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Parents' Perceptions: Strategies to Motivate Lower-Elementary Children's Virtual Emergency Learning During COVID-19

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Dissertation Submitted in Partial Fulfillment

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Abstract

During the 2020–2021 school year, many students were forcibly shifted from traditional in-person learning to virtual emergency response learning (ERL) due to the COVID-19 pandemic. During this shift, many lower-elementary school students suffered socially, emotionally, and academically due to lack of infrastructure, social isolation, and the loss of direct instruction from educators. Because of this loss, many parents had different responsibilities to their children's social, emotional, and academic well-being. Research has not provided practical, motivational strategies used by parents to motivate their lower-elementary school children during virtual ERL during COVID-19 pandemic. The purpose of this study was to examine parents' perceptions on the strategies used to motivate their lower-elementary school students during virtual ERL due to COVID-19. Maslow's theory of human motivation served as the theoretical foundation for this study. A basic qualitative inquiry was used to examine parents' perceptions through developing an interview instrument to collect data from 13 participants through in-depth, one-on-one, semistructured interviews. Thematic analysis was used to code and discover themes. One overarching theme of "Routines & Consistency" and 11 themes outlined the common perceptions of the strategies parents used to motivate their lower-elementary school children during ERL due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Results may contribute to positive social change by providing parents with practical motivational strategies to use for their lower-elementary school children in the case of any virtual ERL situations in the future for reasons such as medical emergencies, pandemics, epidemics, natural disasters or home confinement for any reason.

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Dedication

I dedicate this research to my parents, Jason and Charlene, and my husband, Eric, for their immense support, patience, and love during this process. Thank you for being my biggest motivation. I would also like to dedicate this research to my everlasting grandparents: Eddie, Eugenia, and Shirley, for their endowing support while they were here on this earth and their continued prayers and protection in the afterlife. May they rest in eternal peace.

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I would first like to thank God, for nothing is possible without His love and grace. I would like to thank my husband, Eric, for all the support throughout this process. We had many dinner-less or takeout nights and working through the weekends but with him as my partner, nothing is impossible. I'd also like to thank my parents, Charlene and Jason, for challenging me every day of my life to be a thinker! I pray one day I can be half as wonderful to my children as they are to me. I would be remiss if I did not thank my good friend, Taneisha, for showing me the Walden University program and being an inspiration to peruse my doctoral degree. I am also beyond thankful for my closest friends who gave me encouragement and were there through the trials and tribulations, Ashley, Sadi, Jourdan, Julisa, Cierra, Nikole, Chante, and my accountability partner Jesse. I could not have done it without all of you in my life!

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Lastly, I would like to extend a special thank you to the participants in my study. Your contribution and commitment to this study made it possible. I would not have been able to do it without you!

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Chapter 1: Introduction to the Study

In March of 2020, the world shifted due to the COVID-19 pandemic. COVID-19 is a disease caused by a virus named severe acute respiratory syndrome coronavirus 2 (SARS-CoV-2), which causes flu-like symptoms in the upper respiratory area (Center for Disease Control and Prevention [CDC], 2021). COVID-19 spreads when an infected person breathes out droplets and microscopic particles that contain the virus, and another person encounters the droplets through their eyes, nose, or mouth (CDC, 2021). Due to the high contagion of the disease, the CDC (2021) recommended that all people over the age of 2 years old wear a well-fitted mask, stay 6 feet away from others you do not live with, and avoid poorly ventilated spaces. All the new CDC guidelines affected many establishments where people gathered in large crowds. In March of 2020, the World Health Organization (WHO) declared COVID-19 a pandemic. Many governors, superintendents, presidents, and principals decided to close schools to prevent the spread of COVID-19 (Education Week, 2020b). In the United States, all 50 states shut down school operations in March of 2020, most states remained closed until September of 2020 except Montana and Wyoming, and other states remained virtual or hybrid until August 2021, such as New York, New Jersey, and California (Education Week, 2021b). Due to the advancements in technology, students could learn remotely through platforms like Google Meets and Zoom. Students were not physically in a classroom, but teachers took their curriculum and shifted to a virtual learning environment (Hodges et al., 2020).

With the shift of learning from in-person to completely virtual, students, educators, and parents had to adjust in ways many have never had to before to support

student learning. Students, especially younger learners, rely heavily on adult influences to be motivated. Elementary teachers foster learning environments to support student motivation and achievement (Koca, 2016). Since students were removed from the presence of teachers in a physical learning environment, students had to be motivated by the adults and influences around them (Ghazali, 2020; Lee et al., 2021; Munastiwi & Puryono, 2021; OECD Centre for Skills, 2020). Educators gave parents suggestions to motivate their students, such as for the parents being more involved, how to establish a relationship with the teacher, and ways to be an effective collaborator (Raguindin et al., 2021). The educators' recommendations were based on what educators believe to be the best way to support learning from home. But students were less successful in the virtual environment, students' attendance significantly decreased, the achievement gap grew exponentially, and many parents felt the 2020–2021 school year had a negative impact on their child's success (McKinsey & Company, 2021). Further, due to the mandated social isolation, the loss of peer and friend interaction, and stress faced within the homes, students also struggled with significant social and emotional deficits (Munastiwi & Puryono, 2021; Pozas et al., 2021; Zaccoletti et al., 2020).

Getting parent's perceptions on motivational strategies used to address the social, emotional, and academic concerns students faced during the COVID-19 pandemic is needed. Because students' loss the infrastructure from school, the in-person direct learning from teachers, the motivation provided by the school, and the socializing with their peers, this research study addressed lower-elementary school parents' perceptions on strategies used to motivate their children socially, emotionally, and academically

during virtual emergency response learning (ERL) due to COVID-19. I examined the motivational strategies parents used on all five levels of Maslow's hierarchy of needs (physiological, safety, love, esteem, and self-actualization) to understand what strategies parents used to motivate their lower-elementary school children. This study was necessary because there is limited information on parental perceptions of the ways that they kept their children motivated during virtual ERL. Remote learning is not a new concept, but shifting rapidly for future crises, natural disasters, or social distancing reasons needs to be further studied from the parent's perception to find ways for parents to motivate their children.

In Chapter 1, there is the background of the study, the research gap, and why the study is needed. Also in this chapter is the problem statement, the purpose of the study, and the research question (RQ) that this study will answer. Furthermore, this chapter will consist of the theoretical framework by Maslow (1943) and the nature of the study, which is a basic qualitative approach. Additionally, in Chapter 1 is the significance, assumptions, limitations of the study and the definitions of the keywords. Lastly, there will be a summary of the chapter.

Background

During virtual ERL due to COVID-19, many students struggled academically due to a lack of motivation (GÜNBAŞ & GÖZÜKÜÇÜK, 2020; Tan, 2020). For students to be successful in remote learning, teachers must engage the community to help foster motivation in the students (Talakoub et al., 2020). For example, Raguindin et al. (2021) developed an instrument, Strategies for Parental Involvement during Emergency Remote

Teaching Scale (SPIERT-S), which provided parents with strategies to use during emergency remote teaching (ERT) to promote parent involvement. The SPIERT-S gave strategies on three different levels of parenting: parents as facilitators of learning, parents as sources of information, and parents as collaborators. But, for many reasons such as schedules, obligations, and education levels, parents are unable to complete the suggestions given by teachers (Hornby & Blackwell, 2018).

There is a gap between the rhetoric and reality of parental involvement (Hornby & Blackwell, 2018). School recommendations of parental involvement and parent follow-through are often inconsistent. Parent involvement motivates students to achieve academic success, establish positive learning habits, transmit educational values, and assist students in preparing for school (Belaić, 2021). Student motivation is an essential component to student academic achievement (Zee et al., 2021). Students' overall attitudes and beliefs about school directly informs their academic achievement (Zee et al., 2021). But motivation is about more than attitudes and beliefs, it is about the drive or desire to do a task (Yang, et al., 2018). Motivation for people can be about having proper food, sleep, love, etc. (Maslow, 1943). Many students were food deprived, without proper sleep and shelter, and had difficulties maintaining basic human needs during the COVID-19 pandemic (American Institute for Research, 2020; McKinsey & Company, 2020a; Rollins, 2020; Vike, 2017). Scholars often cite a mantra *Maslow before you Bloom* (Mutch & Peung, 2021), referring to the construct that students must first have their basic human needs met before they are able to learn and understand new information.

There is a need to gather thoughts and insight from parents on practical strategies that they were able to successfully do to aid in their child's academic achievement (Raguindin et al., 2021). There is limited research on parents' direct involvement affecting their lower-elementary school students' motivation during the COVID-19 pandemic. In a traditional in-person classroom, model classrooms nurture student motivation, cultivate positive learning environments, have positive relationships, have rituals and routines, a sense of comfort and belonging, and students have peer and teacher models to replicate (Grecmanová et al., 2020; Revising Instructional Skills & Strategies, 2021; Walker & Graham, 2021). During the COVID-19 pandemic, many parents, especially those of low income, essential workers, and non-native speaking parents had difficulty motivating and assisting their children during ERL (Department of Education, 2021; McKinsey & Company, 2021; Sugarman & Lazarin, 2021). Parents' perceptions of strategies used to motivate their lower-elementary school students during ERL needs to be further examined so parents can have an in-depth understanding of strategies to motivate their child socially, emotionally, and academically for any distance learning emergency measures.

Problem Statement

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, many students had no choice but to shift from traditional in-person learning to virtual learning in March of 2020 (Tan, 2020). The pandemic changed the lives of many individuals in the United States and in over 199 other countries due to this shift (CDC, 2020a). Students were one of the most affected groups of people where they lacked the resources and support in the virtual learning

environment and therefore suffered socially, emotionally, and academically to succeed (Munastiwi & Puryono, 2021; Pozas et al., 2021; Zaccoletti et al., 2020). In the United States, students' attendance rates decreased, the achievement gap grew, children suffered social isolation, and younger children were unable to have productive social engagements. Because of this, many parents in the United States felt the 2020–2021 school year had a negative impact on their child's academic and social-emotional well-being (McKinsey & Company, 2021).

Since COVID-19 forced children to learn at home via technology, many families became responsible for their children's learning like never before (OECD Centre for Skills, 2020). Parents became responsible for caretaking for their children all day, which includes helping with education, feeding their children nutritious and consistent meals, and socializing their children, while still managing the pandemic from their work-family perceptions (Ghazali, 2020; Lee et al., 2021; Munastiwi & Puryono, 2021; OECD Centre for Skills, 2020). While keeping children safe was a consensus of most parents, many parents found it challenging to contribute to their children's motivation during virtual learning (Garbe et al., 2020). Previous research was conducted to understand how parents felt about virtual learning and how successful their child was during ERL (Cahoon et al., 2021; Chu et al., 2021; Garbe et al., 2020; GÜNBAŞ & GÖZÜKÜÇÜK, 2020; Pozas et al., 2021), but these studies did not focus on the practical strategies parents used at home to motivate their lower-elementary children.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this basic qualitative study was to examine parents' perceptions of the strategies used to motivate their lower-elementary school children's virtual ERL during COVID-19. This study examined perceptions of strategies that parents used to motivate their lower-elementary school children's virtual ERL.

Research Question

This study addressed the following RQ and subquestions (SQ) to help close the identified gap in the literature:

- RQ: What are parent perceptions of the strategies used to motivate their lower-elementary school children's virtual ERL during the COVID-19 pandemic?
    - SQ 1: What are parent perceptions of physiological strategies used to motivate their lower-elementary school children's virtual ERL during the COVID-19 pandemic?
    - SQ 2: What are parent perceptions of safety strategies used to motivate their lower-elementary school children's virtual ERL during the COVID-19 pandemic?
    - SQ 3: What are parent perceptions of love strategies used to motivate their lower-elementary school children's virtual ERL during the COVID-19 pandemic?
    - SQ 4: What are parent perceptions of esteem strategies used to motivate their lower-elementary school children's virtual ERL during the COVID-19 pandemic?

- SQ 5: What are parent perceptions of self-actualization strategies used to motivate their lower-elementary school children's virtual ERL during the COVID-19 pandemic?

Theoretical Framework

The framework for this study is Maslow's theory of human motivation (Maslow, 1943). Maslow suggested that there are, at minimum, five goals that drive human motivation: physiological, safety, love, esteem, and self-actualization. People are motivated by the desire to reach and maintain each level of the motivational hierarchy. These basic goals are related to each other; one need must be met for the following need to be desired. Parents felt their child's safety and physical needs were the priority to be met during the COVID-19 pandemic (Garbe et al., 2020), which according to Maslow are the first two needs that must be met to achieve the next level of the motivational hierarchy. Most parents prioritized these first two levels of human motivation, but parents then have a responsibility to contribute to their children's self-esteem (love, esteem) so they can be motivationally successful (self-actualization) (Center for Parenting Education, n.d.). During ERL, due to the COVID-19 pandemic, understanding parents' perceptions at the physiological, safety, love, esteem, and self-actualization level was necessary to examine what needs were met for lower-elementary school students and in which ways. This basic qualitative approach used Maslow's theory of human motivation as a framework, which will be further detailed in Chapter 2, to understand how parents contributed to their child's motivational hierarchy during COVID-19.

Nature of Study

This qualitative study followed a basic qualitative inquiry to examine in-depth perceptions (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016) of parents with children who were in lower-elementary school during virtual ERL due to COVID-19. Semistructured interviews were used to obtain the parents' perceptions to understand better how they motivated their children on each level of Maslow's theory of human motivation. In-depth, semistructured interviews (Rubin & Rubin, 2012) were conducted with parents who report that they had children in lower-elementary school that shifted from traditional in person learning to virtual ERL due to COVID-19. The interviews were audiotaped with the consent of the participants. Interview transcripts and thematic analysis were used to determine common themes. Thematic analysis was used to identify categories and themes in the data collected from the qualitative interviews. The themes were used to bring meaning to the commonalities of the experiences had by the participants (Braun & Clarke, 2006). To use a thematic analysis, I first began with familiarizing myself with the data, then the initial coding phase, followed by generating themes and validating said themes. Next, I defined the themes before interpreting the findings (Braun & Clarke, 2006). Using a basic qualitative interview, gave authentic perceptions of parents on the strategies they used for their children to motivate them during COVID-19.

Definitions

Emergency response learning (ERL): A temporary shift of learning to an alternative form due to the crisis circumstances. For this study, it will be recognized as a

derivative from Emergency Remote Learning as cited in Khlaif (2021) as a shift from traditional in-person learning to virtual or remote learning.

Emergency response teaching (ERT): A temporary shift of instruction to an alternative form of delivery due to the crisis circumstances (Hodges et al., 2020).

Lower-elementary school: The primary grade-school years in education before 9-years-old or 3rd-grade (Yunker & Chicago University, 1968).

Assumptions

This basic qualitative study was based on the beliefs of ontology, epistemological, and rhetorical assumptions. Ontology questions are those that respond to the question "what is there that can be known?" or "what is the nature of reality?" (Ahmed, 2008; Al-Ababneh, 2020). Epistemological assumptions align with the constructivist view of learning, which postulates that ideas are not discovered or found out but rather constructed based on thoughts, feelings, and emotions (Ahmed, 2008; Al-Ababneh, 2020). Lastly, rhetorical assumptions are the idea that the researcher is not seeking a specific answer or a truth but rather to document the experiences of the participants of their accounts and experiences (Al-babneh, 2020). Ontology, epistemological and rhetorical assumptions relate to this study by aligning with the idea that all assumptions are constructed and are not seeking to find a truth but rather understand the details of the participants' perceptions of their experiences.

It was assumed that parents could articulate the strategies they used to motivate their lower-elementary school students on all five levels of Maslow's hierarchy of needs: physiological, safety, love, esteem, and self-actualization. It was also assumed that all

participants had students in the correct academic grade level for their age. It was also assumed that most parents were able to assist their children in the lower levels of Maslow's hierarchy of needs such as physiological and safety, but many parents would start to struggle with assisting their children with meeting the higher levels of needs such as love, esteem, and self-actualization.

Scope and Delimitations

The scope and delimitations are boundaries set in terms of study duration, population size, and type of participants (Theofanidis, & Fountouki, 2019). The specific aspects of the research problem addressed in this qualitative study are parents of lower-elementary school students during the COVID-19 pandemic and their perceptions on how they motivated their children socially, emotionally, and academically. This focus was chosen because there is a lack of research from the parents' perceptions on practical ways to motivate their lower-elementary school students during virtual ERL. The participants in this study include lower-elementary school parents in the United States. Parents must have had children in kindergarten, 1st, 2nd, or 3rd grade and be younger than the age of 9 during the 2020–2021 academic school year and must have had a rapid shift from in-person learning to virtual learning. This research did not include family members who are not the child's legal guardian. This research excluded all grade levels below kindergarten and above third grade.

This research focused on Yuker et al. (1968) idea of lower-elementary school students and their needs as academic learners. Self-determination theory (Deci & Ryan,

1985) and social learning theory (Bandura, 1977a) are closely related to the topic but were not used because they describe the individual's experience who is either intrinsically or extrinsically motivated and I did not talk to the children directly but rather their parents. This research may not be transferable to parents of other grade levels and may be transferable to multiple genders, races, and geological locations.

Limitations

A limitation that may impede the study is that COVID-19 was traumatic for many individuals. Being willing to talk about that trauma may be undesirable or difficult for the participants. Additionally, COVID-19 began in March of 2020, this study took place in mid-2022; therefore, it may have been challenging for participants to remember in-depth details of all the strategies used to motivate their lower-elementary school students. Another barrier I foresaw was the ability to control the validity of human perceptions. Participants may not be forthcoming or truthful about all their perceptions. Another limitation is generalizability across socioeconomic classes, races, and other demographics that differ from the participants. Lastly, a limitation that may impede the study is differentiating my role as a researcher from my role as a clinician. Remaining in my role as a researcher involved introspection and self-awareness to ensure my questioning remained to seek understanding and to not give therapy.

Significance

This study is significant in that with the reopening of schools, parents will need practical motivational strategies to use with their lower-elementary school children in the case of any virtual ERL situations in the future for reasons such as school closures,

medical emergencies, pandemics, epidemics, or natural disasters. These strategies could promote social, emotional, and academic success for lower-elementary school students. This study provides detailed accounts of strategies parents used during ERL by examining parent perspectives of motivational strategies used that directly aligns with the research gap. Research has lacked the ability to provide parents the practical, parent-used motivational strategies to motivate their lower-elementary school children during virtual ERL due to COVID-19 (Bhamani et al., 2020; OECD Centre for Skills, 2020; Raguindin et al., 2021). By providing parents' perceptions of the motivational strategies used during COVID-19, the positive social change is for future students impacted by forced virtual ERL. They will, hopefully, experience less social, emotional, and academic stress and decline during ERL in lower-elementary school because their parents will be equipped with strategies other parents used to motivate their child for success. This research may serve as a toolbox for parents to come.

Summary

Parents had a difficult time motivating their children socially, emotionally, and academically during the COVID-19 pandemic (Munastiwi & Puryono, 2021; Pozas et al., 2021; Zaccoletti et al., 2020). As a result, students lost academic, social, and emotional growth. Most of the literature on parental strategies to motivate their children during virtual ERL was suggested by educators, but the practicality of the strategies has not yet been researched (Raguindin et al., 2021). Many parents know and understand that parent involvement is critical to student achievement in traditional in-person schooling (Ihmeideh et al., 2018). Consequently, many parents found it challenging to motivate

their lower-elementary school students during virtual ERL (Bhamani et al., 2020; OECD Centre for Skills, 2020; Raguindin et al., 2021). Hence, there is a need to examine parents' perceptions of the strategies used to motivate their lower-elementary school children's virtual ERL due to COVID-19. Moving forward, Chapter 2 details a comprehensive overview of student motivation and parental involvement before and during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

In March 2020, a variety of COVID-19 control policies were implemented as a response to prevent the spread of COVID-19 such as restrictions on social gatherings, workplace closures, national and international travel bands, mandatory COVID-19 testing, and contact tracing (CDC, 2020b; Schnider et al., 2021). Since schools and education sites have many students in small, confined spaces and could potentially increase infectious outbreaks, one policy implementation was closing all in-person schooling. This caused a rapid shift in learning environments for students. Students went from traditional in-person learning models to learning remotely, primarily through technology. More than 1.2 billion students were directly affected from elementary schools through higher education institutions (United Nations Sustainable Development Group, 2020). In the United States, 55 million school children were impacted educationally due to COVID-19 and were forced to stay in their homes (Culver et al. 2020; National Center for Education Statistics 2019a; U.S. Census Bureau 2019), and 80% of children and students worldwide were forced into being educated at home (Van Lancker & Parolin, 2020). This led to challenges to succeed socially, emotionally, and academically (Munastiwi & Puryono, 2021; Pozas et al., 2021; Zaccoletti et al., 2020).

Since the learning environment changed from traditional in-person schooling to virtual learning from home, students no longer had school interactions, peer guidance, or in-person teacher support. Students had to utilize their homes as their sole source of infrastructure for learning. For lower-elementary students who need an abundance of motivation and support to perform academically, parents became responsible for

providing educational support like never before (OECD Centre for Skills, 2020). Due to lacking a learning environment a traditional school provides for academic support (Tan, 2021), parents had to assume the responsibilities once shared with educators. Unfortunately, barriers of parent involvement include parent-teacher communication, societal factors, and practical factors (Hornby & Blackwell, 2018). Because ERL impacted the learning framework, students faced challenges in performing academically, managing emotionally, and engaging socially (Munastiwi & Puryono, 2021; Pozas et al., 2021; Zaccoletti et al., 2020). Students engaged in less school-related activities and had potentially less productive interactions with teachers, which corresponds to less socializing (Di Pietro et al. (2020; Engzell et al., 2021; Maldonado & De Witte, 2020).

Despite to the challenges parents reported keeping their children socially, emotionally, and academically motivated during the COVID-19 pandemic (Cahoon et al., 2021; Chu et al., 2021; Garbe et al., 2020; GÜNBAŞ & GÖZÜKÜÇÜK, 2020; Pozas et al., 2021), there is a lack of research on the practical, motivational strategies parents used to motivate their lower-elementary school children during virtual ERL due to COVID-19 (Bhamani et al., 2020; OECD Centre for Skills, 2020; Raguindin et al., 2021). The purpose of this study was to examine parents' perceptions of strategies used to motivate their lower-elementary school children's virtual ERL during COVID-19. Listening to the perceptions of lower-elementary school parents that endured the COVID-19 pandemic may help examine the motivational strategies used by parents to support their lower-elementary school students academically, socially, and emotionally during virtual ERL.

The following literature review provides a comprehensive overview of current research on the abrupt change of the learning modality in the United States and globally from in-person learning to virtual ERL due to COVID-19 and the effects on lower-elementary school students socially, emotionally, and academically. The literature review addresses the following significant components: the literature search strategy, the theoretical framework, traditional in-person school (infrastructure and motivational tools), elementary school education before and during COVID-19, parent involvement and traditional barriers of involvement, previous pandemic, epidemics, and crises, ERL versus homeschooling and their historical impact on education, COVID-19 and its effect on the education system, student motivation, and human interaction related to school operations, emotional deficits, and social constraints.

Literature Search Strategy

The following databases were used during the literature search: ProQuest, PsychINFO, PsychARTICLE, ERIC, ScienceDirect, EDUCATIONAL SOURCE, APA PsychNET, and Google Scholar. The research was limited to literary articles within the past five years, with exceptions to some historical texts. Many search terms were used as well as synonym words. The following are search terms used for the literature review: *distance education or distance learning or online education or online learning, parents or caregivers or mother or father or parent, literature review, elementary school or primary school or grade school, student motivation or learner motivation or child motivation, virtual learning or online learning or E-learning environments, human motivation, Maslow's human motivation, academic identity, parent involvement, barriers,*

academic deficit, social deficit, emotional deficit, parental stress, homeschooling, emergency response teaching, social isolation, food, nutrition, meals, and *school meals*.

I also found articles closely related to the topic that were outdated and searched more current articles that cited the dated work. An appointment with the Walden Librarian was requested, who located articles surrounding the topic of COVID-19 and student motivation. Because COVID-19 is still being documented as a current event, not many scholarly peer-review articles have been written on student motivation in elementary or lower-elementary schools. COVID-19 is not heavily researched from a parent's perception in the United States. There are many foreign articles and articles written internationally on elementary school students, but there is a deficit in research from a parent's perception. To combat the lack of scholarly works, I used evidence from other pandemics, epidemics, and crises faced in the world as further references. I also used information from other countries.

Theoretical Framework

The theoretical foundation provides a perspective, theory, or construct that frames the study's research focus; it is how the researcher views the research problem (Collins & Stockton, 2018). Due to the nature of the COVID-19 pandemic and the abrupt force to in-home ERL for schools across the United States, there is a significant gap in research that directly addresses student motivation related to ERL. This research happened during the COVID-19 pandemic, where educators are focused on how the deficit has impacted students and how they can close the achievement gap (McKinsey & Company, 2020a). The limited focus on student motivation during ERL provided the opportunity to examine

the motivational factors that were implemented by parents of the lower-elementary school students who endured virtual ERL due to COVID-19 and how these motivational factors were implemented, from the parents' perception, to aid in the academic, social, and emotional well-being of their children. Thus, Maslow's theory of human motivation provided a theoretical framework to examine parents' strategies to motivate their lower-elementary school students during ERL. Maslow stated five sets of goals, or basic needs—physiological, safety, love, esteem, and self-actualization—that drive people.

Physiological

Physiological needs consist of the starting point for Maslow's motivational theory (Maslow, 1943). The physiological needs are the immediate needs to keep one's body in homeostasis, such as water, salt, sugar, protein, fat, calcium, oxygen, hydrogen-ion, and a consistent blood temperature. This is determined by the need to eat, drink water, and have sufficient sleep. Maslow argued that often when one thinks they desire one version of a physiological need, they may, in fact, need another. For instance, a person who believes they are hungry may need sleep or water. A person's brain is always trying to find homeostasis; if the physiological need of motivation is not met, a person's sole motivation would be to have it met, leaving all other motivational levels unsatisfied and "simply non-existent" (1943, p. 373).

Safety

Once the physiological need is met, then emerges the need for safety. Animals are safety-seeking organisms (Maslow, 1943). An infant is often used to understand the basic need for safety. When an infant has any unfamiliar change to what or who they perceive

as safe, they can be found almost instantly crying due to the disruption. Safety is about location, shelter, and proper clothing, but it is also about routine and rhythm. Routine and rhythm give safety and security by understanding what happens next. Things unreliable, unsafe, or unpredictable threaten an individual's ability to feel safe. Children need "an organized world rather than an unorganized or unstructured one [to feel safe and secure]" (Maslow, 1943, p. 377). When safety is not met in the form of location, shelter, clothing, or routine, it becomes an essential need to be met by an individual. If physiological needs met and safety needs are met, then a person can move on to the next higher-level need, love.

Love

The need for love is met when one feels affection and a sense of belonging in their world (Maslow, 1943). Once one feels physiological homeostasis and is safe, individuals search for love in the form of friends, community, family, or spouse. At this level, one needs to give and receive love for the need to be met. Love is equivalent to finding a community through socialization and commitment to that social group. Once one feels love, one can move onto the next level of the hierarchy of needs, esteem.

Esteem

The hierarchy of need, esteem, involves self-respect, self-esteem, and esteem of others. Maslow (1943) stated that esteem could be broken into two categories: (a) desire for "strength, achievement, adequacy, confidence to face the world, and for independence and freedom" and (b) the desire for "reputation or prestige, recognition, attention, importance or appreciation" (p. 382). When self-esteem is achieved, it can lead to

feelings of confidence, worth, strength, capability, and adequacy. When one does not meet the esteem need, it can lead to the feeling of inferiority, weakness, and helplessness. Individuals do not have the desire to be independent because they feel incapable of success, hence lacking self-esteem, confidence, and feeling unimportant. If esteem is met, one can move on to the final and highest hierarchy of needs, self-actualization.

Self-Actualization

Self-actualization is the highest level to be met in Maslow's theory of human motivation (Maslow, 1943). Self-actualization is the desire for self-fulfillment. Self-actualization refers to one's ability to fulfill all that one is capable of doing. For instance, a student who has the potential to be great with numbers excels in math class, or a person who has excellent penmanship becomes a scribe. Self-actualization involves having the potential to be great at something and having all of one's needs met so that one does become great at said task. Individuals who are satisfied in all areas of their other basic needs are considered satisfied people. Whether they chose to self-actualize remains an unknown phenomenon for researchers.

People are driven by the desire to obtain and maintain each level of Maslow's hierarchy of human motivation. These basic needs are dependent on each other, "being arranged in a hierarchy of prepotency" (Maslow, 1943, p. 394), meaning that the most imminent desired goal will monopolize consciousness, and people will go through any measure to have that need fulfilled. The less imminent needs are "minimized, even forgotten or denied" (Maslow, 1943, p. 395). However, once the imminent need is met, one can move on to the following hierarchy level to fulfill the next basic need.

Rationale for Theory

Other studies have used Maslow's theory of motivation to discuss student motivation and the importance of all their needs being met before learning new scholarly concepts (Crump, 1995; Husain, 2014; Latsoalo et al., 2018). Without having satisfied their biological needs for food, water, sleep, etc. (physiological needs), it is unlikely that students will be interested in completing any schoolwork or other motivational hierarchies without their physiological need being met (Raffini, 1993). Excitement, interest, and enthusiasm toward learning are essential objectives in motivation (Crump, 1995), but self-efficacy is one of the most important factors to student motivation (Husain, 2014).

Letsoalo et al. (2018) looked at the influence of home factors on the academic performance of at-risk learners in South Africa's Limpopo Province using Maslow's theory of human motivation. Latsoalo et al. (2018) found that for at-risk students, dysfunctional home factors are detrimental to students' learning. Susanto and Lestari (2018) promoted the emergent need of enhancing students' motivation in Islamic education by fulfilling five basic needs as suggested in Maslow's theory of human motivation. Maslow (1943) argued that in order to reach self-efficacy (self-actualization), a person must first have the four preceding needs met.

When discussing Bloom's Taxonomy, which are the building blocks of learning (knowledge, comprehension, application, analysis, synthesis, and evaluation) (Bloom et al., 1956), scholars often state that students must *Maslow before they Bloom* (Mutch & Peung, 2021). Research shows that students cannot perform academically if they do not

have their basic human motivational needs met (Crump, 1995; Husain, 2014; Letsoalo et al., 2018; Mutch & Peung, 2021; Susanto & Lestari, 2018). However, children are often in need of adult help to provide for their basic needs. Parents have multiple responsibilities to provide their children those needs. Parents must fulfill the first two basic human motivational needs (physiological and safety), which in most instances are legal obligations (Center for Parenting Education, n.d.). However, parents also have the responsibility to contribute to their child's emotional needs (love, esteem) so they have an opportunity to reach their full potential (self-actualization) (Center for Parenting Education, n.d.).

This research study was guided by the five levels of basic needs from Maslow's theory of human motivation to understand which strategies parents used to motivate their children during virtual ERL. Parents often were concerned about the physiological and safety needs of their students (Garbe et al., 2020; Lee et al., 2021), but some did not know how to contribute to their children's motivation besides basic caretaking strategies such as feeding, shelter, and clothing (Bhamani et al., 2020). Previous research has used Maslow's theory of human motivation to uncover what was missing or what needed to be fulfilled to achieve student self-actualization (Crump, 1995; Husain, 2014; Latsoalo et al., 2018; Susanto & Lestari, 2018). However, there was a need to understand the strategies used by parents to motivate their children socially, emotionally, and academically during virtual ERL situations (Garbe, et al., 2020; Raguindin et al., 2021). The RQ relates to Maslow's theory of human motivation by further examining ways in which human

motivation applies to education and parental involvement for student motivation in lower-elementary school children during virtual ERL.

Literature Review Related to Key Variables and/or Concepts

Traditional Elementary School Students

Elementary school is where parents, teachers, and the student learn the student's academic abilities (Turgut & Turgut, 2020). In elementary school, teachers are learning to identify students' strengths and weaknesses and differentiate their learning based on those skill sets (Nickelsen & Dickson, 2019). Parents are learning the areas in which their student is successful and the areas in which they need nurturing, while the student is taking in information as an academic learner for, in lower-elementary school, the first time (Black et al., 2019). Students have little to no preconceived ideas about their abilities and are at a point in their lives where they are developing their ideas about their learning style. Elementary education is a vulnerable experience that can shape an individual's academic identity for the rest of their life (Black et al., 2019).

Learning Environment

Research has shown that students thrive in a school environment that gives them peace and happiness (Calp, 2020). Calp (2020) also argued that a student's peace should be the absence of all violence including conflict, injustice, inequalities, inequities, exploitation, and isolation (Calp, 2020). The learning environment should also be a place that motivates students to achieve success (Calp, 2020; Johnson, 2017). There have been multiple studies done on students' perceptions of peace and how the school climate can affect their well-being (Egeberg et al., 2016; Gage et al., 2014; McLernon & Cairnes,

2001; Oppenheimer & Kuipers, 2003; Thapa et al., 2013). The consensus in all these studies is that children understand peace in their learning environment at a young age. A healthy school learning environment fosters the motivation to achieve success academically and build self-esteem.

Elementary school students achieve peace in various ways. According to Calp (2020),

> elementary school students define peace within schools when schools are a fun, quiet, a place where the teachers are not sad, a place with values, a place like home, a place where ideas are respected, a place without a fight, a place with rules, a place where games are allowed, a place where no one is scared of the teacher, a place where responsibilities are fulfilled and a decent and respectful place. (p. 313)

The findings of this study revealed that most students find that the ideal learning environment involves healthy relationships where the students feel safe and comfortable and a quiet place where they are free to examine their true potential.

According to Fitriani et al. (2021), child-friendly facilities, infrastructure, and the participation of parents, community institutions, the business world, other stakeholders, and alumni are some of the core components of the child-friendly school model. A school learning environment that is child-friendly involves bright, colorful classrooms, visual aids, has items easily accessible to the students, has routines and rules, and is a peaceful learning environment cultivates student learning (Calp, 2020; Cardellino & Woolner, 2020; Errázuriz & Portales, 2018; Steed et al, 2021). Errázuriz and Portales (2018) found that visuals play a considerable role in the teaching and learning processes. Visuals allow

students to participate in the construction of their learning environment, and also encourages them to identify themselves with their educational space. The more a child identifies with their workspace, the more likely they are to connect with that space, be motivated to perform well, and participate in work production (Errázuriz & Portales, 2018). A student's learning environment directly affects student motivation (Fan & Williams, 2018).

Traditional Motivation

Lower-elementary school is where students first begin to develop their academic self-concept, (i.e., I am good at reading or I do not like school) (Guay et al., 2010). Lower-elementary school is the foundation of traditional education, beginning at preschool in the United States (Encyclopedia Britannica, n.d.). The foundations for lower-elementary school students' social skills, self-esteem, perception of the world, and moral outlook are established during these years and the development of cognitive skills (NAEYC, 2021). Motivation is the driving force or desire to do something (Ryan & Deci, 2020; Yang et al., 2018). That drive can be produced from either intrinsic or extrinsic motivational factors as per the self-determination theory. Researchers found that intrinsic motivation is the instinctual need to feel valued, self-reliant, intellectual, and a part of a larger whole (Yang et al., 2018). It comes from one's internal desire for fulfillment and success. Individuals are motivated intrinsically due to their talent, life joys, and the need to achieve personal good. Being motivated extrinsically differs because it is the desire to do something because one is rewarded for their efforts, specifically, on a quid quo pro. Individuals are often motivated extrinsically for gifts, rewards, and/or praise (Yang,

2018). Bandura's social cognitive theory suggested that intrinsic motivation directly affects one's self-efficacy (Bandura, 1977a). Self-efficacy conceptualizes one feeling good about what they have done. When one is proud of their work, they are motivated to continue to do the work (Yang et al., 2018).

Educators often get students motivated and excited about school when attempting to understand ways to increase student achievement (Hsieh et al., 2021). According to Burkhalter (2014), students who are engaged in the learning process are likely motivated to learn, and their attendance records are higher, which are two factors that, when positively aligned, increase a student's likeliness for academic success. When a student is successful in school, according to Bandura (1977a), the success heightens the students' self-efficacy compared to their counterparts who are not motivated to learn and therefore, not engaged in the learning process (Burkhalter, 2014).

Nature and nurture play a significant role in student motivation. Home environment, personality, genetics, age, sex, disabilities/abilities, and personal responsibilities can affect a student's academic motivation (Hsieh et al., 2021). An example would be a student with a physical disability may or may not be motivated to participate in physical education depending on their limitations. A student who has the genetic make-up of speed and agility may be highly motivated to participate in gym. A combination of all these ideas or a single isolated idea can factor in a student's motivation (Reeve et al., 2018). Younger students have a rigid idea of self-concept either self-identifying as a good student or a bad student with little flexibility (Guay et al., 2010; Lodge, 2018). This lack of flexibility is why younger students have varying motivation

levels in multiple subject areas. Students who are good at math are reinforced to believe they are good at math because they work harder to achieve success in math. Suppose a student is not good at a particular topic in math, such as addition or regrouping. In that case, if a child continues to do poorly on that topic it reinforces their negative self-concept that they are not good in that subject as a whole (math) and therefore lowers their motivation to perform in that content area (Lodge, 2018; Reeve et al., 2018).

Students reported being more motivated to succeed academically when their teachers are actively engaged in their learning process (Reeve et al., 2018). Teacher motivation directly impacts student motivation (Scheifele, 2017). Teachers that set clear rules and expectations in the classroom foster students who become accustomed to those rules and routines and become more autonomous in the classroom. Model classroom management enables a sense of autonomy, organization, and accountability (Franklin & Harrington, 2019). Poor classroom management can lead to misbehavior. When misbehaviors happen in a classroom, it can interfere with learning and teaching, which can frustrate not only the teacher but the learners (Rosa & West, 2009; Shamnadh & Anzari, 2019). Poor classroom management could lead to negative feelings of frustration for both the student and the teacher.

Research shows that when educators create a positive learning environment and foster positive relationships with their students, they become more motivated for academic success in the classroom (Rimm-Kaufman, 2010; Yarborough & Fedesco 2020). Being motivated for success in the classroom can be participating in classroom discussions, completing homework assignments, and studying to achieve success on

formative or summative assignments. When students feel they are being challenged and taught by a caring teacher who encourages the student and their academic achievement, they are likely to perform at a higher level in the class on items such as tests, quizzes, and classroom participation (Burkhalter, 2014). When the learning environment is positive, with supportive teacher's students feel able to attain higher grades because, in those positive learning environments, they feel respected, appreciated, and admired. (Mustary & Bulgarian Comparative Education Society (BCES), 2020). When a student feels worthy and acknowledged, the student's self-concept and self-efficacy will be positively contributed to, which will further motivate that student academically (BCES, 2020).

Schools also motivate students by fulfilling some of the basic needs that the student may be lacking. Students that come to school hungry, tired, or worried about life circumstances are unable to focus. Vike (2017) found that 80% of teachers noticed that students who face hunger hardships at home have difficulty concentrating, 76% of the students who face hunger hardship decline in academic performance, and 62% of them have behavioral problems. It was found that 57% of teachers who know their students are food-deprived at home buy food for their students (Vike, 2017). The United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) implemented The National School Lunch Program (NSLP) which is a federally assisted meal program for public and nonprofit private schools and residential childcare institutions. It provides nutritionally balanced, low-cost, or free lunches to children each school day. For eligible schools, the USDA also instated the School Breakfast Program (SBP), which provides reimbursement to states to implement nonprofit breakfast programs in their schools (USDA, n.d). These programs

ensure that while at school, students have their hunger needs fulfilled. In school, students need of peer involvement, direct adult interaction, food, shelter, and positive relationships all help foster a positive learning environment. While in the home environment, during virtual ERL, there is still a need to study how these motivational needs were met.

Historical Crises/Pandemics/Epidemics

The COVID-19 pandemic is not the first crisis that influenced academic and social-emotional well-being due to periods of school closure. Large-scale outbreaks of other diseases such as Ebola and influenza, natural disasters, teacher strikes, and violent conflicts have forced schools to stop their activity in the past. Researchers and other international organizations have studied the effects of school closures on students' academic progress and found significant loss in the acquisition of remedial skills, with an emphasis on disadvantaged children (Cattaneo et al. 2017; Quinn et al. 2016). The Pakistan earthquake in 2005 caused students to miss three months of school due to school closure. Four years after the earthquake, students were found to be at the learning level equivalent to 1.5 years behind grade level (McKinsey & Company, 2020b). Hurricane Katrina, also in 2005, students missed between 6-12 months of school due to school closure. Students came back on average more than two years below grade level (McKinsey & Company, 2020b). SARS in 2002 and H1N1 influenza in 2009 both resulted in school closures in which students faced academic loss and loss of direct instruction from their teachers (Cauchemez et al., 2014). But, according to Azoulay (2020) and Winthrop (2020), the world has never experienced an educational disruption

of the magnitude of COVID-19. This is the first account in recorded history where one disease has interrupted the education of most countries in the world.

The largest difference from all other forms of school closures to now is that students, in large part, had access to technology for virtual learning (Li & Lalani, 2020). In prior situations where school closure was mandated, and students could not physically be in school, there was no access to teachers in any way. Due to technological advances, schools were more willing to stay out of school longer, some as much as a full year and a half (McKinsey & Company, 2020b). Therefore, although students have been out of school for periods of time in the past, this is the first incident where the lack of school building access did not stop instruction from educators. Virtual learning caused education to be accessed in ways like never before, and although students were able to access education virtually, there were still many concerns students, parents, and teachers faced.

Parent Involvement

According to Gengler and Olson (2014), educators are held accountable to educate students. However, in turn, parents have responsibilities that they must adhere to make the school environment a place to grow the whole child. Parents, stakeholders, and all school staff members must be open to assisting the child in their educational needs (Gengler & Olson, 2014). One of the essential roles that parents, and educators have in students' education is communication (Gengler & Olson, 2014). Each stakeholder in the child's education has different expertise; teachers support their day-to-day education, administrators support in the communication of records and data on the child's success, and parents are experts on the child's emotional needs and school-work-life balance

(Gengler & Olson, 2014). There must be a trusting relationship between all parties to better the child. Research shows that parents who are more heavily involved in their child's education and advocate for their child are more likely the child will show progress in their weak content areas (National PTA, n.d).

Parents of elementary school students may have to be aware of the school's education process and the expectations for their child to support the child's needs at home (Ihmeideh et al., 2018; National PTA, n.d; Newman et al., 2019). Ihmeideh et al. (2018) investigated how parents, early childhood teachers, subject coordinators, school administrators, and school counselors living in Qatar perceive family-school relationships using Epstein's six types of parent involvement framework; the six types of parent involvement are parenting, communicating, volunteering, learning at home, decision-making, and collaborating with the community (Epstein, 2019). Parenting is described as educators helping all families establish home environments to support children as students (Epstein, 2019). Communication is the idea of giving clear and understandable information to parents and allowing for an open line of accessible communication from the parents to the school (Epstein, 2019). Volunteering is when schools recruit and organize parent involvement in programs and activities in the school (Epstein, 2019). Decision making includes involving parents in school decisions and developing parent leaders and liaisons (Epstein, 2019). Learning at home is defined as giving families information on how to help their children with homework, decision making, and planning so they can be successful problem solvers and helpers at home (Ihmeideh et al., 2018). Collaborating with the community enlisting resources and services from the direct

community to strengthen school programs, family practices, and student learning and development. The results indicated that the learning at home type was the highest rated type of parental involvement perceived by the study's participants because this type of parent is collaborating with best practices to ensure the student is successful at home and school.

A parent who collaborates with the school staff is likely to have confidence in the educational process (Hodge, et al 2020). Parents have a further responsibility to ensure that their child comes to school daily and works with the student to understand and follow all school expectations, routines, and rituals (Gengle & Olson, 2014; Rhames, 2014). Shafer (2017) indicated that student attendance directly correlates with students' grades. Parents, especially for elementary school students, are a critical factor in addressing issues of chronic absenteeism. Often the lack of awareness of the effect of absenteeism on students' success is why parents are lax in their decisions to send students to school regularly (Shafer, 2017). School officials and staff have the responsibility to communicate that information. Moreover, parents are responsible for receiving the information and making the best decision for their children (Shafer, 2017). Roy and Giraldo-Garcia (2018) argued that parents are also accountable to aid their children in obtaining emotional and social skills that will help them become better community citizens in the real world and at school. Teachers must promote parent involvement by involving parents in all things regarding their child, such as school activities and actionable items in school such as the student's behavior, attitude, and approach to learning (Compton, 2016). When parents feel like a valuable part of their child's

education process, they are likely to contribute and be readily accessible for their child's needs (Compton, 2016). According to the executive director of external communications, parent involvement is the greatest significant factor in student achievement (McBane, 2017). Kohn (2013) argued that the relationship between students and their parents has a significant impact on the students emotional well-being, creativity, and potential to enjoy school. Research has found that students who have involved parents are more likely to have higher self-esteem and self-efficacy than those who do not have involved parents (Gith, 2017; LV et al., 2018; Newchurch, 2017; Wairimu et al., 2016).

According to Brajša-Žganec et al. (2019), parental involvement is a multi-dimensional aspect of school involvement. Parental involvement can be grouped into three categories: "home-base involvement (e.g., parental engagement with schoolwork, communication between parents and children about school, creating a learning environment at home), school-based involvement (e.g., communication between parents and teachers, visits to the school for school events, volunteering at school), and academic socialization (e.g., parental aspirations and expectation for child's education, parental value or utility of education, fostering educational and occupational aspirations)" (Brajša-Žganec et al., 2019, p. 1247). Brajša-Žganec et al. (2019) found that academic socialization school-based and home-based involvement are two of the top three involvement types that correlate to student achievement.

School-based and home-based parental involvement have an important role in student achievement because parents are one of the most influential environmental factors in a child's life, education, and overall development (Brajša-Žganec et al., 2019).

According to the multidimensional conceptualization and motivational model developed by Grolnick and Slowiaczek (1994), when parents are involved in their children's schooling, school activities, and programs:

1. They are involved in teaching their children how to address school assignments, and they instill the value of learning, homework and assignment completion, and school processes into their children.
2. They set rules and routines that prioritize school and activities related to school, social, and personal obligations.
3. They support their children and make them aware that they are invested in their success and are present to help them through their failures.
4. They provide a reliable support system in the home for their children's learning.

It has been found that parents who are more involved with their child's school, through communicating with their child's teacher and other parents and attending school events, the child has a better academic achievement (Brajša-Žganec et al., 2019). Research consistently reports that children can become motivated, self-confident, and engaged in school when they are given the correct parental support and engagement related to school and school activities (Hanson, 2020; NAEYC, 2021; Newchurch, 2017; Wairimu et al., 2016).

Barriers to Parent Involvement

Hornby and Blackwell (2018) described four types of barriers to establishing effective parental involvement in education: individual parent and family barriers, child

factors; parent-teacher factors; and societal factors. Individual parent and family barriers can be items such as parents' beliefs about school, their level of education, parents' current life context and financial stability, parents' perceptions of feeling welcomed and included into the classroom, school dynamic, ethnicity, and gender (Hornby & Blackwell, 2018). Child factors that could impede parental involvement include the child's age, learning abilities and disabilities, natural gifts and talents, and behavior concerns. For instance, parents who have a disabled child are more likely to be involved in the student's education to ensure the child is being treated just. Parents of students with behavioral issues are likely not to be as involved with the school because they may believe that it is about an adverse event with the child whenever the school is contacting them.

Parent-teacher factors include the different ideas and attitudes about learning, language barriers for parents and teachers who speak a different language, and communication fluidity (Hornby & Blackwell, 2018). The societal factors that influence parent involvement include historical academic factors for minority students and their families, demographic, political, and economic issues. Hornby and Blackwell (2018) sought to narrow the gap between the rhetoric and reality of parental involvement. A quantitative study of small-scale, semi-structured interviews of 11 schools was conducted regarding closing the gap between the rhetoric and reality of parental involvement. The results yielded a clear expectation of involvement with parents as a necessary component in facilitating the most effective education for their children. Still, parents have many difficulties supporting their children. This has caused many schools to provide more and more support, while less support comes from the homes and the families (Hornby &

Blackwell, 2018). Parental involvement has been a topic of interest but has been significantly under-studied (Belaić, 2021). Educators and parents knew there was a need for parental involvement before COVID-19 and virtual ERL. But, when involvement was mandated via virtual ERL at home, the strategies parents used for practical parent involvement to keep their children motivated is even more under-studied.

The Elementary Student During COVID-19

COVID-19 resulted in a significant effect on daily operations in the United States. The CDC noted that with community transmission of COVID-19 being so pertinent through coughing, sneezing, and human contact, organizational operations, including educational establishments, were forced to socially distance themselves by closing, restricting human contact, and mandating facial coverings (masks) when social distancing was impossible (UNESCO, 2020). Due to COVID-19, initially, 48 states in the United States closed physical school buildings from March 2020 throughout the rest of the 2019-2020 school year except Montana and Wyoming, which reopened their schools in May and June of 2020 (Education Week, 2020a). All the other states implemented virtual ERL for students in preschool through post-secondary education (Rollins, 2020). For younger-aged students in early education and elementary school, many parents had to make a difficult decision to either stay home with their child to assist them in virtual learning and not go to work or continue to earn a living and rely on others for childcare and educational assistance (Rollins, 2020), few parents had the option to work from home and childcare at the same time. Family dynamics, wealth, family support, housing status, and parents' educational background all prelude when now, the sole infrastructure for these

students is at home (American Institutes for Research, 2020; McKinsey & Company, 2020b). In the United States, there are over 2.5 million homeless students, that during ERL, lost more than a place to learn and develop, and they lost their food supply, healthcare, and their safe space (American Institute for Research, 2020). During ERL, childcare and family support for students were vastly different depending on parent resources and parental involvement. There is a disparity that highlights the inequity in the United States for low-income families, students with special needs, and vulnerable populations (Rollins, 2020). COVID-19 presented many equity issues that schools could not provide, such as WIFI, computers, subscriptions to online applications, and food insecurities (McKinsey & Company, 2020a).

Emergency Response Virtual Learning Versus Homeschooling

In March of 2020, school, as most students knew it, was shifted drastically. Many students went from a traditional in-person school environment almost all their education being delivered online or virtually (McKinsey & Company, 2021). The COVID-19 pandemic shifted and redefined learning at home. Online education is defined as when a school provides 80% or more of the curriculum online (Grazianno & Bryans-Bongey, 2018). Virtual and online learning started in the 1990s to help students who live in remote or rural locations have access to learning (Toppin & Toppin, 2016). Many states in the United States served virtual learning before the pandemic due to convenience and parental choice (2016). Hodges et al. (2020) discussed the difference in experiences from online learning that is planned from the beginning and was originally designed to be online to ERT, which is a temporary shift of instructional delivery to an alternate delivery

model due to crisis circumstances. For a curriculum that was meant to be taught in-person to shift and be altered to a virtual delivery due to a crisis changes the scope, planning process, and even emotional charge behind the delivery (Hodges et al., 2020). The article discussed the experience at the collegiate level, but the idea that a planned online experience differs from an ERL model is the same across student experiences. The conclusion of Hodges et al. (2020) urged scholars to avoid looking at ERT as a homeschooling modality because they have very different implications.

Windish and Wachob (2017) found that parents who homeschool their children had lower levels of stress compared to parenting national averages, but Aznar et al. (2021) found that parental stress during the closure of schools significantly increased, which had a negative effect on their own well-being which in turn negatively affected their ability to help their children during ERL. Because parents' stress significantly increased, there were high spikes in child protective services calls which had negative effects on parent-children's relationships (Agrawal, 2020; Aznar et al., 2021; Brown et al., 2020; Chung et al., 2020). ERL happens due to a crisis or traumatic experience that causes stress and unplanned life events. It differs significantly from planned homeschooling.

Challenges Students Faced During COVID-19

Challenges students faced during ERL due to the COVID-19 pandemic are still being quantified (Aburto et al., 2021). The practice of remote learning has been common to many educational institutions worldwide (Duraku & Hoxha, 2020), but the emergent closure of educational institutes due to the social isolation necessary to minimize the

transmission of COVID-19, many factors influenced students' ability to be successful in a virtual learning environment. Students struggled academically (Drexler, 2018; Huber & Helm, 2020; König et al., 2020; Mann, 2021; McKinsey & Company, 2020b), emotionally (American Academy of Pediatrics, 2021; Aznar et al., 2021; Brown et al., 2020; Chung et al., 2020 Ghazali, 2020; Lee et al., 2021; Munastiwi & Puryono, 2021; OECD Centre for Skills, 2020), and socially (Ewing & Cooper, 2021; Flynn et al., 2021; GÜNBAŞ & GÖZÜKÜÇÜK, 2020; Maio & Higgins-Dunn, 2021; Şahin et al., 2017).

Academically

JerseyCAN (2021) stated that the effects of COVID-19 have the potential to exacerbate educational inequalities for generations to come. McKinsey and Company (2020b) projected that students could achieve only about 70% of full learning potential in reading and about 50% in mathematics due to ERL; some students may fall behind a whole year depending on the grade level and home environment. Almost all, 97%, of educators reported seeing some type of learning loss of students who had ERL compared to previous years (Mann, 2021). According to McKinsey and Company (2020b), the lower the grade level, the more learning loss potential due to the hands-on nature of lower-elementary school needs. For lower-elementary school students, direct hands-on instruction fosters student engagement and increases comprehension (Cohen, 2018). During ERL, students lost direct hands-on instruction from teachers.

Students had to rely on technology to see their teachers and lost physical interaction completely. Understanding that the access and ability to participate in remote learning heavily relies on both connectivity to technology and a child's home

environment. Poor technology and poor home environments resulted in even further learning loss (McKinsey & Company, 2020b). For lower-elementary students, difficulty with technology was their lack of familiarity with communication devices necessary for virtual learning, such as videoconferencing, typing, the use of educational applications, internet, and Wi-Fi usage (Drexler, 2018; Huber & Helm, 2020; König et al., 2020). Because of this lack of familiarity, younger students had online learning challenging and needed help from their parents, older siblings, or others with more technological awareness (Ewing & Cooper, 2021).

Very few elementary teachers conducted live virtual sessions for their students because of the technology concerns or lack of technology. Instead, most elementary school teachers provided asynchronous lesson plans for their students (Flynn et al., 2021; Huber & Helm, 2020). It was found that many students spent less time engaged in traditional formal learning during virtual learning than during regular in-person schooling (Huber & Helm, 2020; König et al., 2020). Cahoon et al. (2021) found that 75.2% of parents reported that their children spent between 1 and 3 hours engaging in home learning activities; they also found that children learning from home in the United Kingdom spent on average, 2.5 hours each day doing schoolwork. This would suggest that students spent less time reading and learning during virtual learning than in traditional schooling. The nature of the lower-elementary school is learning to read as they begin to read to learn (Knupfer, 2021). Without direct instruction, students spent less time learning, which in turn meant spending less time on reading and on foundational skills needed for success in school.

Virtual learning can also hinder teachers' ability to differentiate lessons, which is more difficult during audio-video learning involving whole classes or large groups than during in-person learning. Teachers were producing one lesson, and it was expected that all students grasp the concept in the same way (Oliver, 2020). With all the different needs, one virtual lesson made it very difficult for students to learn on their differentiated levels (Oliver, 2020). Also, very young children typically have limited attention spans, with most education being delivered virtually through platforms such as Google Meets or Zoom the lessons were shorter than in-person lessons (Oliver, 2020). These challenges hindered virtual ERL productivity for elementary school students.

A study conducted in Norway with first-grade students revealed that students who received instruction during ERL for almost seven weeks had lower quality writing, handwriting fluency, and poorer attitudes toward writing than previous year first graders who were tested on the same items the year before during traditional in-person schooling (Skar et al., 2021). Spector (2021) found that second and third graders were affected the most by the pandemic regarding reading levels and fluency. It was found that 2020–2021 second and third graders are approximately 30% behind students in a typical school year in oral reading fluency and accuracy (Spector, 2021). Being significantly lower in reading affects a learner's ability in other content areas since reading is an important component in most subjects. The achievement gap, which was exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic, affected Black and Hispanic students and students of low-income households at an even higher rate than students without these identifiers (McKinsey & Company, 2020; Spector, 2021). The average Black or Hispanic student is roughly two years behind

the average White student in academics, and students who identify as low-income are significantly underrepresented in the top-rated academic students (Dickler, 2021; McKinsey & Company, 2020a). McKinsey and Company (2020a) found that ERL loss varies based on many factors such as the quality of instruction from teachers, the amount of home support and resources available, and the amount of engagement the student had during ERL. In 28 states in the United States, K–12 distance learning was not mandated; therefore, students received only asynchronous instruction; consequently, many students did not receive any direct instruction until 2021, resulting in learning loss of up to 12-14 months (McKinsey & Company, 2020).

Emotionally

With specific regards to COVID-19, ERL not only shifted the educational location and platform but also altered the lives of parents, teachers, and students socially and emotionally. In October of 2020, the American Academy of Pediatrics, The American Academy of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry, and The Children's Hospital Association stated the pandemic-related mental health decline had become a national state of emergency (American Academy of Pediatrics, 2021). COVID-19 caused many people worldwide trauma. From social isolation to the loss of loved ones and normal operation, COVID-19 was traumatic. ERL was a way to still provide learning to students in the context of the trauma being faced at home for many. Domestic violence increased in the homes, parents abusing drugs and alcohol to cope with stress, depression, and anxiety increased, and children were home to witness the trauma unfolding, many with no safe outlet (Deacon et al., 2021). This quick change of events, for many, was a hard

disturbance of reality and forced many students to have multiple responsibilities as learners and full-time students, balancing schoolwork, chores, and parental demands throughout the day. Parents' responsibilities also increased with balancing work, multiple children at different grade levels, and their own social-emotional health (Ghazali, 2020; Lee et al., 2021; Munastiwi & Puryono, 2021; OECD Centre for Skills, 2020).

Due to ERL, parents reported experiencing elevated stress levels during the COVID-19 pandemic for reasons such as managing poor behaviors from their children, teaching their children during virtual learning, working from home, dealing with elderly family members and other vulnerable populations in the home, or loss of jobs and income (Aznar et al., 2021; Brown et al., 2020; Chung et al., 2020). Which, according to Agrawal (2020), suggested a spike in harsher punishments and a more authoritarian style of parents. Because punishments become harsher, there was also a significant increase in child abuse reported (Agrawal, 2020). Parental involvement is a key component to student success, but also parental behaviors have been shown to have a significant effect on student achievement (Brajša-Žganec et al., 2019). Research has shown authoritative parenting is related to better school achievement compared to other styles of parenting, such as authoritarian, permissive, and uninvolved parents (Morin, 2021). Parents who create relationships, establish and enforce rules, and explain the reasons for punishments when rules are broken have a much more successful parent-child relationship than other forms of parenting styles. Taking a child's feelings into consideration during the implementation of consequences maintains a healthy, trusting relationship. According to a study conducted by the CDC, 46.6% of parents reported increased stress levels, 16.4%

reported using more drugs and alcohol, and 21.6% reported having difficulty sleeping; 54% of parents reported higher levels of suffering compared to parents who received no virtual instruction (Kreiter et al., 2021). Children faced emotional trauma from the exacerbated parental stress, which impeded parent-child relationships. The more the child depended on their parent for school support, the more negatively impacted the parent-child relationship became (Schmidt et al., 2021). The best parent-child relations were those children who worked independently and relied very little on their parents for educational support (2021).

In May 2020, roughly 30% of parents surveyed stated that their child were "experiencing harm to [their] emotional or mental health" (United States Department of Education [USDOE], 2021). Furthermore, 45% of parents reported separation from teachers and classmates as a "major challenge." (2021). Compounding with social trauma, ERL, social isolation, and the spike of parental abuse, suicidal ideation significantly increased in children (USDEO, 2021). Nationally reported by the USDOE (2021), throughout the 2020-21 school year, educators, parents, and administrators continuously felt social and emotional well-being was a significant challenge for students, especially those learning virtually. The CDC found that between April and October 2020, the proportion of mental health-related emergency room visits increased by 24% for children aged 5–11 (Leeb et al., 2020).

Socially

During the COVID-19 pandemic, children had limited contact with their peers, friends, and family. Many students were limited to telecommunication interactions only.

Due to the CDC recommendation of social distancing and isolations (CDC, 2020), children may have gone long periods of time without interacting with people who live outside of their homes. The younger the students were the fewer chances of social interactions (Ewing & Cooper, 2021). Younger students were reported to miss their peers and teachers more because of their limitations to others outside of their school environment (Ewing & Cooper, 2021; Flynn et al., 2021). Since students were physically separated from their teachers and peers and could not communicate with them, the lack of interaction can also lead to a loss of academic motivation (GÜNBAŞ & GÖZÜKÜÇÜK, 2020; Şahin et al., 2017).

Miao and Dunn (2021) reported 62.9% of parents with children in ERL stated their kids were getting less exercise, 58% were playing less outside, and 86.2 % of children were spending less time with friends. About 25% of parents reported their children's emotional health significantly declined due to virtual learning and social isolation (Maio & Higgins-Dunn, 2021). Most parents/guardians in a survey conducted by OECD (2021) reported worrying about the development of their child's social skills due to the closure of educational institutes due to COVID-19. More parents/caretakers are worried about the development of social skills (88.3%) compared to academic skills (85.4%) (OECD, 2021). For many children, they went over a year of canceled birthday parties, playdates, sporting events and competitions, dance and art classes, and many other activities where young children typically get to learn social skills. Children need social interaction to thrive and encourage healthy brain development (Bright Horizons Family Solutions, 2021). When kids socialize, they learn how to interact with other

people, they learn how to show and be empathetic, how to share, negotiate, and how to pick up on social cues and norms of other people.

Due to the CDC mandating items such as social isolation and wearing masks when social distancing was impossible (CDC, 2020), children's social anxiety spiked (Matheis, 2021). Children were increasingly anxious about being in social settings because for over a year; they were not allowed to be in large groups nor in close contact with others. So, when COVID-19 restrictions began to become laxer in the summer of 2021, many children suffered due to the fear instilled in them for the past year. When social isolation was not practical, wearing masks were enforced (CDC, 2021). According to Matheis (2021), wearing masks takes away the ability to see facial expressions, which also inhibits social interaction. Being able to see smiles, see the emotions in facial expressions, or just feel connected with faces was all hindered using masks. The social, emotional and academic norms awarded traditionally were not given to students during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Parental Involvement Shift During the Pandemic

Parental support has been shown to be a vital contribution to the success of virtual learning (Makrooni, 2019; Woofter, 2019). In lieu of teacher presence, parents and caregivers had to take responsibility for their children's daily academic needs. Parents often struggled with understanding the needs of their children and how they can assist them during ERL (Hornby & Blackwell, 2018). Challenges that directly impacted parental involvement during ERL include economic resources, lack of internet access, lack of interest in using technology, and having low digital self-efficacy (Beckman et al.,

2019; Drexler, 2018; Huber & Helm, 2020; König et al., 2020 McKinsey & Company, 2021; Povey et al., 2016). It is important to note that parents did not choose for their students to learn from home; this construct was forced upon them.

During online learning, teachers and educators found the following helpful for parents to do to motivate their children: organizing and managing students' schedules, cultivating relationships and interactions, monitoring and encouraging student engagement, assisting in instructing students as necessary, being sources of information as necessary, collaborating with teachers and school personnel, and facilitating learning (Borup, 2016; Raguindin et al., 2021). Because of this new demand, parents are expected to stay at home or work from home full time. Unfortunately, not every job can be done from home. Dingel and Neiman (2020) found that about 37% of jobs can be done at home. Therefore, parents were unable to assist their children during online learning. Parents that were able to work from home had to complete their own tasks during the school day in order to keep their jobs and provide financially. For low-income families, or families who did not have the capability to work from home, faced other obstacles in supporting their children (Munastiwi & Puryono, 2021). These parents had to find babysitters, elder parents, or rely on others to assist their children during ERL.

According to the USDOE (2021), education levels and parent/caregivers' employment status impacted students' ERL. Parents/caregivers with a college education are four times more likely to work from home compared to parents who are not college-educated (USDOE of Education, 2021). The parents who are college-educated are 26.7% more likely to facilitate learning and 52.6% more likely to support their child's learning

compared to non-college-educated parents (USDOE, 2021). Parents without college degrees reported feeling less confident in facilitating learning and reported just being helpless for their children while they were learning (USDOE of Education, 2021). Essential workers were amongst the most challenged parental groups, along with non-native speaking parents and immigrant parents (USDOE, 2021). Essential workers are least able to provide time to assist their children at home as they were not home to do so. The USDOE's survey found that essential workers are least likely to engage directly in facilitating their child's learning and more likely to encourage the students to work independently (USDOE, 2021). Essential workers were often working longer hours than prior to the pandemic and were at the greatest risk of becoming infected with COVID-19, which also increased their stress levels and their ability to assist with their child's learning.

Non-native speaking parents had difficulty assisting their children due to language barriers. Teachers in the United States taught and communicated in English, primarily, so assisting their children with reading and writing in English became challenging and often frustrating because those parents felt helpless (Sugarman & Lazarin, 2021). Immigrant parents may have also struggled in the same way with the language barrier, but they have potentially exacerbated challenges if they are illegal. Illegal immigrants may have had limited access to public benefits, work, and health care during the COVID-19 pandemic (Sugarman & Lazarin, 2020).

Regardless of language or citizenship, parents reported wanting additional resources to support their children's learning in all subjects; math (52.6%), science

(49.1%), literacy/reading (46.2%), and art (35.1%) (OECD, 2021). An in-depth review revealed multiple factors that inhibited ERL from being delivered, which include the way teachers delivered instruction, time constraints of virtual learning instruction, teacher dependency on parents for regulation and redirection, lack of resources, and technology concerns (Munastiwi & Puryono, 2021). Around 73% of kindergarten parents found it difficult to manage student schedules because many of the activities did not line up with the planned schedules due to many of these obstacles (Munastiwi & Puryono, 2021).

Due to the needs of younger students, assistance from parents is needed in order to be successful virtually (Hapsari et al., 2020). Unfortunately for many parents, school is a form of babysitting as they are expected to go to work during the same hours (Hapsari et al., 2020). Along with educating students, parents had to take the place of educational institutes in feeding their children meals that schools would historically provide. Students in most schools across the United States of America are given lunch every day for small payments or for free. In some school districts, as much as breakfast, lunch, and late snacks are provided for free during the school year (USDA, n.d). Due to the COVID- 19 pandemic, nearly 370 million children did not receive a school meal in 150 countries during the pandemic (Borkowski et al., 2021). A survey conducted in April/May 2020 revealed that 23% of households ran out of food in March and April 2020, with a significant disparity in lower socioeconomic demographics (Schwab, 2020; Wieser et al., 2020). Unfortunately, 74 million children were food-insecure globally due to the lost income of parents faced by the COVID-19 pandemic (WFP, 2020). Due to this crisis, some states obtained permission from the USDA to allow schools to provide food for all

children under 18 years old, not just those who previously qualified for free meals (Action for Healthy Kids, 2020). In other states, that was not an option for students, so parents had to feed their children 1-2 meals more than they were used to providing daily.

Parents who were juggling parenting, working, and many other forms of barriers may have felt burdened by assisting their child(ren) with virtual learning (Tokić & Vukašinović, 2020), along with providing nutritious meals for their child(ren) on a consistent basis (Borkowski et al., 2021), and being active facilitators in student education parents struggled with practical ways to keep their children motivated (Raguindin et al., 2021). As stakeholders of their children's academics, parents' motivational strategies to foster productive parental involvement in virtual learning environments must be thoroughly investigated.

Summary and Conclusion

The COVID-19 pandemic required stakeholders in children's education to rethink how education and infrastructure are structured. With education shifting from in-person to virtual learning due to emergency situations, it is paramount that students stay motivated to learn regardless of the place they are learning. Students are found to be motivated when the learning environment is engaging, students have clear rules and expectations with appropriate authoritarian consequences, the environment is positive and welcoming, and they have active facilitators (Burkhalter, 2014; Mustary & BCES, 2020; Rimm-Kaufman, 2010). When students feel respected, appreciated, and admired, they are more likely to be motivated to perform academically (Mustary & BCES, 2020). When

students are in school, these constructs are facilitated by teachers and supported by parents due to the students being present in the school.

In model lower-elementary schools, teachers model intrinsic and extrinsic motivation, provide healthy, positive learning environments, and are places for students to feel safe, be fed, and feel at peace (Calp, 2020; Mustary & Bulgarian Comparative Education Society; BCES; Rimm-Kaufman, 2010). When students are unable to go to school for crises, pandemics, natural disasters, or any emergency response situations, with the new advances in technology, students will be expected to engage in virtual learning (Camacho & Legare, 2021). In order for virtual ERL to be successful at home and learning gaps not to be exacerbated, parents must find practical ways to aid in the physiological, safety, love, esteem, and self-actualization motivational factors for young learners. Chapter 3 provides a detailed review of the qualitative method and instrumentation that was used in the study.

Chapter 3: Research Method

The purpose of this basic qualitative study was to examine parents' perceptions of the strategies used to motivate their lower-elementary school children's virtual ERL during COVID-19, addressing the limited research on this topic. By using semistructured interviews to examine motivational strategies parents used during virtual ERL, I was able to gain insight on parental strategies from the parents' perception. Chapter 3 will detail the methodological process that was used in the study. In this chapter, I review the research design and the rationale, my role as the researcher, the methodology, recruitment of participants for the target population, instrumentation, data collection methods, and data analysis. At the end of Chapter 3, issues of trustworthiness and ethical considerations and a chapter summary can be found.

Research Design and Rationale

A qualitative approach was most suitable to examine the perceptions of parents who had children in lower-elementary school who transitioned to virtual ERL due to COVID-19. A quantitative approach was not suitable because quantitative research aims to answer quantified questions such as who, what, when, where, and how (Apuke, 2017). Quantitative research also seeks numeric explanations to determine cause and effect, correlations, and comparisons in data (Apuke, 2017). In contrast, qualitative research gives researchers the opportunity to examine a phenomenon. Researchers can examine specific experiences that happened and what they meant to the participants (Williams & Moser, 2019). A qualitative study allowed me the use of open-ended questions to receive the necessary data to understand perceptions.

A basic qualitative approach is the approach used for the study. The basic qualitative approach stems from constructivism (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). It is the idea that people construct their realities and thus have symbolic interactions with that experience. A basic qualitative approach allows researchers to obtain first-person accounts of lived experiences. A phenomenological approach was not appropriate for this study because phenomenology is limited to experiences and does not ask about perspective, perception or about any thoughts on the specific topic (Peoples, 2021). Hence, a basic qualitative approach fitting the examined RQ best. The purpose of this study was to examine parent perceptions of the strategies used to motivate their lower-elementary school children's virtual ERL during the COVID-19 pandemic. A basic qualitative design permitted open-ended questions involving the participants' perceptions (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016) of strategies used to motivate their lower-elementary school children's virtual ERL during the COVID-19 pandemic. A qualitative research design helped obtain an in-depth description of the participants' perceptions (Clark & Vealé, 2018; Merriam & Tisdell, 2016; Rubin & Rubin, 2012), answering the following questions:

- RQ: What are parent perceptions of the strategies used to motivate their lower-elementary school children's virtual ERL during the COVID-19 pandemic?
    - SQ 1: What are parent perceptions of physiological strategies used to motivate their lower-elementary school children's virtual ERL during the COVID-19 pandemic?

- SQ 2: What are parent perceptions of safety strategies used to motivate their lower-elementary school children's virtual ERL during the COVID-19 pandemic?
- SQ 3: What are parent perceptions of love strategies used to motivate their lower-elementary school children's virtual ERL during the COVID-19 pandemic?
- SQ 4: What are parent perceptions of esteem strategies used to motivate their lower-elementary school children's virtual ERL during the COVID-19 pandemic?
- SQ 5: What are parent perceptions of self-actualization strategies used to motivate their lower-elementary school children's virtual ERL during the COVID-19 pandemic?

Role of the Researcher

The role of a researcher was to be an active instrument in the research process (Wa-Mbaleka, 2020). A qualitative researcher is responsible for the rigor and credibility of many aspects of the research such as validation, reliability, standardization of measures and methods. The researcher is also responsible for collecting and analyzing the data while reporting the findings in a non-biased way (Wa-Mbaleka, 2020). Because the researcher is the primary instrument, biases are almost impossible to avoid (Maxwell, 2005). My responsibility was to ensure that I was aware of any biases throughout the process. As the researcher I was responsible for recruiting participants who are parents of lower-elementary school children during the virtual ERL due to the COVID-19

pandemic. I ensured the participants were clear on their roles as voluntary participants of the study by having a consent form signed and disclosing that they were free to withdraw from the study at any time. I thoroughly explained confidentiality to the participants, briefing them that all identifiers were removed from data used for the research. I also ensured participants felt safe by answering all questions they may have before the interview began. To avoid bias or other ethical issues and to ensure integrity, I kept detailed records using reflective journaling during data analysis to remain aware of potential biases (see Merriam & Tisdell, 2016).

Methodology

For the study, I used a basic qualitative inquiry (Merriam, 2016) to examine parent perceptions of strategies used to motivate their lower-elementary school children's virtual ERL during COVID-19. In-depth, one-on-one, semistructured interviews (Rubin & Rubin, 2012) were conducted with parents who had children in lower-elementary school during the 2020–2021 school year who had a shift from in-person learning to virtual ERL. By interviewing parents of children who experienced virtual ERL, I was able to examine the parents' perceptions on the strategies used to motivate their lower-elementary school students during virtual ERL. Parents self-reported that they had children in lower-elementary school during virtual ERL. The participants must have been able to speak and understand English to be able to effectively communicate with me and consent to the study. Excluding criteria was any parent who identified as having children in any other grade besides kindergarten, 1st grade, 2nd grade, or 3rd grade during 2020–2021 school and any parent whose child did not have a shift from in-person learning to

virtual learning due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Parents with children who had any learning disabilities were also excluded from the research, as these parents may be used to giving their children extra educational support.

Sampling

Purposive sampling entails identifying and selecting individuals that are specifically knowledgeable about a phenomenon of interest (Palinkas et al., 2016). Criterion-sampling is a more specific selection of individuals based on the assumption that they have specific experience with the phenomenon of interest and therefore will be able to provide in-depth information on the phenomenon (Palinkas et al., 2016). For the study, parents were assumed to have knowledgeable experience on the strategies used to motivate their lower-elementary school children's virtual ERL. All criteria for inclusion needed to be met to be considered for participation in the study. If any of the exclusion criteria were met, the individual was disqualified.

A purposeful sample of 13 parents who self-report having children in lower-elementary school during the 2020–2021 school year were located by recruiting participants on Facebook parent–teacher association groups, Amazon Mechanical Turk, Research and Me, Walden University participants pool, and by using snowball referrals. Parents were able to view the recruitment flyer that details ways to contact me via email. The parents underwent an initial interview to ensure they fit the criteria of the study via email. Once the participant fit the criteria, the participant was sent a consent form and a 45-minute one-on-one, semistructured interview was scheduled. Because the selection

criteria were specific to parents of lower-elementary school children, the study results may not be generalizable to other grade levels.

It is recommended that 12 participants be used in qualitative research (Vasileiou, et al., 2018). I chose to go one above the recommended participants to ensure saturation is met. The continuation of sampling and interviewing participants was conducted until saturation was achieved (Van Rijnsoever, 2017). Saturation was met once no new information arose from the data (Guest et al., 2020).

Instrumentation

As the researcher, I served as the primary instrumentation. I used in-depth, one-on-one, open-ended, semi-structured interviews (Merriam, 2016; Rubin & Rubin, 2012). The secondary instrumentation that was used for this study consisted of 10 interview questions (IQ) aligned with Maslow's theory of human motivation (Maslow, 1943), (see Appendix A). The developed qualitative interview has established content validity because each question specifically aligns with finding out information regarding one of Maslow's 5 basic needs: physiological, safety, love, esteem, and self-actualization (Maslow, 1943). SQ 1 has two IQs, IQ1 and IQ2, which request information regarding the student's physiological needs. SQ 2 has two questions, IQ3 and IQ4, which request information regarding safety needs. SQ 3 has two questions, IQ5 and IQ6, which request information regarding love needs. SQ 4 has two questions, IQ7 and IQ8, which request information regarding self-esteem needs. SQ 5 has one question, IQ9, which requests information regarding self-actualization needs, and IQ10 requests information on any motivational strategies parents may have used to motivate their children during virtual

ERL which helped answer the overall central RQ. Each question in the qualitative interview was used to obtain the parents' perceptions to better understand how they motivated their children on each level of Maslow's theory of human motivation (1943). By using open-ended questions I was able to saturate the data.

Procedures for Recruitment, Participation, and Data Collection

Parents who self-report that they had children in lower-elementary school during virtual ERL were used for the study. I obtained the participants by posting and sharing the recruitment flyer on Facebook parent-teacher association groups, Amazon Mechanical Turk, Research and Me, Walden University participants pool, and by using snowball referrals. During the recruitment, potential participants reached out to me via email once they have viewed the recruitment flyer which had my email contact information on it. Upon response to the flyer via email expressing their interest in participation, the potential participants were sent an initial interview via email to ensure they met the set criteria.

During the initial interview, I provided the participants with the purpose of the study and the inclusion criteria. I also answered any questions they may have about the study or the interviewing process. Once participants were aware of the study and they have met the criteria, I sent a consent form to the participants to partake in a one-on-one interview via email. Depending on the participants preference, the interview was scheduled on the telephone, in-person, or via videoconferencing. Saturation was established by selecting 13 participants. I know I reached saturation when the data

material became redundant and no new information was found (Faulkner & Trotter, 2017).

The data collection qualitative interviewing instrument consisted of in-depth, semi-structured, open-ended questions (see Appendix A). The qualitative interviewing instrument was given in the form of qualitative interviewing. Videoconferencing was used to collect data. To ensure the data was accurate for analysis, the interview was audio recorded and transcribed using hand-transcription. Each interview lasted approximately 45-minutes. Videoconferencing was recorded via an audio recording device on an Apple, Inc. iMac device. At the end of each interview, I debriefed each participant about the significance of the study and thanked all the participants for contributing to the research study. All participants were made aware of national counseling resources (see Appendix B) to deal with any emotional distress that may have been triggered due to the traumatic effects COVID-19 had on many families. Participants were made aware that after the conclusion of data analysis I would contact them again to request information on the accuracy of the findings via member checks and share the findings.

Qualitative Data Analysis Plan

The qualitative interview consisted of in-depth, one-on-one, semi-structured, open-ended questions. The interviews were audio recorded to ensure all information was received accurately for data analysis. The interviews were conducted via videoconferencing. Each audio was recorded, and the interview was transcribed verbatim using hand-transcription. The transcripts were analyzed using thematic analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2006). The thematic analysis is used to systematically identify and organize

information which helps offer insight into patterns that give meaning to data sets through themes and confident ideas (Braun & Clark, 2006). A thematic analysis allows researchers to look across many experiences and make sense of common experiences. The thematic analysis consists of the following six-phase approach:

1. Phase 1: Familiarizing Yourself with the Data. The first phase in the thematic analysis is to get to know the data that has been collected by reading and rereading the transcript, listening to the audio recording, and getting a good sense of the information received (Braun & Clarke, 2006). In this process, I familiarized myself with the data by reading and rereading the transcript and listening to the audio recording multiple times while also engaging in bracketing (Tufford & Newman, 2012) by documenting thoughts and emotions while engaging with the data.
2. Phase 2: Generating Initial Codes. The second phase in the thematic analysis is identifying initial codes for the data collected. Codes provided labels and meaning to the data collected that is relevant to the RQ (Braun & Clarke, 2006). In the process I received the data and categorized it based on similarities.
3. Phase 3: Searching for Themes. The third phase in the thematic analysis is to transfer codes into themes (Braun & Clarke, 2006). Themes capture the importance of the code and represent patterns amongst the data set. Themes are constructed rather than discovered to give symbolism to the data. In this

phase I took the codes constructed in phase two and construct patterns and themes found in the codes.

4. Phase 4: Reviewing Potential Themes. The fourth phase in thematic analysis serves as a quality check for the themes identified in phase three. In this phase I figured the importance of the theme, the quality of the theme, the relevance to the topic, and I figured if the data supports the theme (Braun & Clarke, 2006). This is an essential part of the cohesion of the data and the themes identified.
5. Phase 5: Defining and Naming Themes. The fifth phase in the thematic analysis is when deep analysis is used to extract meaning of each theme and give them specific identities. In this phase, I reviewed and solidified each theme that was extracted in the codes and ensure their dependability (Braun & Clarke, 2006).
6. Phase 6: Producing the Report. The sixth and final phase in the thematic analysis is writing the themes in a way that communicates to the readers the meaning that was constructed throughout the data set. This phase aligned the data to the RQ order to convey validity in the questions asked to the answers received (Braun & Clarke, 2006).

The use of a Word Document table assisted with the organization from phase to phase. Demographic information was also reported in a table.

Issues of Trustworthiness

Credibility

To ensure credibility and trustworthiness, I regularly conducted self-check in's making sure that the questions being asked of the participants align with the RQ. For the data to align with the RQ, it is imperative that the questions be asked appropriately and accurately. To stay credible and consistent, I used a standard voice and tone when conducting the interviews and I transcribed each interview electronically using hand-transcription verbatim. Next, when coding the data, a strategy I used to ensure trustworthiness is reflexivity to bring awareness to my biases, assumptions, and how I affected the research study (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). I used bracketing and journaling to keep myself aware of my reactions to the data. Another strategy I used to ensure trustworthiness is at the end of the data collection I used member checks to ensure that the findings were congruent with the data received from the participants (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). Frequent communication with my dissertation committee was also paramount for further validity.

Transferability

To ensure transferability, I provided an outline of the steps of the interview process, recruitment strategies, and thematic analysis to allow the information to be transferable and reused, if necessary for others to replicate the study. This study may be transferable to other parents or caretakers of lower-elementary school students in any ERL situation in which students must go from traditional in-person learning to virtual ERL.

Dependability

Audio trails were used to ensure dependability (Carcary, 2020). Audio trails document each step of the research process. The steps that were documented in the audio trail are the methods, participants demographics, the data collection process, and the summary of all interviews.

Confirmability

To ensure confirmability some of the same steps I took to ensure credibility and dependability such as reflexivity and audio trails were used. Audio trails of all data collected were viewed and analyzed during data analysis which provided me the opportunity to journal about any thoughts, feelings, or emotions triggered by the data collected.

Ethical Procedures

Ethical considerations were a top priority of this study. Being effective in upholding confidentiality and nonmaleficence (APA, 2014) was a priority of this study. Ensuring full disclosure of the limitations to confidentiality as recommended by APA (2014) made all participants aware of all instances that confidentiality cannot be upheld. According to APA (2014), if the participants disclosed any true intent to harm themselves or someone else, then the researcher would be obligated to report that information to ensure the safety of all participants. Anything disclosed outside of harming themselves or others was confidential information (APA, 2014).

Nonmaleficence was also held to a high regard because some of the questions may be triggering, the researcher needed to ensure that all questions have high value to

the RQ and are not prying in a way that could leave participants feeling any negative feelings. If so, in the consent form, the participants were given national counseling resources (see Appendix B). Doing harm was not a goal or a projection in this study.

Agreements

After being cleared by the Walden University IRB (approval number 05-17-22-1039430) to begin data collection, I requested to add a flyer with contact information to two Facebook groups: National Parent Teacher Association and Parent & Teachers Association (PTA Online), and the online platforms of Amazon Mechanical Turk, Research and Me, and Walden University participants pool to recruit parents who had children in lower-elementary school during the 2020–2021 school year during the COVID-19 pandemic when students shifted into virtual ERL from traditional in-person learning. The purpose of the request to post the recruitment flyer in these aforementioned groups were to gain access to the target population for data collection.

Treatment of Human Participants

Once the participants reached out to me via email, I obtained informed consent via email that entails full disclosure about the purpose of the study and how I would use the information received in the interviewing process (Xu et al., 2020). The participant was made aware of any potential risks and limitations of the study. The consent form explained that the study is completely voluntary with no compensation received to complete the study and that if they wished to withdraw at any point without any explanation, they are free to do so.

Treatment of Data

All data received was kept confidential. All identifiable information was sealed from the study. Information such as names, city, states, the school the child attends, email address, and phone numbers will all be excluded when reporting the finding. For organization of data, each participant was labeled alphanumerically (P-13). P presenting participant and the number representing the order in which the interview was conducted. All video recording were stored on a password protected computer under a password protected folder. Five years after the data collection is complete, all transcribed and audio recordings will be deleted from any electronic database (American Psychiatric Association, 2013).

Other Ethical Issues

As a current licensed professional counselor who does clinical work with children in a school district, remaining aware of my responsibility as an interviewer and not a clinician was a role that I had to continue to differentiate. Knowing the psychosocial effects COVID-19 had on parents and students, remaining stern in my role as an interviewer was paramount.

Summary

This chapter focused on the research design, approach, and reasons for conducting a qualitative research design and why the basic qualitative approach was appropriate for examining parent perceptions of lower-elementary school children's motivational strategies used during ERL due to the COVID-19 pandemic. This chapter also focused on in-depth details of the research process, research design and rationale, my role as the

researcher, criteria for recruiting participants, trustworthiness, and data analysis. Chapter 4 will detail the analysis of the settings, demographics, data collection, data analysis, and evidence of trustworthiness.

Chapter 4: Results

The COVID-19 pandemic caused a major shift in the way education was delivered to students. The rapid shift from traditional in-person learning to virtual ERL happened quickly with little to no preparation for teachers, parents, or students. Studies show that in order for students to learn, they must first have all of their basic human motivational needs met (Crump, 1995; Husain, 2014; Latsoalo et al., 2018). But many parents found it difficult to motivate their children during ERL (Garbe et al., 2020); hence, many students may have suffered academically and did not their full potential during the 2020–2021 academic school year due to virtual ERL. The purpose of this study was to examine parent perceptions of the strategies used to motivate their lower-elementary school children's virtual ERL during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Chapter 4 includes an in-depth description of the study's results. The results include one overarching theme, 11 themes, and four subthemes. In Chapter 4 the videoconferencing setting will also be discussed, and the participants' demographics will be outlined. This chapter also includes a discussion of data collection methods, data analysis, and evidence of trustworthiness. Chapter 4 will conclude with a chapter summary.

Setting

Participants were recruited via online social media platforms, so many of the participants were not in a vicinity where they could be reached in person. Therefore, I offered the participants the option to meet via videoconferencing or telephone. All 13 participants opted to meet via videoconferencing. I held each videoconference in a

private in-home office where I could ensure the participants' confidentiality. The participants were free to video conference where they felt comfortable; a quiet location was recommended to limit distraction and create a virtual space where the participants were willing to share freely and honestly. No conditions were present during data collection that influenced the participants participation or data interpretation.

Demographics

A total of 18 participants reached out to me to participate in the study. I then sent an initial email to ensure the participants met the criteria. The participants were instructed to email "I meet all the criteria" if they were eligible to participate in the study. Three participants did not respond to the initial email and then were disqualified. The remaining 15 potential participants were sent the consent form where they were instructed to reply "I consent" if they wanted to move forward with the study. All 15 participants consented to participate in the study, but two participants never responded with a time and date to participate in the interview. The study was conducted with a total of 13 participants to achieve saturation.

All participants were parents who had children in lower-elementary school (grades kindergarten–third) during ERL due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Each participant was assigned an alphanumeric identity (i.e., P1–P13) to ensure confidentiality. Table 1 displays the participants' children's grade, gender, and race; the parent's identified socioeconomic status; the primary language spoken at home; their highest level of education; and if there were more than one child in the home. There is a parent representative for each of the four grade levels being researched in lower-elementary

school. Most of the parent participants had children who identify as male. Twelve of the 13 participants identify as either Black, Hispanic, or a combination of the two. The majority, 62%, of the parents identified as being middle class. English is a primary language for 92% of parents. Nine of the 13 or 70% of parents have a graduate degree or higher. Eleven of the 13 participants had more than one child in the home.

Table 1

Demographics

Characteristics	*n*	%
Child's grade		
K	2	15
1	5	40
2	2	15
3	4	31
Child's gender		
Male	8	61.5
Female	5	37.5
Parent's race		
Black	4	31
White	1	8
Hispanic	6	46
Asian	0	0
Mixed Black and Hispanic	2	15
Parents' socioeconomic status		
Lower class	4	30
Middle class	8	62
Upper class	1	8
Language spoken at home		
English	8	62
Spanish	1	8
Both English and Spanish	4	31
Highest level of education		
High school	2	15
Some college	2	15
Bachelor's degree	4	31
Graduate degree	5	39
Multiple children in the home		
Yes	11	85
No	2	15

Data Collection

The primary data collection method used for this study was one-on-one, semistructured interviews developed to answer the RQ and guided by Maslow's theory of human motivation. The instrument used to conduct the interviews was an interview guide (see Appendix A) to examine parents' perceptions of strategies used to motivate their lower-elementary school children during ERL due to the COVID-19 pandemic. I began the data collection process on May 17th, 2022, after receiving IRB approval (#05-17-22-1039430). Data collection concluded on June 6th, 2022. I obtained participants by posting the recruitment flyer on Facebook parent–teacher association groups, Amazon Mechanical Turk, Research and Me, Walden University participants pool, and by using snowball referrals. Once the flyer was posted on the sites for recruitment purposes, participants began to reach out to me via email. A total of 13 participants who met the eligibility requirements and consented were selected to participate in the data collection portion of the study.

Once the 13 participants agreed to the terms of the consent form via email, the interview was scheduled. All 13 participants agreed to videoconferencing for the interview. I set a reminder via Google calendar to remind the participants of the time of the scheduled interview. Before the interview started, I reminded each participant that the interview will be audio-recorded as per the consent form. Each participant agreed to the audio-recording. I began the interview by reading the opening statement of the interview guide to review the purpose of the study and ensure the participants were aware that they

had the option to opt-out of the study at any time, for any reason. Each participant was assured that their identity would be protected to ensure confidentiality and that no information would be bought, sold, or used against them to harm them in any way. During the interview, I took detailed notes of the participants' responses and my reactions to their responses.

The interview instrument consisted of 10 questions to examine parents' perceptions of strategies used to motivate their lower-elementary school children's ERL due to the COVID-19 pandemic. The duration of the interviews ranged from 20 to 35 minutes, depending on the length and details given in the responses. All interviews were complete, and saturation was achieved with the 13 interviews. No follow-up interviews were needed. At the conclusion of each interview, I hand-transcribed the audio data. To ensure accuracy, I listened and relistened to the audio data. Transcripts were shared with my chair for review. Feedback was received and applied.

The audio recordings, transcripts, and notes taken were stored in a secure, password-protected file and the hard copies are placed in a safe in my in-home office. I am the only person who has access to the digital file and password to the safe. There was one variation in data collection from the plan presented in Chapter 3. The interviews were thought to take 30–45 minutes, but it took 20–35 minutes to complete the interviews. There were no unusual circumstances encountered during data collection.

Data Analysis

For my data analysis, I used a thematic analysis (Braun & Clark, 2006); a six-phase analysis in which I first began with familiarizing myself with the data, then I began

the initial coding phase, followed by generating codes, then developing themes and validating said themes. Next, I defined the themes and interpreted and reported on the findings. The thematic analysis assisted in identifying the meaning and themes that developed from the participants' answers to the open-ended questions.

After transcribing the audio recording of the video-conferenced interview data verbatim, by hand, I reread each transcript to immerse myself in the data and better understand the participants' experiences. During transcript review, I bracketed and journaled my personal biases to avoid my personal interpretation skewing the data. While viewing the data, I coded the data by using highlighters to identify multiple categories found in the data. By labeling each participant alphanumerically (P1-P13), I was able to organize the data while ensuring confidentiality. A Microsoft Excel document table entitled "Coded Analysis" was created for each of the 13 participants and a sheet was created for each of the 10 questions to organize their responses to the IQs. Each sheet had columns that were labeled with the participants' alphanumeric identifier (P1-P13), the interview extract, codes, categories, meaning, themes and sub-themes.

While reading through each transcript, I identified and extracted meaning codes of the participants' perceptions, highlighted them on paper, pulled the extract out digitally and added it to the excel spreadsheet. After coding all the categories, I uncovered 94 categories which were able to be consolidated to 65 categories to be coded. I then found specific codes that groups of categories fell under. The codes allowed me to begin to find themes in the data. Once all the codes were established, I then found common themes and sub-themes in each question that answered the central RQ.

There was one overarching theme of routines & consistency, 11 themes, and four subthemes that emerged from the data. The final themes and sub-themes were recorded in a Microsoft Excel spreadsheet titled “Analysis Themes.” The themes were used to develop the results section of this chapter. Although some variations of participants responses were recorded, the overarching theme remained consistent. The variations and discrepancy of recorded data were noted and factored into the final data analysis. See Table 2 for a summary of the themes and their alignment with the RQ and SQ

Table 2

Thematic Analysis

Research question/SQ	Theme	Subtheme (if applicable)
Overarching question	Routines & consistency	
SQ 1	1.Consistent bedtime 2.Children need to be fed three meals a day and snacks in between. 3.Following school’s schedule for feeding	
SQ 2	4.Parents were home to assist their child with childcare and schoolwork. 5.A distraction-free learning environment where children felt safe mentally and physically.	5a: Classroom elements in their learning environment
SQ 3	6.Feeling loved, physically verbally and emotionally	6a: Spending one-on-one time with parents to engage in activities
SQ 4	7.Social engagement 8.Positive affirmations	8a: Affirmative rewards
SQ 5	9.Parents knowing their child’s learning style 10.Parents knowing how their child is motivated 11.Parental involvement with academics	11a: Mental health

Evidence of Trustworthiness

Trustworthiness

Trustworthiness in qualitative research is the degree to which credibility, transferability, confirmability, and dependability can be established (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). To ensure credibility and trustworthiness, I ensured that the questions being asked to the participants align with the central RQ. I established trustworthiness by asking the participants the same questions aligning with the interview guide. To stay credible and consistent, I used a standard voice and tone when conducting the interviews and I transcribed each interview electronically by typing them on the computer. I also used many strategies to stay consistent such as reflexivity, bracketing, journaling, and member checks as described in Chapter 3. Weekly communication with my dissertation chair was influential.

Transferability

Transferability provides details of information necessary to replicate the study in the future or consider the used strategies and take notice of the differences (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). To ensure the transferability of this study, I provided detailed descriptions of the method, data collection, and analysis process. The 13 participants in this study were parents of lower-elementary school children who had an emergency shift from traditional in-person learning to virtual ERL due to the COVID-19 pandemic. This study's results may be transferable to parents of lower-elementary school parents who have an emergency shift to virtual learning modalities.

Dependability

The dependability of this study was established by using an audit trail, which provided a detailed record of the research process by documenting the steps taken during the research process (Carcary, 2020). The steps that were documented in the audit trail are the methods, participants demographics, the data collection process, and the summary of all interviews.

Confirmability

To ensure confirmability, many of the same steps I took to ensure credibility and dependability such as reflexivity and audit trails were used. Audit trails of all data collected were viewed and analyzed during data analysis which provided me the opportunity to journal about any biases, thoughts, feelings, or emotions triggered by the data collected.

Results

This section detailed the study findings, including the themes, sub-themes, and direct quotes from participants' interviews to support each theme. An assigned alphanumeric identity (P1-P13) protected the confidentiality of each participant's quotes. The interview instrument contained 10 IQs with appropriate follow-up questions, which supported the RQ. The IQs (see Appendix A) included questions addressing what strategies parents used to motivate their lower-elementary school child's virtual ERL due to the COVID-19 pandemic. The participant's responses were typed on a computer verbatim and hand-coded, assigned categories and themes and were then analyzed.

Central RQ

Based on an in-depth analysis of the data collected from the interviews of the 13 parents of lower-elementary school children who had and emergency shift from traditional in-person learning to virtual ERL due to the COVID-19 pandemic, one overarching theme, 11 themes, and four sub-themes emerged (see Table 2) that addressed the following central RQ: what are parent perceptions of the strategies used to motivate their lower-elementary school children's virtual ERL during the COVID-19 pandemic?

The interview instrument (see Appendix A) was utilized to present 10 IQs with follow-up questions, which supported the central RQ. Each IQ had follow-up questions to gain more of the participants personal insight depending on their responses to the initial question. Because the IQs required open-ended responses, there were some deviations in responses from the participants. As a result of the participants' responses to the asked IQs, one overarching theme, 11 themes and four sub-themes were revealed. IQ I & 2 support SQ 1: what are parent perceptions of physiological strategies used to motivate their lower-elementary school children's virtual ERL during the COVID-19 pandemic? IQ 3 & 4 support SQ2: what are parent perceptions of safety strategies used to motivate their lower-elementary school children's virtual ERL during the COVID-19 pandemic? IQ 5 & 6 support SQ3: what are parent perceptions of love strategies used to motivate their lower-elementary school children's virtual ERL during the COVID-19 pandemic? IQ 7 & 8 support SQ4: what are parent perceptions of esteem strategies used to motivate their lower-elementary school children's virtual ERL during the COVID-19 pandemic? IQ 1–10 support SQ5: what are parent perceptions of self-actualization strategies used to

motivate their lower-elementary school children's virtual ERL during the COVID-19 pandemic? All IQ 1–10 support the overall RQ: what are parent perceptions of the strategies used to motivate their lower-elementary school children's virtual ERL during the COVID-19 pandemic?

Overarching Theme: Routines and Consistency

As a result of the participants' responses to the IQs, "Routines and Consistency" emerged as the overarching theme of the study. This theme was present in nine of the 10 IQs. All 13 participants expressed that finding routines and consistency was necessary to keep their child motivated during ERL due to the COVID-19 pandemic. P1 stated, "definitely putting them to bed early and put them on a sleep schedule as far as like a bedtime … By nine o'clock." P2 stated, "I try to be consistent on a schedule that he was previously on. … I tried to be consistent with the schedule … just being consistent with your routine. Try to keep some type of normalcy in their life with everything that is going on." P3 stated, "To follow a schedule, some kind of schedule … I tried to do a schedule where we would be doing routine work in the morning." P4 stated, "And then we would follow the school schedule." P5 stated, "just trying to have a schedule." P6 stated, "We kept the same schedule as if we were still going to school." P7 stated, "So we just tried to continue the same routine regardless of whether it was home … or went to school." P8 stated, "mostly we try like a routine … He always have a schedule." P9 stated, "Routinely, she wakes up at seven, eats breakfast, gets ready to get online. She has a bedtime routine." P10 stated, "It was scheduled. … Time management." P11 stated, "she had a schedule throughout the day." P12 stated, "we'll have a schedule … And I also had

a timer that I use throughout all day. … I try my best to keep like on schedule" P13 stated, "stick to routine regardless of the circumstance that is going on around you. If you stick to the routine, a child remains consistent and learns in that discipline.

SQ 1: Physical Motivational Strategies

There were three themes and one sub-theme that emerged from SQ 1: what are parents' perceptions of physiological strategies used to motivate their lower-elementary school children's virtual ERL during the COVID-19 pandemic: theme one: consistent bedtime, theme two: children were fed three meals a day and snacks in between, and theme three: following the school's schedule to assign feeding and sleeping routines. These themes and sub-themes emerged from IQ 1 & 2.

Theme 1: Consistent Bedtime

Twelve of 13 parents stated that their children go to bed early between 8:00 p.m.-9:30 p.m.. One parent stated that their child went to bed earlier as the school schedule became stricter. When the school schedule was laxer, their bedtime was laxer. P1 stated, "Definitely putting them to bed early and put them on a sleep schedule as far as like a bedtime … By nine o'clock. It was the goal." P2 stated, "We're staying on that schedule as far as sleep that's at 8:30 p.m., pandemic or not, 8:30 p.m.." P3 stated, "Sleeping by 9:30 p.m.." P4 stated, "It was typically eight o'clock try to get them in bed." P5 stated,

> So, sleeping habits … definitely got a little bit out of control … Late night it just got, yeah, I got a little out of control … [they were] moody [in the morning when] bedtime was 10:30pm–11:00pm … [it was] late for their age group. So, this was at the time at the beginning, because then once the school changed it, and they

> kind of like had to sign on at a certain time then we would start working more on a schedule. So, they were a little bit tired. So, they would go to bed a little bit earlier.

P6 stated, “by 8:00 p.m., 8:30 p.m., 8:45pm was bedtime when you kind of tried to keep the same schedule.” P7 stated, “We had the same schedule, sleeping-wise … my kids go to bed at 8:30 p.m..” P8 stated, “school time, [bedtime was] 8:30 p.m. and 9:00 p.m..” P9 stated, “goes to bed around 8:30[p.m.]. That has never changed.” P10 stated, “bedtime was 8:30 p.m.”. P11 stated, “They were on … she had a schedule throughout the day. She was asleep like around eight o’clock.” P12 stated bedtime was, “8:30 p.m.–9:00 p.m..” P13 stated, “8:30 p.m. was her bedtime.”

Theme 2: Children were Fed Three Meals a Day and Snacks in Between

The theme that arose around motivational strategies for feeding was children were fed three meals a day and snacks in between. P2 stated, “breakfast, lunch, dinner, and then two snacks. I tried to be consistent with the schedule.” P3 stated,

> I had my time schedule with them. Do breakfast in the morning. Lunch break in the middle of the thing. So that forced me to get that done in the time that we had to get it done. I will do dinner during the normal three times with snacks in between.

P4 stated, “meal prep … So snack, lunch, that sort of thing.” P5 stated,

> Wake up have breakfast. Around noon have lunch. A lot of snacks in between, and then kind of have like, sometimes, like the late lunch and then dinner. We

> would try to follow a schedule … you know, brush your teeth, watch cartoons and have their breakfast before we start.

P6 stated,

> Little extra time to sleep in. Seven o'clock, the morning routine, get up, brush your teeth, wash your face, have breakfast. We kept the same routine. So once school ended, he would have lunch. Lunch for an hour, free time after school. Free time for the rest of the day and then dinner was still around the same seven o'clock 7:30 p.m..

P7 stated,

> Breakfast, lunch, dinner, snacks in between lunch and dinner." P8 stated, "So before school, he had breakfast. During the period that they take a break, they have like snack or something. Even lunch like at 12:30 p.m. or 1:00 p.m. he ate lunch. And in the afternoon, like snacks. Dinner like five, six o'clock.

P9 stated, "eats breakfast before she was logging in … I would feed her snacks." P10 stated, "we would do lunch and snacks in between … breakfast in the morning. Virtual learning would start. And then it was either lunch or a snack and then lunch." P11 stated,

> She created a menu for like the week as a school would do. And she had them like set times like, like lunchtime, if they were eating at 11:00am in school they were eating at 11:00am at home and she tried to keep them on that. She would have breakfast for them. And then he will be ready to get on, get on virtual at 8:00am.

P12 stated, "will have a schedule, what time to eat. … To eat breakfast at this time and then lunch at this time and then snack at this time and dinner. I had something written

down." P13 stated, "she would eat breakfast before she logged on around 7:15 in the morning, she would eat lunch at the time that it was indicated of the school and then she would have dinner time after we got off of work."

Eight of the 13 parents stated that they found it necessary to motivate their child by feeding them before they began virtual ERL. P1 stated, "So we'll get up eat breakfast and then it will chill for like probably like 20 minutes with the TV or the iPad or whatever when they choose and then it will be time for Zoom." P5 stated, "wake up have breakfast." P6 stated, "Seven o'clock, the morning routine, get up, brush your teeth, wash your face, have breakfast." P8 stated, "So before school, he had breakfast." P9 stated, "eats breakfast before she was logging in" P10 stated, "breakfast in the morning. [then] virtual learning would start." P11 stated, "She would have breakfast for them. And then he will be ready to get on, get on virtual at 8:00am." P13 stated, "So she would eat breakfast before she logged on around 7:15 in the morning."

Theme 3: Following School Schedule

Five of the 13 parents reported following the school's lunch and snack time schedule during ERL. P4 stated, "It would be more set around his school schedule." P8 stated, "During the period that they take a break, they have like snack or something. Even lunch like at 12:30pm or 1:00pm he ate lunch" P10 stated, "We would just schedule like lunchtime around whenever time lunch was typically supposed to be for school." P11 stated, "And she had them like set times like, like lunchtime, if they were eating at 11:00am in school they were eating at 11:00am at home and she tried to keep them on that." P13 stated, "she would eat lunch at the time that it was indicated of the school."

SQ 2: Safety Motivational Strategies

There were two themes and two sub-themes that emerged from SQ 2: what are parent perceptions of safety strategies used to motivate their lower-elementary school children's virtual ERL during the COVID-19 pandemic: theme one: parents were home to assist their child with childcare and schoolwork and theme two: a distraction-free learning environment where children felt safe mentally and physically, sub-theme: classroom elements in their learning environment. These themes and sub-themes emerged from IQ 3 & 4.

Theme 4: Parents were Home to Assist with Childcare and School Work

Ten of the 13 parents reported staying home with their children during ERL. P2 stated, "I also work from home. So, he was with me majority.... all the time, actually. Shelter we were also at my parents' house during that time. So even with that they went to work. I was home with him all day. … I was working virtually, working at home." P3 stated, "Because of the nature of my job, I can be home. I was home and they were home." P4 stated, "I was the childcare person. I didn't work." P5 stated, "I wasn't on my way to work. … I was on unemployment." P6 stated, "I didn't really have to do childcare because I was home from teaching. … I had stuck him in the living room across from me so I can keep an eye on him." P7 stated, "My husband owns his own business. I stayed home with the boys." P8 stated, "I used to work in a daycare so [when] they shut down everything … I stay at home." P9 stated, "I was watching her during these times. I am staying at home. … He was working all the time outside the house." P12 stated, "Well with childcare, since I was home with them, I didn't need someone to help me. I am a

teacher. Okay, so during the pandemic, I used to teach from home." P13 stated, "So we were working as she would be right there with us."

The following three participants were the outliers in the theme because they were not always home to assist their child with childcare. Two parents reported having a babysitter caretake and assist with virtual learning. One parent reported having a family member caretake for the child. Of those three parents, the adult who assisted with childcare had more than one school-aged child in the home. P1 stated, "Either home or with the babysitter. 2pm-10pm, when I go to work, five days a week." P10 stated, "Childcare was difficult we went back and forth between my house and her mom's house. We had family members that were home during the time that would kind of help out and stay when they could.", P11 stated, "He was at my sister's house … since that's where he was at for virtual learning."

Theme 5: A Distraction-free Learning Environment Where Children Felt Safe Mentally and Physically

The theme that emerged regarding the child's learning environment was a distraction-free learning environment where children felt safe mentally and physically. The sub-theme that arose was classroom elements in their learning environment. Seven out of 13 parents reported keeping their children away from distractions during ERL. P1 stated, "And away from the TV. [They were distracted by] iPads, TVs … you name it." P2 stated, "the table in my den was more motivating because it was less distractions. The TV wasn't on and the iPad wasn't around." P6 stated, "Being outside of his room worked better. I was able to utilize the kitchen, for when he had speech. He's at a table in a chair

sitting up properly. I had stuck him in the living room across from me so I can keep an eye on him." P7 stated, "Okay, so we've got another space for them to play. To try to keep a separate if that makes any sense. They have a play space separate in the basement. I removed all their play stuff from the room. He had a desk in the room." P8 stated, "he sat on the table like without any noises and anything so that's it he sat on the table … so it was very quiet." P9 states, "I make sure that she doesn't have any toys. So, she doesn't get distracted. I bring her iPad and I keep it safe so she doesn't get tempted." P10 stated,

> We set up a space in a dining room for her to be out of her room, be able to just focus on schoolwork. … I think that when we moved her out of her bedroom and away from a lot of the distractions there, that was a better move for her.

P13 stated,

> We made sure that her playroom, which is where she had virtual learning, was always clean. There were no distractions because very easily she could have gotten distracted with a Barbie …We made sure that she did not play with her toys while she was in class.

Parents with multiple children in the home set up learning environments where the children were separated. P7 stated,

> They were both in the same table in the same room, it was terrible. So, I set one in the kitchen … in the living room. And then I set one in the bedroom, instead of having them both in the bedroom … I had to switch. So, like halfway through I switch them. I put the little one in the kitchen where I could see him 24/7 and then I put the older one in the room. So, he [the younger one] needed more babysitting.

> And then the other one needs more like, 'I have a question because it was like complicated' stuff like integers and fractions.

P12 stated, "one was in the bed … bedroom. And the other one was here [in the kitchen]. I had to go to my room and sit on my bed and do the teaching in my room"

Subtheme 5a: Classroom Elements in Their Learning Environment. Eleven of the 13 participants created specific areas for virtual learning. P1 was the outlier. P1 stated, "I didn't do the whole desk thing we did the kitchen table, just because it was more comfortable for them." P2 stated,

> But we have a table in our den area. And that was like our learning area. So, I tried to do all that there. Instead of … I didn't really move to different parts of the house during the learning time, because I just wanted to be, again, consistent with the location of where we learn … to focus on your education.

P3 stated, "so I made a library in the house, I have a library. But I put a couch in the house like this, like, little blue couch that I had, like a little like a resource center." P4 stated, "We used our office as pretty much his classroom while he was virtual. Making sure he had his supplies where he needed them." P5 stated,

> We kind of like changed the living room and dining room into like a classroom. I put like all this, you know, like I separated one in the living room and a dining room. So anyway, we'd like. … I put posters everywhere. Sometimes she just wanted to do it in her in her room. Sometimes the living room; same with the kindergartener, they kind of wanted to move around the house. Pencils, like, you

> know, we made it really nice. They were both in the room at different times, but like they liked it. … able to sit where they wanted to sit.

P6 stated,

> He was in his room, or in the kitchen table. He kind of took advantage of having it in his room … door closed … nobody's looking at me and stuff. So, I kind of switched it up every couple of months, where he's able to do his specials in his room. Core classes were seated at his desk, he had his own desk, where I could visually see the computer, and I could watch him as well. So, it was I utilized my whole apartment."

P7 stated, "'go to your classroom.' I'd write, *Today is this day,* like, you know, like the easel … next to my son's computer, my sons like table" P9 states, "she has her desk." P10 stated, "he did have a separate desk and like a whiteboard in her room. At one point, and then we moved into the living, I mean, dining room." P11 stated,

> She made them like little cubicles, too, like for like their learning. She put up like boards so they were virtual. When they were in virtual, it was just they'll be like they're in class, like, you know, like she tried to keep it like a classroom setting. … She has her basement set up downstairs. So, they all had their own section, like their own cubicle area. Yeah, she has like it was like a little classroom setting. She even had like the banner hanging around like the ABCs you know how they do in the classroom."

P12 stated,

> I'd have like number charts, skip counting by 10s, like long vowel or short vowel sounds, like the month of the year, the days of the week [shows a room that has posters set up in a classroom style]. These were like the color sight word. Yeah, the sight words of every week. Like posters everywhere.

P13 stated,

> but that [the playroom] was the assigned room, the area, that we wanted for her for distraction-free. Her room was kept clean, that she was maintaining it. … Playroom was very very colorful and [bright], full of sunlight. Bright sunlight."

SQ 3: Love Motivational Strategies

For SQ 3, what are parent perceptions of love strategies used to motivate their lower-elementary school children's virtual ERL during the COVID-19 pandemic: two themes and one sub-theme emerged; theme one: feeling love physically, verbally, and emotionally, and theme two: social engagement, sub-theme: spending one-on-one time with parents to engage in activities. These themes and sub-themes emerged from IQ 5 & 6.

Theme 6: Show Their Child Love Physically, Verbally and Emotionally

Seven of the 13 parents found it necessary to show their child love physically, verbally, and/or emotionally which emerged through the parents' need to hug, kiss, and tell their child how much they love them. P3 stated,

> little going to bed session every night … little love cuddle session. We would have … I started implementing social emotional breaks or I'd be like, "how are

> you feeling? How are you feeling today?" My child is very affectionate … I invented the virtual hug. I said, "give me a hug."

P5 stated,

> Give them a lot of kisses and hugs all day, tell them they're doing a great job. … They slept a lot in bed with us … hugs and kisses always, you know, I tell them all the time that I love them. Because I feel like that's important. Sometimes we think that people know how much we love them, you know, but when we don't say it, that's normal."

P6 stated, "we'll sit on the couch with a blanket, and we'll cuddle up to a movie." P7 stated,

> My husband and them would go on a date because I needed a break. … I had to lay in bed with him. We'll alternate like sometimes my husband would do this with us. He was just more needy. … I had to carry him to bed. He'd just sleep with me every night every like every night sleep with me.

P9 stated, "Always kissing them and hugging them and I carry her even though she's nine now." P11 stated, "I'm a loving person anyway, I'm always loving all my kids. During virtual, I did give him extra love because it was different. … I showered him with hugs and kisses and toys. Whatever he asks for, honestly." P12 stated, "Something that I did also more than. … it was that I would sleep with them." P13 stated, "I am really verbal with her. So, I verbalize it. I affirm her with words. I physically show it to her I hug her. We do tickles."

Subtheme 6a: Spending One-on-one Time with Their Children. Six of the 13 parents also found it necessary to spend one-on-one time with their children in order for them to feel loved. P1 stated,

> Definitely spent time with them as much as I could without the virtual. … Soon [as] it was done, I made sure we did some[thing] fun. Whether outside playing, watching the movie, whatever they decided to do. We were away from everybody.

P2 stated, "Me and him we used to go out we used to go outside and just walk. … Just paying attention. I got think that even … if it's something to me so silly that he wants to show me the stopping, like get off your phone, you know, remove the distractions and watch whatever it is."

P5 stated, we spend a lot of time together". P6 stated, "I did movie nights, where we'll order pizza, we'll have popcorn, we'll sit on the couch with a blanket, and we'll cuddle up to a movie. This be our bonding time. A little one-on-one time." P9 stated, "I just make sure that I give her her time. That's me and her time. … So, I made sure that I sit down and I hear her and she likes to ask questions so I make sure that I don't have any distractions." P13 stated,

> We did a lot of movie times. That was Netflix and movies we did a lot. So, that was our love language … ice cream. Ice cream time, coloring time. As a parent, that's what we did. Her dad would do constant … they were constantly I want to say twice a month they would buy a new Lego and build a Lego so that's their bonding.

Three parents found it important to reassure and give their child verbal affirmations for them to feel loved. P1 stated, “Definitely the positive affirmations for sure, encouraging them and giving them positive words and just tell him “I’m proud” because for them that’s what keeps them going; is knowing they making me happy.” P2 stated, “So just like being consistent and like positive reinforcement.” P3 stated, “I think reassuring him was important.”

Theme 7: Social Engagement

All 13 parents engaged their child socially during the COVID-19 pandemic. Some parents found it necessary to only engage their child with family members or a small, trusted group of people. P2 stated, “only socialization that we had was with my niece, when, during school time, she wasn’t with us.” P4 stated, “I would take him to the park. This is a kid in real life, not just online, he had time to play with his brother.” P6 stated,

> My ex had a son so they were both the same age where they were able to just go out and express yourself outside, to the park or somewhere fun. Keep distance. I did try to keep them in contact with some friends that we could like meet up safely, but it was kind of hard.

P7 stated, “They created a board game. They created a car out of a cardboard box. It created a boat with little motors, he’s [the children’s father] an electrical engineer major. They had each other.” P10 stated, “it was a lot of family time. Watching TV too … we started creating video game videos together, like you know, arts and craft projects, and craft projects.” P11 stated, “He played outside. And he was with my nieces and nephews too, during the virtual learning. So, like, my sister had the schedule for them. Whether it

was their time for recess, or she would let them go outside or, you know, play." P12 stated, "my sister … she used to come like once a week."

One parent stated she created a social group of mothers who would take their children on trips and engage them in social activities. The group of mothers were formed to keep the children safe and engaged socially. P3 stated,

> I began the Beehive [the social group of mothers who was a trusted group to have their child play socially] with some of the parents. So, I was like, "let's do some activities together." And I was like, "alright, cool." The cool thing is I got somebody to finance a lot of those field trip … Paint and sips, bowling.

Some parents only allowed their children to engage with other children virtual. P2 stated, "but they have FaceTime … their own iPads." P7 stated, "They had a little birthday party through FaceTime one time." P9 stated, "she talks with her friends via electronics, facetime." P10 stated, "Friday, I believe it was like they will have kids just kind of meet up online and just kind of had like a recess type of thing online." P12 stated,

> And with the peers I had [teacher's name] sister, they used to FaceTime like, every day. Oh, and also like with their cousins, I made them like to call their cousins every day and like when my sister call my sister, my mom, my dad, everyone every day, so that way we keep in touch.

P13 stated,

> I made sure that we incorporated FaceTime for the first time and now she's a pro at it. We allowed her to talk to cousins, and we allowed her to talk to class of friends. And they would create playdates, and it was virtual, online, Barbie time

> … once a week, every Wednesday for four hours we will make sure because Wednesday was their nonvirtual day where they had homework assignments on paper instead of logging on. And they would play for four hours. Yes, they would read, they would color together, they would play dolls together, everything and anything.

All 13 parents found activities that motivated their child socially many of which involved physical activity. P1 stated, “Soon it was done, I made sure we did some fun. Whether outside playing, watching the movie, whatever they decided to do.” P2 stated, “Me and him we used to go out we used to go outside and just walk … do a lot more outdoor activities. So, we walked we have like a trampoline, we’ll go out on that. … ride the bike … we always talk about like his day, and you know what they learn.” P3 stated, “So I actually purposefully planned a trip to Florida, and we went, like, we sure enough did. We went with COVID.” P4 stated, “I would take him to the park.” P5 stated,

> We would make traditional meals together... movie nights... They slept a lot in bed with us. … We went to the park a lot. We just. … we spent a lot of time together … reading watching movies. Like I said, like just doing a lot of like family things … cleaning. I rented like a big party bounce house during the pandemic, since like, we couldn’t go to parties. For a month, we brought a trampoline; we brought a water splash. We brought a pool and we brought a jumpy house. We just improved like our space. You know, so that they can have fun.

P6 stated,

> So, we would end up just going to the park around the corner from our house and hanging out there for a little bit or going to the movies as well. Where we will do fun activities. Even if it's just a walk around the block. But he would like it when I did movie nights, where we'll order pizza, we'll have popcorn.

P7 stated, "Once a week we bake. My husband and them would go on a date because I needed a break. They created a board game. They created a car out of a cardboard box. It created a boat with little motors, he's [the child's father] an electrical engineer major." P8 stated, "we still doing the same thing we watch movies together and we do a lot of things together we go to the park." P9 stated, "The mall she likes to eat out at restaurants. We go as a family. We go and ride bikes together at the park. We watch movies together at home." P10 stated,

> When that happened [the COVID-19 pandemic], it was a lot more time together. It was a lot of family time. Watching TV too, we started creating video game videos together, like you know, we [did] arts and craft projects, and craft projects. It's kind of doing it just to kind of keep her busy time. Girls … would do, like nails and toes and stuff like that. Her mom kept her busy with different things she would do at her house with her. She's very big into crafts. So, it was a lot of arts and crafts stuff. There's a lot of coloring, a lot of painting a lot of building toy robots, and all that stuff like that.

P11 stated, "He played outside. And he was with my nieces and nephews too." P12 stated, "we'd watch like a lot of shows like together like movie nights. Just sit and watch something with no phone or iPad just sit and enjoy each other. P13 stated,

> When it warmed up. We spent time outdoors in the backyard. I made sure that I played with them playing with her outside … of whether that was ball, whether that was chasing running, music plays a lot in my household. So, constantly dancing with her. We did a lot of movie times. That was Netflix and movies we did a lot. So, that was our love language … ice cream. Ice cream time, coloring time. As a parent, that's what we did. Her dad would do constant … they were constantly, I want to say twice a month, they would buy a new Lego and build a Lego so that's their bonding. I am really verbal with her. So, I verbalize it. I affirm her with words. I physically show it to her I hug her. We do tickles.

SQ 4: Esteem Motivational Strategies

For SQ 4, what are parent perceptions of esteem strategies used to motivate their lower-elementary school children's virtual ERL during the COVID-19 pandemic: one theme and one sub-theme arose; the theme: positive affirmations and the sub-theme: affirmative rewards. This theme and sub-theme emerged from IQ 7 & 8.

Theme 8: Positive affirmations

Many parents found it necessary to use positive affirmations, reassurance, and praise to contribute to their child's self-esteem during the ERL due to the COVID-19 pandemic. P1 stated,

> Still just the encouraging thing. That was the biggest thing they would get really discouraged with just the workload itself. It was it was a lot, like I feel like, virtual learning and they have more work than they do right now. Like the teachers were giving them an excessive amount of work and then they felt like

> they didn't have enough time or they didn't understand, it was a lot. So just staying positive with them was what was helping them out.

P2 stated,

> I'm constantly letting him know he's so handsome … remind him that you know, he's valued and that you know, he's confident, he's smart, reminding him of things that that are his attributes and reminding him that he's smart, he's handsome, he's kind, he's patient, just things like that.

P3 stated,

> We started positive affirmations in the morning. "I am great. I am wonderful. I am enough. I am." That was one of the things I did you know, I wanted him to feel like he's special. … You know, and just looking at yourself, like teaching them, look at yourself, don't look at nobody else with the answers. Time to make him be self-aware and process self.

P4 stated, "I just tried to be as positive as I could." P5 stated, "Always telling them like 'I love you'. Always telling them that they are beautiful." P6 stated,

> Um, it was a lot of reminders. "Yes, it's hard. But you can do it, even though Mommy's home doing the same thing and trying to teach as well, it is hard, but it's something that you can do, and like to do". … "Oh, look, you got on a roll for this market period. Oh, my gosh, because you got it. Let's go do something. Let's go get a new game, or let's go out to eat. Where do you want to go? I'll cook your favorite food." So even whenever he turned in assignments, I was like, "Did you

> do your best? Did you put all of it out there?" to go out and get ice cream or go get a new toy or something to help him keep it going … Verbal praise.

P10 stated,

> A lot of praise, a lot of involvement in different things like, you know, having her involved in different sports, having her involved in different activities. Giving her that encouragement, like, you know. Oh, "you did a good job," or you know, or, you know, "if you don't do good, try it again, and keep doing it." And you know, those conversations with her very young, you know, the constant conversations about, you know, "you're beautiful, you're smart," you know. I think that she definitely does love when we're happy or excited for something that she's doing or does.

P11 stated,

> I told him, I was proud of him that you know, good job all the time. I mean, I made him … like if he didn't understand something. I would tell him 'It's okay to ask questions. Like, don't be nervous to ask questions. Speak up. Like because maybe what you don't know maybe another person doesn't know either'. Maybe they're scared to speak up. So, I just always kind of tried to uplift him all the time.

P12 stated,

> Reassure and I would like ask her an answer that she knows like that … I know that she knew. So, I would do things like on purpose, so she could know that she knows something, and I would try to reinforce that confidence to build that confidence because sometimes she knows it. "See you are good at soccer, and

> [younger twin] is good at doing cartwheels." So, I will just try to reinforce and find out something that they're good at and try to build on that to make them feel good about themselves. Finding something that they're good at and just reinforcing that like, "See you're good at this!" like being positive and just cherishing what they're good at, and just make a big deal of something good that they did. "You're awesome see you're good!!" So that's good. Now you just need to look at it and see how you write and you have to rewrite it again. And "that's what we do! Remember practice makes perfect." And that kind of shifted her mood to more like positive, then continue with the dwelling and the crying.

P13 stated,

> He [the child's father] would help her with her math and her science a lot. He was very patient with her; he would teach her maybe a strategy that was a little different than what the teacher was teaching. We would YouTube sometimes strategies, we would ask other friends. … language arts, ELA, so I was able to help her and that was sentence structure and using adjectives and things like that. And every time she felt frustrated, we would just distract her we would ask her a different question. So "how was class today?" We would just … off subject, random and that brings her right back to focus. So, it was a little bit of imagination and then bring her back to focus.

Three parents used parental modeling to contribute their children's self-esteem. P3 stated, "15 minutes mandatory readings, but I will have my stories too. I'm gonna motivate them by reading and then they're gonna be like, "alright, cool." P8 stated,

> I taught him it's just because he needs to like to do things that make him proud and make me proud and make his dad. … so, because we always tried to do … like being … like a role model for him. So, he don't see things like you cannot like say or do in us, so that's why I try all the time with him."

P12 stated, "I would talk to them like about me, like, I am good at doing this, but I'm not at doing this."

Subtheme 8a: Affirmative Rewards. Five of the 13 parents utilized affirmative rewards to motivate their children's self-esteem. P1stated,

> Yeah, just like "you're doing a good job" or "if you do good five days a week or whatever, whatever days it was, I'll take you to the store let you pick out what you want" … Encouraging them that way … I feel like the reward is what kept them going like throughout the week, but without the affirmations I don't think they would have kept going on a daily basis.

P4 stated, "try your best we can go do that, that I think you want it or you can have more Nintendo Switch time." P5 stated,

> They started a YouTube channel; they recorded a lot of videos. I brought them like, just like a lot of opening toys, things that you see on YouTube. Listening to themselves, like looking at themselves. We shared that, like, on social media with family and friends. The school did, like a talent show or virtual talent show, I felt like that was really helpful. I brought them a lot of makeup, you know, just stuff to like, you know, doll themselves up, and they loved it.

P6 stated,

> Surprise praise where we'll go to Five and Below. "$20 to get whatever you want." … go shopping for whatever toys, I can't say no to what he gets … I'll give high fives, I'll give stickers. At the time, he loved stickers. I'll give out stickers to hang on his wall or go to Dollar Tree and get the wall stickers, the peal and stick". P9 stated, "You can do better I know you can do it." I'm trying always not to lower her but lift her. Go[ing to] pick out his own toys was like the biggest one[s] because he was able to make his own choice. He felt more proud in doing that, because he knows he really, really worked hard to earn that.

P12 states, "So I will just try to reinforce and find out something that they're good at, and try to build on that to make them feel good about themselves. Finding something that they're good at and just reinforcing." In IQ10, P12 mentions a behavior reward system to motivate her children

> I have a chart in the room. Every time I will put like, chores that they had to do. Like you had to fix your room, you had to help me fold your clothes. Those chores was also their homework they know that they had to do that. But I will put extra stuff too. And every time they did something I will give them a little star. And depending of how many stars you have, you get to pick what you want. If you want a pizza for Friday, if you want to go order food out, it was their choice. I don't need to hit them or anything I just take your iPad away. I just … "you love to eat good food, sushi and stuff alright there's no sushi this weekend." Routine every day, the reward system.

SQ 5: Self-Actualization Motivational Strategies

For SQ five: what are parent perceptions of self-actualization strategies used to motivate their lower-elementary school children's virtual ERL during the COVID-19 pandemic: three themes and two sub-themes emerged; theme one: parents knowing the child's learning style, theme two: parents knowing how the child was motivated, theme three: parental involvement with academics and sub-theme mental health. These themes emerged throughout IQ's 1–10 as self-actualization, according to Maslow (1943), is the last stage of human motivation and all other motivational components are necessary to reach actualization.

Theme 9: Parents Knowing the Child's Learning Style

Parent were aware of their children's needs. Many parents knew their child's learning style by making statements such as P7, "my younger son is more hands-on learning … Oldest photographed learner." P12 stated, "[younger twin] let's say like a new concept that she's learning, with her it takes a little longer to comprehend and to get it. [Older twin] is different, everything is quick. It's like boom boom with her."

Other parents felt that the virtual learning day consisted of excessive hours of learning and work for their child's age group, making statements like P1 stated, "

> It was it was a lot, like I feel like, virtual learning and they have more work than they do right now. Like the teachers were giving them an excessive amount of work and then they felt like they didn't have enough time or they didn't understand, it was a lot.

P4,

> It would be for like a three-hour day we would have like three sessions or like a two. He was there all the school day and to make you know, a five-year-old, six-year-old sit for all that time and expect him to learn something you know…. too much to take in.

P5 stated, "So, I struggled more with my youngest one the kindergarten one and then you know, she was just still learning the structure within school."

Theme 10: Parents Knowing How their Child was Motivated

Throughout the data, parents made statements as to how they felt their child was motivated whether it was consistency, physically, emotionally, with rewards, positive affirmation, or social engagements. Some parents knew their child did not like specific motivational techniques. P8 stated, "He just wants to be next to me but not hugging and kissing, no." Whereas many parent felt it necessary to hug and kiss their child all the time. P1 stated, "whenever they were hungry, I fed them. I didn't stop for lunch breaks. I didn't do the whole raise your hand and take a break … bathroom break. I didn't do that." Whereas other parents found it paramount to keep routines and consistency for everything the child did. But knowing what motivates child was evident in the different activities performed with the child and different ways of talking and connecting with them. A few parents found it necessary to get their child a tutor because they were unable to assist them academically. P7 stated, "I got them a tutor I just don't have the patience of a teacher, I realized that. And then he was like, I would have constant communication with the teacher." P9 stated, "So, I hired somebody to come to the house for math."

Theme 11: Parental Involvement in Academics

Parents had to become invested in their child's academic experience from helping them with schoolwork, technology needs, mental health, and physical safety. Parents were key components to helping their child achieve each level of motivation. P5 stated, "I became a teacher." P12 stated,

> "Mommy, I need help Mommy, I need this." So, I had to stop in the middle of a lesson and come help them. … Because I worked with them every day. Every day, it was like, "Okay, I finish my job. And now I continue with my second job." And I also search a lot online like what is the sight words that first grade should know, and like, books and stuff. And I make sure that we practice every night.

P13 stated, "It was tough because if I had a meeting, I would speak loudly and I had to remember that she was also on a Zoom call. Plenty of times Wi-Fi went down and I would have to stop what I was doing to go and assist her logging back in. She still needed us." P2 stated,

> I do wish I had help. Because like I said, I was working virtually, working at home and then having him next to me was difficult. Like a computer issues. Like, you know, the mute button isn't working, or my headphones aren't working or I got kicked out of the group. And I'm in the middle of a, you know, report email or something. So, I'm gonna stop what I'm doing, to run over there to fix what he was doing. That was … I wish I would have had help from somebody, you know, having someone to help me do that.

P6 stated, “I had stuck him in the living room across from me so I can keep an eye on him.” P9 stated,

> she’s secure because we’re home and I’m here. She’s not by herself. … Just like I kept her doing extra. Highlight or underline those points that you don’t understand. I will test her from whatever they’re doing. I will test her to make sure that she understood or whatever she can understand I made sure that I put it to the side for the tutor that was coming to work with her. I was just … I just had her do an extra thing at home.

P3 stated, “so, when I had COVID that changed the entire dynamic of the home, because Mommy does everything and Mommy was knocked out and I couldn’t help them. I couldn’t love on them. That was so difficult in my house.” P4 stated,

> And then plus, having an education background, if he wasn’t getting something, I acted like a one to one with him...encouraging words, more of like, hands on, “Hey, you know, this is how we’re going to tackle this, I could see like, you’re not getting it, or if you’re bored, let’s maybe try a problem that’s almost the same as what you’re learning.

P10 stated, “I would teach her how to count money, you know, math and reassure her that, you know, teaching those types of things she kind of, I guess.” P13 stated,

> Her dad would help her with her math and her science a lot. He was very patient with her; he would teach her maybe a strategy that was a little different than what the teacher was teaching. We would YouTube sometimes strategies, we would

> ask other friends. … I was able to help her and that was sentence structure and using adjectives and things like that.

P10 summed up their parental experience by saying,

> It was just, as a parent, you just had to be more involved than you would have usually been. As a parent you have to step in and take on those roles and take on a lot, like you were principal, you're a teacher, you're a gym teacher, you were coach, you were everything. Time management, you know, finding that time throughout your day to be able to be there to support your child as much as they needed you to during that time.

Subtheme 11a: Mental Health. The theme of the child's mental health continued to emerge through the data and became prevalent when I asked the parents if they believed their child reached their full potential during ERL. P4 stated,

> I tried to be flexible but he was allotted breaks during virtual learning. I tried to keep him on track and then when I saw him getting overwhelmed … No [he did not reach his full potential]. It would be for like a three-hour day we would have like three sessions or like a two. He was there all the school day and to make you know, a five-year-old, six-year-old sit for all that time and expect him to learn something you know. too much to take in too much to sit.

P5 stated,

> I don't think so. Parents were unprepared, schools weren't prepared. They were just given packages [packets]. So, like, it was very stressful. So, it was really stressful. I was in school, like full time, so then I changed to online too. We did a

> lot of that at home, but it was just, you know, I don't know, she just, I feel like she's not where she needs to be.

P6 stated,

> I don't think he reached his full highest potential. Certain assignments where he'll rush through it and be done within two minutes because he knew he can get free time once everything was done. So, he didn't put his all into certain assignments, just for the fact of "I get free time when I turn in everything.

P7 stated, "I think he was lacking a lot. I don't think he learned at the speed he should have." P9 stated, "I don't think they reached where she needed to be. She needed a lot of help. Everything was sent from the computer instead of like picking up a paper and pencil and writing it down and solving the problem. P10 stated, "No, I think that it was very stunted; academically, socially, and athletic wise."

P13's response was unique, this parent declared, the child reached her potential academically but not socially. "Socially, sometimes, she doubts herself. I want to make sure that she remains diverse, that she doesn't think a certain way, she's open-minded to many other things."

Other parents felt their child reached their full potential because they were a part of their learning. P12 stated, "I think yes [she reached her full potential]. Because I worked with them every day. Every day, it was like, 'Okay, I finish my job. And now I continue with my second job'. And I also search a lot online like what is the sight words that first grade should know, and like, books and stuff. And I make sure that we practice every night." P3 stated,

> I think he did. So, I was on it. And I was part of the experience. I'd sit there and be like, 'Get off, stop playing, pay attention. Pick up your pencil', like I was like that parent. So, I was always vigilant with him. And that was like the refocused him. And I know Google very well. So, I helped her out a lot.

P1 answered

> I would say just average, I want to say that they like did their best all the way just I feel like they were more frustrated than anything with like I said, the workload…. but they would just get discouraged with a lot … Just encouraging them telling me you know, "you got to do it."

Although, this study strictly focuses on virtual ERL due to the COVID-19 pandemic, one parent made it clear that these strategies to motivate her child is something she is still dealing with. In her school, whenever a person in her classroom contracts COVID-19 the whole class currently goes virtual for seemingly two weeks. P9 stated, "And in December [2021], they went virtual until mid-January [2022]." Which attests to the point that motivational strategies for lower-elementary school students were not only relevant during the 2020–2021 school year but are still relevant in the 2022 school year.

Summary

Chapter 4 presented a detailed description of the thematic analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2006). The participants' demographics, details of the setting in which the interviews took place, and evidence of trustworthiness were provided. To address the RQ, the 13 participants shared their perceptions of the strategies they used to motivate their lower-elementary school child's virtual ERL due to the COVID-19 pandemic. One

overarching theme of “Routines & Consistency” and 11 themes outlined the common perceptions of the strategies parents used to motivate their lower-elementary school children during ERL due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Those specific themes that emerged from each IQ included: for SQ one: consistent bedtime, children being fed three meals a day and snacks in between, following the school’s schedule to assign feeding routines; for SQ two: parents were home to assist their child with childcare and school work, a distraction-free learning environment where children felt safe mentally and emotionally; for SQ three: feeling loved physically, verbally, and emotionally and social engagement for SQ four: positive affirmations, and SQ five: parents knowing the child’s learning style, parents knowing how the child is motivated, and parental involvement with academic. Four sub-themes were also revealed.

Chapter 5 will review the purpose and nature of the study and the significance of the study. Key findings will be summarized and reveal how the results add to the scholarly literature. I will also analyze and interpret the findings as it related to Maslow’s theory of human motivation (Maslow, 1043), discuss, recommendations for future research, and describe the potential impact of positive social change.

Chapter 5: Discussion, Conclusions, and Recommendations

This qualitative study aimed to examine parents' perceptions of strategies they used to motivate their lower-elementary school child's virtual ERL during the COVID-19 pandemic. Previous research conducted on the virtual ERL experience was done to understand how parents felt about virtual learning and how successful their child was during ERL (Cahoon et al., 2021; Chu et al., 2021; Garbe et al., 2020; GÜNBAŞ & GÖZÜKÜÇÜK, 2020; Pozas et al., 2021), but these studies did not focus on the practical strategies parents used at home to motivate their lower-elementary children. A thematic analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2006) was used to collect data through 13 semistructured interviews.

Key findings resulting from this study were (a) routines and consistency, (b) consistent bedtime, (c) children need to be fed three meals a day with snacks in between, (d) following school schedules for feeding, (e) parents were home to support their child with childcare and school work, (f) children's learning environments should be distraction-free where they can feel safe mentally and emotionally, sub-theme: classroom elements in their learning environment (g) feeling loved physically, verbally, and emotionally sub-theme, spending one-on-one time with parents to engage in activities (h) social engagement, (i) affirmations, sub-theme affirmative rewards (j) parents knowing their child's learning style, (k) parents knowing how their child is motivated, and (l) parental involvement with academics with a sub-theme of mental health. Chapter 5 is dedicated to the discussion, conclusions, and recommendations revealed as a result of the

study. The chapter includes an interpretation of the findings as well as a discussion of recommendations and the implications of the study.

Interpretation of the Findings

RQ 1: Overarching Finding: Routines and Consistency

The findings from this study revealed an overarching theme of routines and consistency that parents used to motivate their lower-elementary school children's virtual ERL during the COVID-19 pandemic. All 13 parents shared that they used some form of routine scheduling during virtual ERL to help their child feel motivated. Children need "an organized world rather than an unorganized or unstructured one [to feel safe and secure]" (Maslow, 1943, p. 377). Dysfunctional home factors can be detrimental to students' learning (Latsoalo et al., 2018). Dysfunctional homes are not an effective learning environment which is supported by parents attempting to cultivate function within the home by creating routines and consistency for their children. Children having a consistent world allows them to know what is happening next and makes their life predictable rather than random and insecure. P13, P7, and P12 shared that regardless of what was happening and whether their children were in school or not, having routines is how their children learned. Parents created routines for bedtime, eating, clothing, social interactions, learning environments, homework schedules, and home-life balancing.

Parents felt that schedules created a sense of normalcy and self-regulation to motivate their children to be successful during ERL. Social-emotional self-management provides the groundwork for adjustment and change, if necessary (Steed et al., 2021). With the entire learning modality switching, many parents also wanted to keep the same

schedule that they had for sleeping and eating (physiological needs) as they did before the COVID-19 pandemic. Keeping their child consistent with what they were used to allowed for expectations to never be changed. Throughout the data, parents felt that routines helped cultivate all other aspects of virtual ERL during the COVID-19 pandemic. P6, P7, P11, and P13 found it necessary to keep their child in uniforms daily to help create a routine and consistency in the learning environment, preparing them mentally for school. People are safety-seeking creatures, and without routines and consistency, their safety could feel threatened (Maslow, 1943). No other motivational hierarchy, except physiological needs, can be met without safety needs being met (Maslow, 1943); the findings of this study support the research that there is safety in routines and consistency.

SQ 1 Theme 1: Consistent Bedtime

The first finding that was revealed for SQ 1 was a theme of a consistent bedtime. According to Maslow (1943), sleeping is the most pertinent motivational need next to eating. If the physiological needs are not met, an individual's motivation would be to have them met, leaving all other motivational levels unsatisfied (Maslow, 1943, p. 373). Without satisfying their biological need for food, water, sleep, etc. (physiological needs), it is unlikely that students will be interested in completing any schoolwork or other motivational hierarchies without the physiological need being met (Raffini, 1993). All 13 parents reported putting their lower-elementary school child to bed between 8:00 p.m.–9:30 p.m.

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic still being researched, there is limited information on how children's sleep was a necessary component of their motivation. However, it is known that if a child is in a chaotic household without structure, the dysfunction increases the child's likelihood of being unprepared for school and thus unable to perform at their best academically (Letsoalo et al., 2018). This study supports the literature indicating that sleep is a necessary component of motivation by revealing that parents felt it necessary to have well-rested children in order for them to not feel tired (see Maslow, 1943; Raffini, 1993). But this research also adds that sleep is a structured practice that may need to be consistent during virtual ERL.

SQ1 Theme 2: Children Need to be Fed Three Meals a Day with Snacks in Between

The second finding that was revealed for SQ 1 was a theme that children need to be fed three meals a day with snacks in between. Nine of the 13 parents reported feeding their children three meals a day with snacks in between the meals to satisfy their child's hunger. From all the reports of this study, none of the parents found it difficult to support their children with feeding during the COVID-19 pandemic. However, research shows that 370 million children were food deprived (Borkowski et al., 2021), and many families ran out of food during the COVID-19 pandemic (Schwab, 2020). Many of the parents in this study considered themselves middle and upper class; therefore, feeding their children may not have caused a burden on them financially. For many lower-class families, this was not the case during the COVID-19 pandemic, and because of that, government agencies, such as the USDA, developed programs to assist in feeding children (USDA, n.d.). According to Vike (2017), students cannot focus when they come to school tired,

hungry, or worried. The findings from this study show the privilege of parents being able to fulfill the hunger needs of their children in order to motivate them to learn. The findings of the USDA (n.d) agree that children need to be fed breakfast, lunch, and snacks to feel hunger-satisfied in order to learn, hence the development of the national school feeding programs. This study adds to the literature that dinner may need to be included for children to be motivated throughout the day.

SQ 1 Theme 3: Following School Schedules

The third finding for SQ 1 was a theme of following school schedules for feeding. Five of the 13 parents reported following the school's lunch and snack schedule during ERL, which made the children feel safe in knowing when they would be fed. Parents who were able to follow the school schedule were aware of their child's daily schedule. Research shows that communicating with educators was an essential role of parents during ERL (Gengler & Olson, 2014). Parents who were more involved in a collaborative way were more confident in the educational process (Hodge et al., 2020). Organizing and managing students' schedules were recommendations teachers, and educators found helpful for parents to do during online learning (Raguindin et al., 2021). Traditional in-personal schools schedule lunch around class schedules, so instead of parents needing to organize other times during the day, they found it helpful to stay aligned with the school schedule and feed their child. Because this area is not heavily researched, this finding adds to the scholarly literature that parents could follow the outlined school schedule for feeding their child during virtual ERL.

SQ 2 Theme 4: Parents were Home to Support their Child with Childcare and Schoolwork

The first finding that was revealed for SQ 2 was a theme that parents were home to support their child with childcare and schoolwork. Many parents nationwide had to either stay home with to assist their child with virtual learning and not go to work or continue to earn a living and rely on others for childcare and educational assistance (Rollins, 2020); few parents had the option to work from home and provide childcare at the same time. Research has indicated that about 37% of jobs can be done working from home (Dingel & Neiman, 2020). Ten of the 13 parents reported staying home with their child during ERL. Of these 10 parents, five did not have a job. The other five reported working from home in order to help their child at home. P7, P8, and P9 all reported having assistance from their partners who had jobs to take care of the family's financial obligations. Three of the 13 parents relied on family or a babysitter to assist with childcare. P11 reported that she does not know what she would have done without the support of her sister. Individual parent and family barriers, such as societal factors, threaten a child's motivation for school and education; parents' education level, current life contexts, and financial stability being a few (Hornby & Blackwell, 2018). Parents who were privileged enough to have a partner in life to help with financial stability or whose jobs allowed them to work from home had a significant advantage over parents who had to continue to go to work to support their families.

Before the COVID-19 pandemic, schools were providing more and more caretaking and academic support for children while fewer and fewer responsibilities were

placed on the parent (Hornby & Blackwell, 2018), but COVID-19 shifted those responsibilities. Parents were now responsible for their child's caretaking and academics in a way they were not used to (OECD Centre for Skills, 2020). Most of the parents in this study stated that they had to learn their children in a new way because of the amount of time and care they needed to provide during virtual ERL. Many of the parents in this study were at home to support their child, but according to research, this is not true for the majority of parents. Children who may not have had a multi-parent support system during virtual ERL may not have had the option to have a parent at home to support them while learning (Letsoalo et al., 2018). Parents had to decide to stay home and not work or find reliable childcare during virtual ERL. Being home is considered a privilege, and the likelihood of being at home with the child during virtual ERL increases with the parent's education level and having a multi-parent household.

SQ 2 Theme 5: Distraction-Free Learning Environment where Children Feel Safe Mentally, Physically and Emotionally

The second finding that was revealed for SQ 2 was a theme of a distraction-free learning environment where children feel safe mentally and emotionally. The learning environment, according to scholars, should be a place that motivates students to achieve success (Calp, 2020; Johnson, 2017). Seven out of 13 parents reported keeping their children away from distractions while engaged in virtual ERL. Parents reported keeping children away from toys, iPads, and other physical distractions, but parents also wanted to keep the learning environment quiet from pets, televisions, noise-making adults or other children in the house. Calp (2020) found that students thrive in a school

environment that gives them peace and happiness. Calp (2020) discussed that students found peace by having a learning environment that is “fun, quiet, …….a place like home, …..a place without a fight…….” (p. 313). Parents with multiple children in the home set up learning environments where all the children were separated. P11’s babysitter created cubicles for the multiple children in the house; so, they were in the same learning environment but had privacy boards up so they could not be distracted by one another. Parents would also separate the children by often keeping the younger child closer to them and the older child in a further room because they had more autonomy to work independently in a different space. Due to the needs of younger students, parents’ assistance was necessary for the child to be successful virtually (Hapsari et al., 2020). P7 felt that she had to babysit the younger child more. In contrast, the older child only needed to ask questions about the work rather than the parent needing to keep them focused or helping with technology which is consistent with the findings of Hapsari et al. (2020).

Calp (2020) found that an ideal learning environment allows children to examine their true potential. If children are distracted or unable to focus in a specific learning environment, it is not helpful for their academic development. Many parents understood this idea due to their willingness to change their child’s learning environment, often from outside of their bedroom to a place where distractions were absent. As described by Hsieh et al. (2021), the direct home environment has a significant role in student motivation. How quiet the home is, how engaging and dedicated the family is to the academic growth of the child, how involved the caretaker is, and quality of resources all

impact the child's motivation to learn. By parents separating children from other noise-making distractions such as people, pets, and televisions while also keeping their learning environment toy and physical distraction-free, parents in this study agreed that a distraction-free, quiet learning environment is desired for student motivation.

Subtheme 5a: Classroom Elements in their Learning Environment

The sub-finding that was revealed in theme 5 is that children should have classroom elements in their learning environment. Eleven of the 13 participants created specific areas for virtual learning. Parents felt like having their child at a designated desk in the home assisted with their child maintaining a school routine but also prepared them mentally to mimic the school environment. P2 reported it was important to have virtual learning in one location daily to remain consistent and only focus on learning. Parents reported having school supplies, computer monitors, a library, and a multitude of visual aids in the virtual learning environment. P11's babysitter set their basement up as a classroom with ABC banners and sight words on the walls. P3 added that she made a library in the house that served as a resource center where the child engaged in virtual learning. P13 ensured her child's learning environment was bright and colorful. P12 added that she had number charts, skip counting by 10s, long vowel and short vowel sounds, months of the year, and the days of the week charts in a room that she turned into a classroom. These elements not only made the learning environment feel and look like a classroom but it also provided lower-elementary school children with resources and visual aids to perform academically. Visuals allow students to participate in the construction of their learning environment (Errázuriz & Portales, 2018).

Some parents were aware of what their child needed to learn because they were involved with the child's academic growth. For example, a lower-elementary school child who struggled with letter sounds may have had phonics pictures in their learning environment. Children that struggled with emotional regulation may have had social-emotional cues around them to help foster a more resourceful learning environment. In a traditional in-person school, students may have the rules and regulations written for easy access and a quick reference. In the home environment, parents also utilized easels, posterboards, and schedules to write down the rules and expectations of their children. Visuals give children references to help them understand their expectations and things they should know. Model classrooms in traditional in-person learning enables a sense of autonomy, organization, and accountability (Franklin & Harrington, 2019); some parents found it necessary to cultivate independent learners, while others were a lot more hands-on and involved. A traditional classroom, as stated in Chapter 2, is child-friendly and involves bright, colorful classrooms, visual aids, has items easily accessible to the students, has routines and rules, and is a peaceful learning environment (Calp, 2020; Cardellino & Woolner, 2020; Errázuriz & Portales, 2018; Steed et al., 2021). This research adds to the scholarly literature that parents felt the home learning environment should provide students with some of the same traditional in-person classroom elements because children should maintain the same expectations and be given the same resources to foster autonomy at home as they would in school. Parents in this study found that a learning environment that had some elements of the school environment motivated their

child's learning, which is consistent with Fan and Williams (2018) finding that a student's learning environment directly affects student motivation.

SQ 3 Theme 6: Feeling Loved Physically, Verbally, and Emotionally

The first finding that was revealed for SQ 3 was a theme of feeling loved physically, verbally, and emotionally. All 13 parents showed love and affection to their child, whether physically, verbally, or emotionally. The need for love is met when one feels affection and a sense of belonging in their world (Maslow, 1943). Love is essential to a child's motivation because it gives them a sense of community and fellowship. Parents who create relationships have a much more successful parent-child relationship than other forms of parenting styles (Morin, 2021). P9, P5, and P11 physically showed love by kissing and hugging their children daily. Other parents like P13 felt like telling their child that they loved them daily was essential. While some parents felt like having cuddle time and sleeping with their child brought them emotional connections such as P12, P6, and P7 stated. Each of these strategies were established by the child and parent, depended on the parent-child relationship, and how that child receives love. The parent-child relationship also depends on the parent's well-being, which did not appear in the data. Aznar et al. (2021) found that parents' stress during the COVID-19 pandemic increased, which affected their ability to be fully present with their children. COVID-19 was traumatic for many people who lost jobs, family members, and a sense of normalcy. Parents have basic motivational needs, just as all animals do. Parents who were unable to sleep, who had food insecurities, and did not feel safe or secure may have had difficulty showing and or receiving love. Parents' ability to navigate their own emotions during this

time was significant in their ability to show their children love effectively. This theme aligns with the research from Aznar et al. (2021) that feeling loved is a necessary component of motivation, but just like children, parents could not contribute to their child's love needs if they were not satisfied physiologically or safe.

Subtheme 6a: Spending One-on-one Time with Parents to Engage in Activities

The sub-finding for theme 6 was parents spending one-on-one time with their children to engage in activities together. Six of 13 parents found it necessary to spend one-on-one time with their children in order for them to feel loved. Many of these one-on-one activities involved going for a walk, playing outside, and engaging in some sort of physical activity. Miao and Dunn (2021) reported that kids were getting less exercise during ERL, but this study shows that children were active, however the activities involved the parents being active participants. Parents would schedule gym times or activity times with their children on a daily and weekly basis. This way, kids knew when they would get that time with their parents and could expect it.

Parents with multiple children or multiple responsibilities wanted to ensure their child felt special; therefore, spending time with the child with no other distractions was found necessary. P2 made it a point to report that even if the child wanted to show her something "silly" she would stop, get off the phone, and simply pay attention to the child's needs. P9 added that as a parent of two children, it was necessary to give the child "her time." Doing any activity where the parent was only engaged with the child was considered bonding for the child and reinforced the sense of love, belonging, and community people yearn to attain. According to The Center for Parenting Education

(n.d), parents are responsible to contribute to their child's emotional needs. Before the COVID-19 pandemic, children may have relied on teachers, coaches, friends, and other family members to get special attention. But during the COVID-19 pandemic, where social isolation kept children, especially younger children, from others, parents were often left with the task of providing their children with the attention they needed. Each parent in this study felt it was necessary to provide their child with quality-time bonding so that their child felt special, seen, and heard.

SQ 3 Theme 7: Social Engagement

The second finding that was revealed for SQ 3 was a theme of social engagement. Love is equivalent to finding a community through socialization and commitment to that social group (Maslow, 1943). According to the Bright Horizon Family Solution (2020), children need peer socialization to thrive and encourage healthy brain development. Since students were physically separated from their teachers and peers and could not communicate with them as often, the lack of interaction could have also led to a loss of academic motivation (GÜNBAŞ & GÖZÜKÜÇÜK, 2020; Şahin et al., 2017). Parents recognized the lack of peer interaction and found ways for children to interact with their peers safely. Younger children could only interact with peers in their home or peers that their parents allowed them to see in person or virtually. USDOE (2021) reported that 45% of parents found that a major challenge children had was separating from their teachers and classmates. This separation from their teachers and peers could lead to boredom, lack of motivation, and an overall decline in a child's social development. When children socialize, they learn how to interact with others, they learn how to be

empathetic, share, negotiate, and they learn social cues and norms (Bright Horizons Family Solutions, 2021). Many of these developmental milestones can be missed or delayed in the absence of other children.

Many parents were worried about their child's social skills and social development due to social isolation (OECD, 2021). To combat the social isolation P4, P6, and P11 allowed their children to safely meet up at the park with trusted children such as family members or family friends. P12 started a parent social group in which she recruited multiple mothers with children who were of the same age as her child and engaged in activities such as social gatherings and field trips. On the contrast, many students were limited to telecommunication interactions only due to parents' fears of contracting COVID-19 (CDC, 2020); therefore, children could not interact physically with children outside their homes. P2, P7, P10, and P13 all found that virtual interactions with their child's peers was a COVID-19-friendly way to get the social interactions needed while staying safe at home. P13 added that the virtual interactions were a scheduled event where once a week on Wednesdays, the children would meet up on Facetime and play with dolls, read, and color together. This seemed to have worked for children with like-minded parents who established this consistent playtime.

The NAEYC (2021) found that a student's social skills and moral outlook are established during the lower-elementary school years. With the lack of community involvement with things such as sports, clubs, school programs, and extracurricular activities that children would normally engage in (Brajša-Žganec et al., 2019), parents had to find other ways to socialize their children in a productive, child-development way.

Children, in traditional in-person learning, would normally be surrounded by peers daily; with the absence of the social learning that would go on during this critical social growth period of a child's life, parents understood the need for peer engagement and found flexible ways to fulfill the need.

SQ 4 Theme 8: Positive Affirmations

The only finding that was revealed for SQ 4 was a theme of positive affirmations. Students' overall attitudes and beliefs about school directly informs their academic achievement (Zee et al., 2021). When children were feeling overwhelmed or stressed about schoolwork or their work performance, parents used positive affirmations and words of encouragement as motivation. Gith (2017) found that students who have involved parents are likely to have higher self-esteem and self-efficacy, which becomes evident when involved parents are contributing to the child's self-esteem with verbal affirmations and praises. The Center for Parenting Education (n.d.) felt parents have a responsibility to contribute to their children's self-esteem. Seven of the 13 parents declared they reassured their child with words and wanted their child to know their value as a person. P3 had their child recite positive self-affirmations every day, such as "I am great. I am wonderful. I am enough." Some parents felt that discussing the child's physical attributes would build their self-esteem. P2 and P5 wanted their children to know that the way they physically looked was something to regard. Then, parents such as P5 wanted the child to feel affirmed in their skill set; praising their child for trying their best, doing a good job, for work completion, or, as P10 and P11 stated, for their talents.

Research shows that a healthy school learning environment builds a child's self-esteem (Egeberg et al., 2016; Gage et al., 2014; McLernon & Cairnes, 2001; Oppenheimer & Kuipers, 2003; Thapa et al., 2013). With the absence of the school learning environment, parents seemed to naturally use praise and self-esteem-building techniques to foster self-esteem in their child. Some parents have always used positive affirmations, praises, and positive regard to motivate their child. Other parents may have felt it necessary when they saw their child struggling with learning, but overall, parents had a natural response to uplift their child with words. Using verbal praises, positive affirmation, and affirming the child's skill set is how parents felt it was necessary to build their child's self-esteem. This study's findings on giving children positive affirmations support the scholarly literature on children's motivation. Lower-elementary years are when children develop their self-esteem and overall perception of the world and themselves as academic beings. Yang et al. (2018) found that when a person is proud of their work, they are motivated to continue that work. This research found that parents reinforcing their child's skills verbally contributed to the child's motivation and overall self-value, which confirms the literature on ways to motivate children to do work.

Subtheme 8a: Affirmative Rewards

The sub-theme revealed in theme 8 was affirmative rewards. According to Yang et al. (2018), motivation is about more than attitudes and beliefs; it is about the drive or desire to do a task. Verbal praise can be intrinsic or extrinsic motivation, but parents also use other forms of extrinsic motivation to drive their children to be successful in virtual ERL. Individuals are often motivated extrinsically by gifts, rewards, and/or praise (Yang,

2018). Being motivated on a quid quo pro is extrinsic motivation that could obtain short or long-term results. Five of the 13 parents utilized affirmative rewards to motivate their children's self-esteem. Affirmative rewards could be behavior rewards devised by a system such as a child getting a sticker for each time they complete an assignment, and after they achieve a certain number of stickers, they receive a large reward. P1 & P12 referenced creating a behavior reward system for long-term behaviors. Other parents, such as P6 and P4, gave their child a desired item such as a toy or an electronic if they tried their best doing an activity or prevailed at a difficult task. P1 felt that positive affirmations were short-term, in-the-moment motivation, whereas the behavior reward kept them motivated in the long-term.

Research shows that intrinsic motivation is a motivational strategy that inhibits long-term success, whereas many behaviors that are rewarded through extrinsic motivation yield short-term results or results just long enough to receive the reward (Hsieh et al., 202; Reeve et al., 2018; Ryan & Deci, 2020; Yang et al. 2018). Many people believed COVID-19 was a short-term problem that ended up affecting students for over a year and still continues to affect many. Many parents may have thought the strategies they put in place were something that would be short-lived but as the pandemic progressed became more long-term. Nevertheless, intrinsic and extrinsic strategies were used for motivation, confirming that people's driving forces can come from internal or external factors; it depends on parental's level of involvement and the child's desires.

SQ 5 Theme 9: Parents Knowing their Child's Learning Style

The first finding that was revealed for SQ 5 was a theme of parents knowing their child's learning style. Parents often struggled with understanding the needs of their children and how they could assist them during school (Hornby & Blackwell, 2018). Two of the 13 parents reported knowing their child's learning style. P7 felt their child was a hands-on learner and therefore was able to get manipulatives to help foster his learning. In comparison, P12 has a pair of twins who learn differently. One twin is able to grasp concepts quickly, and the other one needs concepts explained multiple times. But by the parent being aware of the child's academic needs, she could assist in those respective areas. Three of the 13 parents were able to report what their child disliked about virtual learning and made a note of it. The other remaining parents struggled with identifying their child's academic needs, and if they did identify them, they did not have a solution to assist their child during virtual ERL.

Bhamani et al. (2020) found that parents did not know how to motivate their children beyond feeding and clothing, which could be due to parents not having educational responsibilities to their children prior to the pandemic. Parents were responsible for keeping their children alive and healthy, but many parents relied solely on schools to know and understand their child's learning style. Because the pandemic forced parents to be more actively involved in their child's academic development, many parents became aware of their child's needs that may not have been previously known. A few parents that were involved in the day-to-day schooling became more aware of what their child needed to be successful, but other parents, even those who were involved, may have

still fallen short in understanding their child's learning style. Knowing a child's learning style may have also meant assisting in the instruction as necessary (Raguindin et al., 2021). Suppose parents knew their child was a hands-on learner, for example, and the teacher was teaching math through a computer-based program. In that case, parents may have had to reinforce the learning with manipulatives or with real-world examples, which may have been out of the scope for many parents. So, although parents may have known how their child learns, they may not have known how to teach them via their learning style. This theme confirms the research that few parents knew how to meet the needs of their child's learning style, but many other parents struggled to understand and meet the needs of their child and even if they did understand them, meeting them was still a challenge.

SQ 5 Theme 10: Parents Knowing how their Child is Motivated

The second finding that was revealed for SQ 5 was a theme of parents knowing how their child is motivated. Parents without college degrees reported feeling less confident in facilitating learning and reported feeling helpless for their children while they were learning (USDOE, 2021). Fifty-one percent of the parents reported having a bachelor's degree or higher in this study. Thirty-eight percent of parents in this study were working from home. With over 50% of the parental population having a higher education degree, and 15% of parents reported needing a tutor for their child. Parents with college degrees are said to have been more prepared for virtual learning compared to parents who were not college educated (USDOE, 2021), but what this research adds is that parents who may not have had the personal skills or time to assist their children in

virtual ERL may have hired academic help through tutors. Whether it was a parent enlisted tutor or the parent themselves, children needed an adult's assistance academically. According to Brajša-Žganec (2019), school and home-based parental involvement is vital in student achievement as parental involvement influences a child's overall development. When parents understand how their child is motivated in education, parents are aware of the child's needs and moreover what they need to be successful.

Throughout the study, parents reported knowing the motivational strategies that worked best for their child. Parents made statements such as P8, "He just wants to be next to me but not hugging and kissing," because the parent is aware that the child is not fond of physical touch. P7 felt that the child needed someone who was not a parent to help teach them academics because although she was an involved parent, she did not have the skill set or patience as a teacher. In traditional in-person schooling, according to Hsiesh et al. (2021), educators often get students motivated about school by attempting to understand ways to increase the student's achievement. In virtual ERL, this study found that some children needed behavior rewards systems, and others just needed their parent's affirmations. Parents who were teachers such as P4, P6, and P12 put effective plans in place to ensure their children were learning. They were well-equipped to foster virtual ERL. P3 and P13, who are business professionals, were also very organized and precise with their child's needs and expectations for virtual ERL. This study aligns with the more educated the parents were, the more likely they were to be home during virtual ERL, and the more likely they knew how to motivate and support their child's learning.

SQ 5 Theme 11: Parental Involvement with Academics

The third finding that was revealed for SQ 5 was a theme of parental involvement with academics. Parent involvement is said to motivate students to achieve academic success, establish positive learning habits, transmit educational values, and assist students in preparing for school (Belaić, 2021). McBane (2017) found that parental involvement is the greatest significant factor in student achievement, which became more evident during virtual ERL as parents and caregivers had the sole responsibility to ensure students had the resources and learning environment necessary to be successful. Parents with a college education are four times more likely to work from home than parents who are not college-educated (USDOE, 2021). The parents who are college-educated are 26.7% more likely to facilitate learning and 52.6% more likely to support their child's learning compared to non-college-educated parents (USDOE, 2021). In this study, with 51% of parents being college educated and P4, P6, and P12 being educators, many of the parents did facilitate learning. The Center for Parenting Education (n.d) felt that beyond legal obligations of shelter and clothing, parents are responsible for contributing to their child's emotional needs so they can reach their full potential. When parents are involved in children's schooling, school activities, and programs, Grolniek and Slowiaezek (1994) found that parents instill values of learning and homework assignment completion, set rules and routines, they make sure the child is aware that they are invested in their learning and are there to help them in their failures along with being a reliable support system. This was true in 1994 when this study was conducted, and it holds true currently during the transitions to virtual ERL from traditional in-person learning. A parent

invested in their child's education holds an irreplaceable value in the student's academic success and motivation.

Gengler and Olson (2014) found that parents must be open to assisting their children in their educational needs. During ERL, this became more evident than in traditional in-person learning. P10 felt that his role as the primary caretaker meant that he was also a principal, gym teacher, and teacher during virtual learning. P12 and P13 would finish their job and then begin to assist their child with foundational skills to reinforce what was taught virtually. Learning at home is one of the six parenting styles described in Epstein's six types of parent involvement framework. Learning at home is defined as giving families information on how to help their children with homework, decision making, and planning so they can be successful problem solvers and helpers at home (Ihmeideh et al., 2018). With virtual ERL being forced on most of the United States, learning from home took on a whole new meaning. Learning at home encompassed all six types of parent involvement: parenting, communicating, volunteering, learning at home, decision-making, and collaborating with the community (Epstein, 2019). Parents had to find homecare support, whether doing it themselves or a caretaker. Parents must have communicated with the teacher to understand school schedules and what assignments were being asked of the child in order to help the child achieve their academic goals. The parent volunteered their time by organizing activities and spending time with their child. All 13 participants planned and organized activities for their children to keep their minds occupied. Parents were responsible for decision-making for when the child would log onto school, what they would wear, and the child's schedules

and routines. Collaborating with the community was also possible during virtual ERL such as when P3 started a mother's social group to get children safely outside and socializing. If parents did not take innovative and plan and organize these activities, it would not have happened. Learning at home was the highest-rated type of parental involvement (Ihmeideh et al., 2018) because parents had to collaborate with teachers to ensure learning was happening at home. Thus, during virtual ERL, parents were more likely to embody all six parenting types in order to help their child reach their full potential.

In traditional in-person school, students reported being more motivated academically when their teachers are actively engaged in their learning (Reeve et al., 2018). In virtual ERL, the children may need their parents to be engaged facilitators in order to be academically motivated. Teacher's delivery of instruction, time constraints of virtual learning instruction, teacher dependency on parents for regulation and redirection, lack of resources, and technology concerns were all reasons that affected the delivery of virtual ERL (Munastiwi & Puryono, 2021). Parents had to become invested in their child's academic experience by helping them with all aspects of schooling, technology, daily living, socialization, mental health, safety, and security. Four parents detailed how technology was a factor in how much assistance their child needed: Wi-Fi and video conferencing skills being at the forefront. P3 reported that she, as a parent, was everything to her child during virtual learning. Parents in this study felt that their support was needed for their child to have been able to grow academically during virtual ERL.

Subtheme 11a: Mental Health

The sub-theme that emerged for theme 5 was mental health. The child's mental health continued to emerge through the data and became prevalent when discussing if the parent believed their child reached their full potential. Roughly 30% of parents surveyed in the USDOE stated that their child was "experiencing harm to [their] emotional or mental health" during the COVID-19 pandemic (USDOE, 2021). P4, P5, and P6 felt their child did not self-actualize and made comments about the child being overwhelmed, frustrated, and stressed. P1 and P4 also made comments earlier in the interview about negative feelings their child had about virtual learning. Those parents later reported that they did not believe their child reached their full potential. This totals for 38% of the parents feeling their child's mental health was negatively impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic hence being consistent with the USDOE (2021) findings. Along with children's social anxiety caused by social isolation, wearing masks, and lacking peer engagement, children had negative emotional responses to the COVID-19 pandemic and their educational experiences.

Virtual ERL is not the same as homeschooling (Hodges et al., 2020) and many children felt the pressures of teachers attempting to teach an in-person curriculum in a virtual learning environment. Cahoon et al. (2021) found that children spent between one and three hours engaging in home learning activities, with the average in the United States being about two and a half hours. Parents in this study, however, reported that their child felt the virtual ERL day was too long, which could be because a traditional in-person day consists of seven to eight hours, for most elementary schools, however during

in-person schooling, children have breaks, teacher's engagement, playtime, songs, dances, social outlets, etc. whereas much of the virtual ERL day, according to parents in this study, was surrounded by teachers trying to get the students attention, fixing connectivity issues, and trying to implement a curriculum that did not fit all learning styles (Oliver, 2020). Because of these difficulties, Ewing and Cooper (2021) found that parents and older siblings needed to consistently assist younger students with learning, especially with technology and connectivity concerns (Drexler, 2018; Huber & Helm, 2020; Konig et al., 2020). Flynn et al. (2021) and Huber and Helm (2020) found because of these emotional difficulties with ERL; many elementary school teachers provided asynchronous lesson plans for students, leaving them to work on their own at home with no teacher support. If children did not understand the lesson, then they may have become more frustrated, which could have caused for more parental assistance. Schmidt et al. (2021) found that the best parent-child relationships were those children who worked independently and relied very little on their parents for academic support, but with teachers teaching for multiple hours a day or expecting children to work independently, at the lower-elementary school age, assistance from a parent/caregivers or older siblings was likely needed. Virtual ERL likely caused parents to become frustrated with their child and their ability to assist them in academic work. This is the phenomenon for children who had adult assistance. Many children whose parents were essential workers, illiterate, or non-English speaking had no choice but to do the work on their own (USDOE, 2021). This group of students was not privileged with parents who were able to

assist them with schoolwork which could have caused more frustration and a further decline in academic performance and the parent-child relationship.

Parental support has been shown to be a vital contribution to the success of virtual learning (Makrooni, 2019; Woofter, 2019). Parents that felt they were involved in their child's learning by being active participants in the educational process felt their child did reach their full potential. P12, P3, and P1 all felt their child did self-actualize because they had their parents to assist with education. This finding confirms that the more successfully involved a parent was with education, the more likely the child was able to be motivated to obtain success academically during ERL.

Theoretical Framework Analysis

The findings of this study support Maslow's theory of human motivation (1943). The findings confirm and explain that all parents in this study used motivational factors on each level of the five levels of Maslow's motivational hierarchy to motivate their child during virtual ERL: physiological, safety, love, esteem, and self-actualization. Each IQ aligned with each one of the five levels described by Maslow. The results revealed that physiological, safety, love, and esteem motivational needs could be met; however, students may not be able to fully self-actualize. Self-actualization was measured in this study by the child reaching their full potential in academics. Children could have not reached their full potential for reasons such as teacher's teaching style, time and delivery of the curriculum, lack of resources, and technology concerns (Munastiwi & Puryono, 2021).

In Maslow's theory of human motivation, each preceding level of the hierarchy must be satisfied in order for the next level of the hierarchy to be sought out (Maslow, 1943). For lower-elementary school children who need adult help for structure and guidance, parents had to assume more responsibility by being active participants in their child's motivation. With sufficient food and sleep (physiological needs), children were able to focus on the next level of hierarchy which was safety. Parents kept their children safe with secure shelter, childcare, and routines. Each parent showed their child love physically, mentally, or emotionally. Parents contributed to their child's self-esteem, especially when their work or their social world became challenging. According to parents' perceptions, although all the children in this study had parents who contributed to their physiological, safety, love, and esteem needs, some children still did not reach their full potential.

Limitations of the Study

This study provided a comprehensive description of parents' perceptions of the strategies used to motivate their lower-elementary school child's virtual ERL during the COVID-19 pandemic. This study may not be generalizable to parents of other grade levels outside of lower-elementary schools who have to change learning modalities from traditional in-person learning to virtual ERL. A limitation noted in this study is many parents had to remember what they did during virtual ERL. For all but one parent, virtual ERL happened over a year ago. Human error in reporting and using parents' perceptions may have impacted the data. Due to the researcher also being a mental health clinician, separating the role as a researcher and the role of a clinician was achieved by journaling

my feelings during the interview and staying self-aware to avoid biases. In this study, parent's educational background, socioeconomic status, language, and gender may have skewed the data. Parents who had access to emails, English speaking, and knew technology were the only parents who responded to the flyer. This study recruited parents who were involved and willing to discuss their perceptions of their child's experiences. Parents that may have had more negative experiences did not come forth to participate or did not want to discuss their perceptions.

Recommendations

This study examined parents' perceptions of motivational strategies used to motivate their lower-elementary school child's virtual ERL due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Because many of the parents who requested to be a participant in the study were able to be home with their child, a lot of the data was from the perception of parents who did not need childcare assistance. Overwhelmingly 63% of jobs cannot be done at home (Dingel & Neiman, 2020); therefore, it is recommended that a study be conducted from the perspective of essential workers or labor-worker families to gain their personal insight on how they motivated their children while working outside of the home during virtual ERL. Future research could also look at the motivational strategies put in place for the homeless population of students across academic grade levels. Another recommendation would be to gain personal insight of motivational strategies from parents who are not literate in English in the United States to find academic motivational strategies that they used to motivate their lower-elementary school child during virtual ERL. A recommendation for a quantitative study on the effects of lack of technology

resources such as Wi-Fi, computers, and subscriptions to online applications on children's academic success would also be beneficial to the literature. Another recommendation would be for a study to be done on parent preparedness for virtual ERL and the outcome of the preparedness on the children's academic success. Recommendations on how schools prepare parents for virtual ERL and student academic success could also be studied for future ERL situations. Lastly, it is recommended that researchers partner with organizations such as public schools to recruit participants. Recruiting online via email and flyers limits the pool of participants to those who use and have access to internet services.

Implications

This study contributes to positive social change for future lower-elementary school students who may be forced to enter a virtual learning environment due to school closures, medical emergencies, pandemics, epidemics, natural disasters, or home confinement. If their parents have the tools to alleviate some of the social, emotional, and academic stress and decline during that time, the negative outcomes of virtual ERL may be lessened. The stressors may be lessened because parents will be equipped with motivational strategies other parents use to motivate their child during virtual ERL. The more prepared parents are, the more preparation they can give their child. If parents used past strategies and were unsuccessful, this study provides other strategies that may not have been considered. This study could also validate parents who were already using some of these strategies as motivational techniques for their children during virtual ERL.

Conclusion

Lower-elementary school children need motivation in order to learn (Burkhalter, 2014). Maslow's five basic human motivational needs: physiological, safety, love, esteem, and self-actualization, need to be met in order for children to be successful academically (Crump, 1995; Husain, 2014; Latsoalo et al., 2018; Susanto & Lestari, 2018). Because lower-elementary school children are still developing their academic identity, they need their parents to assist them in being motivated for school. Since COVID-19 forced children to learn at home via technology, many families became responsible for their children's learning like never before (OECD Centre for Skills, 2020). Previous research was conducted to understand how parents felt about virtual learning and how successful their child was during virtual ERL (Cahoon et al., 2021; Chu et al., 2021; Garbe et al., 2020; GÜNBAŞ & GÖZÜKÜÇÜK, 2020; Pozas et al., 2021), but these studies did not focus on the practical strategies parents used at home to motivate their lower-elementary children. This study gives parent strategies that can be used at home to motivate lower-elementary school children on all five levels of Maslow's theory of human motivation. Based on this study's findings, parents felt to motivate a child physically, they need a consistent bedtime, three meals a day and snacks in between, and to follow the school's schedule for feeding. To motivate a child's safety needs, parents were home to assist their child with childcare and schoolwork; and parents created a distraction-free learning environment where children felt mentally and emotionally safe while having classroom elements present in the learning environment. To motivate a child's love needs, parents ensured their child felt love mentally, physically, or

emotionally; depending on how that child receives love and how the parent shows affection, and parents socialized their child either with their peers or with family while also giving them one-on-one time. To motivate a child's self-esteem, parents positively affirmed their children and gave them affirmative rewards. Lastly, this study found that parents knew their child's learning style, knew how their child is motivated, and parents felt that they must be involved with academics to help their child reach their full potential during ERL. Using researched strategies that parents used to motivate lower-elementary school children may positively impact children's social, emotional, and academic well-being during any virtual ERL situation.

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Appendix A: Qualitative Interview

Interview Guide

30-45 minutes in length

Opening Statement

The purpose of this interview is to examine parent's perceptions of strategies used to motivate their lower-elementary school children during virtual learning caused by the COVID-19 pandemic. All information gathered is used for the completion of my dissertation in a doctoral program in psychology. None of the information will be bought or sold or used against or to harm you in any way. If you feel uncomfortable answering any questions, feel free to decline to answer. You may choose to withdraw or stop the interview at any time and the debriefing will begin. During the interview, although there are standard questions, most questions will have follow-up questions to gain more of your personal insight.

Demographic Questions

1. What grade was your child in during virtual emergency response learning due to COVID-19 during the 2020–2021 school year?
2. For that child, what is their gender?
3. What race(s) do you identify as?
4. What socio-economic category do you identify as: lower, middle, or upper class?
5. What language is primarily spoken at home?
6. What is your highest level of education?

7. Do you have any other children in the home, if so what were their ages in the 2020–2021 school year?

IQs

IQ1. What strategies did you use to meet your child's physical needs during virtual emergency response learning (e.g., feeding and sleeping)?

IQ2. Were there any strategies that worked better than others to meet the physical needs of your child?

IQ3. What strategies did you use to meet your child's safety needs during virtual emergency response learning (e.g., shelter, clothing, routine, learning environment, and child care)?

IQ4. Were there any strategies that worked better than others to meet the safety needs of your child?

IQ5. What strategies did you use to meet your child's love needs during virtual emergency response learning (e.g., spending time together, showing them affection, socializing them)?

IQ6: Were there any strategies that worked better than others to meet the love needs of your child?

IQ7. What strategies did you use to meet your child's self-esteem needs during virtual emergency response learning (e.g., unconditional positive regard, positive reinforcement, motivational techniques)?

IQ8. Were there any strategies that worked better than others to meet the self-esteem needs of your child?

IQ9. How do you believe your child did reaching their full potential during virtual emergency response learning due to COVID-19?

IQ10. Are there any other strategies you would like to tell me that you used that motivated your child in any way during emergency response learning due to the COVID-19 pandemic?

Debrief:

This study is concerned with parents' perceptions of strategies used to motivate their lower-elementary school students during emergency response learning due to COVID-19. Throughout the pandemic, research has shown that students struggled socially, emotionally and academically while in emergency response learning and parents have found it difficult to motivate their children during this time.

How was this tested?

In this study, you were asked a series of questions about your perceptions of strategies you used to motivate your lower-elementary school student during emergency response learning due to COVID-19. Probing questions were followed depending on your response to the initial question.

Expectations and main questions:

I expected to find parents strategies used to motivate their lower-elementary school students during emergency response learning due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Why is this important to study?

By understanding parents' perceptions of strategies used to motivate their lower-elementary school students during emergency response learning due to COVID-19 parents

will be able to hear other parents' strategies that they may not have used and potentially use them in the future.

Further help

If this interview caused you any distress or traumatic thoughts, please visit a mental health professional. A list of mental health professionals was provided in the consent form.

Thank you for your participation in this study.

Appendix B: Resources

Helplines

1. Immediate Crisis: Call 911
2. National Suicide Prevention Lifelineexternal icon: 1-800-273-TALK (8255) for English, 1-888-628-9454 for Spanish
3. Lifeline Crisis Text Line: Text SIGNS to 741741 for 24/7, anonymous, free crisis counseling
4. Disaster Distress Helplineexternal icon: CALL or TEXT 1-800-985-5990

Appendix C: Initial Email

Good (time of day & participants name),

Thank you for your interest in participating in this study. My name is Brittany Harden and I am the conducting researcher. The purpose of this study is to examine parents' perceptions on the strategies used to motivate their lower-elementary school students during virtual emergency response learning due to COVID-19. For that to happen, I am looking to gather participants who meet the following criteria:

1. Are a parent of a child who was in grades Kindergarten, 1st, 2nd or 3rd grade during the 2020–2021 school year.
2. Parents must be English speaking
3. Students must have had a shift from traditional in-person learning to emergency response learning at home during the 2020–2021 school year.

Parents of children with disabilities will be excluded because those parents may be used to providing different levels of care for their children at home.

If you meet this criteria and would like to participate in this study, please reply to this email stating "I meet all the criteria" so that I can send over the consent form necessary for you to participate in this study.

Thank you again for your time and consideration in this study.