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Psychological and Contextual Antecedents to Student Engagement Profiles of Ninth Grade Students

Wendy Ann Jones
Walden University

Walden University

College of Social and Behavioral Sciences

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Wendy Ann Jones

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Review Committee
Dr. Michael Durnam, Committee Chairperson, Psychology Faculty
Dr. Ricardo Thomas, Committee Member, Psychology Faculty
Dr. Georita Frierson, University Reviewer, Psychology Faculty

Chief Academic Officer
Eric Riedel, Ph.D.

Walden University
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Abstract

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by

Wendy Ann Jones

MA, Andrews University, 2009

BS, University of the West Indies, 1994

Dissertation Submitted in Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

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Abstract

Student engagement is a determinant for students' academic success, readiness for higher education, and social agency. The purpose of this qualitative, case study was to explore ninth grade students' perceptions of the contextual and psychological factors that influence the development of student engagement profiles. The ecological systems theory was used as the framework for the study. Through purposive sampling, 15 participants were selected, and 5 groups of 3 were formed based on participants' engagement profiles as identified by cooperating teachers' categorization and the results of the Student Engagement Instrument. Using semi structured interviews, data were gathered for the 4 research questions. Iterative content analysis of interview data identified 7 emergent themes that underscored the relative importance of parental support, teacher's mood and behavior, peer relationship, and a sense of justice and safety in the classroom as factors that promote multidimensional engagement patterns. These findings may influence students, parents, teachers, counselors, administrators, community members, and organizations to create spaces, and develop practices and policies that would provide environments and relationships that enhance students' emotional, behavioral, and cognitive engagement with school and schoolwork, especially for students who might be on the verge of disengaging from school.

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Dedication

To the 15 brave, honest, participants of this study, to their peers, the principal and teachers.

Acknowledgments

This was a long journey that helped me see myself from multiple perspectives. I have learned from all faculty who facilitated the core courses, I am grateful for each of them for walking with me through each stage to each milestone.

Also, behind the scene and every day of this long period, I had been carried on the wings of prayer and love from my community of faith, the members of my family, and my friends. I know many of them wondered why I was inflicting such torture to myself, but they persisted in prayer with great expectations. Thank you all.

My first approach to the principal at the study site was so encouraging that I felt angels were working with me. I acknowledge with sincere gratitude the readiness to cooperate expressed by the principal, teachers, parents, and participants. The research was possible only because of you.

I feel extremely blessed that I had the opportunity to work with my research committee. The Chair of my research committee was the most patient, engaging, and encouraging person I could have wanted to work with me. He expressed interest in my topic and prospectus from day one. Thanks to Dr. Michael Durnam for the graceful autonomy support, and the positive and constructive feedback he has provided. I could not have completed this dissertation without his insightful support and guidance.

My committee member, Dr. Ricardo Thomas provided another shoulder for me to stand and lean on to see more clearly the potential of my dissertation. His insightful feedback and support brought to clearer vision some deeper issues I needed to address in this dissertation – especially in analysis of the data.

I am grateful for the input of Dr. Georita Marie Frierson because she ensured that I had made provision to protect the rights of participants of this study. With a grateful heart, I tip my proverbial hat to these experts who walked with me through this long process.

Finally, to my God–Father, Son, and Holy Spirit–for providing the grace to persevere, whenever I asked. For being my helper close at hand, I give you all the honor and praise because you are worthy. Thank you, my Lord.

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Chapter 1: Introduction to the Study

Introduction

Scholars have provided an understanding of how student engagement profiles are differentiated according to the pattern of participation and commitment to schoolwork, on all dimensions of student engagement (Fredricks, Blumenfeld, & Paris, 2004; Wang & Peck, 2013). Although the distinction between formal and informal learning is not always clear, formal learning is characterized by the use of prestated objectives, as well as tasks that are "structured and prescribed" (Jones, 2013, p. 113). The purpose of this study was to explore ninth grade students' perceptions of their contextual and psychological factors that influence the development of student engagement profiles.

In this first chapter, I present the background to this study and identify the gap in extant literature that I reviewed. Then, I provide a problem statement, the research questions, the conceptual framework, the nature of the study, the scope of the study, and its limitations. This chapter closes with the contributions that the findings of this study may pose for positive educational and social change for students, families, neighborhoods, counselors, schools, and policy makers.

Background

Scholars have addressed school engagement including its nature, antecedents, consequences, and predictive relationships between school engagement, the pursuit of college education, and mental health issues. Students' patterns of school engagement predict their academic success (Li, Lerner, & Lerner, 2010), mental health issues, and long-term educational choices (; Wang & Eccles, 2011 Wang & Peck, 2013). Some

scholars have underscored how student disengagement leads to increased dropout and academic underachievement (Archambault, Janosz, Fallu, & Pagani, 2009; Blondal & Adalbjarnardottir, 2012). Fredricks et al. (2004) noted that student disengagement is preventable because student engagement is malleable; therefore, interventions may help students increase their degree of engagement. Disengagement is the end of a process that begins with affective or emotional disengagement (Blondal & Adalbjarnardottir, 2012). Learners' engagement improves when they receive support from peers (Drolet & Arcand, 2013), parents and teachers (Cheung & Pomerantz, 2012; Estell & Perdue, 2013; Marion, Laursen, Kiuru, Nurmi, & Salmela-Aro, 2014), and the whole school environment (Metha, Cornell, Fan & Gregory, 2013; Ripski & Gregory, 2009).

Blondal and Adalbjarnardottir (2012) noted that adolescent students require developmentally appropriate support for learning so that they do not become bored with learning and associated processes. Cheung and Pomerantz (2012) noted that parents of students in seventh and eighth grades should provide their children with a balance of overt support and autonomy support so that these learners may develop intrinsic motivation that may lead to engagement with school. Such support is important for students in the ninth grade because researchers have identified Grade 10 as the stage when "full engagement begins to decline" (Conner & Pope, 2013, p. 1438). If appropriate and timely intervention is provided, this decline may be stemmed (Christenson et al., 2008; Wang & Fredricks, 2013).

Wang and Peck (2013) highlighted various patterns of coping with the school context and engagement with schoolwork that students employ. Wang and Peck

identified five engagement profiles: highly engaged, moderately engaged, minimally engaged, emotionally disengaged, and cognitively disengaged (p. 1271). Wang and Peck found that students who were identified as emotionally disengaged were able to demonstrate behavioral and cognitive engagement, but were at-risk for mental health challenges. Students with the cognitively disengaged profile registered high behavioral and emotional engagement, were not performing as well as emotionally disengaged students, but were at lower risk for mental health issues than students with emotionally disengaged profiles (Wang & Peck, 2013, pp. 1271-1272). Wang and Peck also found that the risk for dropping out of high school was greatest for students with minimally engaged profile, students with moderately engaged profile and those with cognitively disengaged profile faced the second and third greatest risks respectively for dropping out of high school. Students with highly engaged and those with emotionally disengaged profiles were not at zero risk for dropout (Wang & Peck, 2013).

Researchers have identified the need for clarity about the conditions that encourage students to engage with learning tasks in the classroom and socially in the general school environment. In conducting this study, I sought to address the need for clarity about how learners perceive their environment at home, their neighborhoods, and at school, with reference to methodological issues identified by Wang and Peck (2013) that called for multiple sources of data and learners' perspectives on their home and learning environments, as well as the processes learners use to apply support for learning. I addressed the need for clarity about ninth grade students' experiences at home and at school and how these experiences influence their patterns of engagement with school.

Problem Statement

Successful completion of school for many students connotes being present and on time at every class, not attracting negative attention, and graduating as a result of accomplishing full attendance (Reschly & Christenson, 2012). The high student-teacher ratio in secondary education classrooms presents a challenge for teachers to support students' focused attention on learning tasks. As a result of these challenges and misunderstanding of what constitutes successful school completion, students graduate ill-equipped for the workplace because of a lack of essential academic and social skills. There are other students who drop out of school because they face "inappropriate educational environments result[ing] in a downward spiral of school engagement" (Li et al., 2010, p. 812). Social programs have been designed to support single parents, unemployed, and unemployable persons.

Scholars have examined the nature of students' engagement with school and have confirmed the multidimensionality of the concept (Fredricks et al., 2004). Wang and Peck (2013) clarified the heterogeneity of profiles of student engagement, but the processes students initiate in translating their experiences at school, home, and other relevant contexts to developing patterns of engagement with school will add to the literature on the issue (Metha et al., 2013; Wang & Peck, 2013). Moreover, knowledge of psychological factors that contribute to how students adjust to school environments and help them navigate through the learning processes will contribute to school engagement, especially for those who are at risk for academic failure.

Teachers, counselors, psychologists, and parents would be better able to provide appropriate interventions if they understood how learners perceive and use support for learning. Appleton, Christenson, and Furlong, (2008) have noted a correlation between motivation and engagement. Because motivation and engagement are malleable, educational interventionists like parents, teachers, counselors, and policymakers will profit from learners' views on their relationships with parents, peers, and teachers, as well as how these may influence their engagement with school and schoolwork.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this qualitative case study was to explore ninth grade students' perceptions of contextual and psychological factors that influence student engagement profiles. Data collection methods included semi structured interviews with learners and observation of these participants in classrooms.

Research Questions

RQ1: How do ninth grade students perceive their relationships with their parents, classroom context, and personal characteristics for the development of student engagement profiles?

RQ2: How do ninth grade students apply their relationships with their parents, classroom context, and personal characteristics for the development of student engagement profiles?

RQ3: What factors influence ninth grade students' perception of their relationship with their parents, classroom context, and personal characteristics for the development of student engagement profiles?

RQ4: What factors influence ninth grade students' use of their relationships with their parents, classroom context, and personal characteristics for the development of student engagement profiles?

Theoretical Framework for the Study

Bronfenbrenner's (1979) ecological systems theory provides a framework from which an individual may understand how human development results from interactions between the person and key persons in the environment. Similarly, Fredricks et al. (2004) concluded that student engagement is influenced by students' interactions with parents and siblings at home and teachers and peers at school, particularly for adolescents. The malleability and multidimensionality of engagement provide researchers opportunities to examine student engagement using multiple data sources and multiple methodologies. Additionally, interventions to improve student engagement can be developed, as well as prevent development of disengagement in students.

Fredricks et al. (2004) confirmed that there is a relationship between home and school contexts and student engagement. Factors that constitute the context for school engagement include "the sum of and interactions among processes at work within students and their peers, families and schools" (Estell & Perdue, 2013, p. 326). In the ecological systems theory, Bronfenbrenner and Ceci (1994) outlined context and the factors that are integral to the concept. According to ecological systems theory, there are several interactions and processes between an individual and others at home, school, and events remote from the individual that influence that person's psychological development (Bronfenbrenner, 1979). Remote events exert influence on student engagement through

interactions within students' contexts. Hence, students' decisions to disengage and eventually drop out of school are influenced as much by contexts in school as well as those not related to school (Archambault et al., 2009; Burofsky, Kellerman, Boucom, Oliver, & Margolin, 2013; Rumberger & Rotermund, 2012). Additionally, teacher-characteristics, which may be influenced by economics, relationship issues, and other factors remote from learners' contexts, contribute to the learning environment and student participation (Corso, Bundick, Quaglia, & Haywood, 2013).

The context of school engagement includes teacher practices (Corso et al, 2013; Fredricks, 2011; Lam, et al., 2014; Mih & Mih, 2013), structure in the classroom (Fredricks, 2011), as well as subject content and task characteristics (Corso et al., 2013; Fredricks, 2011). Furthermore, safety and security at school and at home (Burofsky et al., 2013) and parental involvement (Cheung & Pomerantz, 2012; Lam et al., 2014) are factors of the context of students' school participation.

Psychological factors influencing student engagement include self-efficacy, subject-efficacy, motivation, self-regulation, and metacognition (Deci & Ryan, 2008; Jones, 2013; Li & Lerner, 2013; Mih & Mih, 2013). These factors can be used to identify students' sense of self, feelings of belonging at school, values applied to school tasks, and commitment to participate in academic and social pursuits related to school (Mih & Mih, 2013). Context, psychological factors, and engagement are interrelated. Grades, teacher characteristics, peer characteristics, and home environment are also principal contributors to the dynamic among context, learner characteristics, and engagement profiles. When ecological systems theory is applied to the interrelationship between learning contexts

and learners' psychological factors, I identified the importance of microsystem in the development of student engagement profiles.

Ecological systems conceptual framework provides for the use of multiple sources of data, particularly because the framework features interactions that influence psychological development. In this study, I applied tenets of Bronfenbrenner's (1979) ecological systems theory as its framework to gather, sort, analyze, and interpret data from students about their perception and application of their contexts and interactions with persons related to their educational experiences. This framework allows for the examination of multiple sources of information and the expression of participants' perception and meaning of their experiences (Merriam, 2009).

The research questions required participants to provide data on how they perceived and applied contextual and psychological factors for their participation in school tasks. Participants also provided their understanding of factors that influenced their participation in activities at school. These inquiries facilitated the construction of truth from individual and communal perspectives–integral components of qualitative research.

Nature of the Study

This study was qualitative as its purpose related directly to exploring a phenomenon for clearer understanding. I examined antecedents of school engagement profiles in response to scholars who noted that relationships at home, in the classroom, and the school context influence students' degree of engagement and motivation (Estell & Perdue, 2013; Fredricks et al., 2004; Wang & Peck, 2012). A single case with

embedded units design was appropriate for this study because I explored the relationships, perceptions, experiences and interpretations of participants in contexts of their school and home environments. The data collection method I used was primarily interviews; I also collected observational data that were used to confirm disclosures and findings gleaned from interviews. Some aspects of lived experiences can be understood only through discussions and observations. Jimerson, Durbrow and Wagstaff (2009) provided evidence of the value of observation as a credible data collection method (p. 189).

Other data sources I used included students' self-reports and teachers' reports to identify and categorize student engagement profiles. Observations of participants in their natural setting at school corroborated the categories of student engagement assigned to each participant. I also conducted interviews with students to get rich descriptions of their experiences and interpretations related to the research questions. The single case with embedded units design was a good fit for the multiple school engagement profiles while providing for the application of ecological systems theory.

Bronfenbrenner and Ceci's (1994) ecological systems theory facilitated this inquiry as it proposes the interaction of several factors and factor sets that influence the development of the human person. As Martin, Anderson, Bobis, Way, and Vellar (2012) proposed, Bronfenbrenner's theory readily facilitates the development of an "educational ecology" (p. 3). An educational ecology features personal as well as ecological factors influencing students' experiences at school. I developed educational ecologies for

participants using various methodologies and sources, as recommended by Wang and Peck (2013).

My approach to analyzing data in this study was to use steps in content analysis. The research questions of this study helped focus data reduction in compliance with the aim of data analysis, which Trochim and Donnelly (2007) identified as answering the research question. Content analysis is a structured approach to data analysis, and it facilitates the identification of key patterns or themes from data. Transcripts of interviews was the primary data set in this study, as in content analysis (Patton, 2002). Steps of content analysis, as outlined by Hancock and Algozzine (2006), included the following:

1. Selection of analytic categories to guide the identification of types or patterns from the transcripts and ecological systems theory that informed the identification of these types or patterns of relationships
2. Identification of grounded categories from the transcripts
3. Sorting of categories between analytic and grounded as identified from transcripts
4. Summing citation of each category to provide descriptive information for each embedded unit
5. Identifying patterns or themes in each category

Baxter and Jack (2008) identified steps in data analysis that include within, between, and across subunits in a case study with embedded units. I followed this structured process for each embedded unit in the case and conducted a between-unit

analysis for common and unique patterns. I added to this iterative process a bracketing exercise where I noted my experiences with antecedents of school engagement, as well as my interpretations of scenarios I had observed. The aim of the note-taking exercises was to bracket my bias regarding school commitment and factors influencing students' behaviors at school. I triangulated the results of this analysis with data from observations and my journal entries.

I used NVivo Plus software to store, organize, and manage data and to ensure that I had a timeline of changes I made at every stage of the data storage and interpretation process. Creswell (2013) noted that the use of software in data analysis creates a sense of distance between the researcher and the information. I addressed the sense of distance from the data that software presents by completing preliminary hand coding exercises. I also completed several readings of interview transcripts to keep me grounded in the field experience and to focus the analysis of the interviews, and interpretation of the analysis for meaning.

Definitions

The following were definitions of key factors in this study:

Contextual factors: Those elements of the environment at home and school, particularly the interactions between students and parents, students and teachers, and students and their peers (Estell & Perdue, 2013).

Psychological factors: The personal characteristics demonstrated by students and related to their behavioral, emotional and cognitive engagement with school tasks. These

include self-efficacy, subject-efficacy, self-regulation skills, metacognitive skills, and motivation (Deci & Ryan, 2008).

Student engagement profile: A student's pattern of engagement with school tasks as identified by Wang and Peck (2013). There are five profiles as follows: highly engaged (students who scored higher than average on behavioral, emotional, and cognitive engagement), moderately engaged (students who scored moderate levels on the three dimensions of engagement), minimally engaged (students who received a low score on the three dimensions of engagement), emotionally disengaged (students who scored low on emotional engagement, moderate on behavioral engagement, and high on cognitive engagement), and cognitively disengaged (students who scored low on cognitive engagement, and moderate on behavioral and emotional engagement; p. 1270).

Assumptions

Qualitative research provides study participants the opportunity to express their perspectives on the phenomenon of interest (Patton, 2002). In conducting this study, one assumption I held was that participants would be able to share their experiences of engagement with school and schoolwork. This qualitative enquiry used in this study was informed by social constructivism, which posits that meaning is not an objective truth, but is constructed through shared perspectives that are developed through lived experiences (Creswell, 2013; Stake, 1995). Therefore, the findings of this study were based on the emergent themes that were identified from the data collected from the participants.

Scope and Delimitations

In this study, I identified contextual and psychological antecedents of student engagement profiles. I focused on Grade 9 students because Wang and Peck (2013) showed a predictive correlation between students' engagement profile in Grade 9 and their educational aspirations. Moreover, the process of disengagement, which leads to school dropout, begins with emotional and cognitive disengagement (Wang & Peck, 2013) that begins fully at Grade 10 (Conner & Pope, 2013). An understanding of students' experiences at Grade 9, before they experience decline in engagement, provided insights to help learners at risk for disengagement at Grade 10.

I focused on how Grade 9 students understood support systems and relationships with their parents, teachers, and peers at school. I also identified distinctions in students' experiences among five student engagement profiles. Due to the need to assemble rich, thick descriptions of students' perceptions, prospective participants who were unable to articulate their experiences, interpret their actions, and validate reports that I provided were excluded from the study. Students who were able to articulate their experiences, interpret their actions, and validate the reports that I provided were included in the study. Students who satisfied inclusion criteria were grouped according to their engagement profiles.

Ecological systems theory (Bronfenbrenner, 1979) provided the framework for this research because it provides the required structure for inquiry of a variety of contextual factors at home and at school. Moreover, ecological systems theory proposes that human development is intrinsically linked to environmental factors and processes

inherent in relationships. The multifaceted nature of interactions between context and personality to produce patterns of engagement at school, as proposed by the ecological systems theory, provided the best framework for this inquiry.

Limitations

There are inherent limitations of the design and methodology of this study, as are common to all qualitative studies that use interviews and observation as data collection methods. These limitations include "possible distorted responses due to personal bias, anger, anxiety, politics, and simple lack of awareness" (Patton, 2002, p. 306), and a tendency to affect observed behavior despite attempts to be unobtrusive. Patton (2002) further noted the effect of the interviewer on the participant, the emotional state of the participant at the time of the interview, and even "self-serving responses" (p. 306) as weaknesses or challenges associated with qualitative inquiry.

The weaknesses noted above were addressed with several steps including prolonged engagement whereby I spent enough time at the study site to become familiar with the environment and to allow participants to develop a sense of safety with my presence–enough to facilitate their willingness to disclose their experiences, but not too much to influence their responses to interview questions. Janesick (2011) noted that qualitative researchers would do well to keep a reflective journal of their experiences on the field, as well as to record their responses to these experiences. I recorded in a reflective journal, my feelings, flashbacks, interpretations, and biases regarding the site, my experience of student engagement, and participants. Development of researcher-attributes and skills that lend to effective research were critical to addressing the

weaknesses of the design of this study. Janesick (2011) recommended commitment to regular journaling as a means of developing these attributes and skills (p. 198). In addition to these measures, I encouraged participants to develop and maintain a journal related to the research questions and to disclose the contents in any subsequent meeting. Finally, I checked with participants to verify the results of my analysis of the interviews to ensure my interpretations represented what participants intended to say.

Significance

This study had the potential to contribute to a clearer understanding of antecedents of student engagement profiles. Of particular interest for scholars were students' relationships at home and school (Dotterer & Lowe, 2011; Drolet & Arcand, 2013; Li et al., 2010; Wang & Peck, 2013). The multisource and multi methodological inquiry provided a perspective for a more holistic understanding of students and their behaviors. The findings may contribute to literature on the development of relationships that support students' engagement with school and academic pursuits.

The significance of this study also resided in its potential contribution to information needed to project students' longer-term social, economic, and psychological stability. As noted by Blondlal and Adalbjardottir (2012), educational success that positions persons for independence from state welfare, depends on student engagement more than on students' abilities or attributes. When stakeholders in education know of and provide the most appropriate antecedents to school engagement, students' success and esteem is increased. Additionally, schools that have a clearer understanding of

antecedent factors of student engagement can enhance their services to support behavioral, affective, and cognitive engagement for learners.

The findings of this study may also be useful for policy development, particularly related to equity in differentiated educational practices. Moreover, an investment in understanding antecedents of ninth grade students' engagement profiles will contribute to improvement of their experiences at school, both in the short-term and in longer-term educational and occupational decisions of this group of students (Estell & Perdue, 2013; Wang & Eccles, 2011). These outcomes may influence the social fabric and relationships in families and communities and contribute positive social change, as people will be inspired to set educational goals and persist toward their achievement.

Implications for Social Change

Student engagement predicts educational pathways and long-term outcomes (Archambault et al., 2009; Conner & Pope, 2013). A literate and socially adept population may contribute to personal security and safety, as well as economic and other forms of development. The information from this study may provide avenues for social change at several levels of the educational system, especially in Trinidad and Tobago.

This study provided parents and guardians information regarding the amount and quality of support required to help their children engage effectively with school-related tasks. Consequently, students may experience improvement in academic achievement and social development. Engaged students become engaged graduates who become engaged employees and employers in their own right.

Summary

Students face several forms of challenge regarding school experience. These challenges range from bad fit between their needs and school environments, teacher characteristics, improper support at home, and temptations from peers. Students' responses to challenges are differentiated, and this may be related to their preferred pattern of attending to tasks at school. Students who are highly engaged may be more likely to find productive ways to negotiate their way through school successfully; whereas, students who disengage behaviorally or emotionally experience more academic and social challenges, and the behaviorally disengaged run the risk of failure at school and dropout.

There is need for a clearer understanding of the factors that influence the development of student engagement profiles, and this should be from the students' perspectives (Wang & Peck, 2013). In this study, I addressed this need.

In Chapter 2, I will identify the area of void that this study addresses.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

Introduction

Scholars have debated the causes and consequences of increasing dropout rates among secondary school students. The consequences of school dropout are both immediate and long-ranged. Students who fail to complete school face limited employment options, are generally at risk for criminal behaviors and conviction, and are more a burden on the social welfare system than those who complete school successfully (Blondal & Adalbjarnardottir, 2012).

Some students stay in school but do not complete the full requirements of education. To complete school successfully, a learner should exit school having met "the defined academic, social, and behavioral standards of schooling" (Reschly & Christenson, 2012, p. 4). Learners are able to achieve academically and socially and are able to apply learning if their level of global engagement is high. Unsupported youth who are not highly self-efficacious and who depend on extrinsic motivation are more likely to drop out of school and become a burden on their communities than intrinsically motivated students (Tas, Bora, Selvitopu, & Demirkaya, 2013). Fredricks et al. (2004) noted that student engagement is a multidimensional concept that comprises behavioral, emotional, and cognitive engagement of the individual particularly in the classroom. Furthermore, Fredricks et al. underscored the malleability of engagement, which signals hope for students who are deemed at risk for academic underachievement or dropout. Therefore, engaging students in school has immediate and far-reaching consequences.

Student engagement is related to contexts at home and at school. Parents, teachers, and student peers who provide support and challenge to learners encourage behavioral and emotional engagement (Fredricks et al., 2004; Fredricks, 2011; Mih & Mih, 2013). Students who have a sense of belonging at school perform better cognitively than those who feel alienated from school (Conner & Pope, 2013). Moreover, students who experience positive feelings about school find it easier to participate in school-related tasks and to commit to schoolwork and practice self-regulating skills at school (Li & Lerner, 2013). There are some identifiable patterns of student engagement that differentiate students and their degree of academic achievement, and mental health statuses (Wang & Peck, 2013).

According to Wang and Peck (2013), students with highly engaged profiles are not at risk for academic failure and do not show signs of depression. Highly engaged students feel they belong at school, have a sense of what they may contribute to the learning process, exercise self-regulation and effective planning related to studies, and participate fully in classroom activities. Students with moderately engaged profiles were among the majority of Wang and Peck's sample. For moderately engaged students, scores on multidimensional engagement were lower than scores for students with highly engaged profile, but higher than the other three profiles (Wang & Peck, 2013). Of the five engagement profiles (moderately engaged, highly engaged, minimally engaged, emotionally disengaged, and cognitively disengaged), students with minimally disengaged profile were at greatest risk for school dropout, and students of moderately engaged and cognitively disengaged profiles were at risk for dropout to lesser degrees

(Wang & Peck, 2013). Further, students with emotionally disengaged profile were at greatest risk for depression (Wang & Peck, 2013). Students with highly engaged profile and those with emotionally disengaged profile were not at risk for dropout because according to Wang and Peck the highly engaged and emotionally disengaged scored high on cognitive engagement, which is a requirement for academic success.

In this chapter, I will present the strategies used to identify and locate research on student engagement and student engagement profiles. I will outline the conceptual framework of student engagement. I address the concept of student engagement and the engagement profiles exhibited by adolescent learners. Finally, a summary of major themes and issues in the literature is presented, and a conclusion that points to the need for a qualitative method of inquiry is included.

Purpose Statement

The purpose of this qualitative case study was to explore ninth grade students' perceptions of contextual and psychological factors that influence the development of school engagement profiles. The primary sources of data were participants' experiences, memories, and interpretations of their relationships at school and at home, and these were collected through semi structured interviews.

Literature Search Strategy

The key initial search terms used to access articles for the literature review were *engagement, motivation, participation, school, emotional engagement behavioral engagement, cognitive engagement, affective engagement, student* and *adoles**. The databases searched were psycARTICLES, Academic Search Complete, Business Source

Complete, Educational Resources Information Center (ERIC), PsycCRITIQUES, and PsycEXTRA. Full text, scholarly, peer-reviewed journals, published between 2009 to 2014, were limiters for these searches, which produced 578 articles. Additionally, I followed the literature in references of articles, a handbook, and textbooks related to student engagement and motivation. I was able to get these articles through Google Scholar and the Walden Library.

Conceptual Framework

Student engagement profiles refer to the predominant pattern of students' attendance, commitment to school, sense of belonging to school, and valuing of learning (Conner & Pope, 2013; Tuominem-Soini & Salmela-Aro, 2014; Wang & Peck, 2013). Student engagement profiles are also reflected in learners' determination to persist through difficult tasks related to school and learning. Fredricks et al. (2004) concluded that school engagement is a multidimensional concept that includes behavioral engagement, emotional engagement, and cognitive engagement.

Behavioral Engagement

According to Fredricks et al. (2004), behavioral engagement relates to the individual's degree of participation in academic and nonacademic activities at school. Behavioral engagement is marked by students' on-task behaviors, their interaction with the teacher and their peers in in-class activities, and their nondisruptive behaviors (Fredricks et al., 2004; Mahatmya, Lohman, Matjasko, & Farb, 2012).

Emotional Engagement

Emotional engagement includes learners' reactions to school. These reactions encompass positive and negative feelings, and include "interest, boredom, happiness, sadness, and anxiety" (Fredricks et al., 2004, p. 63). Another indicator of emotional engagement is students' sense of identification and belonging regarding school, teachers, peers, the learning process, and curriculum content (Blondal & Adalbjarnardottir, 2012; Fredricks, 2011; Fredricks et al., 2004; Wang & Halcombe, 2010).

Cognitive Engagement

The determination to set goals, plan, and persist through difficult tasks to gain mastery of the task or subject is a component of cognitive engagement (Fredricks et al., 2004). Cognitive engagement describes students' commitment to persist through difficult tasks, their preference for the pursuit of mastery goals, and their actions to engage learning strategies and self-regulation skills toward achieving their goals (Blondal & Adalbjarnardottir, 2012; Fredricks et al., 2004).

Student Engagement Profiles

Profiles of engagement represent how students measure on the three dimensions of engagement. These profiles emphasize heterogeneity of learners' responses to schoolwork; the profiles refer to the degree of engagement on dimensional levels as well as on a global level and they reflect an individual's characteristic approach and feelings toward school and school-related situations (Wang & Peck, 2013).

Scholars have presented configurations of student engagement profiles, and they refer to these variously, as clusters or types (Conner & Pope, 2013), subgroups

(Tuominen-Soini & Salmela-Aro, 2014), and profiles (Wang & Peck, 2013). Conner and Pope (2013) uncovered three engagement profiles: reluctantly engaged, busily engaged, and fully engaged (p. 1434). These clusters describe the three patterns of engagement in this study. Conner and Pope (2013) suggested seven types of engagement based on the dimension an individual select to use in completing school-related tasks (pp. 1429-1430).

Tuominen-Soini and Salmela-Aro (2014) identified four combined subgroups of student engagement and burnout profiles: engaged, engaged-exhausted, cynical, and burned-out. Wang and Peck (2013) identified five student engagement profiles: moderately engaged, highly engaged, minimally engaged, emotionally disengaged, and cognitively disengaged (p. 1270). For this study, I used the framework of student engagement profiles as outlined by Wang and Peck. This framework allows for the use of several sources of data and several methods of data collection, thus providing for triangulation of data toward the reliability of the findings.

Review of Literature

Students express a range of sentiments regarding school. These sentiments range from seeing school as an unwelcoming, suppressive place, a place where students feel protected, or as a place like home (Ozdemir & Kalayci, 2013). These perceptions of school all relate to students' sense of safety and willingness to invest time and effort to school and school-related activities (Metha et al., 2013). Additionally, individuals develop profiles of engaging at school, and these become characteristically dominant patterns of adjustment to the school environment.

Contexts Influencing Students' School Engagement

A number of theories have been applied to understand how students commit to school and academic pursuits. In the participation-identification model, Finn (1989) proposed that engagement involves behaviors and valuing school and outcomes of achievement. In the social cognitive theory, Bandura (1986) proposed that psychological development and meaningful learning occur not in isolation, but because of the interaction of dynamic factors present in a person's environment. Social cognitive theory further proposes that an examination of all interactions in a person's environment is necessary for a holistic understanding of learning and development. Eccles et al. (1993), in their stage-environment-fit theory, highlighted the importance of attending to the developmental needs of students, especially at transitional stages. This theory was developed to address the developmental needs of adolescents, and it identified the fundamental need for autonomy at home and school (Eccles et al., 1993). The ecological systems theory (Bronfenbrenner, 1979; Bronfenbrenner & Ceci, 1994) suggests that human development should be considered contextually, and interpersonal processes should be examined as integral to the developmental process.

At Home

One of the factors that influence student engagement is the nature of relationships that children and adolescents have with their parents. Students thrive on support from significant others and place premium value on parental support as they translate this support into readiness to learn and commitment to the learning process (Jones, 2013). Maternal care and support are influential in boosting a pupil's ability to engage at school

(Marion et al., 2014; Wang & Eccles, 2012). This relationship affects children's long-term ability to engage in learning at school (Drake, Belsky, & Fearon, 2014; Wang & Eccles, 2012). Moreover, students who receive maternal support are protected from the negative influence of support from peers who demonstrate negative behaviors (Wang & Eccles, 2012) and from peers who experience burnout at school (Marion et al., 2014).

Parental support, as extrinsic motivation, helps youth develop interest in academic pursuits. Parent-oriented motivation has a positive influence on students' engagement because students want to please their parents and live up to their expectations. When parents provide support and express interest in their child's academic performance, the child engages behaviorally and emotionally with schoolwork (Cheung & Pomerantz, 2012). However, Cheung and Pomerantz (2012) noted that parents should be careful to not overextend themselves to influence a child's degree of academic commitment because this may result in the child's inability to exercise automaticity in the parent's absence or to not develop personal interest in academic achievement (Deci & Ryan, 2008). Students who have established a strong attachment to their mothers develop self-regulated "responses to social challenges" (Drake et al., 2014, p.1358).

At School

School ethos, particularly in the classroom, is the most immediate context for learners to demonstrate engagement and for observers to identify patterns of commitment and participation in school and the pursuit of academic goals. Students are motivated to invest in academic pursuits when the conditions in the classroom address their need for autonomy, competence, and relevance (Corso et al., 2013; Fredricks et al., 2004). When

students feel competent in a subject, they are more likely to approach the period for that class with confidence that they would perform well (Corso et al, 2013).

Poorthuis et al. (2014) recommended that teachers should provide supportive feedback that gives instruction for students to improve their performance. Such forms of feedback contribute to the development of positive teacher-student relationships that influence youths' determination to commit to participating fully in classroom activities (Corso et al., 2013; Fredricks, 2011; Ozdemir & Kalayci, 2013). School context includes the general school climate, teacher characteristics, classroom interactions, and peer relationships (Archambault et al., 2009; Blondal, & Adalbjarnardottir, 2012; Fredricks, 2011; Fredricks et al., 2004).

General School Climate

Educational institutions are linked to the social context of their location, so that the ethos of the community where schools are located affect the ethos of the schools, unless efforts are made to counteract the influences of the community. Burofsky et al. (2013) concluded that school engagement and academic achievement are negatively impacted by community violence (p. 390). Moreover, Burofsky et al. noted the current and long-term negative relationship between community violence and learners' abilities to engage with schoolwork (p. 390).

Students are motivated to persist through school when they perceive school as a safe learning environment (Metha et al., 2013; Ripski & Gregory, 2009). When students feel unsafe at school, they generally focus on staying out of trouble, and they lose sight of engaging in school-related activities (Metha et al., 2013; Ripski & Gregory, 2009).

Providing a safe school environment, therefore, is one intervention that addresses students' emotional and behavioral disengagement–the process that leads to dropout (Metha et al., 2013; Ripski & Gregory, 2009). Interventions that address violence as an environmental issue should also address violent behaviors in learners, even from the kindergarten stage, because violent behaviors from this stage predict low classroom engagement at the elementary school level (Pagini, Fitzpatrick, & Parent, 2013). Early interventions would provide learners with an advantage because when engagement skills are learned early in a student's educational history, it puts the learner at an educational advantage as "early educational success essentially begets later success" (Brenner & Wang, 2013, p. 1298).

Teacher Characteristics

Teachers' approaches to their classroom responsibilities influence comfort levels and school identification for students (Wang & Holcombe, 2010). Apart from teachers' focus on mastery goals rather than performance goals to help encourage student participation and positive identification with school, teachers who provide classroom environments of trust and confidence provide support for learners to commit to complete even difficult tasks (Corso et al., 2013; Fredricks, 2011; Mih & Mih, 2013). According to Corso et al. (2013), teachers' efforts to help learners relate curriculum content to their personal interests, long-term goals, and personal identity are critical in helping students engage with learning activities (pp. 330-332). Students develop high self-efficacy and academic self-concept when teachers provide effective autonomy support in the classroom. This relationship is noted when students have input in setting boundaries for

classroom behaviors, what they want to learn, how they learn, and how their learning is assessed (Jones, 2013; Mih & Mih, 2013, p. 303).

Classroom Interactions

Interactions or dynamics in the classroom contribute to the degree that students engage with class work. Corso et al. (2013) concluded that positive teacher-content, student-content, teacher-student, and teacher-student-content interactions are critical factors for high student classroom engagement. When student engagement is considered as a "psychological process that mediates the effects of the contextual antecedents on student outcomes" (Lam et al., 2014, p. 215), it becomes an urgent issue to understand the contextual antecedents as much as the psychological processes students negotiate as part of their experiences at school. Dotterer and Lowe (2011) noted that classroom context predicts students' engagement

Teacher-content interaction. Students have a legitimate expectation that teachers have sound knowledge of the content of the syllabus. In fact, students feel more competent and encouraged to engage in learning activities when they perceive teachers as experts in course content (Corso et al., 2013; Fredricks, 2011). Teachers who are able to scaffold instruction and provide skillful pedagogical support encourage student engagement more readily than those teachers who are not able to demonstrate that level of expertise and offer such support (Corso et al., 2013; Fredricks, 2011; Mih & Mih, 2013).

Student-content interaction. Relevance of what is taught at school is one of the factors influencing an individual's participation and commitment to the learning process.

Teachers are encouraged to help learners relate course content to their "current interest, future goals, and personal identity" (Corso et al., 2013, p. 54) in order to help learners see the value in academic success. When students identify how what they learn may contribute to their sense of self and personal goals they invest effort and time in the learning process.

Teacher-student interaction. Scholars have concluded that the relationship between teachers and students sets the tone for interactions in the classroom (Fredricks, 2011; Pianta, Hamre, & Allen, 2012). This finding suggests that teachers who express caring, fairness, and support create a social environment that supports behavioral and emotional engagement in the classroom (Fredricks, 2011; Pianta, et al., 2012; Wang & Eccles, 2012). Adolescent learners value teachers as adult mentors, and support from teachers boosts students' subject-efficacy, self-perception, and classwork engagement (Mih & Mih, 2013; Pianta et al., 2012).

As an "interpersonally coordinated process between teachers and students" (Mih & Mih, 2013, p. 306), school engagement is most effective when both parties understand their roles in the classroom and perform these roles appropriately (Brooks, Brooks, & Goldstein, 2012; Sheppard, 2011). In other words, an engaging teacher will work well to encourage substantive engagement from students, even with difficult tasks. Such a teacher will exercise procedural engagement and seek the interest of learners, will treat each student as an individual, and seek input from pupils regarding the norms that would inform classroom interactions, (Danielsen, Breivik, & Wold, 2011; Mih & Mih, 2013; Reeve, 2012; Sheppard, 2011; Voelkl, 2012; Wang & Eccles, 2012).

Teacher-student-content interaction. Sheppard (2011) proposed the need for a holistic understanding of school engagement that includes procedural engagement as well as substantive engagement (p. 120). By this, Sheppard asserted that student engagement is the result of a reciprocal relationship between teachers and students. High classroom engagement and maximally engaged profiles develop as a result of students' positive response to engaged teachers. So that, as teachers master procedural engagement skills (Sheppard, 2011) learners' confidence in teachers' abilities should increase to the degree that they trust that what is taught will benefit them and their future goals (Mih & Mih, 2013; Sheppard, 2011). This view gives teachers the bulk of responsibility for the degree of engagement students practice in the classroom, and for the degree of students' academic and social achievements (Sheppard, 2011). The liberal view of engagement places emphasis on the learner's initiative to seek knowledge, and on how personal interest motivates the pursuit of knowledge, (Sheppard, 2011, p. 119).

Peer Relationships

Students face several issues in their attempt to navigate through school when they experience challenges related to global engagement. Blondal and Adalbjarnardottir (2012) concluded that global disengagement is the result of a process that begins with emotional disengagement, which may progress to behavioral and cognitive disengagement. Learners' problem behaviors during classroom activities as well as in the general school environment are modes of behavioral disengagement (Wang & Fredricks, 2013). Wang and Fredricks (2013) noted that behavioral disengagement might be

because of cognitive disengagement (p. 733), which suggests interrelationship among cognitive, behavioral, and emotional school engagement.

The process of disengagement ultimately leads to academic underachievement and social incompetence. One way to address emotional disengagement among adolescent students is to provide peer support that may help them develop quality relationships (Pianta et al., 2012).

Eccles et al. (1993) addressed the developmental nature of the relationship between quality friendships and academic achievement. Eccles et al. concluded that according to stage-environment-fit theory, students benefit when their developmental needs are satisfied at school and home. Eccles et al. noted that students in early adolescence face a "developmental mismatch" (p.94).in the classroom because their curiosities and cognitive needs associated with their stage of development are not addressed as they enter high school. Adolescents demonstrate a fundamental need for belonging, particularly to groups of their age. Adolescents value peer relationships as important to their personal development, and sense of self (Chen, 2005; Santrock, 2008). Age and gender also are important factors in peer support because learning at this stage is more effectively accomplished when learners have models who are similar in age (Bandura, 1986; Snowman & Biehler, 2006).

Scholars underscore the value of the relationship between peer friendships and students' sense of belonging at school, which support students' efforts to succeed academically and socially (Chen, 2005; Eccles et al., 1993; Estell & Perdue, 2013). However, the nature of relationships between adolescents encourages or discourages

participation in school activities and commitment to school. According to Wang and Eccles (2012), students who receive support from negative peers demonstrate a low level of compliance with behaviors expected at school. Students who receive support from positive peers are more compliant regarding school and school-related activities (Wang & Eccles, 2012).

Students who engaged behaviorally are less likely to drop out of school than those whose participation in school activities are at a minimum or less (Archambault et al., 2009, p. 665). This relationship suggests that students who are socially competent are inclined to feel a sense of belonging to their school, and value academic achievement (Estell & Perdue, 2013).

Wang and Eccles (2011) have noted that although emotional engagement is important, students need to be engaged behaviorally and cognitively in order to achieve academically. Peer support among adolescent students is one of the factors that improve student engagement (Fredricks et al., 2004). Students develop social skills and peer relationships through their interactions in group activities in and out of the classroom (van Knippenberg, 2000).

Blondal and Adalbjarnardottir (2012) noted that school environments should encourage learners to develop positive peer relationships especially among male students because emotionally engaged students are more likely than emotionally disengaged students to engage behaviorally. Adolescent learners should develop supportive relationships with their classmates because of the positive relationship between peer support and emotional engagement (Drolet & Arcand, 2013; Estell & Perdue, 2013).

Psychological Antecedents to Engagement Profiles: Personal Characteristics

Researchers have identified the importance of student characteristics that enable learners to face the challenges in learning (Deci & Ryan, 2008; Mih & Mih, 2013). Resilience, competence, and positive beliefs about self and adults with whom they interact, are characteristics associated with students who demonstrate high levels of motivation and engagement in school-related tasks (Brooks et al., 2012; Martin et al., 2012). Researchers have highlighted other mindsets that may determine students' levels of engagement with schoolwork. Among these psychological states are school self-efficacy and academic self-concept (Bandura, 1986; Mih & Mih, 2013, p. 303), which mediate teachers' autonomy support for high academic performance. Learners' self-efficacy and academic self-concept thrive well with teachers who encourage learner autonomy, expression, and critical thinking, and when teachers help learners understand and accept the importance and relevance of what is taught in the classroom (Brooks et al., 2012; Jones, 2013; Mih & Mih, 2013, p. 304).

Jones (2013) emphasized the significance of an autonomy supportive learning environment for learners to develop the required skill sets to engage metacognitive skills. Jones controlled for factors in the general education system which result in negative psychological effects on children. According to Jones, learners who are home schooled readily demonstrate self-determination, self-direction, and self-regulation skills that contribute largely to learners' sense of identity, and are nurtured when learners are empowered to determine learning exercises. Within this framework, non-formal and formal learning exercises are valued equally as connected to the real world and provide

sufficient interest for autonomous motivation (Deci & Ryan, 2008; Fredricks, 2011; Jones, 2013).

Summary and Conclusion

The topic of school engagement is widely researched and extant literature has unveiled themes related to this phenomenon. Student engagement is now understood as a multidimensional concept that includes learners' feeling, thinking, and behaviors at school and with school-related tasks (Fredricks et al., 2004). As a multidimensional concept, student engagement is also malleable and may be either increased or decreased by several factors in students' psyche or physical environment (Conner & Pope, 2013; Fredricks et al, 2004; Li & Lerner, 2013). Researchers agree that student engagement occurs as a reciprocal and interactive process between the learner and others in the environment. Learner characteristics like self-concept, self-efficacy, academic-efficacy, self-regulation, and trust in peers and adults contribute to the degree of engagement (Bandura, 1986; Brooks et al., 2012; Fredricks et al., 2004; Martin et al., 2012; Reschly & Christenson, 2012).

Contextual factors that encourage student engagement extend from the home to the school environment. These factors include the nature of interactions between the learner and parents, learner and siblings, learner and school peers, and learner and teacher (Bronfenbrenner, 1979; Dotterer & Lowe, 2011; Mih & Mih, 2013; Wang & Halcombe, 2010). Furthermore, early exposure to violence at elementary school predicts student engagement at higher levels (Pagini et al., 2013). Bullying and violence at school or in the neighborhood where the school is located are factors that influence engagement

negatively as students focus more on protecting themselves or avoiding conflict more than focusing on schoolwork (Burofsky et al., 2013). However, parental and teacher support moderate the negative effects of violence and negative peer influence (Cheung & Pomerantz, 2012; Connell, Ripski & Gregory, 2009; Drake et al., 2014; Metha et al., 2002).

Researchers have also unveiled the concept of student engagement profiles. According to Wang and Peck (2013), there is a relationship between student engagement profiles and environmental and psychological factors. Although engagement profiles are represented variously in the literature, what is agreed is that learners demonstrate predominant and characteristic patterns of global engagement (Conner & Pope, 2013; Tuominen-Soini & Salmela-Aro, 2014; Wang & Peck, 2013).

Despite the proliferation of conclusions from research about student engagement there still remains a need for clearer understanding of students' perceptions of their environments and how these perceptions inform their mindsets regarding school and school-related tasks (Wang & Peck, 2013). Several studies have identified a need for more information on aspects of students' engagement at school. Further study was recommended on the antecedents to engagement, and suggestions were made for understanding home and school contexts (Dotterer & Lowe, 2011; Drolet & Arcand, 2013; Li et al., 2010; Wang & Peck, 2013). Estell and Perdue (2013), and Wang and Peck (2013) recommended the use of multiple sources and methodologies in this query for a clearer understanding of student engagement profiles, their antecedents and consequences.

In this study, I addressed the need for a clearer understanding of student engagement profiles from learners' perspectives. The methodology was qualitative research which gave learners a voice to express how they perceive and apply their personal and general spaces and interactions. Ecological systems theory provided the framework for this inquiry and analysis because the theory proposes an understanding of systems of interactions and how these influence human development and behavior.

Chapter 3: Research Method

Introduction

The purpose of this qualitative, case study was to explore adolescent learners' perception of contextual and psychological factors that influence student engagement profiles. In this chapter, I present the research tradition that I used for this study; I also provide the rationale for the choice of tradition as related to the intent of the study. I present my role as researcher, the methodology for the research, steps that were taken to establish the trustworthiness of the study, and ethical procedures I used to protect participants and ensure a transparent process. I conclude the chapter with a summary of salient points related to the study's design, methodology, and soundness of the approach.

Research Design and Rationale

Metha et al. (2013) identified several patterns of academic engagement students develop. These modes of engagement have been associated with degrees of further academic aspirations, socioeconomic projections, and mental health issues (Wang & Peck, 2013). Scholars who examined engagement and motivation of adolescents have found differentiation in educational and socioeconomic outcomes for students of different school engagement profiles. Compared to students who are minimally engaged and those who are cognitively disengaged, students who are highly engaged in the learning process are least likely to experience mental health challenges and are more likely to enroll in college and complete college education (Wang & Peck, 2013). Wang and Peck (2013) also found that students with emotionally disengaged profiles are also engaged cognitively and behaviorally and are able to accomplish their academic goals despite the

risk they face for mental health issues. According to Wang and Peck, among the five engagement profiles, students with minimally engaged profiles are at greatest risk for dropout and second greatest risk for depression.

There is need for clarity on students' perspectives on school and home environments and how students appropriate their perception of these environments for their advantage regarding engaging with schoolwork. To this end, the research questions for this study were the following:

RQ1: How do ninth grade students perceive their relationships with their parents, classroom context, and personal characteristics for the development of student engagement profiles?

RQ2: How do ninth grade students apply their relationships with their parents, classroom context, and personal characteristics for the development of student engagement profiles?

RQ3: What factors influence ninth grade students' perception of their relationship with parents, classroom context, and personal characteristics for the development of student engagement profiles?

RQ4: What factors influence ninth grade students' use of their perception of their relationship with their parents, classroom context, and personal characteristics for the development of student engagement profiles?

Central Concept of the Study

In this study, I explored how students in ninth grade perceive their relationships with their parents, classroom context, and their personal characteristics and how these

students apply these factors in the development of patterns of engagement at school. Researchers have outlined the objective learning environment and what factors contribute to learning spaces that meet the needs of students in general. Some best practices in education of adolescents include considerations of autonomy support, teacher characteristics, relevance of curriculum, and student characteristics (Mih & Mih, 2013). However, students' differentiated responses to the same factors require deeper inquiry into the perceptions that may influence these responses (Metha et al., 2013; Wang & Peck, 2013). The central concept of this study was two-fold: students' perception of their learning environment at home and school and the processes they employ to translate their perception into patterns of engagement with schoolwork. I sought to provide a view of school-related processes from perspectives of the study participants and understood in the contexts of their school and home environments. I also explored the way these processes were appropriated regarding educational pursuits of study participants.

Research Tradition

In this study, a qualitative methodology was used to explore ninth grade students' perspectives of factors in their relationships and contexts at home and school that influence their engagement at school. I also attempted to identify how these students respond to these factors as they develop patterns of engagement with schoolwork. The qualitative approach was applicable to this study because it facilitates the gathering of nonnumerical data and participants' perspectives (Creswell, 2014; Lincoln & Guba, 1985).

I had no intention to identify a priori variables nor sought causal relationships between them, as is appropriate in quantitative methodologies (Campbell & Stanley, 1963; Creswell, 2014). Quantitative researchers examine causal relationships and identify relationships between variables. These relationships are more easily identified when the researcher is able to exercise some control over other variables; these conditions do not exist in the natural environment. Whereas quantitative research is appropriate for the laboratory conditions, qualitative research examines phenomena in their natural environment where the researcher has no control over factors within the environment (Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Patton, 2002; Stake; 1995; Yin, 2014). I wished to examine students' experiences of engaging with schoolwork and the patterns of engagement they develop in their natural school environment where all conditions contribute to an understanding of the phenomenon of interest.

Role of the Researcher

My role in this study was limited to observation of ninth grade participants in the classroom and to conducting interviews with participants. I observed participants in the classroom to gather data on their behaviors related to their commitment to in-class tasks and their abilities to attend and persist through challenging activities. The interviews provided data on the ways that ninth grade students perceive their environment at home and school and how they develop patterns of engaging with schoolwork. I did not engage as a participant in this study; I completed observations as unobtrusively as possible.

I used to have limited contact with the students of the school where this study was conducted. Students were referred to me for counseling regarding minor incidents at the

school, such as fights and unresolved disagreements between students, and when students felt the need to talk to someone about challenges that they faced in peer relationships. My office was not located at the school, and the students and I did not interact except for those who were referred. The students I had interacted with have since graduated, and for the last two school terms, students of existing classes had not been referred for counseling. Participants targeted for this study were students in Grade 9. In Trinidad and Tobago, the equivalent to Grade 9 is form four, and students in this form are between 14- and 16-years-old. This age group presents some ethical issues related to the study, and these were addressed as follows:

- I provided parents with informed consent forms and requested their permission for their children to participate in the study;
- potential participants, and their parents, were provided with an explanation of the nature of the study, potential risks, and were asked to agree freely to participate;
- obvious identifiers were removed from the report in an effort to protect participants' identities and assure their privacy;
- interviews were conducted during school term break, during lunch break, or after school to ensure that learning time and other school-related activities were not compromised

Methodology

One of the characteristic factors of qualitative research is that the choice of informants is determined by the purpose of the study, so that purposive sampling will be

critical in selecting appropriate participants (Creswell, 2014; Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Patton, 2002). The participants in this study were persons who were able to provide rich content about their experiences of support at home and in the classroom for school-related activities. Therefore, the participants were expected to be able to express freely their own experiences regarding the processes they used to translate their support systems at home and at school into how they attended to and followed through on school-related activities.

Wang and Peck's (2013) categories of student engagement profiles informed the selection criteria for participants. Purposive maximum variation sampling (Patton, 2002) accommodated for the variation of profiles. Cooperating teachers assisted in identifying students who fit each profile, as informed by Wang and Peck's categories. A heterogeneous sample provided for identification of differentiated experiences as well as helped me to identify the essence of students' perceptions or common themes in experiences shared by participants of diverse engagement profiles. For each of the five embedded units, three participants were recruited to facilitate identification of common, as well as divergent, experiences specific to each student engagement profile. This possibility of identifying common and diverse themes strengthened the study as the study's purpose was to understand the experiences of students who developed diverse engagement profiles.

The issue of data saturation and thematic saturation, when interviews provide no additional information for the development of themes, was examined by Guest, Bunce, and Johnson (2006). Guest et al. defined saturation as that state when the researcher gets

"a reliable sense of thematic exhaustion and variability within [ ] data set" (p. 65). Guest et al. concluded that when structured interviews are conducted with information-rich participants, there is no need for more than 12 participants for a study to arrive at saturation. This condition is evident when the study requires a homogeneous sample. I sought multiple perspectives while aiming for the essence of students' experiences. Therefore, the 15 participants were sufficient to provide data to arrive at the essence of the experience of perceiving and applying support for school-related work, as well as variation expected in these experiences.

Instrumentation

An integral characteristic of the qualitative case study design is the development of rich and thick descriptions of the context. Thick description of case context and embedded units was accomplished through semi structured interviews. These interviews addressed the four research questions, and the information garnered from the interviews was corroborated by information from observation of participants in the classroom.

Observational data are important for understanding context and for communicating descriptions of case space, individuals, groupings, and interactions so that the consumers of the study may understand the context as if they were present (Patton, 2002). Therefore, data collected through observation were used to provide thick description of the school site as well as descriptions of participants interacting in classroom and the school context. Creswell (2013) recommended observation for collecting data, and suggested the use of observational protocols to guide the collection of

observational data in the field. I developed observation protocols to guide and structure my collection of observational data of the general context and participants' activities.

Interviews are tools for gathering participants' perspectives on their experience (Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Patton, 2002; Stake, 1995; Yin, 2014). Lincoln and Guba (1985) emphasized that the interviewer's focus should be on facilitating the interviewee's perspective on past and present events, as well as on future projections based on interviewee's experiences. Additionally, the interview may be used to verify or triangulate data received from other interviews and from observations. In this study, I used a semi structured interview whereby I prepared an interview protocol with questions designed to enable participants to share their experiences regarding support for school pursuits and how they translate such support into action–or inaction–with their schoolwork. Patton (2002) noted that researchers should prepare carefully for interviews so that participants may be helped in providing relevant information. I used a semi structured interview that allowed participants enough leeway to express themselves, and it provided me with a framework to focus the participants' sharing of their experiences when the conversation veered off topic.

The observation and interview protocols I developed were sufficient data collection methods for this study because these methods were used to triangulate findings. Dependence on only one method of collecting data would have been insufficient. Patton (2002) noted that although interviews may provide data on participants' experiences, observations provide the researcher with a view of what participants sometimes choose not to share in interviews. Additionally, observations

provide the researcher with a view of what might become routine and insignificant to the participants in their context, as well as to bring clarity and additional perspective to perceptions of study participants (Patton, 2002, pp. 262-264). Further, the sufficiency of these instruments was founded on the protocols, which were developed to address the questions this study addressed.

Procedures for Recruitment Participation and Data Collection

I used semi structured interviews with participants and observation of participants in selected classrooms as the data collection methods for this study. Qualitative research is an iterative process between data collection and data analysis; qualitative researchers conduct more than one interview with participants to check for clarification and to verify how interview data is interpreted (Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Patton, 2002; Stake, 1995). I conducted all interviews; the duration of each session was no longer than 1 hour with follow-up sessions as needed for clarification of themes or to provide additional information.

The participants for this study were recruited through the cooperation of parents, the school principal, and teachers. This line of contact was important because the targeted participants were teenaged students, and they required institutional and parental permission to participate in any form of research. Therefore, before any contact with prospective participants was established, I received written permission from the school principal, teachers' agreement to cooperate, and parental permission in writing.

The procedure included introducing the principal, teachers, and parents of ninth grade students to the aim of the study, the possible significance of the results for the

institution, and the amount of time I needed to interact with participants. This introduction was provided first in writing to the principal and teachers of ninth grade students. I informed the principal and teachers of the aim of the study and the benefits the results may provide; I also provided a working description of students who fit the five engagement profiles. I then asked teachers to provide written consent to cooperate by identifying these students, and from these, I requested parental consent and student assent to participate in the study.

Observational data were collected from the school site, and I used an observation protocol that was focused on the context, activities, and interactions between teachers and study participants and between participants and their peers. Observational data also addressed observable behaviors demonstrated by teachers and students' responses to these behaviors. These data addressed whether the classroom ethos was conducive for students' engagement.

Interviews with participants were recorded on a digital voice recorder, and parents provided consent beforehand. Each participant was asked for permission for me to voice record before the beginning of each interview. These interviews addressed participants' perspective on the classroom and school ethos and focused on the way students perceived teacher behaviors, classroom environment, and home environment regarding support for students' engagement with schoolwork. Furthermore, in the interviews, I addressed the process participants used to translate relationships with parents, teachers, school peers, as well as classroom and school environment to their attendance and commitment to schoolwork. Each participant was met for two sessions of interviews: the first interview

was to collect the participants' data to address the research questions. The second interview was a follow-up session to bring clarity to issues that were unclear, to debrief the participant, and to provide an opportunity for the participant to validate findings as done in member checking.

Data Analysis Plan

I addressed four research questions to arrive at ninth grade students' experiences with the processes involved in perceiving and appropriating relationships at home and at school for school engagement on three dimensions, behavioral, emotional, and cognitive engagement. Questions 1 and 2 were used to address learners' perceptions of their environment and how factors in the environment influence their attention to schoolwork. For these questions on perception, the interviews were sufficient to assemble multiple perspectives of students' experiences. The observation of students in their classroom served to confirm or disconfirm participants' responses in interviews. Questions 3 and 4 were used to identify factors as perceived by students, and these factors may originate from the environment or may be psychological like self-esteem; subject-efficacy, liking or not liking a subject, liking or not liking a teacher, and liking or not liking parent or parents. I gave participants a voice that could influence the approaches that parents, teachers, and administrations may use to provide appropriate support for success for diverse students.

I conducted data analysis and data collection concurrently, and the process was iterative to ensure efficiency in data management and provide clarity as the study progressed. I applied the principles of content analysis to analyze observational data and

data collected from interviews. Each research question was used to help reduce the data into codes and patterns.

I began data analysis by completing several readings of transcripts of observations and interviews. Hsieh and Shannon (2005) identified steps in conventional content analysis, which include several readings of transcripts. Hsieh and Shannon noted that the first reading of transcripts will provide a general sense of the content of the participant's experience and provide the researcher with a sense of engagement with that experience. With subsequent readings, the researcher identifies codes, develops categories from codes, and formation of clusters of codes from categories. Further, Hsieh and Shannon identified a penultimate stage in conventional content analysis as the development of definitions for categories developed from the data.

I followed the steps in content analysis for each participant, each embedded unit, between embedded units, and for the case as a whole to arrive at an understanding of common and unique patterns of the students' experiences within the case. To control for bias in interpreting and analyzing data, I bracketed my experiences with factors that influenced my engagement experiences at secondary school, and I journaled my immediate interpretation of field observations and interviews. In addition to hand coding data, I used NVivo Plus software to assist with storage, organization, and management of data, and to provide ready access to changes I made in the processes of data collection and interpretation.

In addition to presenting the essence of phenomena of interest, qualitative research boasts of facilitating the presentation of multiple perspectives for deeper

understandings of phenomena. Discrepant, or negative, cases provide the researcher with opportunities to examine alternative explanations to the experiences of participants, and facilitate more holistic and inclusive explanations, or hypotheses of the perceptions and experiences of the study participants (Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Patton, 2002).

Lincoln and Guba (1985) suggested that although researchers should aim for zero discrepant cases through careful analysis to ensure that the articulation of the findings include all cases, inclusion of 60% of discrepant cases into the interpretation or hypothesis is acceptable by qualitative measures. I analyzed discrepant cases in this study to ensure that I present multiple perspectives. In accordance with recommendations of Lincoln and Guba (1985), I aimed to include at least 60% of discrepant cases in the final interpretation of data and reporting of findings. This approach met the expressed aim of this study to explore students' experiences at home and at school and their responses to these contexts in the development of student engagement profiles.

Issues of Trustworthiness

Trustworthiness of research methods and findings is fundamental to the veracity of qualitative research approaches. According to Patton (2002), the use of rigorous methods for collection and analysis of data, establishing credibility of the researcher, and researcher's commitment to the process of qualitative methodology are all essential to presenting evidence for and establishing the quality and trustworthiness of a study. In fact, trustworthiness hinges on the fairness of a study in presenting multiple perspectives of participants. Qualitative researchers are encouraged to document the credibility,

dependability, transferability, and confirmability of their study to establish trustworthiness of their research process and findings (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). I was careful to take steps before, during, and after data collection to establish quality and trustworthiness of this study.

Credibility

Researchers need to establish the credibility, or validity, of research findings by providing documentation of prolonged engagement with the context in which the study is to be conducted, persistent observation, triangulation, member checks, referential adequacy, and negative case analysis (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). I used prolonged engagement at the school, persistent observation, triangulation of data sources, and member checks to verify the veracity of my findings.

Transferability

One of the contributions of this study is an understanding of the factors that support and encourage positive and successful student interaction for learning. The findings of this study will be transferable to other situations that match the study's context and participants' characteristics. I provided thick description of the site where the study was conducted as well as demographics for participants so that the reader should understand the context of the study, and characteristics of participants. Description of the study site and participants contributed to an appreciation of how the context contributes to the interpretations of data in this case. Creswell (2013) noted that transferability is incumbent on the entity that desires to use the findings of qualitative research. The description of study site and participants will provide users the information

they need to determine whether their contexts and persons are sufficiently similar to attempt application of the findings of this study.

Dependability

It is important to present enough information for future inquiries to attempt to replicate this study. Lincoln and Guba (1985) provided the rationale for the use of an inquiry audit of the "process [and] product" (p. 318) of a study to establish the study's dependability. In an attempt to establish the dependability of the procedure and product of this study, I have an audit trail in documentation of the data, process notes on data collection and data analysis, as well as the findings of the study for independent audit as necessary. Additionally, I have triangulated data sources to support the dependability of the study and its conclusions. Triangulation of sources and methods is also used to establish confirmability of qualitative inquires (Lincoln & Guba, 1985).

Confirmability

Establishing confirmability involves identifying the degree to which the interpretations are neutral and not influenced by researcher bias (Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Patton, 2002). Janesick (2011) noted that researchers should keep a reflexive journal to bracket their experiences with the research process and the phenomenon under study. I exercised reflexive journaling at different stages of this study to bracket my experience and views regarding engagement with schoolwork, experiences at home and at school, how I perceive support, and how these factors influenced how I attended to schoolwork when I was in secondary school. I also triangulated data collected from participants through interviews and observations to strengthen the dependability of the study.

Ethical Procedures

American Psychological Association [APA] (2010) outlined the ethical requirements for research and the practice of psychology. Informed by the ethical guidelines of the APA, I was careful to minimize infringement of the principles of justice, beneficence, and respect for persons. I met the principal at the site only after my research proposal received approval from the Walden University Institutional Review Board (approval # 03-22-17-0400252). I began recruitment of participants only after I had entered into an agreement in writing with the institution and with the parents of prospective study participants.

The site of this study is a privately run vocational secondary school located in east Trinidad. I contacted the principal and asked her permission to conduct my study at the school. I shared aurally, and provided in writing an explanation of the purpose of the study, a description of the participants suited to the study, the procedures I planned to follow for interviews, my need to conduct observations at the school, the risks and benefits for the participants and for the school, and the required time-period for the collection of data. I also promised to share the findings of the study with her, as principal, and with the school at large as per her request.

Prospective participants were informed about the nature of the study, their right to decline participation, and their right to withdraw from the study at any time (APA, 2010). I told prospective participants about the data collection methods, the risks, benefits, and time expected for their participation. I also gave prospective participants information about the study in writing, and the written information included a request to audio record

interviews, and a commitment to confidentiality and privacy regarding data and participants' identity. Before they gave assent to participate in the study, prospective participants asked questions about the nature and purpose of the study, data collection methods, and any other issue related to the study.

I stored data as audio-files using NVivo Plus software, and in hard copies. The audio-files were secured in NVivo Plus on my personal computer which was password protected. The hard copies of data were stored in a locked filing cabinet, which is accessible to me only, at my home. Participants' identities were anonymized in the report of the findings.

Summary

Qualitative research methodology and design are developmental, and researchers may make some adjustments as the research process progresses (Yin, 2014). Yin (2014) recommended the use of a case protocol, and Patton (2002) recommended the use of observation and interview protocols in qualitative research to ensure researchers maintain focus on the field. To focus data collection and field experiences, I prepared interview and observation protocols. Inspired by Yin's elaboration of the use of single case with embedded units to identify both convergent and divergent findings in case study research, I used the single case with embedded units research design.

Data analysis in qualitative studies depends on researchers' skills in coding, categorizing, and interpretation of text (Creswell, 2013; Patton, 2002). The analytic procedure I used involved intimate engagement with field notes and transcripts, the identification of codes, formation of categories, the provision of examples, and

presentation of findings to represent participants' experiences. I used the research questions and ecological systems theory to focus the data collection and data analysis processes.

Cooperation and consent of school administration, teachers, and parents were critical to the successful completion of this project because the target group was "legally incapable of giving informed consent" (APA, 2010, p. 6) due to their age. The benefits far outweighed the risks for participants, the institution, and the prospective consumers of this study who will appreciate the findings of this study regarding the ways adolescent students adjust to demands related to learning at school and eventually develop their characteristic patterns of school engagement. Ethical concerns were considered in the practical implementation of this study as the institution, teachers, parents, and students were assured that steps were taken to protect their privacy. I implemented measures to protect the dignity and freedom of participants, and I executed data collection and management in a manner to maintain confidentiality while ensuring transparency in the execution of this study. The chapter that follows will provide the findings of this study.

Chapter 4: Results

Introduction

The purpose of this qualitative, case study was to explore ninth grade students' perceptions of contextual and psychological factors that influence student engagement profiles. Ecological systems theory (Bronfenbrenner, 1979) informed the framework for data collection and data analysis. In reporting on this case, the following four research questions were addressed:

RQ1: How do ninth grade students perceive their relationships with their parents, classroom context, and personal characteristics for the development of student engagement profiles?

RQ2: How do ninth grade students apply their relationships with their parents, classroom context, and personal characteristics for the development of student engagement profiles?

RQ3: What factors influence ninth grade students' perception of their relationship with their parents, classroom context, and personal characteristics for the development of student engagement profiles?

RQ4: What factors influence ninth grade students' use of their relationships with their parents, classroom context, and personal characteristics for the development of student engagement profiles?

In this chapter, I present the setting of the study; a description of the location of the school; and the nature of relationships among the principal, teachers, and students. I focus on the general socioeconomic status of the student population and the advances the

school made to alleviate some of the challenges that students face. I also present demographics of the participants specific to the perimeters of this study, data collection plan and activities, steps in data analysis, evidence of trustworthiness of the study's process and product, and the findings or results of this study in answer to the four research questions. The chapter ends with a summary of the findings.

Setting

This study was conducted at a private, inclusive, vocational school that was founded to meet the needs of students who exercise a spectrum of skills and those who have special academic, physical, and social needs. Scheduling of classes is aimed at providing students with opportunities to learn and interact socially in an inclusive environment. At the time when parental consent and participants' assent were obtained, the school was in the mode of preparation for end of term examinations. Otherwise, activities at the school were on schedule. The first round of interviews was conducted during the Easter break, so that participants were more at ease and were able to respond in candor.

The study site was located in the Tunapuna-Piarco region of Trinidad, and the student population of 115 was generally from lower income and poor families. The economic status of the school population placed most of the students at a disadvantage regarding their families' ability to provide transportation, meals, and school supplies. The school provides breakfast and lunch for students whose families cannot afford to provide meals for their children. Additionally, the principal extends financial support for students who are unable to attend school regularly because of constraints in their families.

An additional boast of this school is the attempts staff and administration make to support students and their families in the form of workshops for parents, open days to celebrate students' accomplishments and to introduce the wider community to the skills and talents of the students, and parents' days when parents are appreciated and honored at the school.

The curriculum is diverse and covers academics, vocational, and technical skills; sports; music; and folk and modern dance. The school enjoys the support of the national police music band, which conducts classes after school hours with interested students 3 days per week. The teachers also benefit from regular professional development workshops chaired by experts in psychology, education, social services, mental health, special education, and other disciplines as determined by staff needs.

Demographics

The participants were selected based on age-appropriateness for ninth grade, which was forth form in Trinidad and Tobago, and so the age range was between 14- and 15-years-old; there were four female and 11 male participants. Each participant was categorized in one of five student engagement profiles: highly engaged, moderately engaged, minimally engaged, cognitively disengaged, and emotionally disengaged, which were the categories developed by Wang and Peck (2013). Cooperating teachers were asked to select a profile for each of their students based on their knowledge of the student's engagement with school related work and activities. These teachers were given descriptions of the five student engagement profiles to inform their decision in categorizing their students.

At the end of each first interview, each participant completed the Student Engagement Instrument (SEI)–a self-assessment tool that measures student engagement on two dimensions, with each dimension measured on six domains. The results of this were compared to teachers' categorization, and in some cases, they were confirmed. Where there was variance, preference was made for the self-assessment using the SEI. Consequently, the process of identifying the student engagement profile of participants depended primarily on how they perceived themselves and not on the perception of others.

For reporting purposes, and to maintain privacy and confidentiality, transcripts were de-identified, and an identification code was assigned randomly to each participant. As presented in Table 1 that presents demographic information relevant to the study, the code SP for study participant is followed by a number specific to the participant. The 15 participants (four females, 11 males) were profiled according to their self-perception, with three persons in each of the five student engagement profiles identified by Wang and Peck (2013).

Table 1

Study Participants' (SP) Demographic Information

Participant Code	Gender	Age	Student Engagement Profile
SP01	Male	14	Minimally Engaged
SP02	Male	14	Moderately Engaged
SP03	Male	15	Highly Engaged
SP04	Female	15	Cognitively Disengaged
SP05	Male	15	Minimally Engaged
SP06	Female	14	Emotionally Disengaged
SP07	Male	14	Emotionally Disengaged
SP08	Male	15	Minimally Engaged
SP09	Male	15	Cognitively Disengaged
SP10	Female	15	Cognitively Disengaged
SP11	Male	15	Emotionally Disengaged
SP12	Male	14	Highly Engaged
SP13	Male	15	Highly Engaged
SP14	Male	15	Moderately Engaged
SP15	Female	14	Moderately Engaged

Data Collection

There were 15 participants in this study (four females, 11 males), and each was categorized in one of the five student engagement profiles based on the results of the SEI and informed by the categories developed by Wang and Peck (2013). Issues of privacy, safety, and confidentiality were addressed during the interviews. Semi structured interviews were conducted in a private office off the study site; the office was a sound-proof room, and a please do not disturb sign was hung on the door during interviews. Twelve of the first round of interviews were conducted during Easter school break 2017, so that participants' peers could not associate them with the study, and participants' privacy was guarded. To protect participants' privacy, appointments were scheduled to allow one person to complete the interview and leave before the other participant should arrive. Three of the first-round interviews were conducted after school during the first

week of the resumption of school for the last term of the academic year. Each interview lasted between 25 and 40 minutes, and 14 participants allowed me to record the interview with a digital voice recorder. One participant did not give me permission to use the recorder but gave consent for me to make written notes during the interview. I filled in the gaps in the notes immediately after that participant left the office.

Classroom observations were completed over a 3-week period during the middle of the last academic term. The classrooms where observations were conducted were small and were furnished with a teacher's desk and several tables for students. Two to three students sat at each table, and the classrooms accommodated 18 to 24 students. Two of the classrooms had an in-class library, and one of these was also a room used for drama; one classroom was an enclosed space in a larger hall; observations were made in the information technology lab. I observed participants in English language, integrated science, principles of business, and information technology.

A second interview, for debriefing and member checking, was conducted after all classroom observations had been completed. At the second interview, I had the transcript available for participants to double check. However, participants were more interested in hearing what I understood about their experiences and how they felt about attending the school and keeping up with school work. I also took the opportunity to ask about the meaning of some of the behaviors I had observed, especially those that were contrary to what was said at the first interview.

Data Analysis

Interviews with participants provided an introduction to their experiences of their school life and significant relationships they manage. The steps to data analysis included several steps, with each step reducing the information into smaller data units.

Steps in Data Analysis

At the end of each day of interviews, I listened twice to each recorded interview, and then I transcribed each interview into a Microsoft Word document. I read and reread each transcript, and I used my notes of the participant's demeanor during the interview to understand the participant's experiences and sentiments. The next steps in data analysis involved reduction of the data as I used sentences as the units of analysis and ascribed codes to sentences.

The codes were categories, written in the margins of transcripts as I read each line for meaning, and each category was a description or summary of what the participant said. I then identified clusters of categories in each transcript and across transcripts–these I identified as themes or patterns. These amalgamated codes were reduced to 30 categories related to participants' experiences in the classroom, approaches to homework and schoolwork, peer relationships, valuing of school, and relationships with parents/guardians. I reduced the categories further and used the research questions as one component of the framework for identifying patterns.

The final step in data analysis was categorizing themes and reducing them further into patterns. As presented in Table 2, I identified seven from the 30 categories, and these themes with related categories I used to answer the research questions.

Table 2

Themes and Related Categories That Emerged From Interviews

Theme	Description	Related Category
Feelings about Parents/Guardians	Participants' description of relationship with parents and how these are valued	Love to do activities with parents/guardians Missing father Mother is supportive Mother is unreasonable
Teacher Behavior	Participants' descriptions of behaviors of teachers in the classroom	Shouts at students Helps students Do their jobs Repeats lessons/gives easy work Unjust Trustworthy
Approach to Homework	Participants' general approach to homework	Does homework at home: Independently Gets help at home Does not want help Uses technology Has a routine Persists Does not persist Does homework at school
Approach to Schoolwork	Participants' general approach to schoolwork	Takes initiative to do independent work Gets help from peers
Feelings about School	Participants' feelings or emotional response to the school	Likes school Does not like school
Feelings about Schoolwork	Participants' general feelings about schoolwork	Unchallenged Challenged Bored
Relationship with Peers	Participants' description of relationships with peers and how these are valued	Guide to peer Study buddy Not real friends

Data Management

I used Nvivo Plus software for data management as this software provides ease of access to data, as well as facilitates preliminary data analysis queries. I uploaded transcripts and observation field notes, and I ran cluster analysis initially to get a sense of key words participants used. I uploaded the manual codes on NVivo Plus I also used the software to become more familiar with the data by viewing the different ways data could be presented using the software.

Evidence of Trustworthiness

Several steps were taken to establish trustworthiness of this study, and these relate to issues of credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability of the processes and findings.

Credibility

Before data collection exercises were implemented, I engaged in prolonged engagement for 2 weeks at the study site. This was accomplished before the beginning of Easter break, and it included sitting in the general assembly hall, passing by classrooms, walking around the school during break and lunch times, and walking out the school compound among students after school.

Persistent observation was another activity I used to establish the credibility of this study. This activity involved observing students during the period of prolonged engagement and classroom observation activities for data collection. Further, classroom observations were conducted to triangulate the information provided in the interviews. Additionally, when interviews were transcribed and interpreted, member checking

interviews were conducted with each participant to confirm my perception of the core messages as well as responses of participants.

Transferability

The findings of qualitative research are not generalizable (Creswell, 2013; Yin, 2014). However, the experiences of this purposefully selected group of participants were valid not only for themselves but for other learners who share their school context, age/grade, and engagement profiles. I provided rich, thick description of the study site and reported the approaches the principal, teachers, and administration use to support students and create opportunities for parents. I also provided characteristics of participants that relate to the interest of this study–age group, grade, and student engagement profile.

Dependability

In an effort to provide a path to track the stability of the process and results of this study, I kept raw data in various forms–voice recording of interviews, transcripts of these interviews on Microsoft Word, and in NVivo Plus. Field notes from classroom observations digital, as well as original hand-written notes on observation protocols and extra note pads, are available for auditing. I also provided the steps I used in data analysis. By these steps, I provided evidence to substantiate the dependability of this study.

Confirmability

Every step was made in this study to ensure that the results were a true representation of the views of the participants. In the data collection and analysis

procedures, I respected the views and experiences of study participants and kept a reflexive journal as a means of bracketing my own views, experiences, and expectations, especially when I did not understand or agree with the actions and words of participants. Moreover, I made several attempts to use NVivo Plus to proceed with data analysis at one stage of my data analysis exercises, and I determined that the software was not appropriate in coding meaning of the transcripts of this group of participants. My eventual procedure was to depend on my understanding of participants' words and phrases because we share cultural norms and ways of expressing meaning that NVivo Plus could not capture. I confirmed these meanings with participants.

Results

Reduction of the 31 categories identified in the data produced seven themes related to this study. These themes were used to answer the research questions as follows:

First Research Question

> Research Question 1: How do ninth grade students perceive their relationships with their parents, classroom context, and personal characteristics for the development of student engagement profiles?

The first research question enquires about the perception of participants' relationships with their parents, classroom context and their personal characteristics. These components of the learning environment are complex and participants provided several views of their relationships with parents, the teacher in the classroom, their

relationships with peers, and the efforts they make in coping with sometimes challenging classroom contexts.

Questions one and six of the interview protocol (Appendix A) were designed to address the first research question. Categories related to themes of feelings about parents, and teacher behavior were associated with these questions. Table 3 presents categories associated with feelings about parents.

Table 3

Distribution of Categories Related to Feelings About Parents/Guardians

Theme	Related Categories	Participant Code	Engagement Profile
Feelings about Parents/Guardians	Love when parents do things with them	SP10	Cog-DisEn
		SP04	Cog DisEn
		SP02	Mod-En
		SP14	Mod-En
		SP01	Min-En
		SP13	High-En
		SP06	Emo-DisEn
	Misses father	SP12	High-En
		SP15	Mod-En
		SP05	Min-En
	Mother is supportive	SP12	High-En
		SP03	High-En
		SP15	Mod-En
		SP02	Mod-En
		SP14	Mod-En
		SP05	Min-En
		SP06	Emo-DisEn
	Mother is unreasonable	SP11	Emo-DisEn
		SP03	High-En
		SP08	Min-En

Note. Engagement Profile column represents student engagement profile of students: High-En (Highly Engaged); Mod-En (Moderately Engaged); Min-En (Minimally Engaged); Cog-DisEn (Cognitively Disengaged); Emo-DisEn (Emotionally Disengaged)

Feelings About Parents/Guardians

Participants expressed a range of feelings about their parents/guardians. This theme encapsulated four categories, and participants of each of the five student engagement profiles were represented under this theme. However, the absence of clear differentiation of engagement profiles in any of the categories suggests that participants' feelings about parents/guardians have an influence on all engagement profiles. Further, the influence or impact of these feelings are not the same in all categories because categories are populated by different engagement profiles. Such that, loving when

parents do things with them influences participants of all five engagement profiles; missing father influences highly engaged, moderately engaged and minimally engaged profiles–the impact of missing father among these might be insignificant because only one participant of each of these three profiles is represented in this category. A closer examination of the categories reveals all three participants with moderately engaged profiles felt their mothers were supportive, and this suggests a positive relationship between supportive mothers and moderately engaged profile. Further, highly engaged, minimally engaged, and emotionally disengaged profiles seem to be influenced by a supportive mother. Finally, three participants – one each with emotionally disengaged, highly engaged, and minimally engaged profile – disclosed that their mothers were unreasonable. This may suggest an impact of an unreasonable mother on these three profiles, except that the profiles are so diverse and only one participant of each profile is here represented, indicating an insignificant link between an unreasonable mother and these three student engagement profiles

Across student engagement profiles it is noted that feelings about parents, included joy that parents plan activities to share with their children: as SP06 disclosed "we go together to the Mall and we visit granny and clean up the house; I like to go everywhere with them" or "we go to the beach, to the Mall, to Coney Island" (SP02). Even to be with a parent at work was an experience SP14 recalled with pride and joy "my dad is a construction worker, and we do things together sometimes. Last time, he carried me to work to help him move galvanize, he was doing roofing". With pride, SP14 then showed a scar from an accident that occurred the day he helped his father at work.

Participants expressed a longing to spend time with their fathers. This sentiment was expressed by one participant each of highly engaged, moderately engaged, and minimally engaged profiles.

SP12: I like when I used to go out with my father but now when I ask to go to the mall or go out with my father, to have a father-son thing, he makes excuses and I don't like that.

SP15: I talk a lot with my mom, my dad not so much because he doesn't be at home. Like after work he come home – when I reach home, he goes up the road.

SP05: My father, well when he drinks and come home, he starts to get on and thing, and that bugs me a lot . . . my father does be busy, he will just tell me once to do my homework.

One participant dismissed any conversation about his father and mother. About them, SP03 announced "I don't care about them; don't ask me anything about them; I don't care, I don't want to talk about them".

Mother is Supportive. Seven participants expressed positive sentiments about their perceptions of their mother. These mothers provide support for their children by assisting and encouraging them to complete homework.

SP12: My mom said every-time I have something difficult to do just do it and then she will look it over to see if it is correct, and if it's correct she will say 'nice, nice'. If it's wrong, she will just see where I went wrong and show me what to do.

SP15: Sometimes my mother, she knows a lot of things, when I cannot do homework, she will talk to me about it and help me.

SP06: My mommy helps me when the work is hard

SP02: I make sure I do homework first and then I do what I want. I try to sit till I do it right and when I [have] finished, I give my mother to check it.

SP05: but my mother will do research with me, she is a good support.

Three participants who miss their fathers readily identified their mothers as supportive, especially with homework. Other areas of support identified include overall support to the extent that:

SP03: If you ask for something, she will do everything to get it.

SP14: I love my mommy a lot, she does everything for me.

There were three participants who reported that their mothers were unreasonable, noted that they had difficulty understanding their mothers and relating to them. They expressed insecurity regarding their relationships with their mothers:

SP11: Sometimes mom would start to quarrel about nothing and make everybody upset.

SP03: She gets vex for everything.

Referring to his mother-figure one participant referred to her in plural in a manner that seems to indicate that he objectifies her and may not see her as a person with whom he can relate:

SP08: When I say something, they ignore it.

Teacher Behavior

Question six of the interview asked participants to share whatever they wanted about their teachers. Participants associated teachers with the classroom and this

association validates the intent of the question to facilitate participants' free expressions about how they perceive their interactions with teachers in the classroom context. As presented on Table 4, six categories were associated with Teacher Behavior.

Table 4

Distribution of Categories Related to Teacher Behavior

Theme	Related Categories	Participant Code	Engagement Profile
Teacher Behavior	Shouts at students	SP03	High-En
		SP13	High-En
		SP10	Cog-DisEn
		SP06	Emo-DisEn
		SP11	Emo-DisEn
	Moody	SP15	Mod-En
		SP08	Min-En
	Do their jobs	SP11	Emo-DisEn
		SP01	Min-En
		SP03	High-En
		SP10	Cog-DisEn
		SP09	Cog-DisEn
		SP02	Mod-En
		SP15	Mod-En
	Repeats lessons/Gives easy work	SP11	Emo-DisEn
		SP07	Emo-DisEn
		SP05	Min-En
	Unjust	SP01	Min-En
		SP08	Min-En
		SP15	Mod-En
		SP06	Emo-DisEn
		SP09	Cog-DisEn
	Trustworthy	SP02	Mod-En
		SP05	Min-En

Note. Engagement Profile column represents student engagement profile of students: High-En (Highly Engaged); Mod-En (Moderately Engaged); Min-En (Minimally Engaged); Cog-DisEn (Cognitively Disengaged); Emo-DisEn (Emotionally Disengaged)

When asked question six, one participant's response was dismissive "I can't tell you nothing about them, I have nothing to say" (SP07). Other participants expressed freely a variety of views about their teachers and their responses were categorized into a range of six teacher behaviors. The lack of a clear association between distinct engagement profiles and any of the categories of teacher behavior suggests that teacher behavior has an impact on all five student engagement profiles differently. The degree of influence of teachers' shouting at students was greater for participants with highly engaged, moderately engaged, and emotionally disengaged profiles; that teachers do their jobs seem to influence all five engagement profiles; that teachers repeat lessons and give easy work seem to impact emotionally disengaged and minimally engaged profiles; that teachers behave unjustly seem to impact minimally engaged, moderately engaged, emotionally disengaged, and cognitively disengaged profiles but has no impact on participants with highly engaged profile.

Shouts at students. One participant associated student behavior and teachers' shouting when he noted "teachers don't shout out at me because I am quiet in class" (SP13). The other four participants who noted teachers' shouting perceived the irrelevance of shouting, one participant noted her efforts to stay in control during a shouting episode when she believed the teacher intended to embarrass students:

SP10: They shout too much.

SP03: She shouted at me for no reason.

SP06: One of the teachers upset me a lot because she will just start yelling at me, and I just can't calm down.

SP11: They talk disrespectfully to students to embarrass them.

These responses are not limited to any one group, or student engagement profile, but the sample in this theme represents responses from three profiles – highly engaged, moderately engaged and emotionally disengaged.

Moody. Two participants identified teachers' mood changes as a factor in the classroom. The two participants who mentioned teachers' moodiness associated it with how approachable the teacher is perceived to be and how well the student settles in class:

SP15: Sometimes the teacher is in a bad mood or something, and she shows it on her face. Nobody could tell her anything. But, sometimes, some of the students out of the blue would make a joke and she would laugh. But that is just for a while. That's her mood sometimes.

SP08: Once they [teachers] in a good mood and I am doing my work, I am good. Sometimes I get irritated when they keep on calling my name over and over. I tell them I don't like it but they don't take me on. I get in trouble easy, and I like people to leave me alone.

Do their jobs. Seven of the fifteen participants reflected that the teachers in their school do their jobs. Some elaborated, with satisfaction, the ways teachers accomplish this and fulfil their mandate to teach:

SP11: They do their job, I can talk to them about things I don't understand.

SP01: They do their jobs, they teach . . . I can't hate them for doing their job.

SP03: He is a good teacher.

SP10: She does teach the class good; they teach good.

SP02: If we are not understanding, they will call us to the table and explain more until we get to understand what they are teaching.

SP09: I like the teachers helping us and talking through the steps for work we do and if I don't understand something, I could ask them to explain again.

SP15: They help me to work hard, and this term I did good in my tests . . . they push me, not too much but it brings out my abilities.

This category represents the sentiments and perception of the majority of participants in the sample, and all the student engagement profiles are represented herein. However, three participants indicated that teachers were not extending themselves enough and give the class easy work.

Repeats lessons/gives easy work. Three participants indicated they felt the need for challenge in schoolwork, especially related to the academic content in the classroom. This category covers participants' assessment of work done in the classroom, they were given easy work and teachers sometimes repeated lessons, making schoolwork uninteresting:

SP11: I feel I need to be challenged more, because some teachers do the same thing over and over.

SP07: Some of them give us easy work; schoolwork is easy.

SP05: When a new topic coming up, I will be more alert; if the teacher is going over old stuff that I already understand, I don't be interested.

Unjust. Five participants disclosed that teachers were sometimes unjust, not only to the participant, but to other students in the classroom: These participants were 2 of moderately engaged, and 1 each of minimally engaged, emotionally disengaged, and cognitively disengaged profiles,

SP01: He is known for sending people down to the principal's office for nothing.

SP08: Sometimes I get irritated when they keep calling my name over and over. I tell them I don't like it, but they don't take me on.

SP15: The [XXX] teacher accuses me of things I don't do; I don't like when they bouff me for no reason.

SP06: When he caught me talking to my friends, he put me in the corner to stand up.

SP09: Just the other day he sent a boy out the class. The boy left and went to sit on a chair; Mr. [XXX] just went out to him and drag him from the chair rough, rough . . .. I think he should be fired.

Trustworthy. Two participants noted that they could confide in teachers, personal issues and concerns. They felt comfortable enough to relax with teachers and disclose personal information and challenges they faced:

SP02: I can talk to her about anything. I can talk to a lot of teachers about a lot of things.

SP05: You could talk to them; sometimes, if you have an issue you could tell them. You could have a little old chat with them.

In summary response to the first research question, feelings about parents/guardians and teacher behavior were major themes that encapsulated participants' perceptions of their relationships with parents, classroom context and their personal characteristics. The categories of these themes revealed some differentiation regarding feelings about parents or guardians and signaled a relationship between maternal support and cognitive engagement. Regarding teacher behavior, while there was differentiation in engagement profiles regarding feeling that teachers shout too much and were unjust, there was no differentiation among engagement profiles regarding a feeling that teachers did their jobs.

Second Research Question

The second research question intended to explore how participants' relationships and self-perceptions influenced their approaches to schoolwork and their student engagement profiles:

Research Question 2: How do ninth grade students apply their relationships with their parents, classroom context, and personal characteristics for the development of student engagement profiles?

Responses to questions 4 and 10 of the interview protocol (Appendix A) were the primary sources for answering this research question. As Table 5 presents, Approach to Homework identifies the various means participants use to complete homework, and seven categories are associated with this theme.

Table 5

Distribution of Categories Related to Approach to Homework

Theme	Related Categories	Participant Code	Engagement profile
Approach to Homework	Does homework at home:		
	Works independently	SP13	High-En
		SP12	High-En
	Gets help	SP14	Mod-En
		SP15	Mod-En
		SP02	Mod-En
		SP04	Cog-DisEn
		SP09	Cog-DisEn
		SP10	Cog-DisEn
		SP05	Min-En
		SP08	Min-En
		SP01	Min-En
		SP06	Emo-DisEn
		SP03	High-En
	Does not want help	SP11	Emo-DisEn
	Persists	SP12	High-En
	Does not persist	SP01	Min-En
	Uses technology	SP08	Min-En
		SP14	Mod-En
	Has routine	SP02	Mod-En
		SP15	Mod-En
		SP13	High-En
		SP12	High-En
		SP06	Emo-DisEn
		SP01	Min-En
	Does homework at school	SP11	Emo-DisEn
		SP07	Emo-DisEn
		SP03	High-En
		SP09	Cog-DisEn
		SP05	Min-En

Note. Engagement Profile column represents student engagement profile of students: High-En (Highly Engaged); Mod-En (Moderately Engaged); Min-En (Minimally Engaged); Cog-DisEn (Cognitively Disengaged); Emo-DisEn (Emotionally Disengaged)

Approach to Homework

Participants had various ways of addressing homework, and as presented in Table 4 some themes indicate differentiation in approach to homework among the student engagement profiles.

Does homework at home. Two participants, with highly engaged student engagement profile, indicated that they do homework at home independently, one with parental supervision, and the other takes initiative:

SP13: I do my homework on my own and my parents make sure I do it.

SP12: Well, as soon as I get home, I put down my bags, I wash my containers, fill my bottles, I eat, bathe, and If I had homework, I take it out and do my homework, and when I am finished, I will watch the TV and go to sleep.

***Gets help*.** Eleven of the participants (73%) completed homework with assistance from parents, older siblings, cousins, or a tutor. Of the 8 participants who mentioned receiving help from parents, 5 identified the mother as helper, and one identified the father. Participants of all 5 engagement profiles were helped with homework at home; 3 moderately engaged; 3 minimally engaged, 3 cognitively disengaged; 1 emotionally disengaged, and 1 highly engaged.

SP15: Sometimes, my mother, she knows a lot of things, when I cannot do homework, she will talk to me about it and help me.

SP02: When I am finished, I give my mother to check it, or my sister or my brother . . . they help me a lot.

SP14: Sometimes I ask my parents for help, but sometimes I does do it for myself.

SP04: Sometimes my brother helps me.

SP09: When the homework is hard, I would ask my parents or my brother to help me and they do.

SP10: I do my homework every day. When the work is hard to do, I ask my mommy and she help me, daddy help me sometimes.

SP05: My mother will do research with me.

SP08: Sometimes, Miss [XXX] come to the homework center and help me out a lot.

SP01: My brother helps me sometimes, and my parents too.

SP06: My mommy helps me when the work is hard.

SP03: I like homework if it's easy, and if it's not easy I have a cousin, she is in upper six in Bishops. She will help me only if I ask.

One participant, with emotionally disengaged profile, noted that he can get help with homework but refuses to use the help. This participant also disclosed an appreciation of parents as "always understanding", but "mom would start to quarrel about nothing and make everybody upset".

SP11: I can get help with schoolwork, but I really don't want help.

***Uses technology*.** In addition to help from parents, siblings, and a tutor 2 of the participants used technology, especially Internet searches as a tool for completion of homework:

SP08: Sometimes I would go to the Internet, but they say I playing games on the Internet.

SP14: When I understand it in school, I could do it at home by myself. That's why I have my phone – I use the calculator or google to look for stuff I am looking for.

Persists. One participant SP12, highly engaged profile, noted the support and counsel of his mother regarding his approach to schoolwork, the participant said, "sometimes, when I am tired, I fight the feelings and stay up . . .. I don't give up on nothing, my mom said every-time when I have something difficult to do just do it and then she will look it over to see if it's correct, and if it's correct she will say 'nice, nice', and if it's wrong, she will just see where I went wrong and show me what to do".

Does not persist. One participant expressed indifference about school. SP01 noted his displeasure with work that is difficult or takes too much time, he shared:

SP01: I don't like long extended research. If it takes me over an hour, I would just give up on it.

Has routine. Six of the participants who did homework at home identified a routine. These routines involved attending to personal needs, getting involved in games, or completing homework assignments before engaging in other activities:

SP02: First off, when I go home, I take off my clothes, put on a new suit of clothes, home clothes. Then I get right to it and do my homework, then I get all the rest of the time to play and help my dad . . .. I make sure I do homework first then I get to do what I want.

SP15: Normally, I will bathe and eat, then do my homework.

SP13: I relax when I get home, and then go to the table to spend a little bit of time to do my homework.

SP12: Well, as soon as I get home, I put down my bags, I wash my containers, fill my bottles, I eat, bathe, and if I had homework, I take it out and do my homework, and when I am finished, I will watch the TV and go to sleep.

SP06: I will do half when I get home, and the other half when I go to bed.

SP01: If I have homework, I play some games until 6:00 or 6:30. Then I do my homework, take a shower and go to sleep.

Participant SP12 presented an organized approach to attending to homework. He is also the participant who said his mother advised him to persevere through difficult homework.

Does homework at school. Another approach to homework was to complete it at school before leaving for home, or just before class the next day. Participants who did homework at school disclosed their approach nonchalantly:

SP11: I do homework mostly at school, sometimes just before the beginning of class.

SP07: I do homework in school before I go home. If I forget to do it, I do it in the morning at school. I sit alone and do my homework.

SP03: Homework? I don't do homework; I does do homework at school, normal.

SP09: I do work more at school than at home.

SP05: I do homework only when it is necessary – like revision for test. If it is not necessary, I will go to school early in the morning and do it.

The profiles represented in this category, as shown in Table 4, were 1 highly engaged, 2 emotionally disengaged which suggests that emotional disengagement factors into

approach to homework to the degree that contagion between school and home is strictly managed and cognitive engagement is not compromised.

Approach to Schoolwork

The theme Approach to Schoolwork addresses an aspect of the second research question. This pattern was gleaned from responses to interview question 10: If I were to walk into a classroom, and the teacher is absent, what would I see you doing? Table 6 presents the four categories related to the theme approach to schoolwork in this sample.

Table 6

Distribution of Categories Related to Approach to Schoolwork

Theme	Related Categories	Participant Code	Engagement Profile
Approach to Schoolwork	Takes initiative to do schoolwork	SP09	Cog-DisEn
		SP10	Cog-DisEn
		SP02	Mod-En
		SP15	Mod-En
		SP13	High-En
		SP01	Min-En
		SP06	Emo-DisEn
	Gets support from peers	SP12	High-En
		SP11	Emo-DisEn

Note. Engagement Profile column represents student engagement profile of students: High-En (Highly Engaged); Mod-En (Moderately Engaged); Min-En (Minimally Engaged); Cog-DisEn (Cognitively Disengaged); Emo-DisEn (Emotionally Disengaged)

Takes initiative to do schoolwork. Students who take responsibility for their learning by setting goals, planning revision, and acting on feedback from teachers demonstrate cognitive engagement with schoolwork and expect to achieve academically. Study participants who expressed that they take initiative to do schoolwork identified several ways they approached work and their peers:

SP09: [If the teacher is not there I would be] doing my work, studying for a test. Sometimes, well last two weeks we had tests to do. When sir or miss is not there we study and do some work.

SP10: Sit down, take out my book, and do the work the teacher put on the board.

SP02: I start revising the whole time before test – some weeks before, especially the week before test. Then when it's almost ready for test, I revise it again.

SP15: Sometimes I would go to another class to finish what I have to do in other classes . . . I study hard and try to do all my work.

SP13: When I go to a classroom, I sit and take out my text book and start to revise my work before the teacher is ready to begin class. If the teacher is absent, I will spend my time reading. I like to study on my own.

SP01: Normally we would get together and learn, if we are having a test.

SP06: I just sit down and like in Beauty Culture class, I will start to work on the mannequin one time. For reading class, I will go in a corner and sit and read quietly.

Gets support from peers. Two participants freely acknowledged their need for help and identified a peer as their support.

SP12: I have a friend in school who knows a lot, and I will talk with him about it. He is really bright.

SP11: I sit close to a classmate who is just above my level. So, if I have trouble during class, I would ask to see the person's notes so I could understand better.

One of these participants, with emotionally disengaged profile, disclosed that he does not want help with schoolwork from his family, but he strategically positions himself in the classroom to benefit from the knowledge of his peers.

In summary, regarding the second research question, approach to homework and approach to schoolwork were themes that captured the participants' application of their relationships with parents, classroom context and personal characteristics. Does homework at home and does homework at school were the two categories associated with approach to homework, and there were seven subcategories of doing homework at home. Two of the subcategories were more representative of the sample – gets help, and has routine. It was remarkable that 11 of the 15 participants got help with homework and there was no differentiation among the profiles in this regard. However, there was differentiation among engagement profiles with regard to the routine to do homework.

Regarding approach to schoolwork, participants generally took initiative to do schoolwork, even in the absence of the teacher, and getting help from peers to do schoolwork was not a factor for application of contexts and personal characteristics in the development of student engagement profiles in this sample.

Third Research Question

The third research question addressed the factors influencing participants' perceptions of their relationships and contexts. Interview questions 5 and 11 (Appendix A) were designed to address this research question as they addressed feelings regarding the school and the amount of schoolwork participants do:

Research Question 3: What factors influence ninth grade students' perception of their relationship with their parents, classroom context, and personal characteristics for the development of student engagement profiles?

The results that address this question are explicit in the themes Feelings about School, Feelings about Schoolwork, and Relationship with Peers.

Feelings about School

Emotional engagement is influenced by the sentiments that students have about school. Study participants did not express neutral feelings about the school, but their sentiments were categorized into either negative or positive. As presented in Table 7, Feelings about School is associated with two categories: likes school; and does not like school

Table 7

Distribution of Categories Related to Feelings About School

Theme	Related Categories	Participant Code	Engagement Profile
Feelings about School	Likes school	SP04	Cog-DisEn
		SP06	Emo-DisEn
		SP15	Mod-En
		SP13	High-En
		SP10	Cog-DisEn
		SP12	High-En
	Does not like school	SP01	Min-En
		SP07	Emo-DisEn
		SP11	Emo-DisEn

Note. Engagement Profile column represents student engagement profile of students: High-En (Highly Engaged); Mod-En (Moderately Engaged); Min-En (Minimally Engaged); Cog-DisEn (Cognitively Disengaged); Emo-DisEn (Emotionally Disengaged)

Likes school. Six participants expressed positive feelings regarding the school. their comments relate to liking the school as well as valuing teachers, valuing school peers, and the activities they have at school.

SP04: I feel good about going to this school, I like the principal and Miss XX . . . I have lots of friends at school.

SP06: I love to attend this school . . . I love the fun things we do like art and woodwork and math.

SP15: The school is good and thing, but sometimes the children do some outa timing things like get me in trouble but I never do nothing. I feel excited about PE; I like going on the field and play football

SP13: I feel good about attending the school.

SP10: School is fun. I enjoy playing with my friends

SP12: I enjoy when I am in class; I enjoy every kind of homework, I love to learn

Does not like school. Positive feelings about the school were reported by 1 participant each of cognitively disengaged, emotionally disengaged, moderately engaged, and highly engaged profiles. Negative feelings about attending school was reported by 2 participants of emotionally disengaged profile, and 1 participant of minimally engaged profile. These expressions were:

SP01: I do not like school that much. School is just school, nothing that special about it. It's a place to learn, nothing that hot.

SP07: Sad, well to begin you have some special children and some ugly people– that is it.

SP11: Not good. Well every time you tell somebody which school you are attending, they say that school is for children with autism. And how the teachers behave, some of them rude, they don't care.

SP01 expressed indifference about school generally "school is just school", but SP07 and SP11 expressed more directly negative feelings, sad or shame, about the school.

Feelings about Schoolwork

As presented in Table 8 the theme of participants' feelings about schoolwork relate to three categories. These categories address the quest of the third research question as well.

Table 8

Distribution of categories related to Feelings About Schoolwork

Theme	Related Categories	Participant Code	Engagement Profile
Feelings about Schoolwork	Unchallenged	SP07	Emo-DisEn
		SP11	Emo-DisEn
	Challenged	SP01	Min-En
		SP14	Mod-En
		SP09	Cog-DisEn
	Bored	SP06	Emo-DisEn

Note. Engagement Profile column represents student engagement profile of students: High-En (Highly Engaged); Mod-En (Moderately Engaged); Min-En (Minimally Engaged); Cog-DisEn (Cognitively Disengaged); Emo-DisEn (Emotionally Disengaged)

Unchallenged. Two participants with emotionally disengaged student engagement profiles felt schoolwork was easy and they needed to be more challenged academically:

SP11: I feel I need to be challenged more, because some teachers do the same thing over and over.

SP07: Some of them give us easy work.

Feeling unchallenged, these participants' position raises the issue of whether their feeling influences their profile, or whether their profile makes them more vulnerable to requiring more intense or diverse stimulation to keep them interested in school-related work.

Challenged. Three participants found schoolwork challenging, the profiles of these were diverse.

SP01: It's challenging sometimes.

SP14: Exhausting, when I try studying. I find sometimes I can't remember anything, so I ask mommy to buy Ginkgold for me but it is so expensive.

SP09: I feel stressed sometimes, especially with English because I feel he is unfair.

Bored. One participant with emotionally disengaged profile found schoolwork boring and preferred talking to peers in class, rather than paying attention in the classroom and focusing on tasks related to schoolwork:

SP06: I find the work in school is boring, so I will talk about music and stuff.

Relationship With Peers

Participants noted 3 main ways they perceived their classmates and peers at the school. As shown in Table 9 participants viewed themselves as guides and study partners to their peers; then again, two participants did not value their peers at school as real friends.

Table 9

Distribution of Categories Related to Relationship With Peers

Theme	Related Categories	Participant Code	Engagement Profile
Relationship with Peers	Guide to peer	SP14	Mod-En
		SP15	Mod-En
	Study buddy	SP01	Min-En
		SP12	High-En
	Not real friends	SP06	Emo-DisEn
		SP15	Mod-En

Note. Engagement Profile column represents student engagement profile of students: High-En (Highly Engaged); Mod-En (Moderately Engaged); Min-En (Minimally Engaged); Cog-DisEn (Cognitively Disengaged); Emo-DisEn (Emotionally Disengaged)

Guide to peer. Two participants, both with moderately engaged profile, said they were guides to their classmates and school peers.

SP14: I try to show him to behave . . . When the other children misbehaving, I [] tell them to take out the book for class.

SP15: I would tell them to go to their own class.

Study buddy. Two participants appreciated working with classmates to prepare for exams and tests:

SP01: We would get together and learn it if we are having a test.

SP12: I have some best friends too, and the Math teacher put us in groups to revise, like for test, and study different subjects. She'll tell us to revise all kinds of subjects. She would say 'take out your books and revise'.

Not real friends. Two participants noted that their peers at school were not their real friends. In fact, they associate school peers as trouble-makers:

SP06: I don't really like the people in my class, because they like to carry news and say I harass people in the class, so I have friends, I have friends out of the school and we go to the Mall and hangout a lot.

SP15: I have a lot of friends, but some of them carry me the wrong place and get me in trouble, so I don't take them on anymore.

In summary response to the third research question, feelings about school, feelings about schoolwork, and relationship with peers were factors that influenced participants' perception of their relationship with their parents, classroom context, and their personal characteristics related to the development of student engagement profiles. Like school and did not like school were the two categories associated with feelings about school. There was generally no differentiation of engagement profiles regarding liking school. Two participants of emotionally disengaged profile, and one with minimally engaged profile did not like school.

Challenged, unchallenged and bored were categories associated with feelings about schoolwork. Two participants with emotionally disengaged profile felt challenged with schoolwork, one each of minimally engaged, moderately engaged and cognitively disengaged profile felt unchallenged about schoolwork and one participant with emotionally disengaged profile felt bored. There was insufficient data regarding participants' relationship with peers to determine its influence on engagement profiles.

Fourth Research Question

The fourth research question was used to guide an exploration of the factors that influence how ninth graders negotiate their relationships, contexts and personal characteristics as they develop student engagement profiles.

Research Question 4: What factors influence ninth grade students' use of their relationships with their parents, classroom context, and personal characteristics for the development of student engagement profiles?

Interview questions 2, 3, 7, and 8 (Appendix A) inquired into how participants value their relationships with their parents and teachers. These interview questions were designed to gather data on how participants viewed characteristics and actions of their parents and teachers, and whether these perceptions and any other factor influenced how they attended to schoolwork.

This research question brings together responses to the three prior research questions and addresses the theme of this study. Taken together, the results of data analysis suggested a relationship among support from parents, relationships with classmates, perception of teachers in the classroom, personal characteristics, and participants' student engagement profiles. The relationships are not generally differentiated by engagement profiles, so that in this sample contexts are not predictive of engagement profiles. However, data from two participants provide layers or dimensions of relationships and contexts to develop educational ecologies. In the educational ecologies that follow, I focus on the home, school and schoolwork, and personal characteristics of SP11 and SP12.

SP11 – Emotionally Disengaged

Among participants in this study, the relationship between context, psychological factors and engagement profile is evident in the disclosures of SP11who said that his parents are “always understanding”, and although he can get their help with homework he does “not really want help”. However, SP11 sits strategically close to a classmate he believes is “just above [his] level” so that he can be helped during class sessions. Additionally, SP11 said his teachers were disrespectful when they “shout at students to embarrass them”, but he completes his homework at school. SP11 also disclosed that he did not perceive his mother positively because she would "start to quarrel about nothing and make everybody upset”.

SP12 – Highly Engaged

Another profile of factors related to this research question is that of SP12, highly engaged profile, who loves and respects his parents, values the support of his mother, and misses his father’s attention. SP12 appreciates his mother’s advice to persist with homework that was difficult, when he was counseled to “just do it” and his mother would review the homework, and advise him on an alternative approach if she thought he needed help. This participant takes initiative to do schoolwork, persists through difficult tasks, has a close friend at school he considers his study buddy, has a routine that prioritizes completing homework at home. He also considers his teachers as supports for schoolwork and likes to reach to school early.

These two participants are examples of different processes students used. Each participant had to cope with unique home contexts; perceptions of school; feelings about

school and schoolwork; and each possessed unique personal characteristics including student engagement profiles, and unique efficacies. Although the study data may not be generalized, the distinct experiences of the participants are instructive.

Summary

The purpose of this qualitative, case study was to explore ninth grade students' perceptions of their contextual and psychological factors that influence the development of student engagement profiles. This study examined the perceptions and interpretations of participants, and this chapter presented the analysis of data collected using semi structured interviews with 15 participants. Seven themes emerged from the data and these were used to understand participants' experiences and answer the four research questions. The themes were:

- Feelings about Parents
- Teacher Behavior
- Approach to Homework
- Approach to Schoolwork
- Feelings about School
- Feelings about Schoolwork
- Relationship with Peers

The seven themes were used to respond to the general quest of the study as the fourth research question facilitated the consolidation of themes and provide for a more complete profile of participants. In chapter 5, I will discuss the findings of this study, and present recommendations.

Chapter 5: Discussion, Conclusions, and Recommendations

Introduction

The purpose of this qualitative, case study was to explore ninth grade students' perceptions of contextual and psychological factors that influence the development of student engagement profiles. I addressed a gap in the literature on student engagement in response to recommendations for further study of students' perceptions of their environments, relationships, and personal attributes and abilities and the influence of these factors on their engagement with schoolwork (Dotterer & Lowe, 2011; Drolet & Arcand, 2013; Estell & Perdue, 2013; Li et al., 2010; Wang & Peck, 2013). The qualitative approach used in this study was also informed by Wang and Peck's (2013) recommendations for further study into the processes that attend the development of student engagement profiles from students' perspectives.

I collected data from semi structured interviews, and these were analyzed to answer four research questions:

Research Question 1: How do ninth grade students perceive their relationships with their parents, classroom context, and personal characteristics for the development of student engagement profiles?

Research Question 2: How do ninth grade students apply their relationships with their parents, classroom context, and personal characteristics for the development of student engagement profiles?

Research Question 3: What factors influence ninth grade students' perception of their relationship with their parents, classroom context, and personal characteristics for the development of student engagement profiles?

Research Question 4: What factors influence ninth grade students' use of their relationships with their parents, classroom context, and personal characteristics for the development of student engagement profiles?

Using steps in content analysis, I analyzed interview data and discovered seven themes related to the four research questions. These findings reflected a range of participants' perceptions regarding their home and school contexts and some steps or processes they use in negotiating their way through school and with school-related work and activities. The seven themes uncovered through this study were the following:

- Feelings about parents/guardians: participants' perceptions of the nature of relationships they have with parents/guardians and the attending emotions. Feelings about parents/guardians encapsulated four categories: love when parents do things with them, missing father, mother is supportive, and mother is unreasonable
- Teacher behavior: participants' observations and assessments of overt behaviors of teachers; these observations and assessments encapsulated six categories from the interview data–shouts at students, moody, do their jobs, repeats lessons/gives easy work, unjust, and trustworthy.
- Approach to homework: a theme that captured the essence of eight categories related to participants' characteristic approach, or regular manner in which they

undertook to do homework. Two general approaches to homework emerged– doing homework at home and doing homework at school. Those who did homework at home disclosed further whether or not they completed it with help; whether they rejected help; whether or not they persisted through difficult tasks; used technology like features of a mobile phone or Internet–calculator or Google; and whether they had a routine at home.

- Approach to schoolwork: distinct from approach to homework, this theme summarized participants' disclosures of whether they acted independently or got academic support at school. Categories related to this theme were, takes initiative to do schoolwork and gets support from peers.
- Feelings about school: whether or not participants liked the school, or felt they enjoyed attending the school were categories or codes in this theme. Participants who did not like the school felt that way because of their differently-abled peers and their perception of themselves as normal having to associate with the diversity of students for whom the school catered. Participants who liked the school associated their sentiments with their relationships with teachers, their ability to make friends, and the range of subjects offered at the school. The categories associated with feelings about school were likes school, does not like school, and school is fun.
- Feelings about schoolwork: distinct from feelings about school was the theme that summarized participants' assessment of the academic offerings. Categories in this theme were unchallenged, challenged, and bored.

- Relationship with peers: participants identified some ways they relate with their classmates. The theme relationship with peers brought together three categories of relationships participants identified with classmates, and these relationships were across the range of type of peer, whether average or differently-abled–guide to peer, study buddy, and not real friends.

Interpretation of the Findings

I focused on the microsystem of school contexts, family relationships, home contexts, and participants' approaches and processes they use to attend to schoolwork. The nature of relationships with parents and teachers and support received from peers tend to have differential influence on students' patterns of approach to schoolwork (Corso et al., 2013; Drake et al., 2014; Fredricks, 2011).

First Research Question

The first research question sought to capture how participants viewed their parents, their classroom context–including teacher's behaviors and peer interactions–and their self-concept. Two themes were associated with this question: feelings about parents/guardians and teacher behavior.

Feelings about parents/guardians. Four categories–love when parents do things with them, missing father, mother is supportive, and mother is unreasonable–were related to the theme of feelings about parents/guardians.

***Love when parents do things with them*.** Ecological systems theory proposes an interrelationship among different levels of relationships and experiences that influence the development of children. Relationships at home, in the child's neighborhood, and the

school prepare that child for engagement at school. Issues of security, safety, autonomy, and freedom become critical to the student's functioning and are influenced by significant relationships, especially at home–part of the microsystem (Bronfenbrenner, 1979). The full range of profiles among participants indicated positive sentiments about doing things with parents/guardians, like cleaning house, cooking, recreational activities, and even accompanying parents to their jobs. With 46% of participants (two cognitively disengaged, two moderately engaged, one highly engaged, one minimally engaged, and one emotionally disengaged) expressing positive emotions regarding spending time with their parents, I found that spending time with parents may not have differential influence on student engagement profiles, but that all five profiles were equally influenced by doing things with parents.

Missing father. According to Cheung and Pomerantz (2012), student engagement is influenced by motivation to please parents. One of the ways participants in this study expressed the importance of parent-oriented motivation was the expression of loss; 20% of participants (one highly engaged, one moderately engaged, and one minimally engaged profile) expressed emotions related to missing, even craving, meaningful interaction with fathers. Although the number of participants in this category seemed insignificant, the absence of the emotionally disengaged and cognitively disengaged participants suggests that relationship with father does not influence the two disengagement profiles. That one-third of participants from highly engaged, moderately engaged, and minimally engaged profiles indicated that they miss their fathers suggests that it is undermined whether relationship with father influenced. I found that missing

father did not have a significant influence on engagement profiles.

***Mother is supportive*.** Maternal support was associated with students who were better adjusted at school and were able to negotiate changes in the school environment. These students are better equipped to demonstrate global engagement at school (Marion et al., 2014; Wang & Eccles, 2012). The results of this study were consistent with Marion et al.'s and Wang and Eccles's finding, particularly in answer to the first research question; the seven participants who expressed a positive relationship with their mothers represented four of the five student engagement profiles. Two were of highly engaged profile, all of the three moderately engaged profile, one of minimally engaged profile, and one of emotionally disengaged profile. I found that maternal support was a more universally positive influence on engagement profiles.

Conversely, none of the participants of the cognitively disengaged profile were represented in the category of mother is supportive. I found that cognitively disengaged participants did not receive maternal support, and this may suggest a positive relationship between cognitive engagement and maternal support. As noted by Wang and Eccles (2012) and Drake et al. (2014), students' relationship with their mothers has a long-term influence on students' ability for school engagement

***Mother is unreasonable*.** Twenty percent of the participants (*n*, 3) indicated their mothers were unreasonable. These participants were one of each highly engaged, minimally engaged, and emotionally disengaged profiles, indicating no significant differentiation among the student engagement profiles regarding the influence of an

unreasonable mother. I found no marked influence of an unreasonable mother among engagement profiles.

Teacher behavior

The classroom environment is impacted strongly by teachers' readiness, characteristics, and behaviors because these factors determine and support students' level of safety and readiness to learn stemming from students' identification with school (Wang & Holcombe, 2010). Teacher behavior, as one of the themes identified in this study, comprised six categories – shouts at students, moody, do their jobs, repeats lessons/gives easy work, unjust, and trustworthy.

***Shouts at students*.** Teacher-efficacy is enhanced by appropriate application of classroom management skills. An integral part of classroom management is being able to command students' attention so that they focus and complete learning tasks in the classroom. Positive teacher-student interaction promotes student-engagement because this creates the safe social environment that is conducive to behavioral and emotional engagement (Fredricks, 2011; Pianta et al., 2012; Wang & Eccles, 2012). Of the participants, 33% (two highly engaged, two emotionally disengaged, and one cognitively disengaged) noted concern for teachers' shouting at students in the classroom as they stated that this is one of the things they liked less about their teachers.

That two participants with highly engaged profile are represented in this category may be explained by the distraction and loss of time on task they may feel during any shouting episode in the classroom. The two emotionally disengaged participants in this category is consistent with Mih and Mih's (2013) and Wang and Eccles's (2012) finding

that teachers' positive behaviors in the classroom are related to emotional engagement and students' self-efficacy. I found an association between teachers' shouting and high engagement and emotional disengagement.

Moody. Participants identified teachers' moodiness as another aspect of teacher behavior that was least admirable. Two participants said that teachers' mood affected how lessons were taught, how at ease students felt, and it just presented the challenge associated with inconsistency in the classroom. As Mih and Mih (2013) and Pianta et al. (2012) noted, adolescent learners perceive themselves as mentees of their teachers; capricious teacher-mood and teacher-student interactions do not encourage student engagement. Teachers ought to know their roles in the classroom (Mih & Mih, 2013) if student engagement is to be successfully accomplished. The two participants who noted how teachers' mood affected students' appreciation of work in the classroom were of moderately engaged and minimally engaged profiles. Although the participants (13%) in this category were few, the result suggested a confirmation of Mih and Mih's (2013) study which identified the importance of teachers' knowing their roles in the classroom, thus ensuring that their roles supersede their moods or any other personal or institutional circumstance.

Do their jobs. Seven (46%) participants noted that among the things they liked best about their teachers was that they did their jobs. In fact, one participant noted that even in disciplining students, teachers were doing their jobs and he had no reason then, to fault the teachers. The participants in this category were of diverse engagement profiles (two cognitively disengaged, two moderately engaged, one highly engaged, one

emotionally disengaged, and one minimally engaged). I found that generally participants perceive teachers positively regarding the fulfilment of their tacit contract with students to teach and care for them in the classroom. I also found that teachers doing their jobs had no differential influence on student engagement.

Repeats lessons/gives easy work. Teachers who are able to scaffold learning and introduce new information in the learning process are better equipped to facilitate student engagement in the classroom (Sheppard, 2011). Moreover, as Corso et al. (2013) concluded, student engagement is improved when teachers demonstrate expertise in subject content. I found that participants were annoyed when lessons were repeated or when teachers gave them work below their grade, and this suggested that the three participants, one minimally engaged and the two emotionally disengaged, felt some teachers were not competent in the subject matter. Consistent with the findings of Corso et al, I found a positive relationship between giving easy work-which may be perceived as teacher incompetency-and minimal engagement and emotional disengagement.

Unjust. One-third (33%) of the participants noted that one of the things that annoyed them about some teachers was the way teachers disciplined students by sending them out the class and to the principal or dean. Fredricks (2011) identified the teacher's ability to relate with students in fairness is one of the factors that communicate to learners that the classroom is a safe place for them to focus on learning and not to be distracted by the need to defend themselves against capricious behaviors from teachers and student-peers alike. I found an association between unjust teacher behavior and those in this category-two were of minimally engaged profile, and one each of moderately engaged,

emotionally disengaged, and cognitively disengaged profiles. Participants with highly engaged profile were not in this category. I found an association between highly engaged profile and a lack of concern with issues of justice in teacher behavior in the classroom.

That two participants of minimally engaged profile found teachers acted unjustly toward students is consistent with Wang and Peck's (2013) finding that students with minimally engaged profiles were at greater risk for school dropout than those of the other four profiles. Wang and Peck (2013) noted that "truancy, absenteeism, and delinquency are all precursors to alienation from school" (p.1272), and that "dropout may be more of a combined function of emotional engagement and behavioral engagement" (p. 1272). Therefore, students of minimally engaged profile, as well as students with cognitively and emotionally disengaged profiles, may be more sensitive to teachers' negative behaviors because they already feel a sense of alienation from the school. That one participant with moderately engaged profile is in this category is not easily explained.

Trustworthy. Two participants noted how well they get along with teachers. These two participants felt safe enough to disclose personal challenges and seek advice from teachers. The two participants who identified with teachers to this degree were of minimally engaged and moderately engaged profiles. This finding is in accord with the findings of Fredricks et al., (2004) that identified a correlation between support from teachers and behavioral engagement. That participants with highly engaged, emotionally disengaged, and cognitively disengaged profiles were not included in this category suggests no relationship between teachers' trustworthiness and these profiles.

Second Research Question

The second research question addressed the way participants' relationships and self-beliefs influenced their engagement profiles. This research question aimed to understand participants in their microsystems and determine how they negotiate their way through their relationships with parents, teachers, peers, and self as they relate to school, its systems and the demands associated with school and learning. I identified two themes–approach to homework, and approach to schoolwork.

Approach to homework

One of the themes that emerged early in data analysis was approach to homework, and this theme answered the second research question with categories that captured the ways participants relate to their parents and siblings, and how these relationships featured in their approach to school and academic engagement. The two major categories in this theme distinguished between participants who did homework at home and those who did homework at school before they left for home or just before the related class.

***Does homework at home*.** The majority (66%) of participants indicated that they did their homework at home. There were seven ways these participants approached homework and these were identified as sub-categories:

- Works independently
- Gets help
- Does not want help
- Persists
- Does not persist

- Uses technology
- Has routine

Works independently. Two participants with highly engaged student engagement profile indicated that they completed their homework on their own. Although these participants worked on their own, they both noted that their parents played a part in motivating them. The parents either reminded the participant to do homework or were asked to assess the completed homework. I found a relationship between highly engaged profile and completing homework independently with parental supervision or support, an indication that parent-oriented motivation is related to highly engaged student engagement profile. This is consistent with Cheung and Pomerantz's (2012) finding that students who are motivated to please their parents are more engaged at school, and this is a positive outcome despite the risk of challenging students' automaticity in the absence of parents and parental figures. Cheung and Pomerantz noted that this risk may be alleviated by managing the degree of parental influence on students' academic motivation and performance, and by providing autonomy support.

Gets help. Seventy-three percent (n=11) of participants indicated that they get help at home to do their homework. Parents–mainly mothers–siblings, cousins, and in one case a tutor were resource persons from whom participants received assistance with homework. Drolet and Arcand (2013) indicated that parental support is one of the components in a positive parent-child relationship that contributes to students' engagement at school. With the full spectrum of engagement profiles in this sub category, I found that help with homework was associated with cognitively disengaged,

moderately engaged, and minimally engaged profiles, and to some extent with emotionally disengaged, and highly engaged profiles. That two participants each of emotionally disengaged and highly engaged profiles were not represented in this category may suggest that these participants felt efficacious enough to engage cognitively without assistance, or that these participants may not have a close enough relationship with family members or friends to get help or ask for help with homework.

Does not want help. Cheung and Pomerantz (2012) and Estell and Perdue (2013) noted that supportive relationships between students and their parents are predictive for student engagement and academic performance. I found an association between an unsupportive parent-child relationship and emotionally disengaged profile. There was one participant who disclosed that he had opportunities to receive help with homework from parents and a sibling, but he did not want the help because the relationships were adversarial and he would not want to be reproached by anyone in his family. This participant had an emotionally disengaged profile and completed homework at school. Blondal and Adalbjarnardottir (2012) noted that dropping out of school began with students' emotional detachment from school, but Wang and Peck (2013) found that although students with emotionally detached profiles did not face immediate risk of dropping out of school, because they felt they needed to be at school and they had the aptitude to engage cognitively, they did not enjoy being at school, and early identification of their profile, and intervention may alleviate the risk of academic decline and dropping out of school.

Persists. The factors that influence academic success include aptitude, attitude, autonomy support, and grit or the determination to succeed (Corso et al., 2013). Determination is generally demonstrated in the student's attention to the learning task until the task has been completed. One participant indicated that he does not abort efforts to complete homework and classroom tasks because of the advice he received from his mother. This participant had a highly engaged profile and worked independently to complete homework, and he would have his mother review his work. In this significant and single case, I found a relationship between highly engaged profile, maternal support, and persistence through difficult tasks.

Does not persist. There was one participant in this category, and he insisted that he did not like wasting time on work that was difficult, took too much time, or took him to various resources. This participant had a minimally engaged profile and got help with homework when he needed. I found that this participant with minimally engaged profile would not invest more than the student believed was required to complete work, and that motivation to succeed might also be minimal. My finding is consistent with Appleton et al.'s (2008) finding of the positive correlation between motivation and engagement.

Uses technology. The use of technology in learning seems ubiquitous in the 21st century. However, only two participants indicated their dependence on technology–especially the Internet–in their efforts to complete homework assignments, and this may reflect the low socio-economic status of the sample. but the two participants in this sub category were one with moderately engaged profile, and one with minimally engaged profile. That participants of highly engaged profiles are not represented in this category

is not as expected but may suggest the general academic efficacy of participants with highly engaged profile; so that they do not feel the need for the help technology could provide. The absence of participants of emotionally disengaged profile and those of cognitively disengaged profile may indicate no relationship between use of technology and these profiles.

Has routine. Among the eleven participants who indicated they do homework at home six noted that they have a routine related to attending to homework assignments. Fredrick et al. (2004) noted that engagement is malleable and may be developed by practice. Therefore, routines participants developed should demonstrate their degree of engagement with schoolwork.

I found that among study participants the two with highly engaged profile and the two with moderately engaged profile prioritized attending to homework. Of the other two participants in this category the participant with minimally engaged profile treated homework as a secondary pursuit and "play[ed] games until 6:00 or 6:30, then do homework, take a shower and go to sleep". This participant with minimally engaged profile noted that he does not persist through challenging assignments, and this reflects his level of engagement as lack of interest and preparedness to invest in school and academic pursuits. The other participant, with emotionally disengaged profile, would do half homework sometime before bed and the next half in bed before she fell asleep. From the routines of the two highly engaged participants in this subcategory, I found a relationship between highly engaged profile and prioritizing homework. From the routines of the participant with minimally engaged profile, and the participant with

emotionally disengaged profile I found an association between minimally engaged and emotionally disengaged profiles and a laissez faire approach to doing homework.

Does homework at school. Five study participants indicated that they complete their homework at school. Of the five participants, two had emotionally disengaged profile, one highly engaged profile, one cognitively disengaged profile, and one minimally engaged profile. These participants chose to complete homework assignments at school before they left at the end of the school day or just before the relevant class for several reasons. That the only student engagement profile not represented in this category is the moderately engaged profile suggests no differentiation in engagement profile regarding doing homework at school. This finding may be explained by the low socio-economic status of the general population at the school. So that participants, especially the two with emotionally disengaged and the one with highly engaged profile, who complete homework at school might have slim options because of a lack of utilities or other resources at home. On the other hand, a lack of intrinsic motivation and liking school, may be the reasons why the participants with cognitively disengaged and minimally engaged profiles completed homework at school, without much investment of time or planning skills. I found no differentiation in engagement profile regarding doing homework at school.

Approach to schoolwork

Analysis of interview data revealed two categories related to approach to schoolwork. These categories–takes initiative and gets support from peers–identified the approaches participants used to address school work in the classroom. These categories

are indicators of participants' maturity and level of autonomy. However, the categories do not reflect differentiation of student engagement profiles.

***Takes initiative to do schoolwork*.** Study participants who indicated that they do not wait for or depend on teachers' instructions to begin preparing for class sessions, to preview or review information related to the current subject were distributed across the spectrum of the five student engagement profiles: two cognitively disengaged, one emotionally disengaged, one highly engaged, two moderately engaged, and one minimally engaged. As with several other themes and categories, I found no differentiation among this group, and autonomy skills were more widely distributed than expected. That 46% (n=7) of study participants exercised initiative regarding schoolwork is consistent with the liberal view of student engagement that Sheppard (2011) noted involved students' interest, autonomy and motivation expressed as initiative, particularly in the classroom. I expected to find that only participants of highly engaged, moderately engaged, and emotionally dis-engaged profiles to be the ones that would exercise autonomy skills. Instead, I found some participants of all engagement taking initiative and exercising autonomy regarding schoolwork.

***Gets support from peers*.** Two (13%) of the 15 study participants indicated their reliance on their peers. One of the participants had an emotionally disengaged profile while the other participant had a highly engaged profile. The learning strategy of the participant with emotionally disengaged profile was to sit next to a class colleague whom he perceived knew more than he did, so that when he was no longer able to follow the teacher, he would ask his colleague or read the person's notes. The choice to depend on a

colleague to fill in the gaps during class time is consistent with Wang and Peck's (2013) finding that emotionally disengaged students exhibit high cognitive engagement and high behavioral engagement. The student who might have an emotionally disengaged profile can and should be encouraged, to take steps to plan learning strategies and approaches, and the nurturing of positive supportive peer relationships would contribute to adolescents' social and academic development. The participant with highly engaged profile also demonstrated investment in learning by his choice of class colleague whom he thought could help him succeed with schoolwork, as expected of students with highly engaged profile.

Third Research Question

Feelings about school and feelings about schoolwork were themes that addressed the third research question. The third research question enquired about the factors that influence students' perceptions of their relationships with parents, teachers, peers, and students' personal characteristics and learning environments

Feelings about school

Two categories of feelings about school were gleaned from interview data: likes school; and does not like school. Of the 15 participants, 10 (66%) expressed sentiments related to the theme, with representation from each of the five engagement profiles.

Likes school. Of the six participants who indicated that they liked school were two of each of cognitively disengaged profile, and highly engaged profile; and one each of moderately engaged profile, and emotionally disengaged profile. The reasons participants disclosed for liking school ranged from perception of the principal and

named teachers (cognitively disengaged participant), enjoying the vocational and academic subjects (emotionally disengaged and moderately engaged participants), liking school despite negative relationships with peers (moderately engaged participant), to just liking the school (highly engaged participant). The participant with moderately engaged profile had negative peer relationships, but the supportive relationship this participant had with her mother may have attenuated the threat of disengagement associated with negative peer relationships. This finding is consistent with Marion et al.'s (2014) conclusion that supportive maternal relationships minimize the threat of disengagement associated with negative peer relationships.

The participant with highly engaged profile provided no rationale for liking school. I found that his liking school for no named reason was because of his commitment to school, academic success, and social development. According to Wang and Peck (2013), a student with highly engaged profile may be easily recognized under diverse circumstances, as the one who is well adjusted to the school environment because she or he feels safe at school, knows her or his purpose at school, relates appropriately with peers, sets academic goals, and plans for success. Despite the various reasons proffered for liking school, I found no differentiation among engagement profiles regarding liking school.

Does not like school. Two participants with emotionally disengaged profile and one participant with minimally engaged profile indicated that they did not like school. The participants with emotionally disengaged profile identified a sense of shame related to the nature of the school as one that integrates students with special physical and

learning needs. Consistent with Archambault et al. (2009) and Fredricks et al. (2004), who identified a relationship between a lack of belongingness and emotional disengagement, I found a relationship between a sense of shame, which is a factor in a lack of belongingness, and emotionally disengaged profile. Participants with emotionally disengaged profile may be able to compensate for their sense of alienation by adjusting their behavioral and cognitive investments in school.

The participant with minimally engaged profile expressed indifference to school as a concept. Wang and Peck (2013) noted the risk for dropping out of school associated with students with minimally engaged profile. For the participant with minimally engaged profile, indifference about school is an indication of risk for disengagement and ultimately dropping out of school. According to Fredricks et al. (2004), because there is a interrelationship among the dimensions of engagement, global engagement can be enhanced by investing in developing one or more dimension at a time. Fredricks et al.'s observation signals hope for students who are disengaged in one or more dimensions of engagement or those who register as minimally engaged, provided that such students are given the appropriate support.

Feelings about schoolwork

Another theme, feelings about schoolwork, presents study participants' general assessment about the quality of academic content at the school and how these assessments influence participants. Feelings about schoolwork is elaborated further in three categories: unchallenged; challenged; and bored.

Unchallenged. Two participants with emotionally disengaged profiles indicated they found the schoolwork easy and felt unchallenged with the level of work presented by teachers. This circumstance of students feeling unchallenged with schoolwork compounded with an emotionally disengaged profile might accelerate behavioral disengagement that may result in global school disengagement and dropout. These participants require stronger stimulation to engage in schoolwork, so that the teacher would need to introduce new dimensions of a topic more often than is required for students of other profiles. This observation is in accord with Sheppard's (2011) exposition of procedural engagement, which places responsibility on the teacher to be engaged and engaging in the classroom. I found that emotionally disengaged participants believe that teachers give them easy work because teachers believe the students are unable to do more grade appropriate or advanced work. The two emotionally disengaged participants in this category are also the two participants who indicated that they felt ashamed about attending the school that integrates for differently abled students in the general education classrooms.

Challenged. The three participants who indicated they felt challenged about schoolwork were of three profiles–one cognitively disengaged, one minimally engaged, and one moderately engaged. The participant with moderately engaged profile disclosed his struggle with memory and found it exhausting to study; the cognitively disengaged participant associated his challenge with teacher behavior and indicated his challenge was with a specific subject; and the minimally engaged participant just found the whole pursuit a challenge.

That a participant would find a subject challenging because of teacher behavior reinforces Sheppard's (2011) view that to some degree procedural engagement must play a part in getting learners interested and willing to invest in learning activities. Moreover, substantive engagement, which is the reciprocal dynamic between an engaged teacher and her students, helps students who observe and assess teachers against specific standards like moral issues of justice and fairness in the classroom and teacher's confidence and efficacy. I found no differentiation in engagement profiles regarding feeling challenged with schoolwork.

Bored. One participant with emotionally disengaged profile, disclosed that she felt bored about schoolwork and she preferred to engage other interests during class-time. I found that boredom with schoolwork is associated with the emotionally disengaged profile. This finding is consistent with Fredricks et al.'s (2004) note that for the emotionally disengaged student boredom is one of the characteristic risk factors. Corso et al. (2013) suggested that teachers should provide students with the relevance of what they learn for their current interests and future goals. Thus, to alleviate the chance of students becoming bored, teacher-student- content interaction should be positive and relevant to students' interests.

Relationship with peers

The nature of relationships among students at school contributes to a sense of belongingness to the learning community, and because identification with the school environment is a significant aspect of emotional engagement positive peer relationships correlate with students' academic performance and social development (Chen, 2005;

Eccles et al., 1993; Estell & Perdue, 2013; Pianta et al., 2012). Participants in this study shared negative and positive sentiments regarding their relationships with class-and school-peers as follows: guide to peer, study buddy, and not real friends. These feelings are varied and not representative of the whole sample. I found that relationship between with peers and engagement profiles is inconclusive for this sample.

Guide to peer. Two participants with moderately engaged profiles indicated that they helped peers who were struggling with schoolwork and those that they felt needed support with negotiating activities and friendships at school. I found that students of moderately engaged profile were more likely than students of the other engagement profiles to offer support to their peers. This may be so because the highly engaged are so engaged in schoolwork, they have less interest in helping others, and the emotionally disengaged, cognitively disengaged, and minimally disengaged profiles might represent degrees of apathy that blinds the student from the needs of others.

Study buddy. One participant with highly engaged profile and one participant with minimally engaged profile indicated that they revised schoolwork with friends and best friends when it is necessary or when directed by a teacher to revise and study new material. This finding accords with the findings of Fredricks et al. (2004), Fredricks (2011), and Mih and Mih (2013) that peer relationships are important in increasing and maintaining engagement.

Not real friends. Positive peer relationships contribute to the development of highly motivated and engaged students (Drolet & Arcand, 2013). However, when relationships between students are negative and conflictual there is an increased

challenge for students to develop emotional and behavioral engagement (Wang and Eccles, 2012).

Two participants in this study, one with moderately engaged profile and one with emotionally disengaged profile, said their school and class peers were bogus friends who had manipulated situations to get them in trouble with the school principal and with teachers. The emotionally disengaged participant noted that her true friends did not attend her school and that she looked forward to meeting with them after school. The moderately engaged participant was one of the two that offered support to her peers, and the finding that she does not feel her peers are friends is unexpected. The perspective of the participant with emotionally disengaged profile is expected because peer relationships play a part in creating a sense of belonging at school. So that, a student with emotionally disengaged profile would hardly likely have real friends at schoolends. This finding concurs with findings of Drolet and Arcand (2013) that signaled the primacy of peer relationships for adolescents and the part these relationships play in adolescents' sense of belonging at school.

Fourth Research Question

The fourth research question was the ultimate question of this study, because it asked about the factors that influence the development of student engagement profiles. In response to the fourth question I developed a composite description of two participants based on the themes identified throughout the study. I also considered unexpected results; I found no clear differentiation regarding how factors in participants' microsystems influence the development of student engagement profiles. There were

some expected relationships between contextual and psychological factors and engagement profiles for two participants–one with emotionally disengaged profile, the other with highly engaged profile.

***Emotionally disengaged profile*.** From his responses to interview questions, observations in the classroom, and the self-completed Student Engagement Instrument, this participant–SP11–was identified as having an emotionally disengaged profile. A student with emotionally disengaged profile is one who does not feel he belongs in the school environment, he has no real friends there, and does not see the need to contribute anything to the ethos of the school. Wang and Peck (2013) noted that despite his lack of a sense of belonging at the school, the emotionally disengaged student will see the value of attending school and will engage cognitively while not enjoying the experience at all. Moreover, a student who is emotionally disengaged will be at risk for cognitive disengagement engagement because of the of the interrelatedness of engagement. So, such a student is at risk not only for global disengagement and dropout, but ultimately for social underdevelopment and academic underachievement (Blondal & Adalbjarnardottir, 2012; Wang & Peck, 2013).

The association between factors in the microsystem and the emotionally disengaged profile of SP11 was evident in the facts he disclosed about his home environment where his parents were perceived as always supportive, but his mother was perceived as unreasonable, and he had the option to get assistance with homework at home but he did not want their help. SP11 also felt alienated at school as he believed the inclusion of differently abled students was an affront to his sense of belongingness; he

also saw the teachers as just doing their jobs but were unjust and gave easy work. These factors suggest that apart from not feeling support from his parents, and having almost no interest in school, he did not feel stimulated by the lessons, and was distracted by the behaviors of teachers. These associations accord with the findings of Blondal and Adalbjarnardottir (2012) and Metha et al. (2013) that although emotional engagement is not a sole or even primary factor in student success, it is an important factor that arrests the downward spiral to disengagement and academic failure.

SP11 was still cognitively engaged inasmuch as he sat close to a peer so that he could fudge from the peer's book, what he would have lost from the teacher's presentations. Also, he would complete his homework at school so that he could avoid any distractions in the home. I found that SP11 was aware of his emotional disengagement from school but his efforts to engage cognitively and behaviorally was consistent with Wang and Peck's (2013) findings that emotionally disengaged students are still able to engage behaviorally and cognitively, are at no immediate risk of dropping out of school, and are capable of achieving academically.

Highly engaged profile. Although in this study, I found that there was no consistent differentiation of student engagement profiles as they related to factors in study participants' school and home environments, and personal characteristics, participant SP12 with highly engaged profile had home and school contexts, personal characteristics, and engagement profile that fit the expected relationship represented in research literature. Participant SP12 disclosed his longing for a relationship with his father, but valued his relationship with his mother and her support. These circumstances

with his mother made SP12 a good candidate for high engagement on all dimensions, as he was, and this accords with the finding of Marion et al. (2014), and Wang and Eccles (2012), whose works identified the strong positive influence that maternal attachment, and maternal support have on adolescents' degree of engagement at school.

Moreover, SP12 had a routine that prioritized completing homework. He did homework at home independently and persisted through difficult tasks, and enjoyed the supervision of his mother. He had a positive self-concept and academic efficacy, enjoyed relating with a study buddy at school, and liked school. These personal characteristics, and factors of SP12's microsystem were consistent with psychological and contextual factors antecedent to the highly engaged profile, and were in accord with Drake et al.'s (2014) finding that the student with a highly engaged profile is one expected to demonstrate self-regulation.

Unexpected results. Generally, my findings did not reveal clear differentiations regarding influences on different engagement profiles as groups of participants. Participants of varying engagement profiles were broadly spread across the theme categories. These results suggest that engagement and the factors in the microsystem work differently for different people despite similarities in their backgrounds, psychological factors and classroom context. Despite these findings, every effort should be made to identify students who are not as engaged as they should be should they want to reap the full benefits of the multidimensional experiences that relationships at school offer.

Limitations of the Study

In this qualitative case study, I explored ninth grade students' perceptions about their school, home and personal characteristics, and the processes they used to develop their patterns of engagement with schoolwork. There were four limitations to this study and they related to sample size, sampling method, data collection methods, and study design.

Sample Size

The first limitation was the sample size of 15 participants, which was further subdivided into five groups of three participants. This small sample size per engagement profile may not have provided sufficient representation of perceptions and experiences of ninth grade students, their contexts and coping skills in school and their engagement profiles.

The sample size of 15 participants would have been more appropriate for a homogeneous group because while Guest et al. (2006) concluded that 12 participants were sufficient to acquire saturation in a qualitative study, the 15 participants in this study would have provided saturation for the holistic case. The three participants per embedded unit may not have been enough to achieve saturation on the level of the embedded unit in the heterogeneous sample.

Sampling Method

The second limitation was the sampling method. Purposive sampling ensures that only participants with experiences relevant to the study would be considered, and this ensured that they provide rich content for the study. However, as characteristic of

findings of qualitative research, this non-randomized methodology has deemed the findings of this study non-generalizable. So that the results may be applicable only to a population that is like participants in age, school and home contexts, personal characteristics and perceptions.

Data Collection Methods

Data collection methods were the third limitation. One of the assumptions of data collection using interviews was that participants would respond truthfully. However, there was the potential for skewed responses associated with social desirability bias, particularly because the participants were young adolescents and I as researcher was not their age-peer. Then, as noted by Patton (2002), there is no guarantee that participants' emotional state would not influence the accuracy of their responses during data collection. Additionally, behavior is affected when one is observed. So, although observations were used to confirm, clarify, or disconfirm data collected at interviews, the observation data may not be a true representation of participants' behavior in the classroom. This is more so because observations could not be done as unobtrusively as planned because of the small sizes of the classrooms.

Design

The fourth limitation was the design of the study. The 15 participants were categorized into five groups, so that each group consisted of three participants. I used a two-stage process to categorize participants. The first stage employed the teachers' categorizing based on their knowledge of potential study participants. In the second stage, I used the results of the self-report from participants' SEI to compare with the

teachers' categories. Where there were discrepancies between the teachers' categorization and the participant's self-report, I chose the results of the self-report to identify the participant's engagement profile. The limitation in this method is associated with possible participants' social acceptability bias, and/or participants' emotional state or other psychological or physical factors that may have influenced participants' responses in the self-reports.

Recommendations

My intention in this study was to explore students' perceptions of themselves, their relationships with parents, teachers and peers, and identify factors that influence the development of student engagement profiles. Participants were divided into five groups of three according to their engagement profiles. The findings of this study highlighted the influence of maternal support, teacher behavior, degree of difficulty of work in class, personal characteristics, and peer relationships on engagement profiles. However, results were not conclusive regarding how these antecedents influenced engagement profiles differentially. I recommend further study that would bring more clarity to how factors in the home, classroom, and personal characteristics influence the development of student engagement profiles. These recommendations relate to design, focus, and methodology.

Design

The single case with embedded units was an appropriate design for this study that explored one study site and considered the experiences of a heterogeneous group of participants. The challenge of this design was the limit to which analysis could be done on an individual, group, intergroup and whole case level because each embedded unit

comprised only three participants. Future research should select more participants and measure saturation on the level of the whole case as well as the level of each embedded unit. On the other hand, future study should be a single case with a homogeneous group.

Focus

Further research should focus on one engagement profile in the design of the study. Further study should explore the perceptions of a homogeneous group and provide a more incisive exploration of the experiences of the specific profile. A qualitative study of one of the five engagement profiles, using purposive sampling with no less than 15 participants would provide a clearer understanding of the perception and processes of students of that profile.

Methodology

I used the cooperating teachers' categorization of prospective participants and the SEI to identify participants' engagement profiles. The SEI is a self-reporting instrument that the participants completed at their first interview, but there are limitations associated with self-reporting questionnaires that may have occurred in this study. In addition to the SEI, an objective method of identifying participants' engagement profiles should be used in categorizing participants. This would address any bias associated with self-completed questionnaires. This suggests that the selection method should be tiered to address issues related to validity and reliability of the process.

Implications

The purpose of this qualitative, case study was to explore ninth grade students' perceptions of contextual and psychological factors that influence the development of

student engagement profiles. The findings of this study present a number of implications for positive social change. Students' academic achievement and long-term choices for further education are related more to student engagement than aptitude (Archambault et al., 2009; Conner & Pope, 2013). I identified several antecedents to student engagement and these antecedents are as malleable as engagement, so that the potential for social change is enhanced. The aim of interventions on all levels should be to encourage and support students to develop highly engaged and moderately engaged profiles for their academic and social success, and the consequent prospects of higher educational and social prospects as well as enhanced career opportunities. Several groups will benefit from the findings of this study to the ultimate elevation of the school experience for all students at the study site, parents, teachers, school counselors, school administration, and the wider community.

Study Participants

First, the participants will benefit from the findings as they would be able to assess themselves and take responsibility for the responses they make to the changes and nuances in the school and home environments. The findings of this study have endorsed the value of positive peer relationships, and so students with minimally engaged, cognitively disengaged, and emotionally disengaged profiles will benefit from positive relationships with students with moderately engaged and highly engaged profiles.

Moreover, the entire student population at the study site will benefit from the findings of the study when they become educated about student engagement, patterns of approach to schoolwork, and the academic and social benefits and demerits of the

different student engagement profiles. Students should be encouraged to become more aware of their immediate environments and exercise control over their approaches to school and schoolwork, and work toward improving their engagement with the school and schoolwork.

Parents

Parents of participants–and parents of students at the study site–can benefit from the findings of this study because the ethos at home, and the personal relationships between parents and their children were factors that participants identified as important for their sense of self and application to schoolwork. When parents become aware of the challenges their children face at school and at home, and when they understand the value of maternal support in helping students to engage, then they would be empowered to work on their relationships with their children, for their children's benefit. This is particularly notable regarding cognitive engagement so that mothers should do well to provide procedural engagement and autonomy support for their children to ensure they engage cognitively, avoid cognitive disengagement, and place their children on the trajectory of academic success. They would do well to express interest in how well their children are completing schoolwork, and how they relate thoughtfully with their children.

Teachers

One of the findings of this study was that some participants with cognitively disengaged, emotionally disengaged, minimally engaged, and moderately engaged profiles had a heightened sense of justice in relation to teacher behavior. If teachers are aware of this sensitivity of students, especially students with the four aforementioned

engagement profiles, then they would be more aware of the need to arbitrate wrongdoing in the classroom with fairness.

In efforts to promote engagement of students with emotionally disengaged and minimally engaged profiles, teachers should avoid shouting at students in the classroom because students with these profiles already feel more emotionally disconnected from school and are more sensitive to changes in teacher-behaviors and mood than students of highly engaged, moderately engaged, and cognitively disengaged profiles.

School Counselors

As school counselors assess students for the challenges in performing academically, and in their relationships with parents, teachers, and peers, they are able to determine more specifically the dimension of engagement with which a student may have an issue. This immediacy between counsellor and student provides an important dynamic within which interventions may be made.

The results of this study can contribute to the work of school counselors inasmuch as the study has identified some specific perceptions students may have of their personal characteristics, and relationships at home and school. Specifically for students with minimally engaged, emotionally disengaged or cognitively disengaged profiles, school counsellors would be able to recommend direct interventions related to thought patterns, feelings, and behavioral changes which would redound to improvement in their student-clients' engagement profiles.

Administrators

As a school's ethos contributes to the sense of safety and security required for students' full engagement, in efforts to enhance engagement of students and promote the development of students with highly engaged profiles, the school's administrators should become more aware of the concern and shame some participants expressed about the school integrating students with special learning and physical needs.

The findings of this study can influence positive social change at the level of school policy development related to how students should relate to each other and develop a sense of belonging at school. The school administrators and members of the board may need to be educated about elements of school ethos that enhance students' sense of safety and pride in the school because of the diversity of the student population. Educational programs that aim at the development of personal and mutual respect, and particularly respect for diversity, should be made available to parents, teachers, and students to improve the school's morale. Despite the fact that this is particularly regarding the study site, school morale is a universal phenomenon, and all schools should benefit from efforts that engender pride in diversity, mutual respect, and the value of each person as components of a healthy school ethos.

Community

The community related to this study site includes the lay organization that established and supports the school. Other members of the community include one other school in close vicinity to the study site, businesses on the main road, and families residing in the neighborhood. This community will benefit from the positive changes in

the school as there may be a change in the behavior of students as they traverse the neighborhood to and from school.

Moreover, the community as an integral part of students' microsystem, may contribute to students' development of highly engaged and moderately engaged profiles by their contribution of services that may assist students to develop belongingness to the school. These include, but not limited to, painting the school walls with murals conceptualized by students and informed by community-building themes. This project would be especially beneficial for students with minimally engaged and emotionally disengaged profiles because it would provide them an opportunity to express themselves uniquely on the school compound, which should ultimately increase a sense of belongingness, emotional engagement, and behavioral engagement. Transformed students will contribute greatly to transformed communities. Therefore, the positive changes that should occur at the school will have far-reaching positive social consequences.

Conclusion

This qualitative case study explored ninth grade students' perceptions of their home and school contexts and the consequent processes they employ as they developed diverse school engagement profiles. The intent was to identify whether there are differentiations among the five engagement profiles related to the factors like physical contexts at home and at school, participant characteristics, and relationship issues between participants and parents and the teacher-student relationship at the study site that was the holistic case of this study.

The findings of this study underscored the importance of parent-child relationships, especially maternal relationships, for student engagement. Moreover, this study unearthed a dynamic between emotional engagement and commitment to academic pursuits and social relationships at school. Although emotional engagement is not enough to ensure academic engagement, it is an essential dimension of student engagement because emotional disengagement begins a spiral of descent to global disengagement, academic underachievement and school dropout. Students need to experience a sense of belongingness at school if behavioral engagement and cognitive investment in academic and social successes are to be accomplished.

The highly engaged students demonstrated an internal locus of control as in greater self-control over contexts, incidents, and relationships, and seemed to be more assured than students of the other four profiles. Maternal autonomy support and support from teachers and peers are antecedents that work together to create a physical and psychological space for students to engage for success. All factors in the microsystem from home to school work together dynamically for the social and academic development of students. Intentional assessment for strengths and challenges students face could only help create and support students' successful engagement of thought, feelings, and actions.

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Appendix A: Interview Protocol

Psychological and Contextual Antecedents of Student Engagement Profiles of Ninth Grade Students

Interview Protocol

(If the participant should disclose information that is irrelevant to the questions asked, use probes to get him/her back on track. Identify anything the participant says that is relevant to the question asked and use elaboration probes like:

- "What you have said about [relevant content] is helpful, could you tell me some more about that?"
- "I am beginning to understand what you [relevant content], could you give me more detail?"

Today we will be speaking about your relationship with your parents and your teachers, and how you feel about your work at school. I will be asking you some questions and you may feel free to answer them as best you can. The session will not go for more than one hour and you are free to stop at any time for any reason. Would you allow me to record our interview with an audio recorder?

So, I will begin by asking you about what you do at home

1. Tell me about your relationship with your parents.
2. What do you like most about your parents?
3. What do you like least about your parents?
4. How do you cope with doing your homework?

I will now like to ask you about your time at school:

5. How do you feel about attending this school?
6. Tell me about your teachers.
7. What do you like most about your teachers?
8. What do you like least about your teachers?
9. Tell me the things you do, step by step, when you enter your classroom.
10. If I were to walk into your classroom, and the teacher is absent, what would I see you doing?
11. How do you feel about all the schoolwork you have to do?

Thank you for talking with me today, I am happy you were able to make the time. I would want to talk with you again next week, when I will have the interpretation of our session and maybe some other questions. Is that okay with you?

Appendix B: Letter of Cooperation from a Teacher

Letter of Cooperation from a Teacher

Date

Dear Teacher,

I have obtained the principal's support to collect data for my research project entitled Psychological and Contextual Antecedents to Student Engagement Profiles of Ninth Grade Students.

I am requesting your cooperation in the data collection process. I propose to collect data on [_____]. I will coordinate the exact times of data collection with you in order to minimize disruption to your instructional activities.

If you agree to be part of this research project, I would ask that you allow me to meet with your students for one hour on _____ for an information session when I can describe the study, explain what I would want them to do, and answer any question they may have. I would also like to observe students who will be participating in the study during your classes for three sessions of 20 minutes each. Students who will participate in this study will also be interviewed, but these interviews will be scheduled for periods when they will not have classes.

If you prefer not to be involved in this study, that is not a problem at all.

If circumstances change, please contact me via [redacted] or XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX

Thank you for your consideration. I would be please to share the results of this study with you if you are interested.

I am requesting your signature to document that I have cleared this data collection with you.

Sincerely,

Wendy Ann Jones

Printed Name of Teacher

Date _____

Teacher's Written or Electronic* Signature _____

Researcher's Written or Electronic* Signature _____

Appendix C: Permission to Use Student Engagement Instrument

Gmail by Google

Wendy Jones <wendy.jones3@waldenu.edu>

Permission to use SEI in research at Walden University

Megan Dushin <dushi001@umn.edu> Wed, Jan 25, 2017 at 2:06 PM
To: wendy.jones3@waldenu.edu
Cc: Eileen Klemm <klem0027@umn.edu>, Jean Echternacht <nessx008@umn.edu>

Wendy,

I received your request from Eileen Klemm, one of our national Check & Connect trainers, thank you.

Yes, as a PhD candidate at Walden University, you have our permission to use the Student Engagement Instrument (SEI), as available from our website, in your research project.

Please let us know if you need anything else from us to proceed and if possible, the results of your research.

Sincerely,
Megan

--
Megan Dushin, Communications Coordinator
Check & Connect
Institute on Community Integration
University of Minnesota
6 Pattee Hall, 150 Pillsbury Drive SE
Minneapolis MN 55455
dushi001@umn.edu
612-626-8649

CHECK & CONNECT

UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA

Join us October 12-13, 2017 at our 2nd biennial conference, Student Engagement: Connection to School, Motivation to Learn, in Minneapolis.