considered. Parents' perceptions of the demands on their time and energy, particularly in relation to other family responsibilities and multiple job duties or constraints, also influence their decisions to participate. The data I collected contradict Huscroft-D'Angelo et al.'s (2018) assertion that parental engagement is generally low in rural areas, as all but one of the participating parents reported a high level of involvement in their children's school life. Nonetheless, schools should offer parents whose work schedules are relatively inflexible, parents who have more than one job, and parents whose jobs are characterized by instability or high time demands specific information about what they can do to be involved in their children's school life. Suggested information should be based on parents' knowledge, skills, time, and energy.

Limitations of the Study

There are some notable limitations of the study. First, the sample size was small. The study was limited to 10 participants: four parents of children with disabilities, three teachers, and three principals from primary schools in adjacent rural communities. Although the small sample size allowed for deeper questioning and extensive analysis of the transcripts, it potentially limits the scope of the study's findings.

Second, the geographical location in which the data were collected was in three adjacent rural southern communities in one education district on the island of Trinidad. The results of this study may neither be representative of other rural communities in the same education district, nor other rural communities on the island.

Third, participant response bias resulted from the limited number of participants in the study. Teacher and parent participants were invited by principal participants to volunteer, which introduced the possibility of bias. In addition, because no parent was asked to participate that did not want to, it was more likely that the parents that did volunteer would have a different perspective than those that chose not to participate. The group of parents that did not participate might have had a very different perspective than those that did especially when it comes to school participation. However, in qualitative research, the goal is to rely as much as possible on participants' views of the situation being studied (Creswell, 2018b). In addition, the volunteers were the most knowledgeable source that could best help me understand the research problem (Creswell, 2018b; Maxwell, 2013; Patton, 2015).

Fourth, the timing of the study. The interviews took place at the end of an academic year and beginning of the vacation season, during a global pandemic, via Zoom, and in a rural school district in Trinidad. The data offer only a small glimpse into the responses of participants in a rural school district at one point in time. There is a possibility that multiple data points would have skewed the overall picture highlighted by the data.

Despite these limitations, the study provided data that rival the results reported in the current literature. Nevertheless, these limitations suggest that the results cannot be generalized to other contexts. Even so, the limitations do not affect the conclusions of the study. The methodology used is appropriate and the logic is sound. In addition, the data on which the conclusions are based are valid.

Recommendations

My recommendations are based on the limitations of my findings and my study design. This study can initiate the next steps that should be implemented to promote an even deeper understanding of the involvement of parents of children with disabilities in island rural communities. This exploratory study may lay the foundation for training programs, future collaborations between parents of children with disabilities and primary schools in rural communities, and more comprehensive future research.

Recommendations for Professional Development Training

My findings were developed using Hoover-Dempsey and Sandler's (1995, 1997) model of the parental involvement process and Vygotsky's (1978) philosophical worldview of sociocultural theory. My findings lead me to conclude that principals and

teachers have a major influence on parent involvement decisions. Since they are one of

the motivators for parent involvement, future interventions could focus on professional

development training programs to strengthen teachers for parent involvement. Although

the principals and teachers who participated in this study organized training programs for

students and parents, they were not involved in training themselves. According to

Hoover-Dempsey et al. (2005), teachers can be empowered for involvement by making

parent involvement a routine part of staff thinking and planning. Programs should be

developed as evidence-based, in-service programs to provide teachers with opportunities

to collaborate with and learn from colleagues and parents and to practice and revise

proposed parent involvement strategies. Equally important, these programs can be

developed as strategies within an evaluation model to improve schools' capacity to

involve parents of children with disabilities. When schools take steps to promote parental

engagement, they support parents' overall effectiveness in helping their children learn and

strengthen the connection between home and school (Curry et al., 2016; Đurišic &

Bunijevac, 2017; Erdener & Knoeppel, 2018; Hoover-Dempsey et al., 2005; Jeynes,

2016; Lara & Saracostti, 2019; Ma et al., 2016; Park et al., 2017; Thomas et al., 2015).

Recommendations for Parent Partnerships and Collaboration with Schools

My findings also suggest that another motivator for parent involvement is parent

partnership and cooperation in school activities. Future interventions could therefore

focus on supporting and sustaining parent-school relationships through a wide range of

school-related interventions. Hoover-Dempsey et al. (2005) offer a number of strategies

for building school capacity for parent involvement, as well as strategies that schools can

use to enhance parents' abilities to participate effectively. These strategies include school leaders creating a welcoming, friendly school climate, district and community support for creating new structures to promote family-school interaction and communication and providing a wide range of opportunities for parent involvement, including standard approaches and new opportunities unique to the school and community. Although these strategies aim to have school leaders engage all parents, they seem appropriate as school-initiated incentives to engage parents of children with disabilities in particular. When schools successfully plan and implement partnership programs, they can change old patterns that limit involvement to some parents and involve more and different families in children's education (Epstein & Sheldon, 2016). Posey-Maddox and Haley-Lock (2016) agreed that to strengthen family-school relationships, principals and teachers must engage in a two-way, collaborative dialogue with parents about the needs, hopes, and expectations of both parties regarding family-school relationships and the unique realities of their lives.

Recommendations for Future Research

Regarding my study design, future studies can be planned to overcome the limitations of this study by using different or more robust methods. Due to the small sample size and reluctance of volunteers, future research could provide more data if there were more participants and a different method of participant selection, such as critical sampling or criterion sampling, may be the ways to successfully overcome these shortcomings in a new study.

Because there are many rural communities in Trinidad and Tobago, future research could expand the study of involvement of parents of children with disabilities in primary schools in rural communities by collecting and comparing data across different geographic areas. Research could also be conducted that focuses on a specific population. For example, the parent participants in my study were all female; future research could examine the participation of male parents. As another example, all participating parents were between the ages of 18 and 35. A future study could examine engagement based on an older age group. Due to the lack of research on the involvement of parents of children with disabilities in primary schools in island rural communities, future research specific to this topic and this participant group is recommended.

Implications

If principals and teachers have a tremendous impact on parents' decisions about school involvement, it is imperative that principals and teachers see parents as partners. Principals and teachers should take steps to develop long-term plans for engaging parents of children with disabilities in ways that positively impact the academic and social outcomes of their children. According to Epstein in Epstein et al., (2018), "the way schools care about children is reflected in the way schools care about the children's families"(p. 9). Partnership programs that involve schools, parents, and the community should be encouraged to help students succeed.

Positive social change implications at the local district level include stronger parent-school relationships that are likely to lead to improved home-school practices for children with disabilities. Although the educators who participated in my study

effectively partnered with the parents of children with disabilities in primary schools in adjacent rural southern communities in one education district of Trinidad, district leaders play an important role in establishing a "culture of partnerships" and supporting the development and maintenance of parent involvement programs (Epstein et al., 2018). Effective parental involvement requires all stakeholders to review existing approaches, structures, and strategies used to engage parents of children with disabilities. Effective parental involvement has long-term implications for student learning and development and is important to the overall educational process.

The findings of this study can also promote positive social change at the societal level by inspiring policymakers to fulfill the unmet mandates of the Trinidad and Tobago's local Inclusive Education policy (Government of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago, Ministry of Education, 2009) in addition to those of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO, 2017) and the recommendations of the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD, 2012). The Trinidad and Tobago Ministry of Education is committed to providing support and services to all learners through various policies, including partnering with parents.

In order to promote positive social change in island rural communities, I recommend that principals and teachers in primary schools take steps to engage parents of children with disabilities that would ultimately enable their children to succeed in school. One of these measures is to build trusting relationships to ensure ongoing participation. When school staff practice and interact in ways that foster the development

of trust, parents of children with disabilities are much more likely to trust staff and, in turn, partner with them.

Another measure is to create and support parent and parent-teacher networks at school. Primary school principals and teachers should consider district and community support for creating new structures to promote family-school interaction and communication (e.g., telephone and e-mail access in classrooms). In addition, school staff should use existing PTA parent groups to invite all families to participate and work with parent leaders to ensure open access and promote diverse activities of interest to different family groups within the school.

Another measure is to establish Parent Information and Resource Centers (PIRC) in schools to support parents of children with disabilities and engage parents of children with disabilities in ways that positively impact academic and social outcomes.
If all of the above actions are taken, rapid positive social change is possible in any rural education district, nationally, through policy, and even in other island rural communities. According to Hoover-Dempsey and Sandler (1995, 1997) and Hoover-Dempsey et al. (2005), these actions by school personnel will allow parents of children with disabilities to strengthen their understanding of their roles and their sense of self-efficacy. Parents of children with disabilities will be motivated to take an active role in helping their children succeed. This motivation, coupled with invitations from principals, teachers, and their children, as well as educators' consideration of life context variables that may influence parents' ability to engage, will have an exponential effect on positive social change.

Conclusion

This exploratory case study makes valuable contribution to the understanding of rural communities. Specifically, this study describes how parents of children with disabilities are involved in three primary schools in adjacent rural southern communities in an education district in Trinidad, and how the primary schools inhibit, support, and sustain parent-school partnerships with these parents. However, I feel that I have only scratched the surface, and I recommend future research to further investigate why some parents of children with disabilities participate in their children's education while others do not. Nonetheless, this study has filled a research gap, as the involvement of parents of children with disabilities in primary schools in island rural communities has not been previously studied.

Despite research showing that the involvement of parents of children with disabilities is lower than parents of children without disabilities (Duppong Hurley & Huscroft-D'Angelo, 2018; Huscroft-D'Angelo et al., 2018; Stanley, 2015), this study proved otherwise. My findings suggest that parents of children with disabilities in three primary schools in adjacent rural southern communities in an education district in Trinidad are significantly involved. My results also suggest that principals and teachers have a large influence on parents' decisions about their involvement. Educators and parents of children with disabilities in rural communities should think about how they can take advantage of the community and build partnerships within the community for the benefit of all children. All things considered, positive social change can only be achieved if Fisher's (2016) insight is taken to heart, that is, if educators and parents of children

with disabilities gain a better understanding of what "parental involvement" means so that they can decide together where, how, when, or if they want to be involved.

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Appendix A: The Combined Interview Protocol

Research Questions	Interview questions for parents of children with disabilities	Interview questions for principals	Interview questions for teachers
Demographic introductory question:	Please tell me about yourself and your child/children with a disability. **Follow-up prompt questions:** • Yourself- Please tell me which category you fall into: young adult (18-35) or middle-aged adult (36-55) or older adult (56 and older)? • Yourself- Have you had a disability at any time in your life? • How many children do you have with a disability? • What is the type of disability your child has? • What class is he/she in?	Please tell me about yourself and your school. **Follow-up prompt questions:** • Yourself- How long have you been a principal? • Yourself- How long have you been a principal at this school? • School size- What is the student population? • School staffing- What are some details about your staff? Number, gender, age? Where do they live? • Student information- Have you enrolled students with disabilities in your school during the last 3years? • What are some details about student population composition (students with/without disabilities)?	Please tell me about yourself and your class. **Follow-up prompt questions:** • Yourself- How long have you been a teacher? • Yourself- How long have you been a teacher at this school? • Class size- How many children are in your class? • Student information- Have you had students with disabilities enrolled in your class during the last 3 years? • What are some details about student population composition (students with/without disabilities)?
Research question 1: How are parents of children with disabilities participating in three primary schools in adjacent rural	Please tell me what have been your involvement efforts with your child's school over the years? **Follow-up prompt questions:** • Which meetings or events have you attended in the recent past?	Please tell me what parental involvement looks like in your school? **Follow-up prompt questions:** • What does parental involvement mean to you? • How do you involve	Please tell me what parental involvement looks like in your class? **Follow-up prompt questions:** • What does parental

southern communities in an education district in Trinidad?

- How do you rate your attendance at meetings or events at the school?
- What are some things you have been doing at the school to support your child or help the school?
- What are the procedures for finding out how your child is doing in school?
- What does parental involvement mean to you?
- Please consider the different teachers your child has had. How have some been more or less effective at including you in your child's education than others? Why?

parents of children with disabilities?
- What are the kinds of extra services and programs that your school provides to parents of children with disabilities?
- How does the availability of extra services and programs correlate with the levels of involvement of parents of children with disabilities in the school?

involvement mean to you?
- Tell me about any differences in parental involvement levels by contextual characteristics (e.g., having a child with a disability).
- How do you involve parents of children with disabilities?
- What are some ways you support your parents of children with disabilities to become involved in their children's learning?
- How does your practice to involve parents of children with disabilities relate to their levels of involvement?

Research question 2: How do three primary schools in adjacent rural southern communities in an education district in Trinidad inhibit, support, and sustain parent-school partnerships for parents of children with disabilities?

What are your thoughts about the school's provision of information and help for parents to know how to be involved with their children?
Follow-up prompt questions:
- How do the principal/teachers demonstrate evidence of the principles of partnership (Communication, Professional Competence, Respect, Commitment, Equality, Advocacy, and Trust) in your interactions with them?
- How does the school partner with the

What are some factors for sustainability of partnerships for parents of children with disabilities?
Follow-up prompt questions:
- How do you demonstrate evidence of the principles of partnership (Communication, Professional Competence, Respect, Commitment, Equality, Advocacy, and Trust) in your interactions with parents of children with disabilities?
- How does the school partner with the community

What are some factors for sustainability of partnerships for parents of children with disabilities?

Follow-up prompt questions:
- How do you demonstrate evidence of the principles of partnership (Communication, Professional Competence,

	community for providing services and information to parents of children with disabilities?	for providing services and information to parents of children with disabilities? • What would you ideally like to see happening with involvement of parents of children with disabilities at your school?	Respect, Commitment, Equality, Advocacy, and Trust) in your interactions with parents of children with disabilities? • How do you partner with the community for providing services and information to parents of children with disabilities? • What would you ideally like to see happening with involvement of parents of children with disabilities in your class?
Subquestion 1: What factors motivate parental involvement of parents of children with disabilities in three primary schools in adjacent rural southern communities in an education district in Trinidad?	Please tell me what is your overall level of satisfaction with your involvement in your child's education? **Follow-up prompt questions:** • What type of practices has assisted you with collaborating with your child's teacher and ultimately working with your child? • What are some things you would like to highlight as really positive involvement experiences?	What involvement activities do you think parents of children with disabilities find most effective? **Follow-up prompt question:** • What are some things you would like to highlight as really positive involvement experiences?	What involvement activities do you think parents of children with disabilities find most effective? **Follow-up prompt question:** • What are some things you would like to highlight as really positive involvement experiences?
Subquestion 2: What factors are barriers to parental involvement of parents of children with disabilities in three primary	What, if anything, dissuades your level of involvement in your child's education? **Follow-up prompt questions:** • What are some patterns you saw when you did not have strong collaboration with your child's teachers? • What, if any, barriers have prohibited you from	What, if anything, might affect the level of involvement of parents of children with disabilities? **Follow-up prompt question:** • What, if any, barriers have prohibited parents of children with disabilities from collaborating with the school?	What, if anything, might affect the level of involvement of parents of children with disabilities? **Follow-up prompt question:** • What, if any, barriers have

schools in adjacent rural southern communities in an education district in Trinidad?	collaborating with your child's teachers?		prohibited parents of children with disabilities from collaborating with you?
Concluding question:	Is there anything else you would like to tell me?	Is there anything else you would like to tell me?	Is there anything else you would like to tell me?

Appendix B: Interview Instruments

Parent Interview Questions

1) Please tell me about yourself and your child/children with a disability.

   Follow-up prompt questions:

 • Yourself- Please tell me which category do you fall into: young adult (18-35) or

   middle-aged adult (36-55) or older adult (56 and older)?

 • Yourself- Have you had a disability at any time in your life?

 • How many children do you have with a disability?

 • What is the type of disability your child has?

 • What class is he/she in?

2) Please tell me what have been your involvement efforts with your child's school

   over the years?

   Follow-up probe/prompt questions:

 • Which meetings or events have you attended in the recent past?

 • How do you rate your attendance at meetings or events at the school?

 • What are some things you have been doing at the school to support your child or

   help the school?

 • What are the procedures for finding out how your child is doing in school?

 • What does parental involvement mean to you?

 • Please consider the different teachers your child has had. How have some been

   more or less effective at including you in your child's education than others? Why?

3) What are your thoughts about the school's provision of information and help for parents to know how to be involved with their children?

Follow-up probe/prompt questions:

- How do the principal/teachers demonstrate evidence of the principles of partnership (Communication, Professional Competence, Respect, Commitment, Equality, Advocacy, and Trust) in your interactions with them?

- How does the school partner with the community for providing services and information to parents of children with disabilities?

4) Please tell me what is your overall level of satisfaction with your involvement in your child's education?

Follow-up probe/prompt questions:

- What type of practices has assisted you with collaborating with your child's teacher and ultimately working with your child?

- What are some things you would like to highlight as really positive involvement experiences?

5) What, if anything, dissuades your level of involvement in your child's education?

Follow-up probe/prompt questions:

- What are some patterns you saw when you did not have strong collaboration with your child's teachers?

- What, if any, barriers have prohibited you from collaborating with your child's teachers

6) Is there anything else you would like to tell me?

Teacher Interview Questions

1) Please tell me about yourself and your class.

Follow-up prompt questions:

- Yourself- How long have you been a teacher?

- Yourself- How long have you been a teacher at this school?

- Class size- How many children are in your class?

- Student information- Have you had students with disabilities enrolled in your class during the last 3 years?

- Student information- What are some details about the student population composition in your class (students with/without disabilities)?

2) Please tell me what parental involvement looks like in your class?

Follow-up probe/prompt questions:

- What does parental involvement mean to you?

- Tell me about any differences in parental involvement levels by contextual characteristics (e.g., having a child with a disability).

- How do you involve parents of children with disabilities?

- What are some ways you support your parents of children with disabilities to become involved in their children's learning?

- How does your practice to involve parents of children with disabilities relate to their levels of involvement?

3) What are some factors for sustainability of partnerships for parents of children with disabilities?

Follow-up probe/prompt questions:

- How do you demonstrate evidence of the principles of partnership (Communication, Professional Competence, Respect, Commitment, Equality, Advocacy, and Trust) in your interactions with parents of children with disabilities?

- How do you partner with the community for providing services and information to parents of children with disabilities?

- What would you ideally like to see happening with involvement of parents of children with disabilities in your class?

4) What involvement activities do you think parents of children with disabilities find most effective?

Follow-up probe/prompt question:

- What are some things you would like to highlight as really positive involvement experiences?

5) What, if anything, might affect the level of involvement of parents of children with disabilities?

Follow-up probe/prompt question:

- What, if any, barriers have prohibited parents of children with disabilities from collaborating with you?

6) Is there anything else you would like to tell me?

Principal Interview Questions

1) Please tell me about yourself and your school.

Follow-up prompt questions:

- Yourself- How long have you been a principal?

- Yourself- How long have you been a principal at this school?

- School Size- What is the student population?

- School Staffing- What are some details about your staff? Number, Gender, Age? Where do they live?

- Student information- Have you enrolled students with disabilities in your school during the last 3years?

- Student information- What are some details about the student population composition in your school (students with/without disabilities)?

2) Please tell me what parental involvement looks like in your school?

   Follow-up probe/prompt questions:

- What does parental involvement mean to you?

- How do you involve parents of children with disabilities?

- What are the kinds of extra services and programs that your school provide to parents of children with disabilities?

- How does the availability of extra services and programs correlate with the levels of involvement of parents of children with disabilities in the school?

3) What are some factors for sustainability of partnerships for parents of children with disabilities?

   Follow-up probe/prompt questions:

- How do you demonstrate evidence of the principles of partnership (Communication, Professional Competence, Respect, Commitment, Equality, Advocacy, and Trust) in your interactions with parents of children with disabilities?

- How does the school partner with the community for providing services and information to parents of children with disabilities?

- What would you ideally like to see happening with involvement of parents of children with disabilities at your school?

4) What involvement activities do you think parents of children with disabilities find most effective?

   Follow-up probe/prompt question:

- What are some things you would like to highlight as really positive involvement experiences?

5) What, if anything, might affect the level of involvement of parents of children with disabilities?

   Follow-up prompt question:

- What, if any, barriers have prohibited parents of children with disabilities from collaborating with the school?

6) Is there anything else you would like to tell me?

Appendix C: Data Organization–Coding

Appendix C shows the organization and coding of the data in several tables. Each

table shows participants' responses to subquestions based on the research questions. In

the data analysis, the data clusters were coded in two rounds. In the first round,

participants' responses were first categorized into in vivo codes and then into inductive

codes. In the second round, the inductive codes were combined to form the final codes.

Matrix C1

Participant Responses to questions aligned to RQ1

Participant Responses to questions aligned to RQ1: How are parents of children with
disabilities participating in three primary schools in adjacent rural southern communities
in an education district in Trinidad?

P = Parent   T = Teacher   Pr = Principal   S = School

Participant-School	Data Cluster		Round 2 Final Codes
	Round 1 In-Vivo Codes	**Round 1 Inductive Codes**	
	Probe: What does parental involvement mean to you?		
P1 - S1	— parental involvement means *you are there for your child in any way,* and helping him do his work and stuff like that.	caring, backing child	Child's support
P2 - S2	— means that *you are involved* in your child's life… knowing what they go about doing when the day come,	caring about livelihood	

	what they do in school, who they are involved with.		
	— making sure that I have everything up to mark or they don't go the wrong way…you talk to them. So, it's *being a support* for them in all aspects of their life.	supporting	
P3 -S2	— Parental involvement to me *is being involved* with a child's education and everyday life…*being there* for your children, or child.	means of support, backing child	
P4 -S3	— you *always behind him*, you *push him* to do something positive and good.	backing child	
	— You don't try to bring them down, like telling them they stupid and dumb or whatever, you *always try to motivate* them	providing a sense of worth, backing child	
	— make sure they're in a *safe and secure environment*.	care and protection	
T1 -S1	— parental involvement means that a child is *getting the parental assistant* at home, right at home. Because for me when parents are not involved at home, meaning *they help their child, revise whatever was taught during the day, or even preparing healthy meal*, and, you know, *assisting the child where necessary.* For me, that is what parent involvement	home support providing for wellbeing backing child	

	involves… just, you know, *assisting*, a child preparing a meal for a child and all these sorts of things. — You have to sit a child down and say, you know, not really sit down, but you have to get a child to do whatever the child needs to do. And you have *to want the best for your child*. But in this situation, there is no parental involvement, no parental support, nothing at all. Nothing at all, with that child, and she really, really does need the help.	caring about livelihood	
T2 -S2	— So parental involvement first and foremost is having any parents *wanting their children to come to our school*. So the school has to be attractive for parents *wanting the school to be one of the choices for your children*. So parental involvement does not start with the school itself, for the academic purposes, but I believe *the school has to be something like a social agent in the community*, whereby when we have anything like fundraisers or concerts, *the whole community should be involved* and not just the parent body, in the sense that that will attract people to come to the school	partnering alliance association association/ relationship caring about	Collaboration

T3 -S3	— Parental involvement to me means that the parents *should have their children attend school regularly and punctually*. They should *provide them with the basic amenities*, uniform basic stationery that they need to use, and at our school we try to provide the textbooks under the textbook loan program.	livelihood meeting needs	
Pr1 -S1	— Parental involvement is very important to me because *I don't believe that educating children is the teacher's job only*, in that, to me, parents are their child's first teacher. So I like to have a *good working relationship with parents* and to actually know where some of their challenges are in parenting, as well as in the education reaching their particular child. — I believe that in education, parents are one of our greatest stakeholders. Right? *You must have that relationship with parents, and we must have the partnership with parents, teachers school and any child.* If school does not function, then the child suffers. If parent doesn't, if the parents don't honor their role and responsibility, the child suffers. So in terms of	home/school partnership home/school partnership home/school partnership	

	having the children being able to succeed, a very important success factor is involvement of parents and positive involvement		
Pr2 -S2	— Well, parental involvement is a critical component to allow *a balance and harmony between the efforts at the school level and also at the home level.* In collaboration with the Parent Teacher Association, sometimes we use different strategies to bridge the gap.	home/school partnership	
	— if some parents are in denial, sometimes about their charges having any issues with learning, and they take quite a long time in coming to terms with that… that's one group of parents. Another group would recognize the challenges that they have been experiencing with their children, from as early as preschool, and before that, and they, when they come across into the primary school system now, *they indicate that they need help for their children.* — They need *the intervention of some professional* because they recognize that this is something that you don't want to just leave it like that.	teamwork	
Pr3 -S3	— So quite often, it means that, apart from the PTA meetings	home/school partnership	

	and stuff, *we have to have frequent contact with these parents*, teacher conferencing and principal conferencing and always trying to find ways to assist these people. So I would say that the interaction is a bit more personal and frequent.		
P1 -S1	**Probe:** What are the ways parents of children with disabilities are involved? — *PTA meetings, zonal sports* — Medium – some meetings, not all	attending meetings	Attendance to meetings
P2 -S2	— I used to go to *PTA meetings*. If I got a call to come in, I would go in. Since my son is going to that school, there was only one sports day and that year we attended. Any events that they are having, like Christmas concert or anything, we go — High, all meetings, all events.	attending meetings and events	
P3 -S2	— I was *involved in the PTA* in her school. I was a regular visitor to teachers. — High. I am always there.	attending meetings	
		attending meetings	

P4 -S3	— I have *never missed a meeting* or event. — High		
Pr2 -S2	— parent is spot on in terms of being able to work hand in hand with the school, very cooperative, *attends meetings*, sometimes we have online meetings with student support services, with the parent teacher association, Student Support Services aide and special education instructor. So, these are done at various points in times… any information requested, that parent is so cooperative, interested in whatever is required	attending meetings	
P1 -S1	— *I donate*	donation	Financial support
P3 -S2	— With the PTA we have done movie shows for the children…*and other fundraisers*	fundraisers	
P4 -S3	— *Mostly donations with money.* Like, he likes sports, so I will put out for that, and little outings you know. Donations when there's	monetary donations	

	going to be a treat, or if, like they need to get a table fixed or something like that…*I will contribute to that.*	monetary contribution	
T1 -S1	— if I would just reflect on my last academic year, where we had online teaching. Well, with infants, *I suggested that parents be there… right, on the online sessions with my students.* And there were instances where there were some children in my class who did not have that parental support.	Parent support with work at home	Homework support
Pr1 -S1	— Prior to the pandemic, in 2019, as we realized that the children were not doing homework, we were able to get the assistance of KISS, and so in 2019, *we would have started our KISS homework center.* So the parents who themselves were not able to support their children, those children were, then able to get support at the homework center. So *we would have had about 40 children in the homework center.* You know, who would get that assistance.	school supporting parent with homework	
Pr1 -S1	— we would have also realized within the past year that	parents attend sessions to	

	there are *parents who were not able to support their children because they themselves have literary needs*, you know? So, as a result of that, we are work with NALIS now to get support from ALTA for these parents.	improve literacy	Parents literacy programs
Pr3 -S3	— … So those persons in the SSSD although they've been given a small training, they work with the teacher, and myself and the parent, to try to come up with some sort of program that would best help the child.	Parents involved in training programs for child's success	
T1 -S1	— So with respect to that particular child I just spoke about… *I do online sessions*, right. I do online sessions because of the level that I am in. I feel as though these children these young children need to see their teacher; they need to see me because I teach phonics. So there's need to see my mouth, how I move my mouth when I make a sound, when I sound letters, so I do online sessions. — I decided, you know, what *I'm going to send work via WhatsApp*, and send, you know, like, videos on whatever and ask them to create, like, a video recording or audio recording or video recording of the child.	parents work with children during online classes	Online sessions

T3 -S3	— now in the pandemic, they would be present to assist their child when a child needed the assistance. And *I would also send resources over technology* for the parents to read or to print. Well, any assistance that they need, answer any questions that he had, point them in directions where I could not help.	parents work with children during online classes	
P1 -S1	— *I will call* the teacher or *I will go in* the school and talk to the principal.	parents keep in contact	Regular school contact/visits
P2 - S2	— Okay, well, he has his Aide. When he was going to school, she used to have a notebook and just write down whatever they do and thing or if he had a get anything, because sometimes with him, they will give him a message and he don't come with the message. So sometimes, I never used to know what's going on. Other than that, *the principal will contact me* or the teacher. Or, if I had to find out anything, *I will call* the principal, or *just go in.*	parents keep in contact	
		parents keep in contact	

P3 - S2	— I will call, *I would go to the school*, talk to the principal, who would take me to the teacher and the aide. The process was welcoming.		
P4 -S3	— I don't really contact the school…I live like a two-minutes' drive away, so *I just drop in* on them unexpectedly. Everybody knows me. *So at any time of the day I show up, they allow me to go in.* — Once the principal or the Vice Principal is there, *they invite me into the office* and we'll sit down and talk and they'll call the teacher alongside with my son.	parents keep in contact parents visit	
T3 -S3	— *They are free to call between working hours, I tend to extend it to about five*, but it has gone later on occasions and they are free to tell me, like, how their child is responding…	parents keep in contact	
Pr2 -S2	— *I don't have any stipulations where parents are accommodated on certain days*. I'm available right through for parents to come in and chat with me if they have any concerns. So there's nothing debarring parents coming in for a scheduled meeting with the principal.	parents keep in contact	

	— I believe so because even though I'm also only a phone call away to all the parents of this student population. So *they will call me at any time during the day, even on weekends sometimes,* if they need any clarification, if they need any advice, any guidance I'm available by way of phone call as well.	parents keep in contact	
P1 -S1	— I donate *and I help when the school have a curry cue, or bazaar or Christmas treat.*	assistance with social events	Social activities
P3 -S2	— *With the PTA we have done movie shows for the children*	assistance with social events	

Matrix C2

Participant Responses to questions aligned to RQ2

Participant Responses to questions aligned to RQ#2: How do three primary schools in adjacent rural southern communities in an education district in Trinidad inhibit, support, and sustain parent-school partnerships for parents of children with disabilities?

P = Parent   T = Teacher   Pr = Principal   S = School

Participant - School	Data Cluster		Round 2 Final Codes
	Round 1 In-Vivo Codes	**Round 1 Inductive Coding**	
	Probe: How do the schools demonstrate evidence of partnership?		
P1 -S1	— *If they make a promise to you, they keep their promise* to you and the children.	teachers keeping their word	Principle of Partnership- Commitment
Pr1 -S1	— So in terms of commitment, I would state that as a staff, we would show that *we are committed when, or being responsible as well when we honor our commitment* to do certain projects with the children.	teachers being responsible, accessible, going above and beyond	
P2 -S2	— *the school contacts us* if there is a problem. — they set up things so that *the Guidance Officer will contact us* and have talks	school providing and coordinating information	Principle of Partnership- Communication

	with the parents who have any children with disabilities. — *The Guidance Officer will also make presentations in the PTA meetings*.		
P3 -S2	— the *principal and the teachers would call me* in to have, say, like, every month, they would call me in to have a conference about her overall academic performance.	staff being friendly, honest	
T1 -S1	— *I call them regularly. I make home visits* also. — *I will do the phone calls; I would send SMS messages*. These are things that I document. Yes, I do document when I call and even if I call and don't get a response, I would still document it as well. Yes, *I do make home visits*. And there are times when I would have to ask the parent to come in school and meet with me in the school as well.	staff being friendly-personal touch	
Pr1 -S1	— In the pandemic, now, *we have been making calls*, but *previous to the*	staff being friendly-	

		pandemic, usually we would have face to face conferencing. If we can't get the parent to come in physically, well, only then we'll just have to rely on the telephone call.	personal touch	
Pr2 -S2		— With this pandemic, now, the modes of communication would have changed a little. So *we call the WhatsApp groups*. We have a number of WhatsApp groups from each of the different classes. So that as the principal, I am a member of every WhatsApp group for each class. So *all the communication that transpires I would have the ability to monitor* what is taking place and discuss with the teacher whatever concerns and give support. I could also supply information that I received to the teachers for forwarding to the various chats to notify parents of meetings. For example, *when student support services or social workers are having a meeting or a parenting session, the information can be sent out electronically* for those parents who are on WhatsApp. For those	school providing and coordinating information school providing and coordinating information	

	who are not on WhatsApp, that is very much a challenge because of the difficulty in printing handouts, because they do not have the capacity even to log into a Zoom session to participate in these meetings because of lack of internet and devices, and this is a large number of students at my school.		
Pr3 -S3	— *telephone is always there, in present times the telephone, mobile contact*. I have been visiting. Even though we are in a pandemic, I have been visiting, trying to provide some assistance. *The parents more or less have that, sort of, I wouldn't want to say 24-hour communication with the teachers and the principal,* but it's quite extended. As I said, the communication level is totally different, in most cases, from the regular children, because of the fact that these children… they have different needs.	school providing and coordinating information	
P3 -S2	— *They treat me as an equal*, very, very, very, nicely.	teachers sharing power	Principle of Partnership-Equality

P1 -S1	— The teachers do *treat the parents with respect.*	teachers treat parents with dignity	Principle of Partnership-Respect
Pr2 -S2	— the school based intervention *team will look at strategies to help the teacher in addressing* issues concerning the child. If after having tried those, the teacher was unsuccessful, then we do the external referral to the student support services. *The student support services now will keep tabs on each student referred* to them because there's paperwork involved. You have to submit certain documents to back up the referrals.	teachers continue to learn providing quality education	Principle of Partnership-Professional Competence
Pr1 -S1	— I would say *the rise would have been in terms of more parents trusting the school*, so you will see a great enrollment. So when we had started out with that project in 2019, we usually on average, our enrollment, would be like five children, you know, and that would have increased to 16 in September 2020.	parents seeing the school as reliable	Principle of Partnership-Trust

	Probe: How do the schools partner for sustainability of involvement of parents of children with disabilities?		
Pr1 -S1	— so by basically *providing that support*, so I can tell you, especially during the pandemic, we have this child, one of the children who is one- sighted, to ensure that he had a device, priorities would have been put in place for him. Then we have another child who is autistic and would have written SEA.	going above and beyond	Providing extra school support
	— we have the other child who has a learning delay, in infant two, we had to ensure that at least these three children that their needs were met. By doing that, we would have been able to try *to get some stakeholders to at least get devices for these children and ensure that their textbooks… at least for one sighted child, his textbook, he has to get large print.*	empowering students and their families	
Pr2 -S2	— students who are new enrolments at the school, sometimes the teacher will, you know, say, well, *let's have some patience*, you know, with this child	care and support	

	or that child and let's see, and then after term one, they will be in a better position, based on their observations, because they will keep anecdotal records, to draw to my attention, any issues that they see that might want some attention, or for further observation. So *we monitor it and see where it goes* before we refer matters.	attention and support	
	— my role too, sometimes would be, *to liaise with parents and advise them of the services available to choose Student Support Services.* And then, try to inform them as to what the process involves, so that they will know how to operate.	consultation	
P3 - S2	— *they look for donations to help the needy families.*	school assistance with finances	Local community financial support
T1 -S1	— I would let my friends know I have a child that needs to get a reading book or whatever, and that person will either buy the book, I would probably just tell them what book it is, or *they would give me the money, and I would*	teacher assistance with finances	

	purchase the book and give the child. — you know, so many parents would come and say, Miss, I didn't get this book. And I would let them know *I will purchase the book.* And whenever you feel to, whenever you have the money, you can just give me, whenever.		
Pr2 -S2	— it mostly happens with the parent group. Outside of the parent group, when we have to, like raise funds for a particular cause, let's say to assist a parent with medical expenses due to injuries or stuff like that for the children, *we liaise with those persons in the business community for donations of items.* — *The few businesses that we do approach, we get full support*. But the support is resounding in terms of the parents and community because it's just not parents of the school we extend outside of that. When we have an event, we get 100% support.	PTA assistance with finances Community Businesses assistance with finances	
P3 - S2	— I would say the school would reach out to parents like say that there	care and support from	

		is a needy family …*The principal sometimes the teachers will go to that home, and bring those children to school*. Say like they are living far in bushy areas, and rain is falling and they cannot come out…the principal will go, or parents who are coming from that direction and they see children on the road, they will pick them up, drop them off to school.	principal and teachers	Local community material/other support
T1 -S1		— you know, they have problems to access the internet and devices and getting their books and whatever. *So what we do is, in my class, I would identify the children who would need books, and what I do at home, I have a few friends who always like to give and you know, do something good.*	assistance with books from well-wishers	
		— we have parents… so for last academic year, we had parents, *more fortunate parents, who would have bought books for children in the class who didn't have* and it was really, really nice to see that. They didn't even want to be identified, or anything.	assistance with books from fortunate parents	
		— *I have bought books for my students as well.* Because I have students	assistance with books from teacher	

	in my class and I see potential in them.		
	— The area in which I teach, there isn't like a community center, *our school is everything our school is used as a church, a school, a community center, everything is in that one building*. So, we would try to do like Father's Day Program, we will do Mother's Day Program. And that is how we get the parents to come and socialize with each other.	school support and partnering with community	
	It's where the children can see this, the parents socializing and having a good time together and those kind of things, you know. That's how we try to rope them in…they sometimes hold on to the rope for like a few months, but then they let go after, you know, that is how it is on the whole. They always do that. So we try, *we try to get them involved* and I applaud them for selling the extra raffle sheets, for always doing anything on the outside, even though they don't know, that is what we are doing.	school support and partnering with community to assist parents school support at partnering	
T3 -S3	— *If they don't have food, I try to link them with all the organizations* to get,	teacher	

	if they don't have clothes, I try to get them clothes. I do what I can. I think, with the organizations that god blessed me to cross paths with … it's to help others, not just myself.	partnering with organizations for parent support	
	— I left school, it really bothered me, that was really bad. And I don't know, I just woke up one Saturday morning, and sent out a WhatsApp broadcast… Just, I guess the Lord just placed it on my heart, and I don't know that WhatsApp message just took on a life of its own. *People started to reach out ...people I don't even know.* And it was amazing. I got a lot of help, not only shoes, but books as well, because lots of the students didn't have their textbooks and other materials. It was just really, really amazing. I guess the school got assistance more than they expected.	Local community support	
Pr1 -S1			
	— Our school is in a very small village, probably about 500 inhabitants or so. And this school is actually considered a community center as well. *So what we have done is we forged a*	school support and partnering with community to assist parent	

		partnership with the Community Council. And, also the church, the Catholic Church. And the school is actually used as a place where community development courses can be held. Like when the Rice planters and they want to have a meeting, we avail the School to them, because we are aware that there aren't any other buildings that can be used for that.		
		— Presently, what we're trying to do as well is have this school as a cybercafé, because we're aware that in a lot of the homes they do not have good connectivity. *And if we can partner with a stakeholder, we can then be able to get a very strong bandwidth, and therefore, our children, children of the school, and even our past students, and so on can come to the school, so that they can then be able to do further learning,* so we working on that presently.	school support and partnering with community to assist parent	
		— And having our school steel pan orchestra, for the community to be able to benefit from that as well. So what usually happens is that the school is more or less the central hub. And we try to *allow the various personnel in*	school support and	

	the community, to be able to access the school so that they can then continue whatever information that needs to be disseminated to others, or it can be a place of learning for all, you know, not just our students alone, but we open up the school to others in the community as well.	partnering with community to assist parent	
Pr3-S3	— Yes, also, we have been partnering with FEEL. It's an, I want to say, an ongoing project. I don't know if it will continue into this new academic year. So, there is FEEL…Yeah, so we try to provide a lot of assistance for them. Especially like now, *we got hampers from FEEL plus we got a lot of… we always get a lot of other stuff from FEEL that we try to give out to these parents, in need… foodstuffs, clothes, a lot of things.*	school partnering with organizations for parent support	
P1 -S1	— I see *the school has partnered with the Ministry of Education* to get student aides, and guidance officer and some of the textbooks.	school partnering with Ministry of Education	Connection to the Ministry of Education and Social Services

P3 - S2	— my son didn't have a device and the school gave him one, which came from the ministry.	for child and parent support	
T2 - S2	— *if the principal and teachers recognize a child with a disability in school, they will refer that child to the ministry*, and the ministry will then get back to the parent of the child with the disability.	school partnering with Ministry of Education for child and parent support	
	— Another factor that is important is *the support of the student support services,* you see that, that is something that works for us in our school. *We have a good relationship with the team of personnel that are attached to our school, that whole school management team, they support us,* well… another factor is that we have a strong school based team when it comes to student support services. So we have four teachers involved in that. I am a member of it, we have a senior female teacher, and we have two other teachers and we will sit and review cases once a teacher does an	school partnering with student support services for parent and child support	

	internal referral. So those are some of the factors that help build the partnerships		
Pr3 -S3	— *the teachers and myself, we have been trying to make some connections, to other groups*, where the parents could join and probably get some sort of assistance, trying to link them up through the Social Services, trying to get assistance for them through school support services as well.	school partnering with social agencies for child and parent support	

Matrix C3

Participant Responses to questions aligned to SQ1

Participant Responses to questions aligned to SQ#1: What factors motivate parental involvement of parents of children with disabilities in three primary schools in adjacent rural southern communities in an education district in Trinidad?

	P = Parent	T = Teacher	Pr = Principal	S = School

Participant - School	Data Cluster		Round 2 Final Codes
	Round 1 In-vivo Codes	**Round 1 Inductive Codes**	
P1 -S1	**Probe:** What are some involvement activities that parents of children with disabilities find most effective? — *The teacher sends work for my son on my phone.* So I am able to know if my son did his work or not…so, I make sure to get him to do it.	teacher going above and beyond	Commitment
T2 - S2	— *I think there must be a good rapport between the class teacher and the parents, yes. And this is initiated* early, when you now get the class and you have your first parent meeting, that is *probably the meeting you will see the majority of parents attending.* — you establish the expectations for your class, the children, and the parents *and, the relationship you hope to share for that particular year, so I think that rapport is important*.	being sensitive to emotional needs	

P1 -S1	— The *teacher always keeps in touch with me*. If he didn't do all his homework, the teacher will let me know. If he is not focused, *the teacher will let me know.*	being available and accessible	Communication and awareness
P2 -S2	— *the school always calls if they have a problem.*	being available and accessible	
T1 -S1	— I always give my parents my phone number, *they can call me whenever*. So you know, *calling and asking, you know, what my child needs or what you think I should do, what I should do better or whatever.*	being available and accessible	
T2 - S2	— I will also like parents to know, we need to share information with them, so *they need to come and sit in and talk and analyze children's performances,* now, sometimes their behavior will affect their academic performances.	being available and accessible	
Pr2 -S2	— *I would like that awareness* where they must see the need to be patient with the child. *Be responsive to the demands that will be made or the requests that will be made of them,* to supply documents, medical documents, to attend	awareness responsive	

	meetings, to be predisposed to the rollout of intervention strategies by the support services… to generally be cooperative, that the whole process facilitates improvement for the child.		
Pr3 -S3	— I think once you sell it, and most times, they're with their children, most times, because once they see that the child …there's one that I have now, that the parent was particularly concerned, because the child never had friends, he never did anything. He just sat in the class, he never spoke, or never did anything. And then when we got him involved with the music, *and his parents saw that the child was, um, he was a happy child at school, he was making friends and other stuff. She was always there.*	responsive	
P2 -S2	— I find the ministry is doing a good thing, *even though, now is holidays, the Aides still working with the children who have disabilities*. The Student Support Services Team have a six -weeks program of work for the children. It's every day of the week for two hours.	additional encouragement	Motivational support
P3 - S2			

	— I would say *with her having an aide, I was able to understand and grasp all her work, so that I was able to teach it to her*	additional encouragement	
	— *I became involved with my child with a disability because I saw her potential.*		
	— And I wanted her not just to say I am visually impaired, I am blind, I cannot do this. I always thought her she could do anything. So I said, Okay, as a parent, I am into you. I am working with you to be successful. She told me she wants to pass for her first choice school in the SEA. I said, right. I am there with you. And we worked, both of us worked hand in hand. There is nothing that she cannot do. She would wash wares, she would sweep, she even makes pancakes and boil rice. So, *I became really involved in my child so that she can be better off* even if I'm not there or I am not around.	enthusiasm care/interest encouragement providing additional encouragement	
P4 -S3			
	— And make sure *you give them that support. You know, your push them.* Don't try to bring them down and do everything possible to make them get involved in other activities other than the schoolwork. So they will have other things they could do other than schoolwork if they're lacking in that area.	providing additional encouragement	

	— *I will also say schools can help with parental involvement if they are more sympathetic and understanding and also if the teachers read a lot about special children.* Don't just leave them there in the classroom by themselves. You know, *the teacher can give them some other work alongside* while you're teaching if the teacher finds that they're not coping or understanding the work as the others.	being passionate and interested	
T1 -S1	— I believe that parent involvement is what all teachers would like. *All teachers will love for all their parents to be involved in their children's education.* I do believe that. Children spend most of their time at home, now. Especially now, in the virtual setting that we have now… children spend most of their time home and when parents are not involved, it causes children to just,	being passionate and interested	
Pr3 -S3	— I think sometimes the parents; they see the teachers as… they feel that the teachers should be experts. Right, that the teacher should be able to, *to help the child learn, no matter how extreme the cases* and that they		

	should not have to, to find alternative sources of help. So they expect the school to get everything done to fix the child. Let me say. Right, *so the school is supposed to give that assistance, get the child to learn on the same level like others*. And that just simply can't happen sometimes, in most instances, because the teachers aren't trained at that level, sometimes to cater for these children's needs. Yeah, they want and hope for miracles.	providing additional encouragement providing additional encouragement	
T3 -S3	— *I think it's important for the parents to understand what special need their child has*, so that, the teacher could give them tools or point them in the right direction of the avenues that could help. — some way to remove this stigma, attached a child with special needs, in that, the child just learns differently, and probably at a different pace, as opposed to being dumb or unable to learn. *I think if parents could shift those mindsets, and come away from that stigma, I think that it will improve things a lot more.*	knowledge and understanding remove association of shame	Destigmatization and understanding children's needs

Pr1 -S1	— there is a positive correlation. I would say *the rise would have been in terms of more parents trusting the school, so you will see a great enrollment.* So when we had started out with that project in 2019, we usually on average, our enrollment, would be like five children, you know, and that would have increased to 16 in September 2020. Alright, so. And when we had PTA meetings, *we saw a greater percentage of attendance, on average*, we had only one third of the parent population.	participation by some convinces participation by all	Increased overall parental participation
	— we eventually got to, at least 25 on average, 25 parents out of the 40 something parents attend the meetings. In the pandemic, we actually have about 20 parents attending meetings virtually as well. So that I must say, parents, once they realize that they can trust you, at least in the rural villages, okay. *Once they realize that they can trust… once they realize that the school has their children's interests at heart or that we care about them, there's increased participation.*	participation increase with trust and satisfaction	
		increased participation	
Pr2 -S2	— we want *to have the parents working more closely with school officials*. So let's say we have the school social worker doing a presentation.	increased participation	

	Right, or a parenting program, which they have done in the past. *We look forward to improved or enhanced responses, from parents towards how they play their roles in the lives of their charges*, the lives of students. So that is the spinoff or the objective.		
P3 - S2	— my *relationship with other parents* in the class. — So like in case the aide didn't come a day, a parent would send the work to me and I will forward it to the aide and the aide will then break it down and then I will have to explain it to her.	relationship	Increased partnership and relationship
P4 -S3	— Well, as I said before, *joining the group with parents who had similar problems, that really helped.*	partnering for support	
T1 -S1	— *I would like to see all parents involved and asking questions* and you know, what can I do to ensure that my child learns a particular concept or whatever, you know… because sometimes I would send work home. I try to do whatever I could do in the classroom, but the child needs to revise at home as well. — I would like to see *parents*	involvement and participation	

	ensuring that the child revise whatever work that they have to revise, and asking questions	partnering for support	
Pr1 -S1	— what we really would envision… as well the staff and myself, is *that partnership will transcend where parents can come into the school and say, you know what, this is our school and we want to, we want more of an ownership*	involvement and participation	
P4 -S3	— Some things that can help parents to be more involved, I will say is having, like *financial backup*, to push your child forward	financial support	Financial aid
T2 - S2	— Well, there are two concerns I have. I do not know how this will come into your study, one has to do with the socio economic part or the part with the government grants. *The grants that government affords parents who are low income earners or unemployed…* they get them from the Ministry of Social Development. I am concerned that some of the parents do not utilize the funds to support their children in the way that the grant is supposed to support them	financial support	

| T1 -S1 | — Even *being involved in school activities*, *being involved in PTA*, sometimes parents don't even know what is going on in the school, you know, like, if we are having a Bazaar, some of them don't even know what is going on in the school. So they're not a part of the PTA, the PTA turnout is really, really, really poor. We get like if it's about 10% of the parents in the PTA. And it's always the same group of parents that always come. So you know, *try to be involved in those kind of things …in PTAs, and in fundraisers,* you know, because fundraisers are things that would benefit the school, you know. It's always the same parents, and it's the parents, that we don't really want to see, you know.
— *just be involved*, ask the questions that need to be asked for the benefit of your child… that is what I would love from my parents, and all the parents in the school. That's all we need, *we need to be partners in education.* And I always, always trust that. I always tell them, we are partners in education, *we have to work together*, especially in this time where we are in virtual school, *we have to work together for our children.* | being involved

being involved

being involved

being involved

being involved | Involvement in school activities |

T2 - S2	— So, this is what actually happens again, and this has to do with again relationships, *I would like parents with children with disabilities in my class to visit the class regularly, when I say regularly not every day*, but as the teacher sees fit. I have had parents come in and sit in on lessons and observe their children with disabilities Alright, and observe them for constructive reasons, you know.	being involved	
T1 -S1	— So, our school got damaged. It was really, really in a bad state that we were not able to occupy that space at all. So, we would have had to move to another space in the community, and when we were moving back to where the school was rebuilt, *parents really, really, really came out. And it wasn't the 10% you know, the normal 10% who normally always comes out. I think they were really, really excited that we got our own school.* And we got it so, so fast. And when they walked by they will see this school and you know it's really, really nice. They built it really, really nice — So *we had parents coming in to assist* with cleaning of the furniture and making trips, you know making trips from	participating freely participating freely	Volunteer activities

	the place where we were to the newly rebuilt school, back and forth. And, you know, that is one of the things that *I really, really like to see parents working together*. And the children seeing them working, working together.	chipping in	
	— So *we also have parents who would donate like plants to the school, to beautify the school*, you know. We have those kinds of parents who will do those kinds of things for us. So, even though we have the ones that don't help, *we do have the ones that really go out of their way for us and to make their child and children in this school comfortable while they are here*.	playing their part

participating freely | |
| T2 - S2 | — Sometimes we doing a gardening project, and *you will get some of the fathers to come*. That is the hardest thing… to get the fathers to come, because they always say they have to work. But we will get them for sports. Although for the last year, we didn't do any sports. So that is a throwback. | participating freely | |
| Pr1 -S1 | — Presently, we have a problem with the grass being cut at the school, we have to rely on CEPEP and *we want our parents to be able to come forward and volunteer their services*, you know, and say, Okay, this is our school, | playing their part | |

	since we are utilizing the school in the community, we want give back. The parents should be able to help cut the grass or plant gardens in the school, you know, and we don't have that. Right now, we are working on that.	playing their part	
	— we want a mural to be done on the walls. There are different things that can be done at this school. And in terms of these skills, *we want more participation from the parents in those regards.* So we are trying to find out from them, what can be done to encourage them to come on board. I know I can't encourage persons to gather…. but at least if we could stagger the times, you know, when it's okay, saying miss I would like to pledge this, you know, we'd like to do this. So *we are working on a team, the school based management team…* we are working to have this management team be stronger in order for us to have more sustainable outcomes at the school.	coming together to play their part chipping in playing their part	
	— *We had parents who came in to do the gardening.* So we would love that to continue and do a little floral decoration, balloon, sculpting and things like that they would have learned from the community development programs. On evenings*, we would have had parents coming in and*	participating freely	

	teaching little skills to children in our term two… usually term two was when we had that …parents coming in and teaching skills to the children, and then the children will showcase their pieces that they would have done.		
Pr2 -S2	—— *the previous PTA would have had groups of parents coming in to assist with the spreading of backfill, because we have a number of holes in the yard*, the play area for the students and to avoid injury to them, the PTA President liaised with a business person in the area and this man came personally with his Bobcat and spread the material. He delivered the material and helped spread it, and *the parents worked hand in hand with him.*	chipping in coming together to play their part	
	—— we have a women's URP group, *they would have assisted us in painting and painting the furniture.*	participating freely	
	—— cleaning all the furniture, especially after school has been sprayed by public health and insect vector control unit. So *that URP gang would help us tremendously to have the school ready for the reopening* when they work alongside the ancillary staff of the school. *They also*	coming together to play their part	

	helped with the garden projects that we had.		
P2 -S2	— I have been given advice on how to work with him. They know how he does get frustrated fast and thing, *so they tell me not to push him, give him like a half an hour of work, and then give him a fifteen minutes' break. They also tell me like in the writing of sentences, if is ten, you give him five, you always break it down.* — I always get advice how to work with him at home.	parent training for child's success	Education and training
P4 -S3	— *my training and knowledge in Montessori teaching*, like how to tie your shoe lace and zipper your pants, right…*that helped.*	parent training for child's success	
T2 - S2	— *Another factor too, is parent education level, that is something that affects these relationships.* So *those who are more qualified in terms of academics, and probably holding down a government job or economically stable, these are the parents that you will get more involvement with.* I'll tell you something, those who are less fortunate in our community, and who depend on government assistance	parent education level impacts child success	

		grant or the child grant, those are the ones we'll see once a year, and you'll see them when it's time to sign that form.	parent education level impacts child success	
		— So *education of a parent, education level or the socioeconomic status, those are important things.* All right… Well, we talked about communication, already with phone and WhatsApp and messages, and so on.		
Pr2 -S2		— Through the Parent Teacher Association though, we would have had the community police coming in and doing presentations.	parent training for child's success	
		— Also the Alcoholics Anonymous group president coming in and doing presentations to edify the parent body. Right. So *we try to have different presenters coming in and doing presentations.* But at the level of the Parent Teachers Association meetings.	parent training for child's success	
Pr3 -S3		— *So those persons although they've been given a small training, they work with the teacher, and myself and the parent, to try to come up with some sort of program that would best help the child.*	parent training for child's success	
		— Sometimes I think, ideally, *parents need a bit of training*		

	sometimes in how to, how best to assist these children at home, because some of them really depend on the school for everything… is because of lack of knowledge. So probably some training sessions, if it is through the ministry, we could have some training sessions for these people, especially within the rural community. *So training sessions, and probably links to where they can get assistance.*	parent training for child's success	
P3 - S2	— One was definitely a movie night. That was special because *on that day, the entire school came out…* the teachers, the principal, even the cleaners, parents, and students came together.	involvement in special event	Sports, cultural, and special events
P4 -S3	— they allowed him to be part of a team for tug-o-war. The principal and teachers all stood there watching, so they put him in front, and he is very strong, and his group of kids had to pull against the next group. And they won. People were shocked because he was doing it. *So, that was positive for me.*	involvement in sports	

T1 -S1	— like when we have curry cues, and so the *parents would come out, they would support this school*, they would purchase… even though the 10% would be the ones that actually probably come in to do the cooking, or to dish out, or whatever, we will get the parents purchasing.	involvement in special event	
	— What we do, as well, *in the school, to try to involve the parents, we would have like raffles, we would have raffles and you know, we would give a prize to the child who sold the most raffles and, you know, parents like those kinds of things.* So, even though they're not coming to do the work in the school itself, we have them doing our work on the outside for us. We get them to do the work on the outside, to sell the most they can, and they wouldn't see it as that is what we are doing. They just see it as a competition, you know… I want to make sure that my child sells the most. But they don't actually know that is how we get them to be involved.	involvement in special event	
T2 - S2	— so I like to do crafts, that is my strong area. I'm not so strong in music and drama. All right. So whatever the	involvement in projects	

	subject I'm doing, especially if it's science or social studies, *I try to get the children to make if it's a piece of resource that they themselves will put up in the school.*		
T3 -S3	— Well, before the pandemic, when we had curry cues, stuff like that, so *fundraising activities, that got them involved.* Within the pandemic, staff meetings to which they were invited, that got them involved, or some teacher parent conferences that also got them involved.	involvement in special event	
Pr1 -S1	— *well just basically when we have a sports event, or having a national festival parents can come in and probably share their skill and teaching the children a skill or talent* and it can be for all children. I mean when we were having live classes, yeah. Actually, I realized that we could still do things like dance, right, but we're not able to get everybody involved. — Before we would have had *parents coming in and teaching.* — The school community loves cricket. It is a cricketing community, so *we would have had parents coming in*	involvement in sports and cultural events involvement in sports and cultural events	

	and teaching the cricket, right.		
Pr2 -S2	— One area of involvement is from a cultural perspective. *When we have concerts or shows demonstrating the talent of the students, we have full parental involvement and support* in that regard. In the area of dance, well, the visual and performing arts as well, generally. So *like the Best Village performances, we have full parent support*, there.	involvement in sports and cultural events	
	— *when class teachers pose projects, which require students to have themselves videotaped, or they have to do a live presentation of a character, let's say for example, a carnival character. Again, we have a 100% parent involvement* in that regard.	involvement in projects

involvement in cultural events | |
| | — *when we have sports, we also have a certain level, a higher level of parental involvement… where parents do come out and support* their charges. | involvement in sports | |
| | — I think at my school in particular, parental involvement can be greatly enhanced through cultural engagement… *if we have celebrations, and we celebrate things from a cultural perspective, we tend to see a greater parental involvement.* Especially if in | involvement in cultural events | |

	a particular community, that's something that they love very much, then they are going to give their all, like for Christmas concerts. More the Christmas concert, they try the Easter Bunny parade, but that was a youth group that hosted it at our school.		
Pr3 -S3	— In most instances, I would say, Well, I think I should say in all instances that I've come across these children are usually the weaker ones in the classroom, so they don't excel academically. So *sometimes the sports give them an opportunity to be on a sort of level playing field. So, involvement in sports, and I have seen it right. Sometimes it is the only thing that they could excel in.*	involvement in cultural events	
	— like the drama and the singing, the choir and so. There was one in particular who had a love for music. He couldn't write he couldn't read. *But he had a love for music and I think he learned through music, so the teacher was exploring that a bit with the parent.*	involvement in sports	
		involvement in performing arts	

Matrix C4

Participant Responses to questions aligned to SQ2

Participant Responses to questions aligned to SQ#2: What factors are barriers to parental involvement of parents of children with disabilities in three primary schools in adjacent rural southern communities in an education district in Trinidad?

P = Parent   T = Teacher   Pr = Principal   S = School

Participant - School	Data Cluster		Round 2 Final Codes
	Round 1 In-Vivo Codes	Round 1 Inductive Codes	
	Probe: What are some things that prohibit the involvement of parents of children with disabilities?		
P3 - S2	— I have heard other parents say *they can't be as involved as me because they don't have the time…*	reluctance, indifference	Personal unwillingness to be involved
T1 -S1	— There's one parent of a child with a disability, who *neglects her child and is never involved* because both she and her husband drinks a lot	oblivious	
T2 - S2	— some parents *may not want to be involved because of pride*. They don't want other parents to realize that their child has a disability. So they stay away because *they don't want to be noticed? You know, being present means that something is wrong with your child*	uninformed, arrogance	

T3 -S3	— I don't know *personal unwillingness might be one*. I don't know.	reluctance, indifference	
Pr1 -S1	— *sometimes just their unwillingness to be involved.* — *they just did not want to be involved.* There was a group of parents who just see it as… Oh, okay, I send my child to school and that is that, and that is all that should be necessary. *They believe the school should do everything for the child, and there really shouldn't be any involvement with the parent.* So we have been trying, I think, for the past five years, to erode that concept from them and let them know: No, *once your child is enrolled at this school, you are part of this family and we expect you as a family member, to do your part*, you know. So, I think it's still a work in progress. Right. I'm still trying to discern reasons or barriers, that are inhibiting parents from actually being involved at the school.	reluctance, indifference oblivious ignorance	
Pr2 -S2	— So *sometimes persons do not want to associate or to come in or to share or to be a part of anything because they feel maybe, perhaps, distress.* But I	reluctance,	

	think that is an area … conflict, that will cause persons to not want to be together in the communities.	disturbed	
P1 -S1	— *I may have to work sometimes*.	work obligations	Work commitments
P2 -S2	— *I was working for a few months*	work obligations	
T2 - S2	— *Some of them say work, they have to work*, right? I really appreciate that one, because some of them really do have to work and they are working for people, and the hours are not flexible.	work obligations	
Pr2 -S2	— *I think one could be their availability in terms of work*. That is definitely a factor. So, they may not have the time.	work obligations	
Pr3 -S3	— *Work Yes*. Because we have a lot single parent families as well. We have a *lot of people that work CEPEP*. So it means that we have to schedule meetings in the afternoon. We can't have morning meetings with most of these people because they	work obligations	

	have to work in the morning. So work yes. *Work is a barrier*.		
T1 -S1	— after that, again, you know, you're calling, calling, calling, and they're not responding, they're not answering, they're not returning your calls or anything like that.	nonresponsive	Poor communication and access to information
	— when one mother had a new baby, she just forgot everything. *Everything was just on a standstill, even the aide was unable to connect with her.* And with the online, it requires, you know, connectivity with the parent, which the parent had on an on an off basis. So even that impacted how she was able to get some feedback from me on the child's performance, it affected her child's aide in the same way, as well.	nonresponsive	
	— *it's not the reason of the baby only, it's also the poor connectivity in their area. So it's also poverty as well.* Meaning that's not all the time, she's able to put a phone card on her phone to call, but I usually do the calling. And sometimes when I call, I wouldn't even get her. Even the aide has that problem that she wouldn't even get her because of the area in	poor internet bandwidth poverty	

	which she lives. There is low connectivity, sometimes they will get some kind of internet connection in the night. *I think it's only one phone in the house, or sometimes you would call and the father has the phone and he has gone to work.*	poverty	
Pr1 -S1	— *some of them like just don't understand what we were asking.* So we would send out letters, communication letters, and all of that. And even during the pandemic, I realized … you send out our WhatsApp messages to them, and parents will turn around and call because they don't understand what was communicated to them. So in some cases, that communication right, *I think lack of communication* as well.	poor receptive communication skills poor receptive communication skills	
Pr3 -S3	— *Access to information.* Access to the groups, you know, there are usually groups, there are groups all over the country, group for children with autism, groups for children with different special needs. *And I think, yeah, the lack of information sometimes is the biggest hindrance.* Sometimes it's personal,	uninformed Uninformed/ deficit in technological skills	

	personal disinterest, because it creates a certain negative view, some people are sort of ashamed.		
P1 - S1	— Like now, *the hardest thing is the online work*. If I am not around, my older daughter will help my son.	level of knowledge	Lack of technology and technological skills
T1 –S1	— And sometimes when I call, I wouldn't even get her. Even the aide has that problem that she wouldn't even get her *because of the area in which she lives. There is low connectivity, sometimes they will get some kind of internet connection in the night. I think it's only one phone in the house*, or sometimes you would call and the father has the phone and he has gone to work. You know, those are the types of things also.	low bandwidth poor internet shortage of devices	
Pr2 -S2	— During the pandemic, pretty much like at other rural schools, *not having any devices, not having internet access prevent parents from participating in Zoom meetings.*	shortage of devices no internet low bandwidth	

	— the parents *frequently change their phone numbers* mean when you call you can't get them so that may be a barrier also.	poverty	
	— *part of the problem sometimes seems to be having one device, which the parent carries with him or her, and when they return they try to get a child to do the work, and they submit several days after it is due.* Or another part of the problem would be like, *lack of internet…* that also creates a problem.	shortage of devices no internet	
P1 -S1	— *my level of education is not high, so that is one reason.*	education level	Limited education and skills
T1 -S1	— where the mother, she is a very young mother, right. She is very, very young. And sometimes I would talk to her, and I will tell her what she needs to do with her son. And *sometimes I believe that she doesn't even understand what I am telling her what she needs to get done.* And there are instances where probably it is too much. Because you know, when a child has a disability, you have to have that patience with that child.	incomplete schooling/ limited knowledge incomplete schooling/ limited knowledge	

T2 - S2	— *Some of them probably don't know how to help their children.* — *They don't know their roles and responsibilities because some of the parents are very young*, also. The age, some of them have their children very young. And *they don't have the parenting skills.* So I think the ministry might provide parenting sessions for certain people. That might come through the principal. He may have to recommend these things. So that's about three factors there.	incomplete schooling/ limited knowledge limited parenting skills	
T3 -S3	— there are parents but I believe that they don't have much of those skills, like, to me, there is a biological factor in becoming parents, but you need a particular skillset to educate your children. *And a lot of the parental population have dropped out from schools*, even if they attended the school that I presently teach at. Some have dropped out from school early… all in standard three. *Some of them dropped out from school, some did not complete school, some of them didn't complete secondary school.* — *the education level of the parents, that is surely a barrier to their*	limited parenting skills school drop-out incomplete schooling/ limited knowledge	

	involvement and then there's their parenting skills	limited parenting skills	
			Financial constraints
P4 -S3	— *Low finances… sometimes, my husband is out of work and I had to leave my work to care for him.*	financial limitations	
T3 -S3	— *financial constraints.*	financial limitations	
Pr3 -S3	— sometimes financial, too, because in the past, *there were times when we have had to provide some financial assistance to some parents to come out, even to come out to meetings.* Yes, we've done it.	financial limitations	
P4 -S3	— When I buy his books, I will never see his textbooks until the term ends. I always had to be asking the teacher where are my son's textbook. And like when I finally get them, *some other child was writing in them.* And like, I had to actually beg her to send home homework for him. So, say for instance, like every week, *I might be up in the school twice for the week when that teacher*	teacher insensitivity

teacher insensitivity | Lack of commitment of teacher or parent |

	was there because I find her input was as if she didn't care. — the teacher I told you about earlier, *she didn't want anyone in her class, she used to say she didn't want any disturbance at certain times*.	teacher insensitivity	
Pr2 –S2	— *Some parents have not really engaged fully, in terms of having their children attend to the various sessions. So there's a disparity there.* We keep reaching out to these parents to ensure that each child is in attendance	parent insensitivity	
T3 -S3	— I don't know, sometimes, *I believe they feel threatened by authority or they feel threatened that they would lose their child. So that they try to keep you at arm's length.*	parent limited knowledge impacts expectations	Lack of trust
Pr1 -S1	— the number one would have been *a source of distrust.* Apparently, parents, like they just did not trust the school. When I first came there about 10 years ago, you know, the school would have tried to do fundraisers, and so on, and we realized, you know,	parents limited knowledge and past experiences impact expectations	

	the parents not participating. — I don't know, if they are afraid to voice their concerns, if *they are afraid of staff, afraid of admin, but we had persons being fearful,* probably they are afraid that if they voiced their concerns, they would have been victimized. I don't know, I think that would have been a barrier.		