

2017

Relationship Between Parents' Attitudes and Involvement in an Elementary School

Vaneia LaShea Williams
Walden University

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Walden University

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Vaneia Lashea Williams

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Walden University
2017

Abstract

Relationship Between Parents' Attitudes and Involvement in an Elementary School

by

Vaneia Williams

MEd, Prairie View A and M University, 2007

BSW, Stephen F. Austin State University, 2003

Doctoral Study Submitted in Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree of

Doctor of Education

Walden University

December 2017

Abstract

Parental involvement at Shady Lane Elementary School is lower than the district average, which might be contributing to low levels of student achievement. The purpose of this quantitative correlational study was to explore attitudes of parents at the school and selected parental involvement behaviors. The framework for this study was the theory of planned behavior. The focus of research question 1 was the relationship between parents' attitudes toward the school and parental involvement in the form of communicating, volunteering, and learning at home. The focus of research question 2 was the relationship between parents' attitudes toward parental involvement and parental involvement in the form of communicating, volunteering, and learning at home. The covariates were parents' level of education, employment status, and income. Survey data were collected from 108 parents of students in Grades 1-5. Descriptive statistics showed parents had low levels of all 3 types of parental involvement and negative attitudes toward the school and that parents' attitudes toward parental involvement were almost equally positive and negative. Spearman correlations showed a positive correlation between both independent variables (parents' attitudes toward the school and parental involvement) and communicating, volunteering, and learning at home. Multiple regression analysis showed a positive predictive relationship between parents' attitudes toward the school and communicating and learning at home, and between parents' attitudes toward parental involvement and communicating, volunteering, and learning at home. Results may be used to improve students' achievement as a result of improved parental involvement.

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Dedication

This work is dedicated to loved ones no longer here on earth to celebrate my accomplishment: my family members, Carry White, M. T. White, Queen Ester Williams, Glenda Andrews, Ruth Toliver, and Leon Byrd, and my dear friend Crystal Thomas. You all are always with me as angels guiding every step I take in my life's journey.

Acknowledgments

Above all others, I give honor to God for providing me with the guidance, strength, and determination to complete this project. For my understanding that life's greatest accomplishments are not fulfilled without a spiritual force, I credit Lynda Duffield, who introduced me to the Church at an early age.

I express my greatest gratitude to my mother, Joan Wheeler, for instilling in me the value of persevering in the face of obstacles and challenges. She has consistently encouraged me to have faith and pursue my doctoral degree even while facing challenges and obstacles in her own educational journey. I love her more than words can express.

I thank my father, Larry Williams; my stepfather, Rayl Wheeler; and my friends, Arthur and Susan, for their support and encouraging words throughout this long endeavor. I also thank my chair, Dr. Ellen Scales, and my other committee members, Dr. Mary Hallums and Dr. Nori Mora, for their feedback and guidance.

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Chapter 1: Introduction to the Study

The impact of parental involvement on student achievement first began to gain attention in the literature in the early 1980s (Henderson & Berla, 1994). Nearly 15 years later, the concept of parental involvement had become a critical component in the discussion of student achievement in education research, and new connections were being made between parental involvement and student outcomes (Henderson & Berla, 1994). Since that time, research results have continued to support the connection between parental involvement and student achievement (Hoover-Dempsey & Sandler, 1997, 2005; Levin & Aram, 2011; Yuen, 2011). In addition, researchers have made connections between parental involvement and other outcomes including home-school partnerships (Yuen, 2011), student behavior (McCormick, Capella, O'Connor, & McClowry, 2013), and skills and knowledge acquisition with respect to nongraded learning for both parents and children (Ozcinar & Ekizoglu, 2013). It is in the connections to these outcomes that levels of parental involvement in schools become relevant for study.

Parents' attitudes are relevant for study as well. A person's attitude toward a particular behavior has been shown to be associated with that person's choice to engage in that behavior (Ajzen, 2002, 2012, 2015; Ajzen & Fishbein, 1972, 1973). This means that parents' attitudes are associated with their behavior of engaging in their children's education. More specifically, Hoover-Dempsey and Sandler (2005) suggested that parental attitude toward parental involvement and parental attitude toward a child's school (school quality, teacher concern, and child learning) are associated with a parent's choice to become engaged in a child's education. In other words, parental attitude toward parental involvement and toward a child's school may impact parental involvement

(Hoover-Dempsey & Sandler, 2005). It was in this capacity that an exploration of parents' attitudes toward parental involvement and parents' attitudes toward a child's school was relevant for study.

This study has the potential to promote positive social change. Parental involvement at Shady Lane Elementary School was lower than the average of other schools in the district (Texas Education Agency [TEA], 2017). However, if parents' attitudes were found to be related to parental involvement, results may be used to improve parents' attitudes toward parental involvement and the school, which may contribute to improved parental involvement. Parental involvement may impact student (a) attendance at school (Hayes, 2012); (b) behavior (Hayes, 2012; Hill & Wang, 2015; Sheldon & Epstein, 2002; Serpell & Mashburn, 2012); and (c) self-efficacy (Doctoroff & Arnold, 2017; Fan, Williams, & Wolters, 2012; Gonida & Cortina, 2014; Hoover-Dempsey & Sandler, 2005), all of which can impact student achievement. Parental involvement has also been linked to academic achievement (Galindo & Sheldon, 2012; Gordon & Cui, 2014; Kim & Hill, 2015; O'Donnell & Kirkner, 2014; Puccioni, 2015; Rattigan-Rohr, He, Murphy, & Knight, 2014). It was in the potential to improve student outcomes at the focus school that this study had the potential to promote positive social change. This chapter contains 11 sections including a background discussion of literature related to the scope of the topic and discussions of the problem, purpose, theoretical framework, and nature of the study.

Background

Parents who engage in their children's education are considered to be involved parents (Epstein, 1995; Jeynes, 2012, McKenna & Millen, 2013). This involvement may

be overt or subtle (Jeynes, 2010) and may take place in the home (Epstein, 1995; Jeynes, 2010), at school (Epstein, 1995; Poza, Brooks, & Valdés, 2014), or in the community (O'Donnell & Kirkner, 2014; Rattigan-Rohr et al., 2014). In the home, parents may participate by helping their children learn (Epstein, 1995). At school, parents may participate by volunteering or communicating with teachers (Epstein, 1995).

Attitude toward a particular behavior may impact a person's choice to engage in that particular behavior (Ajzen, 2012; Ajzen & Fishbein, 1972). Pertaining to the scope of this study, parents' attitudes toward children's schools (McKenna & Millen, 2013; Myers, 2015; Rodriguez, Blatz, & Elbaum, 2014; Toldson & Lemmons, 2013) and parents' attitudes toward parental involvement may impact parents' engagement in their children's education (Hoover-Dempsey & Sandler, 2005). In particular, parents' attitudes toward the school may impact parents' decisions to volunteer in the school (Barr & Saltmarsh, 2012; Toldson & Lemmons, 2013), communicate with teachers (Rodriguez et al., 2014), and help their children at home (Hoover-Dempsey & Sandler, 2005). Parents' attitudes toward parental involvement may impact parents' decisions to volunteer in the school, communicate with teachers, and help their children at home (Hoover-Dempsey & Sandler, 2005).

Although the literature has shown that parents' attitudes toward the school and parents' attitudes toward parental involvement may impact parental involvement, no exploration of the relationship between these variables had been conducted at Shady Lane Elementary School. This gap in practice was of interest in this study because it was possible that parents' attitudes toward the school and parents' attitudes toward parental involvement were negatively impacting parental involvement at the school, which could

in turn have been impacting student achievement. At the time of this study, satisfactory level student achievement scores on the State of Texas Assessments of Academic Readiness (STAAR) reading, math, and science assessments were below average when compared to the both the school district and the state in which the school was located.

This study was needed because it was possible that I might generate data about parents' attitudes and the connection between those attitudes and parental involvement. With this insight, steps may be taken to improve parents' attitudes toward the school and parents' attitudes toward parental involvement to improve the levels of parental involvement at Shady Lane Elementary School. If levels of parental involvement at the school improve, student outcomes at the school may also improve.

Problem Statement

The need to involve parents in their children's education is one that has received both state and national level attention for decades (Henderson & Berla, 1994; Hoover-Dempsey & Sandler, 1997, 2005; Levin & Aram, 2011; Yuen, 2011). That levels of parental involvement were of concern at the state and national levels was evident in ongoing efforts by state (State of Texas Education Code, 1995) and national (Education Commission of the States, 2015; Harvard Family Research Project, 2015; No Child Left Behind Act of 2001, 2002) level agencies to improve levels of parental involvement in schools. Similarly, the school's efforts to encourage parents to become involved also demonstrated that a low level of parental involvement was problematic and a concern at Shady Lane Elementary School.

At Shady Lane Elementary School, parents were encouraged to communicate with teachers and the school, volunteer in the school, and help their children learn at

home. To encourage communication, Shady Lane Elementary School (2013) sponsored parent nights, held parent-teacher conferences, produced a newsletter, and hosted a parent portal on its school website. All of these avenues of communication encouraged the sharing of school-related information with parents and provided a means for parents to communicate with teachers and the school. To encourage volunteering at the school, Shady Lane Elementary School promoted a volunteer program that matched parents who wanted to volunteer with appropriate volunteer opportunities. To encourage parents to help their children learn in the home setting, Shady Lane Elementary School provided parents with online access to educational resources and offered parent training. During parent training events, teachers and paraprofessionals tutored parents in reading, writing, and math content so that they could have a better understanding of the subject matter their children were learning. The intent was that if parents better understood the subject matter, they would be better prepared to help their children learn that subject matter in the home setting.

At Shady Lane Elementary School (2013), parental involvement was measured by the number of hours parents participated in their children's education by communicating with teachers and the school, volunteering at the school, and attending activities at the school. Activities were focused on helping parents help their children learn better in the home setting. All teachers and school staff who engaged with parents were required to keep track of parental involvement hours. Each month, an administrative assistant in the school's main office produced a report of the combined teacher and staff data.

Despite efforts to engage parents at Shady Lane Elementary School, rates of parental involvement in the school remained low. According to records of parental

involvement collected monthly during the 2014-2015 academic school year, the annual average level of parental involvement at Shady Lane Elementary School (2015) was less than the average among the 14 elementary schools in the Alcott School District (pseudonym). Records of parental involvement available from the 2015-2016 school year (August through March) showed that levels of parental involvement at Shady Lane Elementary School (2016) decreased from the previous year and had dropped to the second lowest among the 14 schools in the district. Evidence from annual parental involvement reports demonstrated a clear need to focus attention on improving parental involvement at Shady Lane Elementary School (Principal of Shady Lane Elementary School, personal communication, October, 15, 2015).

Low rates of parental involvement at Shady Lane Elementary School were problematic because they could have been contributing to student underperformance at the school, a relationship repeatedly identified in the literature (Hayes, 2012; Hoover-Dempsey & Sandler, 2005; LeFevre & Shaw, 2012; Rattigan-Rohr et al., 2014). The 2015-2016 STARR reading, math, and science performance data for Shady Lane Elementary School (TEA, 2017) are presented in Table 1. Reading scores for students at Shady Lane Elementary School were 4-12% lower than the district and 17-25% lower than the state. Math scores for students at Shady Lane Elementary School were 2-5% lower than the district and 22-26% lower than the state. Science scores were 7% lower than the district and 31% lower than the state.

Table 1

Percentage of Students Achieving Satisfactory or Above Performance Scores on the STARR Reading, Math, and Science Assessments for 2015-2016

| Subject by grade | Shady Lane | District | State |
|------------------|------------|----------|-------|
| Grade 3 | | | |
| Reading | 56 | 60 | 73 |
| Math | 51 | 53 | 75 |
| Grade 4 | | | |
| Reading | 58 | 64 | 75 |
| Math | 47 | 50 | 73 |
| Grade 5 | | | |
| Reading | 56 | 68 | 81 |
| Math | 64 | 69 | 86 |
| Science | 50 | 57 | 81 |

In summary, the literature has shown that parents' attitudes toward children's schools (McKenna & Millen, 2013; Myers, 2015; Rodriguez et al., 2014; Toldson & Lemmons, 2013) and toward parental involvement may impact parents' engagement in their children's education (Grolnick, 2015; Whitaker & Hoover-Dempsey, 2013). In addition, parental involvement has been linked to student achievement (Fan & Chen, 2001; Hayes, 2012; Henderson & Berla, 1994; Hoover-Dempsey & Sandler, 1997, 2005; Jaynes, 2012; LeFevre & Shaw, 2012; Levin & Aram, 2012; Miedel & Reynolds 1999; Rattigan-Rohr et al., 2014; Witte & Sheridan, 2011; Yuen, 2011). Based on this information, it is possible that at Shady Lane Elementary School, parents' attitudes

toward the school and toward parental involvement were negatively influencing parents' decisions to become involved, a condition that had not been explored at the school.

By conducting this study, I attempted to address that gap in practice by determining whether parents' attitudes toward the school and toward parental involvement were related to parental involvement. Information about the potential for parents' attitudes to influence parental involvement might have been useful to the principal at the school who could then consider parents' attitudes in future decisions regarding efforts to improve parental involvement and, in doing so, potentially promote higher levels of parental involvement at the school. Low levels of parental involvement at Shady Lane Elementary School represented a lost opportunity to help children at the school achieve at levels more comparable to other schools in the district and the state, and this study represented a step toward rectifying that missed opportunity. In addition, parental involvement at the school was desirable because parental involvement promotes a positive school culture in which parents' efforts to participate in their children's education is supported (Mapp & Kuttner, 2013). It was in this respect that this study had value.

Purpose

Although it was known that the levels of parental involvement at Shady Lane Elementary School were lower than the averages at other schools in the Alcott School District and that this condition was problematic, it was not known why parents were not choosing to become involved (Principal of Shady Lane Elementary School, personal communication, October, 15, 2015). As previously described, one possible reason that parents were not participating in their children's education was because of their negative

attitudes toward parental involvement (see Grolnick, 2015; Whitaker & Hoover-Dempsey, 2013) and their negative attitudes toward the school (see McKenna & Millen, 2013; Myers, 2015; Rodriguez et al., 2014; Toldson & Lemmons, 2013). For this reason, parents' attitudes toward parental involvement and the school, in conjunction with selected parental involvement behaviors, were explored in this study.

Specifically, the purpose of this quantitative correlational study was to explore the relationship between attitudes of parents' at Shady Lane Elementary School and selected parental involvement behaviors. The parent attitudes I explored were parents' attitudes toward the school and parents' attitudes toward parental involvement. The parental involvement behaviors I explored were communicating, volunteering, and learning at home (parents helping children learn in the home setting).

The first relationship between the study variables that I explored was the relationship between parents' attitudes toward the school and three types of parental involvement behaviors identified by Epstein (1995): communicating, volunteering, and learning at home. The second relationship between the study variables that I explored was the relationship between parents' attitudes toward parental involvement and the parental involvement behaviors of communicating, volunteering, and learning at home. There were three covariates: level of parent education, parent employment status, and parent income.

Research Questions

This study of parental involvement at Shady Lane Elementary School was focused around two research questions. The research questions and associated hypotheses were as follows:

Research Question 1: At Shady Lane Elementary School, what is the relationship between parents' attitudes toward the school (school quality, teacher concern, and child learning) and three types of parental involvement (communicating, volunteering, and learning at home) while controlling for parents' level of education, employment status, and income, a condition that potentially could impact student achievement at the school?

H₀1: At Shady Lane Elementary School, the variable parents' attitudes toward the school (school quality, teacher concern, and child learning) does not predict the three types of parental involvement (communicating, volunteering, and learning at home) while controlling for parents' level of education, employment status, and income, a condition that potentially could impact student achievement at the school.

H_A1: At Shady Lane Elementary School, the variable parents' attitudes toward the school (school quality, teacher concern, and child learning) does predict the three types of parental involvement (communicating, volunteering, and learning at home) while controlling for parents' level of education, employment status, and income, a condition that potentially could impact student achievement at the school.

Research Question 2: At Shady Lane Elementary School, what is the relationship between parents' attitudes toward parental involvement and three types of parental involvement (communicating, volunteering, and learning at home) while controlling for parents' level of education, employment status, and income?

H₀2: At Shady Lane Elementary School, the variable parents' attitudes toward parental involvement does not predict the three types of parental involvement (communicating, volunteering, and learning at home) while controlling for parents' level of education, employment status, and income.

H_{A2}: At Shady Lane Elementary School, the variable parents' attitudes toward parental involvement does predict the three types of parental involvement (communicating, volunteering, and learning at home) while controlling for parents' level of education, employment status, and income.

To measure the variables parents' attitudes toward the school and parents' attitudes toward parental involvement, I used items from Epstein and Salinas's (1993) School and Family Partnerships Survey of Parents in Elementary and Middle Grades, and Sheldon and Epstein's (2007) Parent Survey of Family and Community Involvement in the Elementary and Middle Grades.

Theoretical Framework

The theoretical framework for this study was Ajzen and Fishbein's (1972) theory of planned behavior. In their theory, Ajzen and Fishbein posited that behavior is the result of a person's intent to behave, which may be predicted by examining three specific determinants: (a) attitude toward the behavior, (b) the extent to which a person perceives that he or she has control over successful engagement in the behavior, and (c) a person's beliefs about how important others expect him or her to behave (Ajzen, 2012). Important others may be situated in familial, work, or social settings (Ajzen, 2002).

The theory of planned behavior has been used as a theoretical framework in recent studies on this topic (Alghazo, 2016; Bracke & Cortes, 2012; Perry & Langley, 2013) and were well aligned with the research questions in the current study. In their theory of planned behavior, Ajzen and Fishbein (1973) showed a connection between a person's attitude and his or her intent to behave in a specific way, which is assumed to be inherently associated with actual behavior. In this study, I questioned the relationship

between parents' attitudes and selected parental involvement behaviors. The theory of planned behavior was also well aligned with this study's design because the theory is based in part on the relationship between attitude and behavior. I sought to determine whether there was a correlation between parents' attitudes and their parental involvement behaviors. The details of this theory and the applicability of the theory to research on parental involvement are discussed in more detail in the Theoretical Framework section of Chapter 2.

Nature of the Study

This study was a quantitative correlational study using a survey approach to data collection. Creswell (2014) indicated that quantitative studies are appropriate to use when researchers want to explore relationships between particular variables. Because I explored the relationships between the independent variables parents' attitudes toward the school and parents' attitudes toward parental involvement and the dependent variable parental involvement (communicating, volunteering, learning at home), a quantitative design was appropriate for this study.

Researchers use correlational analysis when they want to determine relationships between variables and determine the predictive capacity of variables (Kraska, 2010). Simple correlations are descriptive in nature and used to describe the strength and direction of the relationship (Sheskin, 2010). When researchers want to determine the predictive capacity of a variable, they use multiple regression (Sheskin, 2010). Because I planned to determine whether parents' attitudes toward the school and parents' attitudes toward parental involvement predicted three types of parental involvement

(communicating, volunteering, and learning at home), a correlational approach to the data analysis using multiple regression was appropriate in this study.

Data for this study were collected from parents of students in Grades 1-5. Approximately 600 parents were invited to participate in the study. Data were collected using a parent involvement survey, which included selected items from Epstein and Salinas's (1993) School and Family Partnerships Survey of Parents in Elementary and Middle Grades, and Sheldon and Epstein's (2007) Parent Survey of Family and Community Involvement in the Elementary and Middle Grades. Prior to analyzing the collected data, I conducted scale reliability analyses of the five subscales: parents' attitude toward the school, parents' attitude toward parental involvement, communicating, volunteering, and learning at home. For both research questions, I conducted multiple regressions to determine the relationships between the two independent variables (parents' attitudes toward the school and parents' attitudes toward parental involvement) and the dependent variable (parental involvement as measured through communicating, volunteering, and learning at home). By using multiple regression to conduct the correlation, I was able to include parent level of education, parent employment status, and parent income as covariates and thereby control for any potential impact these covariates may have had on the dependent variable.

Definitions

This section includes definitions of the study variables. More detailed descriptions of the variables are presented in Chapter 3. Common terms were not included in this section.

Attitude: According to Fishbein and Ajzen (1975), “attitude may be conceptualized as the amount of affect for or against some object” (p. 11).

Communicating: Like learning at home and volunteering, communicating is one of six types of parental involvement identified by Epstein (1995). Although Epstein did not directly define what communicating is, Epstein described it as the “design [of] effective forms of school-to-home and home-to-school communications about school” (p. 704). For the purposes of this study, communicating referred to any reasonable contact between the school and the home, regardless of the direction of the communication or the mode used to communicate.

Learning at home: Like communicating and volunteering, learning at home is one of the six types of parental involvement identified by Epstein (1995). Although Epstein did not directly define learning at home, Epstein described learning at home as the provision “of information and ideas to families about how to help students at home with homework and other curriculum-related activities, decisions, and planning” (p. 20). For the purposes of this study, learning at home referred to activities conducted at home that promote student learning.

Parental attitude toward parental involvement: Parental attitude toward parental involvement refers to perceived parental responsibility for (a) a student’s learning in the school and home settings, (b) the resolution of problems related to the student’s academic performance, and (c) the assistance the child requires for learning (Sheldon & Epstein, 2007). For the purposes of this study, parents’ attitudes toward these three categories of parental responsibility were considered jointly as parental attitude toward parental involvement.

Parental attitude toward school: Parental attitude toward school refers to parents' perceptions of whether (a) the school is good, the school views the parent as important, and the school is supported by the community; (b) the teachers care about the child and welcome the parent; and (c) the child is learning (Epstein & Salinas, 1993). For the purposes of this study, parents' attitudes toward these three categories of perceptions of the school were considered jointly as parental attitude toward the school.

Parental involvement: Epstein (1995) defined parental involvement in terms of six behaviors: (a) parenting, (b) communicating, (c) volunteering, (d) learning at home, (e) decision-making, and (f) collaborating with the community. For the purposes of this study, parental involvement included these six behaviors. Because communicating, parenting, and volunteering were variables in this study, I included individual definitions of these terms in this section.

Volunteering: Like communicating and learning at home, volunteering is one of the six types of parental involvement identified by Epstein (1995). Although Epstein never directly defined volunteering, Epstein described volunteering as the "recruit[ment] and organiz[ation of] parent help and support" (p. 19). For the purposes of this study, volunteering referred to any activity in which parents, on their own time and without compensation, engage in school-related activities for the benefit of the student in particular or the school in general.

Assumptions

Two assumptions were made during this study. The first assumption was that participants (parents of students at Shady Lane Elementary School) were truthful in their responses to the survey items. It was possible that parents, in an effort to be helpful,

might have responded to the survey items with calculated rather than honest responses. However, this scenario was unlikely because parents who completed the survey would not have known me and therefore would have been less inclined to try to help me personally. Also, I expressed in both the letter of consent and the directions for completing the survey that the data collected would be used to help promote the most beneficial types of parental involvement, which might then help improve student outcomes. It was likely that parents would want to help their child be more successful in school and, for that reason, answer the survey items honestly.

The second assumption was that parents who agreed to participate in this study were a representative sample of the general population of parents of students at the school. Because the topic of the survey that was used in this study was parental involvement related to the parents of children at the focus school, the completion of this survey could have been considered a type of parental involvement. Therefore, parents with higher levels of overall parental involvement may have been more likely to participate in this study.

Scope and Delimitations

The scope of this study was limited to two independent variables, three dependent variables, and three covariates. The two independent variables were related to parental attitude: parents' attitudes toward the school (school quality, teacher concern, and child learning) and parents' attitudes toward parental involvement. These independent variables were chosen because they were measurable factors identified in Hoover-Dempsey and Sandler's (2005) model of the parental involvement process as factors associated with a parent's decision to become involved in a child's education.

The three dependent variables were types of parental involvement: communicating, volunteering, and learning at home. These three types of parental involvement were included as dependent variables in this study because established scales existed to measure these specific types of parental involvement. Three other parental involvement types (parenting, decision-making, and collaborating with the community) were not included as variables in this study because no established scales existed to measure these variables.

The three covariates were parents' level of education, parents' employment status, and parents' income. These three covariates were chosen for this study because evidence in the literature demonstrated they were associated with parental involvement. Also, including these covariates helped ensure that any significant results I may have found in this study were due to the effect of the independent variables and not due to extraneous variables.

This study was delimited to parents of students in Grades 1-5 at Shady Lane Elementary School. Parents of children in kindergarten were not included because kindergarten is not mandatory in the district. Including this population could have resulted in the collection of biased data. Parents of children in middle school and high school were not included because parental involvement opportunities for parents of students at these levels differed from parental involvement opportunities for parents of students in elementary school. Therefore, it was probable that experiences of parents of children in middle school and high school were likely to be different than those of parents of children in elementary school. It was for this reason that the results of this study would not be generalizable to students in middle and high school. Lack of generalizability of

study results was a limitation in this study and is discussed in more detail in the next section.

Limitations

The first limitation was related to the assumption that parents who agreed to participate in this study would be a representative sample of the general population of parents of students at the school. If parents who were typically involved in their children's education participated in this study at higher rates than parents who were not involved in their children's education, the data collected for the study would not have been a representative sample of all parents at the school. This condition could have been considered a limitation because action taken by school and district administrators based on biased study results might not have applied to all parents at the focus school and might have been less effective than if data had been collected from a representative sample of parents.

A second limitation was the choice of parental involvement types. Although there are six types of parental involvement, the instruments developed by Epstein and Salinas (1993) and Sheldon and Epstein (2007) only included scales for three types: communicating, volunteering, and learning at home. The inclusion of only three of the six types of parental involvement was a limitation because, according to Jeynes (2011b, 2012), not all types of parental involvement have the same impact on student outcomes. In addition, when compared to more subtle aspects of parenting such as parenting style and the quality of the relationship between a parent and child, particularly with regard to communication, volunteering and learning at home are noticeably less efficacious (Jeynes, 2011b, 2012). It was possible that the most salient parental involvement factors

contributing to student achievement would not have been explored in this study. However, the exploration of parental communication, volunteerism, and support of learning at home still was valuable because these aspects of parenting were the focus of the parental involvement activities promoted by administrators at Shady Lane Elementary School at the time of this study. Also, according to Jeynes (2012), these types of parental involvement are easier to promote than the other types.

A third limitation of this study was that data were collected only from parents of students in Grades 1-5. This meant that only data from parents of young students were collected. The collection of data from only parents of elementary school children was a limitation because parents of older students would have been likely to provide differing perspectives with regard to their levels of parental involvement, the type of activities in which they participated, and their attitudes toward both the school and parental involvement. By delimiting the sample to only parents of students in Grades 1-5, I may have missed valuable information.

A fourth limitation in this study was the lack of generalizability of results. Because data were collected only from parents of students in Grades 1-5, findings were not generalizable to parents of students in higher grades. Also, because data were collected only from parents of students at Shady Lane Elementary school, findings could not be generalized to parents of students in Grades 1-5 in other schools in the district or state or to other students in other grades. However, principals in other school districts with similar demographics may find the results valuable and may apply them to their unique situations as they deem appropriate.

Significance

By conducting this study, I generated findings pertaining to (a) three types of parental involvement in which parents at Shady Lane Elementary School engage: communicating, volunteering, and learning at home; (b) parents' attitudes toward the school; (c) parents' attitudes toward parental involvement, and (d) the relationships between these variables. Ideally, these findings would be shared with administrators at the school who are in a position to take action to promote increased levels of one or more types of parental involvement at Shady Lane Elementary School. Parental involvement may impact student (a) attendance at school (Hayes, 2012); (b) behavior (Hayes, 2012; Hill & Wang, 2015; Sheldon & Epstein, 2002; Serpell & Mashburn, 2012); and (c) self-efficacy (Doctoroff & Arnold, 2017; Fan et al., 2012; Gonida & Cortina, 2014; Hoover-Dempsey & Sandler, 2005). Therefore, by improving parental involvement at the school, students may be more likely to attend school, may be better behaved in school, and may feel more confident about their ability to be successful in school, all conditions that may help students be more successful academically. For decades, parental involvement has been linked to academic achievement by numerous researchers (Fan & Chen, 2001; Galindo & Sheldon, 2012; Gordon & Cui, 2014; Hayes, 2012; Henderson & Berla, 1994; Hoover-Dempsey & Sandler, 1997, 2005; Jeynes, 2012; Kim & Hill, 2015; LeFevre & Shaw, 2012; Levin & Aram, 2012; Miedel & Reynolds 1999; O'Donnell & Kirkner, 2014; Puccioni, 2015; Rattigan-Rohr et al., 2014; Witte & Sheridan, 2011; Yuen, 2011). Therefore, the potential for positive social change exists in the possibility of improved student achievement at Shady Lane Elementary School as the result of improved parental involvement at the school.

Summary

At Shady Lane Elementary School, the annual average level of parental involvement during the 2014-2015 school year was less than the average among all the 14 elementary schools in the district. Because lower than average levels of parental involvement may have been contributing to low levels of student achievement, this study was conducted to explore variables that may have been impacting three types of parental involvement. Specifically, I explored whether there was a relationship between the independent variables (parents' attitudes toward the school and parents' attitudes toward overall parental involvement) and the dependent variables (communicating, volunteering, and learning at home, which are three types of parental involvement). I also included three covariates in this study: level of parent education, parent employment status, and parent income.

Ajzen's (2012) theory of planned behavior was used as the theoretical framework for this study. This study was a quantitative correlational study using a survey approach to data collection. Data were analyzed using correlations and multiple regressions. Results of this study are not generalizable to other populations, but they may be used to help school administrators at Shady Lane Elementary School make informed decisions regarding the promotion of parental involvement at the school that could lead to improved levels of parental involvement at the school and improved levels of student achievement.

In the next chapter, I present a review of the literature related to the theoretical framework for this study as well as to parental involvement. This discussion is important so the reader may gain a thorough understanding of the theoretical underpinning of this

study and the concept of parental involvement. With this insight, the study design and findings may become more relevant to the reader.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

At Shady Lane Elementary School, the annual average level of parental involvement during the 2014-2015 school year was less than the average among the 14 elementary schools in the Alcott School District. Lower than average levels of parental involvement at Shady Lane Elementary School was problematic because it may have been contributing to low levels of student achievement at the school. Because parents' attitudes may have been related to their levels of parental involvement at the school, the purpose of this study was to explore parents' attitudes toward parental involvement at Shady Lane Elementary School. Specifically, I explored whether there was a relationship between parents' attitudes toward the school and three types of parental involvement identified by Epstein (1995): communicating, volunteering, and learning at home. Also, I explored whether there was a relationship between parents' attitudes toward overall parental involvement and the same three parental involvement types. There were three covariates in this study: level of parent education, parent employment status, and parent income.

There are four preliminary sections in this literature review: Literature Search Strategy, Theoretical Foundation, Defining Parental Involvement, and Types of Parental Involvement. The remaining sections are related to parental involvement in various ways. In some of the sections, parent attitude is also discussed in relation to parental involvement. The remaining sections are Current Trends in Public Schools, Factors That Influence Parental Involvement, Promoting Parental Involvement, Impact of Parental Involvement on Outcome Variables, and Factors Mediating the Impact of Parental

Involvement on Student Outcomes. This section ends with a summary of the literature and concluding remarks.

Literature Search Strategy

To gather information for this literature review, I used the Google Scholar search engine and databases I accessed through the Walden library: ProQuest, Education and Resources in Education Index, PsychINFO, JSTOR, SAGE Journals Online, Science Direct, and EBSCOhost. The basic term I used to search for literature was *parental involvement*. Using that term, I created multiple other search phrases including *types of parental involvement*, *factors associated with parental involvement*, *barriers to parental involvement*, *strategies for improving parental involvement*, *attitudes toward parental involvement*, and *impact of parental involvement*.

Primarily I accessed articles from scholarly peer-reviewed journals published in the 5 years prior to the completion of this study. In instances when little applicable literature was available, I accessed information from books and respected organization and government websites. In instances when a study was particularly relevant, I included sources older than 5 years. Also, I included older sources when they were seminal works related to parental involvement from well-established experts in the field.

Theoretical Foundation

In their theory of planned behavior, Ajzen and Fishbein (1972) posited that behavior is the result of a person's intent to behave, which may be predicted by examining specific determinants. The three determinants that contribute to behavioral intent are attitude toward a behavior, subjective norm, and perceived behavioral control

(Ajzen, 2012). The underlying factors that precede these determinants are behavior beliefs, normative beliefs, and control beliefs (Ajzen, 2012).

Behavior beliefs refer to a person's beliefs about a behavior's likely consequences; jointly, these beliefs form a person's attitude about the behavior based on whether the consequences are positive or negative (Ajzen, 2012). Normative belief refers to beliefs about important others' normative expectations for the person's behavior (Ajzen, 2012). In other words, normative belief refers to beliefs about how important others expect a person to behave. Important others may be situated in familial, work, or social settings and may include people such as spouses or coworkers (Ajzen, 2002). A person's aggregate normative beliefs, the combined perceived normative expectations of multiple important others, make up the subjective norm, a person's beliefs about what important others expect that person to do (Ajzen, 2012). Control beliefs refer to beliefs about a person's capacity to perform a behavior; jointly, these beliefs make up a person's perceived behavioral control (Ajzen, 2012).

A variety of mediating factors may impact the relationships between variables that ultimately impact behavioral intent and actual behavior. One mediating factor is beliefs about others' attitude toward an act, which may impact the formation of normative beliefs (Ajzen, 2012). For example, if a person perceives that an important other has a positive attitude toward an act, that perception is likely to lead the person to perceive that the important other expects the person to engage in that behavior (Ajzen, 2012). Conversely, if a person perceives that an important other has a negative attitude toward an act, that perception is likely to lead the person to perceive that the important other does not expect the person to engage in that behavior (Ajzen, 2012).

Another mediating factor is motivation to meet the expectations of important others, which mediates the aggregation of normative beliefs into a subjective norm (Ajzen, 2012). If a person is motivated to meet the expectations of important others, a person's normative beliefs are weighted more heavily than if a person is not motivated to meet the expectations of important others (Ajzen, 2002). The more heavily weighted a person's normative beliefs, the greater the strength of the resulting subjective norm and the greater the impact of that subjective norm on behavioral intent (Ajzen, 2002).

A third mediating factor is the actual control a person has over a behavioral outcome (Ajzen, 1985, 1991). In some instances, people may lack volitional control over a behavior so that despite having the intention to behave in a certain way, the person is unable to engage in the behavior (Ajzen, 1991). For example, a person may lack the financial resources, social support, or skills necessary to engage in a particular behavior (Ajzen, 1985). Other variables may contribute to behavioral intent.

The variables subjective norm, attitude toward the behavior, and perceived behavioral control may interact with each other to affect the impact each has on behavioral intent (Ajzen, 2012). Also, behaviors yield feedback, which may subsequently alter existing normative, behavioral, and control beliefs or affect the formation of new ones (Ajzen, 2015). In this way, feedback to behavior may impact future behavioral intent and behavior (Ajzen, 2015). Research has shown that the degree to which interventions based on the theory of planned behavior are successful is mediated by the type of intervention and the population for which it is implemented (Steinmetz, Knappstein, Ajzen, Schmidt, & Kabst, 2016). A graphic representation of the theory of planned behavior is presented in Figure 1.

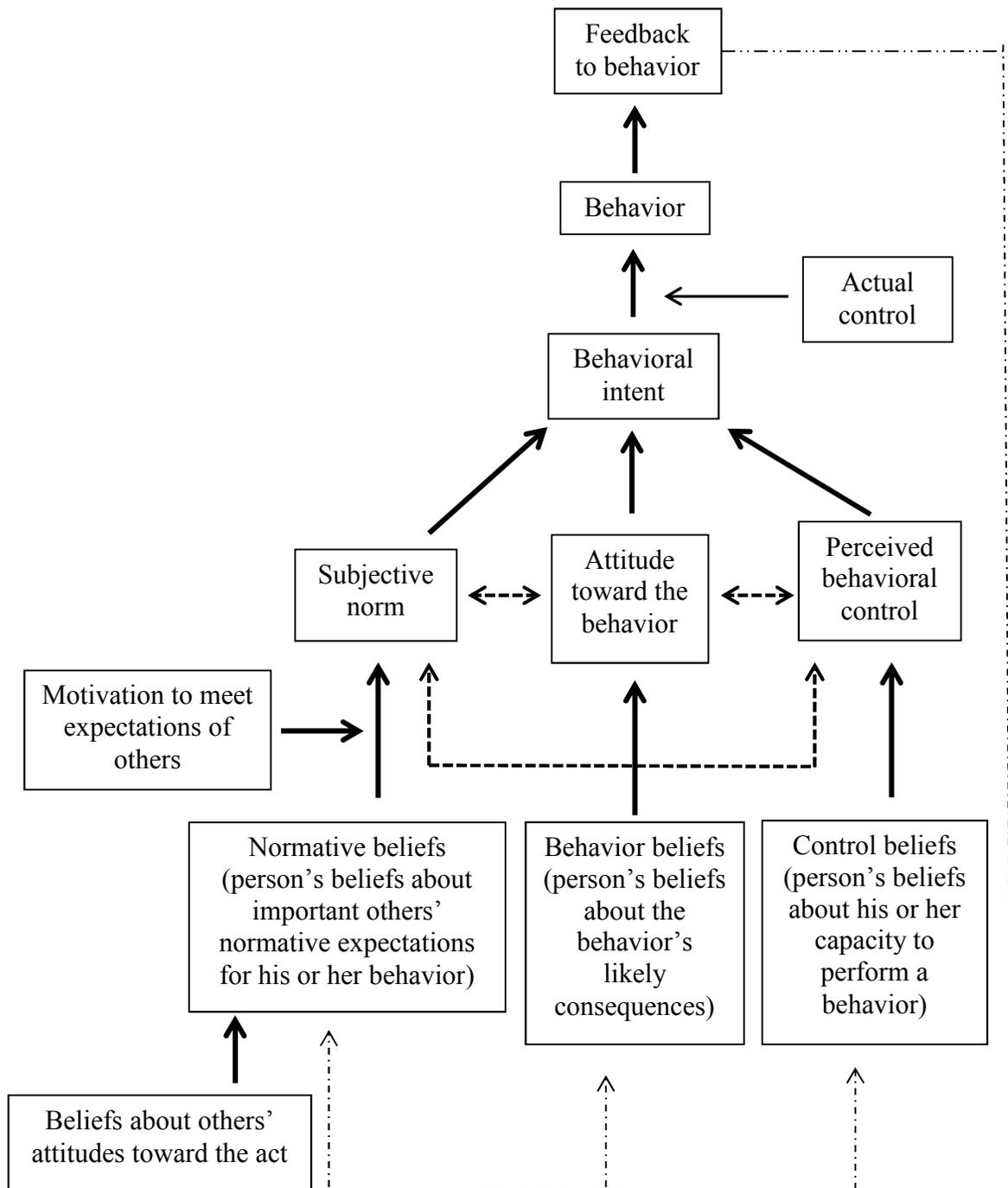


Figure 1. Relationship between behavioral determinants and behavioral intent in Ajzen's theory of planned behavior. Retrieved from https://www.academia.edu/attachments/51561745/download_file?st=MTQ4NTgyMjg2NSwxMDQuMTg0LjM2LjE0MiwzNDaxODU3NQ%3D%3D&s=profile. Reprinted with permission.

The theory of planned behavior may be useful for understanding how parents decide to become involved in their children's education. A parent's decision to become involved is determined by a combination of the parent's attitude toward becoming involved, the parent's perception of the amount of control the parent has over becoming involved, and the parent's perception about whether people who are important to him or her think he or she should become involved. For example, a parent may not perceive value in becoming involved. This perception of parental involvement would likely negatively impact that parent's decision to become involved. In contrast, a parent who has a positive perception of parental involvement would likely be positively influenced to become involved by this perception.

A parent also may perceive a lack of control over his or her participation. For example, if a parent does not own a vehicle, that parent may not perceive him or herself capable of traveling to the school and therefore not capable of becoming involved. This perceived lack of capacity to become involved would negatively impact the parent's decision to become involved. In contrast, a parent who perceives public transportation an option for traveling to the school may perceive him or herself capable of traveling to the school and therefore becoming involved. This perception of capacity to become involved would positively impact that parent's decision to become involved.

In addition, a parent also may be persuaded by his or her subjective norms. For example, a parent might perceive that an important other, such as his or her spouse, does not care whether the parent is involved or perhaps does not want the parent to become involved. The perception that a spouse does not care whether the parent is involved or does not want the parent to become involved could negatively impact that parent's

decision to become involved. Conversely, a parent may perceive that his or her spouse wants the parent to become involved. The perception that a spouse wants or expects a parent to become involved would positively impact that parent's decision to become involved.

Based on the theory of planned behavior, it was feasible to assume that the behavioral intent and subsequent actual behavior of parents at Shady Lane Elementary School were determined by parents' attitudes, subjective norms, and perceived behavioral intent. In this study, I focused on the way parents' attitudes impacted behavior, in particular parents' involvement in their children's education at Shady Lane Elementary School. If study results indicated that parents had negative attitudes, based on the theory of planned behavior, it would have been feasible to assume that these negative attitudes were contributing to parents' low levels of involvement in their children's education. Likewise, it was feasible to assume that if effort was made to improve parents' attitudes, parents' levels of involvement would improve as well.

Although I recognized that subjective norm and perceived behavioral control also influence behavioral intent and could influence parents in this study regarding their decision to become involved in their children's education, these variables were beyond the scope of this study. Results of this study would have been most valuable if they could have been used to prompt change in parents' involvement behaviors. Although I did anticipate that the principal could have implemented campaigns to improve parents' attitudes toward the school and toward parental involvement through relationship building and targeted communication as suggested by Epstein (1995), it was less reasonable to have anticipated that the principal would have been successful in altering

parents' perceptions of subjective norms or their perceived behavioral control because, according to Ajzen (1991), these perceptions are inherently associated with a person's sense of self. For this reason, as well as to keep the scope of this study manageable, I did not explore the impact of subjective norm and perceived behavioral control on parental involvement of parents at Shady Lane Elementary School.

Defining Parental Involvement

Jeynes (2012) and McKenna and Millen (2013) defined parental involvement in general terms. Specifically, Jeynes defined parental involvement as “parental participation in the educational processes and experiences of their children” (p. 717). McKenna and Millen (2013) proposed two general categories of parental involvement: parent voice and parent presence. Fundamentally, parent voice refers to communication between parents and both teachers and the school: “these expressions may consist of parents' desires, dreams, goals, and hopes for their families and children as well as frustration, concern, or anger over isolation and exclusion” (McKenna & Millen, 2013, p. 17). Parent presence refers to physical engagement and may be associated with activities in the home or at school (McKenna & Millen, 2013). Similarly, Hoover-Dempsey and Sandler (2005) claimed that parental involvement could be characterized as school based or home based.

Parental involvement has been defined more specifically, as was the case with the child education equity mandate No Child Left Behind (NCLB, 2002) in which parental involvement was defined as

the participation of parents in regular, two-way, and meaningful communication involving student academic learning and other school activities, including

ensuring (a) that parents play an integral role in assisting their child's learning; (b) that parents are encouraged to be actively involved in their child's education at school; (c) that parents are full partners in their child's education and are included, as appropriate, in decision making and on advisory committees to assist in the education of their child; and (d) the carrying out of other activities, such as those described in section 1118. (Title IX, 20 U.S.C. 7801 et seq.)

Section 1118 of NCLB (2002) included a description of parental involvement activities related to enacting educational agency policy at the local level, including expectations for written policy, allocation of parental involvement activities, inclusion of parents in policy development, and shared responsibilities for student achievement.

Types of Parental Involvement

With regard to student learning, parental involvement can occur anywhere. Most notably, parental involvement occurs in the home, in school (Epstein, 1995), and in the community (Hoover-Dempsey & Sandler, 2005). In these settings, parental involvement may be considered personal (Grolnick, 2015) or an expression of either parental voice or physical parental presence (McKenna & Millen, 2013). In this section, I discuss types of parental involvement organized by location of involvement.

Home

Parents may be involved with their children's education in the home setting by engaging in parenting activities (Epstein, 1995). In a broad sense, parents may become involved by helping their children become socially, emotionally, spiritually, and psychologically well-developed (Young, Austin, & Gowe, 2013) and by establishing an environment of love, support (Jeynes, 2010), and learning in the home (Epstein, 1995;

Jeynes, 2010). More specifically, in the home parents may communicate with their children (Jeynes, 2010), encourage academic behavior, model responsible behavior associated with academic activities, reinforce responsible behavior associated with academic activities, and directly instruct students (Hoover-Dempsey & Sandler, 2005). Direct instruction may include helping students with reading activities or other homework (Abel, 2012).

Direct instruction may be closed-ended or open-ended and typically is associated with students' homework assignments (Hoover-Dempsey & Sandler, 1995). When parents engage in closed-ended instruction with their children, they promote lower-level learning skills associated with the acquisition of knowledge, and when they engage in open-ended instruction with their children, they promote higher-level thinking skills needed to evaluate and problem solve (Hoover-Dempsey & Sandler, 1995). Parents also may instruct students at home by engaging them in curriculum-based learning activities and activities that teach decision making and planning skills (Epstein, 1995). In some cases, parents may be involved in academic activities that support their children's education at home but that are sponsored by agencies outside of the school administration such as the YMCA (Rattigan-Rohr et al., 2014).

In a qualitative study of working-class Latino parents in the San Francisco Bay area, Poza, Brooks, and Valdés (2014) found that Latino parents shared a unique perspective regarding student education associated with the home setting. For this population, student education extended beyond academic learning to the learning of skills and values that support the development of personal character, such as a sense of civic responsibility and commitment to a higher power (Poza et al., 2014). This learning is

considered valuable not only in the educational setting but in larger social settings into which adult children will transition (Poza et al., 2014).

School

Parents may be involved with their children's education in the school setting by asking questions, attending parent-teacher conferences (Poza et al., 2014), volunteering at the school, and becoming involved in decision-making related to school administrators and representatives (Epstein, 1995). Parents also may be involved with their children's education in the school setting by communicating with teachers and staff (Epstein, 1995; Abel, 2012). This type of communication is beneficial regardless of whether it is initiated by the parent or by teachers and staff at the school (Epstein, 1995). The quality of the parent-teacher relationship may be mediated by parents' motivational beliefs based on their perceptions of how parents should be involved (role construction) and their ability to be involved successfully (self-efficacy; Kim, Sheridan, Kwon, & Koziol, 2013). The greater the levels of parental role construction and self-efficacy, the more positive the parent-teacher relationships (Kim et al., 2013).

Community

Parents may be involved with their children's education through engagement with the community. Parents may engage with the community when they take advantage of "resources and services from the community . . . [implemented to improve] school programs, family practices, and student learning and development" (Epstein, 1995, p. 21). Engagement with the community as a parental involvement behavior for supporting positive student outcomes is dependent on parent trust and respect for the community and the services being offered (Epstein, 1995).

Parents of English language learners in particular are more likely to engage in activities in the home setting as opposed to using community resources, according to results of correlational analyses conducted by Vera et al. (2012). For example, parents of English language learners were more likely to help students with homework and talk to them about their school day than they were to take their children to the library. Although it is possible that resources may not be available in particular communities, Vera et al. (2012) posited that this condition is more likely related to other barriers. In particular, parents of English language learners may perceive the services to be beyond their financial means or without the necessarily language support services.

Examples of parental involvement through the community are evident in the literature (e.g., O'Donnell & Kirkner, 2014; Rattigan-Rohr et al., 2014). Rattigan-Rohr, He, Murphy, and Knight (2014) reported on parental involvement in an after-school tutor program called the Village Project. During parents' involvement, both parents and children learned skills, some of which the parents claimed transferred to the home setting (Rattigan-Rohr et al., 2014). In another program, this one sponsored by the YMCA, Latino parents benefited from structured support; in particular, parents increased the frequency with which they communicated with teachers and participated in school activities as well as the quality of their relationships with teachers (O'Donnell & Kirkner, 2014).

Latino parents also may consider parental involvement to be associated with nonacademic-related settings in the community (Poza et al., 2014). Because this population considers education to be inclusive of the learning of skills and values that support the development of personal character, they also consider parental involvement to

include engagement within the community that supports these skills (Poza et al., 2014). In particular, Latino parents perceive their encouragement of their children's engagement in church functions as a form of parental involvement that promotes student education because they perceive the church as a source of character-building opportunities for children (Poza et al., 2014).

Current Trends in Public Schools

In this section, I discuss current trends in public schools with regard to parents' attitudes. First, I discuss parents' attitudes toward the school. Then, I discuss parents' attitudes toward parental involvement. I include discussions of these variables in the literature review because they are the independent variables in this study.

Parents' Attitudes Toward the School

Parents, in general, have positive attitudes toward their children's schools. In a national Associated Press-NORC Center for Public Affairs Research survey of parents ($N = 1,025$), Tompson, Benz, and Agiesta (2013) found that 76% of parents considered the quality of their children's schools to be either good or excellent. Fewer parents rated the quality of their children's schools as fair (16%) or poor (8%; Tompson, Benz, & Agiesta, 2013). Among the factors identified as contributors to school quality were characteristics of stakeholders, school safety, management of the school budget, and student performance (Tompson et al., 2013). Parents' attitudes toward the school also may be impacted by parents' perceptions about teacher accessibility, the staff's knowledge, and provision of student services (Rodriguez et al., 2014).

Parents' ratings of school quality have been found to differ among locations (Tompson et al., 2013). When compared to parents in urban and rural locations, parents

in suburban locations considered their children's schools to be high quality (70%, 76%, and 81%, respectively; Tompson et al., 2013). With regard to specific aspects of quality, the majority of parents said they thought their children were receiving excellent or good preparation for college (57%) and citizenship (55%); however, parents were less likely to think the same about their children's preparation for the work force (45%) and adult life (46%; Tompson et al., 2013). It was not surprising that some parents also were dissatisfied with the quality of teaching at their children's schools given that parents consider themselves, along with teachers, the two mostly influential aspects of school quality (Tompson et al., 2013).

In a more localized mixed method study of Boston Public Schools, Kimelberg and Billingham (2013) found that parents had positive attitudes toward their children's schools with regard to the amount of student diversity evident in the schools. Further, some parents placed more value on the opportunity to immerse their children in a diverse environment than they did on the quality indicators school safety and student nurturing by teachers. Parents who expressed valuing diversity reported being motivated by

- (a) the desire to give their children an educational experience that differs significantly from the homogeneous experience of their own childhood, (b) the belief that it is important that a child's classroom reflects the 'real world,' and (c) the idea that a diverse learning environment has an instrumental value.

(Kimelberg & Billingham, 2013)

Parents described the idea of real world learning as learning that may help students successfully navigate adulthood (Kimelberg & Billingham, 2013).

Not all parents have positive attitudes toward schools. This condition was found to be the case in Rodriguez, Blatz, and Elbaum's (2014) mixed method study of parents of students with disabilities and McKenna and Millen's (2013) qualitative study of mothers of low-income K-12 students in an urban school. In Rodriguez et al.'s study, the parents expressed negative attitudes toward the school because the school failed to inform parents of what they considered to be vital information. Parents also expressed negative attitudes toward the school when it was out of compliance with state mandates (Rodriguez et al., 2014).

In McKenna and Millen's (2013) study, the mothers expressed negative perceptions of the school's communication with parents, inclusion of parents in decision-making processes, and opportunities for parents to participate. In fictitious letters the mothers wrote to teachers, both Black and White mothers demonstrated a need to define themselves as concerned and invested parents (McKenna & Millen, 2013). Black mothers were concerned that teachers might perceive them as less invested because of their race, and all mothers were concerned that teachers might perceive them as less invested because of their low socioeconomic backgrounds (McKenna & Millen, 2013). McKenna and Millen suggested that they uncovered these realistic perspectives because they used a qualitative method for their study, a method that allowed them to discover "the nuances of different cultural, economic . . . [and] geographic circumstance" (p. 9). The use of qualitative research likely helped Kimelberg and Billingham (2013) and Rodriguez et al. (2014) achieve similarly in-depth findings.

Parents' Attitudes Toward Parental Involvement

When describing parents' attitudes toward parental involvement, parental involvement may be considered from a variety of perspectives. For example, parental involvement may be considered in relation to overall parental involvement, with regard to the location of the involvement, or with the specific focus of the involvement activity. In this section I discuss study results from these various perspectives.

In a quantitative study of parents of elementary school children, Bracke and Corts (2012) found that parents identified by teachers as involved and parents identified by teachers as uninvolved both had positive attitudes toward parental involvement, which they perceived as important to their children's success in school. Both groups of parents also expressed honest intentions to participate in their children's education (Bracke & Corts, 2012). However, parents identified by teachers as uninvolved were more likely to identify other parents as uninvolved, were less likely to overcome identified barriers to parental involvement, and were less likely to perceive parental involvement as a social norm (Bracke & Corts, 2012).

Among Black fathers in particular ($N = 101$), Abel (2012) found that when compared to fathers who did not graduate from high school or earn a GED, fathers with higher levels of education had more positive perceptions about home-based parental involvement activities, such as talking to their children about school and the value of school, helping their children with homework, or listening to their children read. These conclusions were based on descriptive data Abel collected at the time of the study. Finally, in a study of predominantly Black parents of students in an inner city Title I school, Zhou (2014) found that parents' attitudes toward the value of parental

involvement were strongly rooted in factors external to the school setting. For example, parents identified family and community support as forms of parental involvement that most impacted their children's academic success (Zhou, 2014). Results of both Abel and Zhou's studies show that activities outside the school can be perceived as valuable means of engaging in parental involvement.

Factors That Influence Parental Involvement

Although parents have been found to have good intentions about participating in their children's educational activities (Bracke & Corts, 2012), levels and types of parental involvement may be influenced by a variety of factors (Abel, 2012). Those factors may be "personal, intergenerational, economic, and cultural" (Bracke & Corts, 2012, p. 192) and include (a) a sense of belonging, (b) learning opportunities for parents, (c) academic benefits for their children, and (d) the opportunity for family-community interaction (Rattigan-Rohr et al., 2014). For some factors, such as parent attitude toward the school (McKenna & Millen, 2013) and parent attitude toward parental involvement (Lawrence, 2015), schools may be influential for promoting change.

Parents' Attitudes Toward the School

One aspect of parent attitude toward the school is parent attitude toward school leaderships' effort to engage parents, which historically has been found to be related to parental involvement (e.g., Dauber & Epstein, 1993) albeit in some cases mediated by level of parental self-efficacy for helping students (e.g., Hoover-Dempsey, Bassler, & Brissie, 1987; Hoover-Dempsey & Sandler, 2005; Hoover-Dempsey et al., 2005). The connection between parent attitude toward school leaderships' effort to engage parents and parental involvement has been found in more current research as well. For example,

in Barr and Saltmarsh's (2014) qualitative study, the researchers found that parents ($N = 174$) were more apt to be engaged in their children's education where they perceive school principals to be "welcoming and supportive of their involvement, and less likely to be engaged where the principal is perceived as inaccessible, dismissive or disinterested in supporting their involvement" (p. 491). Parents stressed that principals play a pivotal role in engaging parents because the attitudes and actions of the principal drive the attitudes and actions of teachers and other personnel in the school (Barr & Saltmarsh, 2014). Similarly, when parents perceive that they are involved in parent-teacher relationships characterized by mutual respect (Myers, 2015) and trust (Young, Rodríguez, & Lee, 2015), and that the school's overall environment is supportive (Toldson & Lemmons, 2013) and culturally sensitive (McKenna & Millen, 2013; Yoder & Lopez, 2013), they are more likely to engage in parental involvement behaviors. Conversely, when parents perceive parent-teacher relationships to be hostile or students to be aggressive and disrespectful, parents are less likely to engage in school-based parental involvement activities (Murray et al., 2014).

Parents also may be motivated to engage in parental involvement behaviors when teachers and schools are perceived to be making a concentrated effort to include them in the educational process in some way (Rodríguez et al., 2014). This condition was found to be true in Rodríguez et al.'s (2014) study of 96 parents of students with disabilities from 18 schools in eight school districts. Despite having found such a connection, Rodríguez et al. cautioned that the results of their study should be interpreted with care, citing the work of Hoover-Dempsey which showed that parents' levels of self-efficacy

may mediate the relationships between invitations for parental involvement and actual parental involvement.

Parents' Attitudes Toward Parental Involvement

Parental role construction refers to the expectations parents have for how parents in general should be involved in their children's education (Hoover-Dempsey & Sandler, 1995). According to Stevens and Patel (2015), these expectations are a reflection of the adult development stage called *generativity* in which parents are driven to engage in activities that will help shape the next generation. Expectations for parents' role construction also may be influenced by perceptions of opportunities to participate, school expectations to participate, and the school's climate (Whitaker & Hoover-Dempsey, 2013). These expectations are generated in part based on observations of their own parents or parents of other children in their child's school (Hoover-Dempsey & Sandler, 1995). However, parents will not act on this expectation if they do not believe they have the capacity to perform the tasks required for any particular involvement activity or if they are not afforded appropriate opportunities to become involved parents (Hoover-Dempsey & Sandler, 1995). In addition, parents who feel they have more autonomy with regard to whether they engage in their children's education are more motivated to engage in parental involvement behaviors related to school issues than parents who feel pressured to participate (Grolnick, 2015).

In Bracke and Corts's (2012) study of parental involvement among parents of elementary school children enrolled in one elementary school in a Midwestern school district, the researchers explored the relationship between parental attitude toward parental involvement and actual parental involvement using logistical regression.

Although Bracke and Corts anticipated that parents' attitude toward parental involvement would predict levels of actual parental involvement, this was not case; results showed that parents' attitude toward parental involvement was not a significant predictor of parental involvement. Bracke and Corts considered the possibility that the lack of difference between the groups with regard to attitude toward parental involvement was due to too small of an effect size.

Opportunities for Parental Involvement

Opportunities for parents to participate in their children's education may impact levels of parental involvement (Fishman & Nickerson, 2015; Galindo & Sheldon, 2012). Through direct implementation of parental involvement initiatives and programs (Sheridan, Kim, et al., 2012), which rely heavily on the power of suggestion, invitations that encourage parental involvement in a specific activity also may impact parents' choice of involvement activity (Hoover-Dempsey & Sandler, 1995). The impact of specific invitations on parental involvement choice is evident regardless of whether the invitation comes from children, teachers, or the school (Hoover-Dempsey & Sandler, 1995). Furthermore, invitations to become involved may not always be overt. For example, teachers can invite parents to become involved by promoting positive parent-teacher relationships, which are associated with higher levels of parent-teacher conferencing (Minke, Sheridan, Kim, Ryoo, & Koziol, 2014). The use of both overt and covert invitations to participate in a child's education may help increase the chances that parents participate in some way.

Parent Expectations

Parents' expectations for parent behavior may impact parental involvement. In their study of parental involvement, Bracke and Corts (2012) found that, rather than parent attitude toward parental involvement, social norms predicted actual parent involvement. Social norms were defined as expectations of appropriate behavior within particular settings (Bracke & Corts, 2012). These norms are viewed by parents as a set of guidelines of sorts that they can use to make decisions about their own behavior. "Once an expectation that other parents are involved is established, a particular motivation towards involvement is more likely to emerge. Social norms can consequently become a legitimate psychological force that determines whether or not parents" (Bracke & Corts, 2012, p. 198) actively engage in the education of their children.

The idea of social impact on parental decision making is not new. In relation to the parental involvement process model, Hoover-Dempsey et al. (2005), like Bracke and Corts (2012), suggested that norms established based on social groups impact parental choice to become involved. Also, like Bracke and Corts, Hoover-Dempsey et al. determined that social groups impact parents' decisions to become engaged by demonstrating behavioral expectations. In other words, parents learn and understand how they should act with regard to parental engagement by observing the actions of social groups. Hoover-Dempsey and Sandler (2005) referred to this mediating factor as parental role construction.

Hoover-Dempsey and Sandler (2005) based this construct, parental role construction, on Biddle's (1986) role theory, which places people's perspective about social expectations and their own roles in society at the forefront of motivation for

behavior. Applying this frame of reference to parents in the educational setting, Hoover-Dempsey et al. (2001) suggested that parents' beliefs about expectations for parenting impact their decisions to become involved in their children's education. In addition, role expectations help parents determine the range of activities in which they will engage (Hoover-Dempsey & Jones, 1997).

Parent Demographic Factors

Parents' demographic factors may impact levels of parental involvement (Jeynes, 2011a). In particular, parents' levels of education, marital status, socioeconomic status, ethnicity, and cultural uniqueness may impact levels of parental involvement. Because these variables are prevalent in the literature pertaining to parental involvement, I discuss these variables in this section.

Parent level of education. Parents with higher levels of education are more likely to engage in parental involvement behaviors (Fishman & Nickerson, 2015). In general, parents with less than a high school diploma are less likely to engage in parental involvement activities associated with school visits when compared to parents with higher levels of education (Toldson & Lemmons, 2013). Results of hierarchical regression analysis showed that among Black parents, level of education can significantly and positively impact levels of both home- and school-based parental involvement; the higher the level of parents' education, the more likely they are to be involved in their children's education (Hayes, 2012). For Black fathers in particular, engagement in home-based activities (listen to children read and discuss school, view television together, and share the importance of school) is more evident for fathers with advanced levels of

education compared to fathers with a general education degree or no high school diploma (Abel, 2012).

Parent marital status. Parental marital status has been found to influence the type and frequency of school-based activities in which parents engage. Biological married parents have been found to be engaged in the most variety of activities and to be engaged the most frequently when compared to biological cohabitating parents, biological and step cohabitating parents, nonbiological parents, and single parents (Myers & Myers, 2015). Differences in levels of parental involvement in school-based activities resulting from differences in family structure have been found among Black parents in particular as well (Hayes, 2012). Black parents from two-parent households are more likely to be involved in school-based activities when compared to parents from single-parent households (Hayes, 2012).

Although the research has shown that marital status may influence the type and frequency of school-based activities in which parents engage, further exploration of the impact of marital status on parental involvement has shown that this relationship is the result of other mediating factors (e.g., Myers & Myers, 2015). In particular, economic, human, social, and cultural capital may impact levels of parental involvement to a greater extent than marital status alone (Myers & Myers, 2015). In other words, parents who have more financial resources, have higher levels of education, have more time to spend with their children, and perceive their parenting role to be essential in their children's education are engaged in a greater variety of activities and engaged more frequently when compared to their counterparts who do not demonstrate similar capital in these regards (Myers & Myers, 2015). Thus, it is not that married parents inherently engage

more in their children's educations but that parents who are married tend to have better resources and be in better positions to engage in their children's education (Myers & Myers, 2015).

Socioeconomic status. Almost 3 decades prior to this study, Dauber and Epstein (1989) showed that socioeconomic status was a factor of parental involvement. Parents continue to claim that lack of financial and other resources serves as a barrier to parental involvement (Renth, Buckley, & Puchner, 2015). In quantitative research, parents characterized as members of low socioeconomic households (Hoglund, Jones, Brown, & Aber, 2015; Zhang, Hsu, Kwok, Benz, & Bowman-Perrott, 2011) and parents who live in communities characterized by high levels of poverty are less likely to engage in parental involvement activities that require them to visit their children's schools (Toldson & Lemmons, 2013). However, Hoglund, Jones, Brown, and Aber (2015) posited that the degree to which children successfully adjust to academic and behavioral experiences may mediate the relationship between economic hardship and levels of parental involvement.

Ethnicity and culture. Ethnicity may be related to the degree to which and the ways in which parents become involved in their children's education. Overall, White parents have been found to be more engaged in school-based activities than their minority counterparts (Myers & Myers, 2015; Zhang et al., 2011). Black, Hispanic, and nonnative English speakers with less than a high school diploma are particularly less likely to engage in parental involvement activities associated with school visits when compared to parents of other ethnic backgrounds (Toldson & Lemmons, 2013).

With respect to Latino parents, in particular monolingual Spanish speakers (O'Donnell & Kirkner, 2014), English language learners (Vera et al., 2014), and first

generation immigrants (Poza et al., 2014), difficulty communicating in the school setting may result in greater levels of parental involvement in the home setting when compared to other parental involvement opportunities such as volunteering at school. Latino parents may compensate for lower levels of communication with the school regarding their children by communicating with outside sources such as employers and community agencies (Poza et al., 2014). Among nonnative English speakers in general, language barriers also may contribute to lack of communication with school staff (Wolfe & Durán, 2013) and between parents, both of which can inhibit parental participation in the school setting (Bower & Griffin, 2011).

Culture, with respect to ethnic lifestyle characteristics, also may impact the degree to which and the ways in which parents become involved in their children's education. For example, parents of Latino English-language learners reported that they did not engage with teachers because they did not want to interfere with their teaching (Vera et al., 2012). This condition may in part be related to parents' lack of knowledge of how school systems in the United States work (Vera et al., 2012).

Parent Life Contexts

Various life circumstances may impact a parent's choice to become involved in his or her child's education. According to Hoover-Dempsey and Sandler (1997), the theorists Bronfenbrenner, Jessor, and Slughter-Defoe each have independently claimed that "human development cannot be adequately understood without significant reference to the proximal and distal social systems that work to limit or enhance both developmental processes and outcomes" (p. 5). In other words, people do not make decisions in isolation but rather within the broader contexts of their lives (Hoover-

Dempsey & Sandler, 2005). Applying this frame of reference to the concept of parental involvement, Hoover-Dempsey and Sandler (2005) suggested that parents consider the broader contexts of their lives when they make the decision either to participate or not to participate in their children's education. In this section, I discuss some life contexts that could impact parents' decisions to become involved or their choice of involvement behavior.

Logistical challenges. Parents may be unable to participate in their children's education because of logistical challenges. These challenges may include lack of financial resources (Williams & Sanchez, 2013), transportation (Bennett-Conroy, 2012; Bracke & Corts, 2012), time (Fishman & Nickerson, 2015), and energy (Hoover-Dempsey & Sandler, 2005). The impact of lack of time and energy on parental involvement may be evident whether the lack is actual or perceived (Hoover-Dempsey & Sandler, 2005).

In some cases, parents' work schedules may pose challenges to parents' participation in school-based activities (Bracke & Corts, 2012; Shiffman, 2013). However, not all parents are deterred by this challenge. Among parents in Bracke and Corts's (2012) study who cited their work schedule as a barrier to parental involvement, no significant difference was found between parents who were involved and parents who were uninvolved. In other words, although work schedules may have posed a challenge to parents with regard to participating in their child's education, some parents were able to or chose to find a means of overcoming that challenge and engaging in their child's education while other parents either could not or chose not to do so (Bracke & Corts, 2012). Bracke and Corts suggested that this difference might be mediated by parents'

attitudes regarding perceived norms of parental involvement. This means that parents who perceived parental involvement to be a social norm found alternatives to overcome the barrier of work schedules (Bracke & Corts, 2012). Yoder and Lopez (2013) also found that many parents who faced tangible challenges to parental involvement overcame those challenges. Often, the parents were able to overcome these challenges with the support of family, friends, and neighbors (Yoder & Lopez, 2013). These studies show that despite challenges to parental engagement, determined parents were able to actively engage in their children's education.

Knowledge and skills. Parents will choose to engage in or avoid particular parental involvement behaviors and activities based on their specific areas of knowledge (Hoover-Dempsey & Sandler, 1995). Generally, parents will become involved in ways in which they expect they will be successful (Bracke & Corts, 2012; Hoover-Dempsey & Sandler, 1995). In cases in which parents' levels of knowledge increase over time, parents' levels of involvement also may increase (Rodriquez et al., 2014).

According to Abel (2012), Black father's self-assessed levels of knowledge and skill in a variety of different academic tasks impacted the types of parental involvement activities in which they engaged. Academic tasks were related to helping with homework, communicating with teachers, volunteering in the classroom, and participating in parent-teacher associations (Abel, 2012). Fathers who perceived themselves as knowledgeable and skilled in a particular area were more like to engage in activities that relied upon that knowledge and those skills when compared to fathers who did not perceive themselves as knowledgeable and skilled (Abel, 2012).

Family and employment demands. The combination of family and employment demands may impact how parents choose to become involved (Hoover-Dempsey & Sandler, 2005). For example, a parent's work schedule may prohibit involvement in activities that occur during the day, and family responsibilities that require attention after the work day is over may prohibit involvement in activities that occur in the evening (Hoover-Dempsey & Sandler, 2005). The three influences on parents' choice of involvement forms are (a) specific areas of parents' skills and knowledge; (b) a combination of family and employment demands; and (c) specific invitations for involvement from children, teachers, and the school (Hoover-Dempsey & Sandler, 1995). Among these three influences, the combination of family and employment demands is the most influential (Hoover-Dempsey & Sandler, 1995). If for example, a parent's work schedule prohibits involvement in activities that occur during the day, the number of invitations to become involved in activities that occur during the day and the parent's belief in his or her capacity to be successful in educational activities that occur during the day will have no bearing on the parents' choice to become involved in that activity; the parent simply will not choose a form of involvement that requires participation during the day (Hoover-Dempsey & Sandler, 1995).

Parent Self-Efficacy

According to Bandura (1977), a person's motivation to behave is dependent on that person's self-efficacy, the belief in one's own capacity to accomplish a task. Applying this frame of reference to parents in the educational setting, Hoover-Dempsey et al. (2005) suggested that parents' beliefs about their own capacity to help their children succeed in school impacts their decisions to become involved in their children's

education. When parents feel capable of helping their children, they become more motivated to become involved (Hoover-Dempsey & Sandler, 2005). Providing parents opportunities to learn may help improve their knowledge and skills, which in turn may help improve their efficacy for helping their children (Shiffman, 2013).

The impact of self-efficacy on parents' motivation to become involved may be mediated by parents' adherence to either the entity theory or incremental theory of intelligences (Henderson & Dweck as cited in Hoover-Dempsey & Sandler, 1997). People who adhere to the entity theory perceive intelligence to be fixed, while those who adhere to the incremental theory of intelligence perceive intelligence to be changeable (Dweck, 2012). Based on this perspective, Hoover-Dempsey and Sandler (1997) suggested that parents who perceive intelligence to be fixed will assume that their children will not benefit from their help or, in the case of parents with low levels of education, will assume that they themselves are not capable of learning and thus will have low levels of self-efficacy with regard to helping their child in school, both conditions which ultimately would diminish their motivational beliefs. On the other hand, parents who believe that intelligence can change will assume that their children will benefit from their help or, in the case of parents with low levels of education, will assume that they themselves are capable of learning and thus will have higher levels of self-efficacy with regard to helping their child in school, both conditions which ultimately would promote their motivational beliefs (Hoover-Dempsey & Sandler, 1997).

Social groups may impact parents' decisions to become engaged by influencing parents' levels of self-efficacy for helping their children be successful (Hoover-Dempsey et al., 2005). Parents who observe involved parents successfully helping their children are

more likely to believe that they themselves are capable of successfully helping their children and thus are more likely to become involved (Hoover-Dempsey et al., 2005). According to Hoover-Dempsey et al. (2005), the impact of social norms on parents' levels of self-efficacy for helping their children be success is evident no matter the level of effort by the school to involve the parents (Hoover-Dempsey et al., 2005).

In Abel's (2012) study of Black fathers, results of multiple regression analyses showed father's self-assessed levels of knowledge and skill in a variety of different academic tasks impacted the types of parental involvement activities in which they engaged. Although Abel did not expressly connect fathers' self-assessments of their knowledge and skill to levels of self-efficacy in these areas, based on Bandura's (1977, 1997) theories of self-efficacy, it is likely that if fathers assessed their knowledge and skills as low, they would not feel efficacious with regard to helping their children in these areas. In this way, self-efficacy would mediate the impact of the fathers' self-assessed levels of knowledge and skill on parental involvement.

Student Characteristics

Although the majority of factors that impact parental involvement are related directly to the parents themselves, some student characters may also impact parental involvement. One student characteristic that may impact parental involvement is student age. Another student characteristic that may impact parental involvement is student need. I discuss both of these characteristics in this section.

Student age. In a sample of 145 parents and guardians of Black students in two large schools in urban areas of the South and Southwest, Hayes (2012) found that student age was significantly and negatively related to home-based parental involvement. As

students' ages increased, parental involvement in the home decreased (Hayes, 2012). This outcome may be the result of increasing levels of student autonomy associated with maturity during the teenage years of child development (Hoover-Dempsey & Sandler, 1995).

In a quantitative study of elementary school children in a K-5 Title I school, Zhou (2014) found that parental involvement was highest among parents of students in third grade. However, Zhou postulated that this outcome might be more the result of high-stakes testing for third graders than the actual age of the students. Parents, concerned that their children might not perform well enough to be promoted to fourth grade, may have increased their level of involvement to ensure their children's success (Zhou, 2014).

Student need. Levels of parental involvement may be dependent on levels of student need. In this scenario, parents engage to higher degrees when their children are struggling to be successful in some way and engage to lesser degrees when their children are experiencing success independently of parental involvement (Hoglund et al., 2015). Parents may increase their levels of parental involvement when they observe their children have academic, social, or behavioral needs (Hoglund et al., 2015). When parents increase their levels of engagement in response to their children's needs, this engagement typically occurs in the home in the form of homework assistance or as communication with the school (Hoglund et al., 2015). However, when students have mental, physical, or emotional needs that require more constant support, parents often provide this support in the school setting (Shiffman, 2013).

Promoting Parental Involvement

Deliberate steps may be taken to promote parental involvement. Specifically, school administrators can take steps to improve parental involvement in the home, at school, and in the community. In this section, I discuss ways in which parental involvement may be promoted. As I argue in this study, it is important to consider the impact of extraneous variables such as parents' attitudes toward the school and parents' attitudes toward parental involvement when considering ways to promote parental involvement.

Home

School administrators can take action to support various types of home-based parental involvement behaviors. For example, school administrators can support parent engagement in parenting behaviors in the home by (a) providing opportunities for parents to advance their education; (b) offering workshops and other opportunities to teach parents how to support learning in the home environment; (c) offering programs to help families “with health, nutrition, and other services; (d) [conducting] home visits at transition points to preschool, elementary, middle, and high school; and (e) [organizing] neighborhood meetings to help families understand schools and to help schools understand families” (Epstein, 1995, p.19). Among methods for promoting parental involvement among all primary and secondary educational levels, Sheldon and Epstein (2002) found that the use of workshops designed to teach parents how to establish academic goals and expectations for performance was the third most effective parenting practice for enhancing student behavior. The use of scheduling books to communicate to parents what teachers expect of students and the implementation of orientations for

families new to the school were the first and second most effective parenting practice for enhancing student behavior, respectively.

School administrators can support direct instruction in the home by providing parents information to help them develop skills, implement plans, and understand policies related to students' completion of homework and the support of in-class learning (Epstein, 1995). School administrators also can support direct instruction in the home through the use of activity calendars, family nights at the school, and learning packets for students to complete over summer vacation (Epstein, 1995). Involving families in goal setting and college or work planning activities is another way in which school administrators can promote parental involvement in the home (Epstein, 1995).

School

School administrators can take action to support various types of school-based parental involvement behaviors. For example, school administrators can support communication between the school and parents by (a) initiating conferences; (b) offering language translators; (c) encouraging that “folders of student work [be] sent home for review and comments; (d) [promoting a] regular schedule of useful notices, memos, phone calls, newsletters, and other communications” (Epstein, 1995, p. 19); and (e) providing parents with clear information they can use for decision-making purposes (Epstein, 1995). Communication between parents and schools also may be promoted through outreach programs (Shriberg, Schumacher, McMahon, Flores, & Moy, 2012). Sheldon and Epstein (2002) also suggested that communication in general should be regular and used to solve problems, such as poor student behavior. In addition,

communication between the school and parents should begin before the school year officially starts (Sheldon & Epstein, 2002).

School administrators can promote parent volunteering in the school by (a) providing space for volunteerism to occur; (b) collecting data related to volunteerism at the school that may be used to make informed decisions about volunteer activities; (c) using “class parent, telephone tree, or other structures to provide all families with needed information, and (d) [implementing] parent patrols or other activities to aid safety and operation of school programs” (Epstein, 1995, p. 20). Activities and programs should be considered that benefit not only the student but teachers, school administrators, and other parents as well (Epstein, 1995). Parents also can participate in mentorship roles (Sheldon & Epstein, 2002).

School administrators can promote parent involvement in decision making by providing parents opportunities to engage in (a) “parent organizations, advisory councils, or committees . . . for parent leadership and participation; (b) independent advocacy to lobby and work for school reforms and improvements; and (c) district level councils and committees for family and community involvement” (Epstein, 1995, p. 20). When parents are involved in decision-making processes, they are afforded the opportunity to consider existing information and proposed options (Epstein, 1995). Through this opportunity, they are further afforded the opportunity to make judgments and their own contributions to the process (Epstein, 1995).

Community

School administrators can take action to support parental involvement through the community. For example, school administrators can provide (a) “information for students

and families on community health, cultural, recreational, social support, and other program and services; (b) information on community activities that link to learning skills and talents” (Epstein, 1995, p. 21). Also, students and families may be encouraged to participate in community service programs, and alumni may be encouraged to participate in school programs that support students (Epstein, 1995). School programs focused on collaboration with communities and families are effective for reducing students’ behavior problems and creating a safe school environment (Sheldon & Epstein, 2002).

Impact of Parental Involvement on Outcome Variables

Parental involvement can have an impact in a variety of ways. For example, parental involvement may impact students. Parental involvement may also have an impact at the school level by impacting school culture. In this section, I discuss the details about how parental involvement may impact both students and school culture.

Student Outcomes

Parental involvement may impact a variety of student outcomes. Those outcomes include attendance, behavior, and academic achievement. According to Jeynes (2010), parenting style, communication between parents and children, and parental expectations for child understanding of the value of education are among the strongest parental involvement influences on these student outcomes. For this reason, these factors should be considered when examining the relationships between parental involvement and attendance, behavior, and academic achievement.

Attendance. Among Black parents, home-based parental involvement was found to significantly and negatively impacted students’ attendance at school. The greater the level of parental involvement at home, the less likely students were to miss school

(Hayes, 2012). This condition was found to be mediated by student age, whereas the older the student, the greater the impact of parental involvement on student attendance. Older students had fewer missed days of school than younger students who received the same level of home-based parental involvement.

Behavior. Parental involvement impacts student behavior in a variety of ways. In the school, parents' involvement in decision making regarding school policies and prevention programs can positively impact student behavior, in particular behavior resulting in student detention (Sheldon & Epstein, 2002). Parent involvement in school programs focused on promoting collaboration with communities and families also are effective for reducing students' behavior problems (Sheldon & Epstein, 2002). For young students at risk for social and economic hardships, the quality of parental involvement, in particular parent-teacher relationships, may be especially important to the degree of impact the relationships have on improving student behavior (Serpell & Mashburn, 2012). Furthermore, positive parent-teacher relationships can mediate the impact school-based behavior improvement programs have on student behavior (Sheridan, Bovaird, et al., 2012).

Among Black students, school-based parental involvement also can interact with student age to negatively predict student behavior (Hayes, 2012). That is, the older the student, the more likely that parental involvement in the school will predict negative student behavior, as represented by high numbers of discipline referrals (Hayes, 2012). This phenomenon may be attributed to the fact that students with behavior issues would inherently promote increased parental involvement with the school (Hayes, 2012). Parents of students with poor behavior would be more likely to be contacted by teachers

and administrators to discuss the poor behavior and options for improving the behavior (Hayes, 2012). In addition, parents might also be expected to meet with teachers and administrators on school grounds for these same reasons (Hayes, 2012).

Home-based parental involvement may have similar outcomes. Among Black parents, home-based parental involvement was found to interact with student age to significantly predict student behavior, as measured by the number of discipline referrals received. That is, the older the student, the more likely that parental involvement in the home would predict positive student behavior, represented by low numbers of discipline referrals (Hayes, 2012). Among Black and European American students, home-based parenting activities that provide emotional support for students may impact the behavioral engagement of those students (Hill & Wang, 2015).

Self-efficacy. Parental beliefs about children's academic efficacy impact the way in which parents help their children with homework (i.e., parenting style), and parenting style may impact students' self-efficacy (Gonida & Cortina, 2014). A parent who does not perceive a child to be academically efficacious with regard to the subject matter on which the homework is based or the processes required to complete the homework assignment is more likely to be controlling and interfere in the child's efforts by dictating how the child should complete the assignment or by directly supplying answers or solutions (Gonida & Cortina, 2014). When a parent acts in these ways, his or her child will feel as if he or she is not capable of completing the assignment independently (Gonida & Cortina, 2014). In this way, style of parenting support with regard to help with homework can negatively impact a student's academic self-efficacy (Gonida & Cortina, 2014). However, when a parent believes his or her child is capable of completing a

homework assignment, the parent is more likely to take on an autonomous style of support (Gonida & Cortina, 2014).

When a parent demonstrates belief in a child's academic capacity, the child's belief in his or her own capacity to accomplish the assigned task increases (Gonida & Cortina, 2014). In this way, style of parenting support with regard to help with homework can positively impact a student's academic self-efficacy (Gonida & Cortina, 2014). Because student self-efficacy is connected to student achievement (Hoover-Dempsey & Sandler, 2005), style of parenting support with regard to help with homework can indirectly impact student achievement (Gonida & Cortina, 2014). Furthermore, because the autonomous style of support is most effective for helping students master subject matter, this style of parental involvement has the greatest potential to positively impact student achievement (Gonida & Cortina, 2014). For mothers in particular, an autonomous style of support during homework may be most impactful on reading achievement (Doctoroff & Arnold, 2017).

Although parents may directly express their beliefs about their children's academic efficacy when helping them with homework, parents also may indirectly express their beliefs about their children's academic capacity at any time and in any setting (Fan et al., 2012). Parents may do this by expressing their expectations for their children's enrollment in postsecondary education (Fan et al., 2012). The argument that follows is that if a parent did not believe his or her child was capable of succeeding in the postsecondary setting, then that parent would not have made a statement to that effect (Fan et al., 2012). According to Fan, Williams, and Wolters (2012), students whose parents indirectly express their beliefs in the students' academic capacity in this way

benefit from improved academic self-efficacy much the same way students who receive direct expression of their capacity benefit.

Academic achievement. Parental involvement associated with student achievement varies in nature. School-based parental involvement associated with student achievement may include parents' attendance at open-house nights, parent-teacher organization meetings, and parent-teacher conferences (Galindo & Sheldon, 2012). School-based parental involvement associated with student achievement also may include participation in student support programs, such as tutoring programs (O'Donnell & Kirkner, 2014; Rattigan-Rohr et al., 2014). In both cases, the impact of parental involvement on students' academic outcomes is equally apparent regardless of the gender of the parent (Kim & Hill, 2015). However, socioeconomic status may mediate the impact of parental involvement on students' academic outcomes (Gordon & Cui, 2014).

Support processes. Whether in school or home settings, students' knowledge and skills are substantially supported through direct parental involvement in academic activities developed for the purpose of improving knowledge and skills (Hoover-Dempsey & Sandler, 1995). However, knowledge and skills also may be supported through parental modeling and reinforcement (Hoover-Dempsey & Sandler, 1995). When parents model or reinforce appropriate school-related behaviors that promote learning, their children are more likely to engage in those or similar activities on their own, which can promote the students' acquisition of knowledge and skills and thus improve their academic outcomes (Hoover-Dempsey & Sandler, 1995).

For children entering the educational setting for the first time, parental involvement in the home may be especially influential with regard to early achievement

(Puccioni, 2015). Children whose parents provide a supportive home environment and engage in transitional practices have higher math and reading achievement scores than their peers who received no or lesser transitional support in the home (Puccioni, 2015). Transitional practices need not be narrowly focused to have an impact (Puccioni, 2015). Any parent/child interaction that increases a child's school readiness is beneficial for improving academic performance (Puccioni, 2015).

The impact parental involvement has on student achievement may be mediated by the age of the student (Levin & Aram, 2012) and parents' expectations for their children's achievement (Jolly & Mathews, 2012). Typically, the higher the expectation for student achievement, the greater the impact of that expectation on student achievement (Jolly & Mathews, 2012). Literature supports the connection between parental involvement and student achievement.

Empirical evidence. Parents who participated in after-school tutoring programs reported that their children's academic performance improved as a result of the tutoring programs (O'Donnell & Kirkner, 2014; Rattigan-Rohr et al., 2014). It is logical to expect that student achievement would have improved as the result of participation in a tutoring program whether or not parents participated in that program. However, parents in the programs also reported the transfer of their own new knowledge from the tutoring setting to the home environment (O'Donnell & Kirkner, 2014; Rattigan-Rohr et al., 2014). Therefore, it is possible that the additional engagement of parents with their children in the home setting contributed to parents' noted improvements in their children's academic performance. This concept is supported in other research that has shown that parental

involvement in the home has a positive impact on student achievement (Zhang et al., 2011).

Among Black students, both home- and school-based parental involvement can significantly and positively impact parent-reported levels of student achievement (Hayes, 2012). However, only home-based involvement has been shown to be a predictor of students' actual academic achievement (Hayes, 2012). Positive effects of parental involvement also have been found specifically for Latino students (LeFevre & Shaw, 2012). When compared to Latino students whose parents are not engaged in their education, either in formal school-based activities or informal home-based activities, Latino students whose parents are engaged in their education in any way are more likely to perform better academically, resulting in on-time graduation from high school (LeFevre & Shaw, 2012).

Alternative perspectives. Not all research on the relationship between parental involvement and student outcomes shows a positive relationship between the variables (McNeal, 2012). For example, some research has shown a negative relationship between help with homework and student outcomes (McNeal, 2012). One explanation for this negative relationship is not that parental involvement negatively impacts student performance but rather that when students are struggling to perform, parents become more involved in their learning in an effort to improve performance (Epstein, 1988). This condition may be especially apparent with parental assistance with homework in the home setting and reading literacy (Hampden-Thompson, Guzman, & Lippman, 2013). Parents may increase their level of involvement in response to poor student achievement of their own accord or as the result of contact from teachers or other school staff

(McNeal, 2012). However, other researchers have discredited this reactive hypothesis suggesting that the claims are merely researcher conjecture and not based on empirical evidence (McNeal, 2012).

One idea that is supported by the literature, however, is that researchers fail to consider the impact of various forms of parental involvement over time (McNeal, 2012). Forms of parental involvement that may be appropriate for helping students at one age may not be appropriate for students at other ages and thus the use of one parental involvement strategy for students of all ages may result in varied outcomes (McNeal, 2012). Another idea that is supported in the literature and one that is related to the previous age-appropriateness idea is that adolescence is a developmental period marked by increased autonomy (McNeal, 2012). As such, when parents of adolescents involve themselves in their children's education, those children may react negatively in ways that impact not only their behavior but their academic achievement as well (McNeal, 2012).

School Culture

Parental involvement can have a positive impact on school culture. For example, school programs focused on collaboration with communities and families may help create a safe school environment (Sheldon & Epstein, 2002) that contributes to a positive school culture. Also, parental involvement, specifically communication with teachers, has been found to be a factor in the development of congruent and positive parent-teacher relationships (Minke et al., 2014). The development of congruent and positive parent-teacher relationships is a desirable outcome in the educational setting because when parents and teachers have congruent and positive relationships, teachers are less likely to describe students with behavior issues as problematic (Minke et al., 2014). One possible

reason for this outcome is that when parents communicate with teachers, it is likely that teachers will develop a broader understanding of the conditions contributing to the students' poor behaviors and thus be more sympathetic to their students (Minke et al., 2014). If students are able to avoid disciplinary action that removes them from the classroom, they are likely to be more successful academically.

Factors Mediating the Impact of Parental Involvement on Student Outcomes

The research has shown that various factors may mediate the impact of parental involvement on student behavior, in particular student behavior that contributes to student achievement. These factors may be grouped into two categories. The first category is children's perceptions of parental involvement. The second category is children's attributes. Children's perceptions of parental involvement activities may directly impact behaviors that lead to academic achievement or may impact children's attributes that impact behaviors that lead to academic achievement.

Children's Perceptions of Parental Involvement

Children's perceptions of parental involvement can influence the degree to which parental involvement (encouragement, modeling, reinforcement, and instruction) will impact student behavior that leads to academic achievement (Hoover-Dempsey & Sandler, 2005). For example, the degree to which parental involvement transforms student behaviors is mediated by children's perspectives of the age-level appropriateness of the parental involvement (Hoover-Dempsey & Sandler, 1995). Compared to adolescents, young children possess a lower capacity to distinguish between parental involvement that is age-level appropriate and parental involvement that is not age-level appropriate and, therefore, tend to accept any parental involvement with enthusiasm

(Hoover-Dempsey & Sandler, 1995). Because adolescents are more capable of distinguishing the age-level appropriateness of parental involvement, they are likely to become resentful of parents who engage in activities the adolescents deem inappropriate for them (Hoover-Dempsey & Sandler, 1995). This condition is compounded by adolescents' increasing interest in and value of their peers (Hoover-Dempsey & Sandler, 1995).

The degree to which parental involvement transforms student behaviors that leads to academic achievement also is mediated by children's perceptions of the appropriateness of the parent involvement response to the school's expectations for parental involvement (Hoover-Dempsey & Sandler, 1995). Because children are inherently linked to both the school's expectations for parents and parents' responses to those expectations, when the match between school expectations and parents' responses are mismatched, children by default become mediators between the two entities (Hoover-Dempsey & Sandler, 1995). In some cases, children may have to choose whether to support one entity or the other, a condition that places children in a position of tension and can drive the children to distance themselves from one or both entities (Hoover-Dempsey & Sandler, 1995).

Child Attributes

Parents cannot control how students think or behave. However, through their involvement, parents may impact a variety of attributes that contribute directly to behavior that promotes academic achievement (Hoover-Dempsey & Sandler, 2005). These attributes include children's use of self-regulatory strategies, social self-efficacy toward teachers, academic self-efficacy, and intrinsic motivation to learn (Hoover-

Dempsey & Sandler, 2005). These concepts are all inherently associated with the construct self-efficacy.

According to Bandura (1977), self-efficacy, which contributes to motivation to engage in a particular behavior, may be developed through successful experiences, vicarious experiences, verbal persuasion, and a person's physiological and emotional states. Through direct instruction, parents may help their children gain knowledge and skills that help them have successful academic experiences (Hoover-Dempsey & Sandler, 2005). One way that people may be exposed to vicarious experiences is through the modeling of behaviors, by either a live or a symbolic model (Bandura, 1977). When parents model appropriate learning behaviors for their children, those parents are providing their children with vicarious experiences (Hoover-Dempsey & Sandler, 1997, 2005). One way that people may be exposed to verbal persuasion is through encouragement (Bandura, 1977). When parents encourage their children, those parents are using verbal persuasion (Hoover-Dempsey & Sandler, 1997, 2005). When parents communicate to their children their beliefs in the importance of academic success, those parents are making emotional appeals to their children (Hoover-Dempsey & Sandler, 2005).

The greater the extent of direct and vicarious experiences, verbal persuasion, and emotional arousal, the greater the potential for improving children's self-efficacy for succeeding in school (Hoover-Dempsey & Sandler, 1995). When students' levels of self-efficacy increase, they are more likely to be motivated to engage in behaviors that will contribute to their academic success (Hoover-Dempsey & Sandler, 2005). In this way,

child attributes mediate the impact of parental involvement on student achievement (Hoover-Dempsey & Sandler, 1995).

Summary and Conclusions

The literature reviewed for this study showed that parental involvement is a multifaceted phenomenon. Parents can engage in their children's education in a variety of ways and in various locations. Specifically, parents can involve themselves in their children's education by (a) providing a home environment conducive to learning, (b) helping children complete their homework and gain knowledge and skills, (c) communicating with the school, (d) participating in decision making at the school, (e) volunteering at the school, and (e) taking advantage of community opportunities.

Parents may be motivated to engage in parental involvement behaviors in a variety of ways. For example, parents' (a) attitudes toward the school and toward parental involvement, (b) opportunities for involvement, (c) expectations, (d) demographic factors, (e) life contexts, and (f) levels of self-efficacy all may impact whether or not parents engage in parental involvement activities, in which activities they engage, and the degree to which they engage in those activities. Students' age and the uniqueness of their needs may impact parental involvement in the same ways.

Parental involvement is important because it may help students improve their rates of attendance (Hayes, 2012) and levels of academic self-efficacy (Gonida & Cortina, 2014) as well as promote positive personal attributes (Hoover-Dempsey & Sandler, 2005) and social behaviors (Hayes, 2012; Sheldon & Epstein, 2002), all of which can contribute to improved academic performance. Parental involvement also may help students improve their academic performance by helping students gain knowledge

and skills that directly contribute to student learning and thus academic performance (Hoover-Dempsey & Sandler, 1995).

The literature has shown that many different factors can contribute to a parent's decision to engage in his or her child's education. In addition, the range of ways in which parents may become involved in their children's education render each study's results even more unique. Although my study was not designed to help fill any gaps in the research about practice, this study may help fill the gap in literature with regard to two of the lesser explored motivators of parental involvement and their relationship to specific parental involvement practices. The details of the study methodology associated with this exploration are presented in the next section.

Chapter 3: Research Method

The purpose of this study was to explore whether there was a relationship between parents' attitudes toward the school and three types of parental involvement identified by Epstein (1995), including communicating, volunteering, and learning at home, while controlling for parents' level of education, employment status, and income. Additionally, I explored whether there was a relationship between parents' attitudes toward overall parental involvement and the parental involvement types (communicating, volunteering, and learning at home) while controlling for level of parent education, parent employment status, and parent income. This chapter includes the research design and rationale, methods, threats to validity, and ethical procedures.

Research Design and Rationale

This study was a quantitative correlational study using a survey approach to data collection. The independent variables were parents' attitudes toward the school and parents' attitudes toward parental involvement. The dependent variables were three types of parental involvement: communicating, volunteering, and learning at home. The covariates were parents' level of education, employment status, and income.

Creswell (2014) indicated that quantitative studies are appropriate to use when researchers want to explore relationships between particular variables. Because I explored the relationships between particular variables, a quantitative design was appropriate for this study. A qualitative analysis, although suitable for generating detailed data about a topic (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016), would not have provided the data needed to conduct inferential analyses such as the regressions needed to answer the research questions in this study. I reasoned that if qualitative data would not have been helpful for

answering the research questions posed for this study, a mixed-methods approach would not have been logical for this study because a mixed-methods study includes both quantitative and qualitative data.

According to MacNealy (1999), surveys are appropriate for collecting quantitative data, especially when a researcher has a large population. Because I collected quantitative data from a large number of parents at Shady Lane Elementary School, a survey approach to data collection was appropriate in this study. A survey approach was also appropriate because it allowed me to generate the quantitative data needed to conduct inferential analyses such as the regressions needed to answer the research questions in this study.

There were no time constraints associated with the use of the survey in this study. Because teachers at the school distributed the packets to students in their classrooms, students returned the surveys to the main office at Shady Lane Elementary School, and the use of SurveyMonkey to collect electronic data was free, no costs were associated with these aspects of data collection. However, I did personally pay for the necessary hard copy survey supplies and printing fees. It was, therefore, cost prohibitive for me to include two copies of the survey in each packet, one for each parent.

Methodology

There were four key areas associated with the study's population and methodology. In this section, I describe the sampling strategy used, the processes for drawing that sample, the sampling frame, and sample size. Next, I explain how I recruited participants, the criteria associated with participation in this study, and the procedures I used to collect data. Then, I describe the instrument I used to collect data and the

operationalization of variables in this study. Finally, I explain the process I used to analyze the data I collected.

Population

The target population for this study was parents of students in Grades 1-5 at Shady Lane Elementary School. Shady Lane Elementary School was one of 14 elementary schools (K-5) in the Alcott School District, and was a predominantly Black public Title I school in Texas. Student enrollment in schools in the Alcott School District totaled 19,228 for the 2016-2017 school year. Student enrollment at Shady Lane Elementary School was 666 during the 2016-2017 school year. Shady Lane Elementary School had one principal, one assistant principal, 40 teachers, and four paraprofessionals at the time of this study. I chose to conduct my study at Shady Lane Elementary School because I was an educator in that school for 2 1/2 years and had a vested interest in the success of the students at that particular school.

Sampling and Sampling Procedures

Samples that are not chosen randomly are considered nonprobability samples (Trochim & Donnelly, 2008). Because I did not randomly choose the sample for this study, my study had a nonprobability sample. The general nonprobability sampling strategy I used to draw my sample was purposive sampling. Because the population in this study was convenient for me to access, I specifically chose the population for my study. For this reason, I considered my sampling strategy purposive in nature.

When using purposive sampling, “the investigator plays a direct role in the selection process, often with the aim of assembling a sample that is in some sense representative or typical of the population” (Affleck, 2010, p. 1,111). Purposive sampling

is used when researchers choose to target a specific population because the members of that population will help satisfy a specific purpose in the researcher's study (Trochim & Donnelly, 2008). Because the purpose of my study was to determine the attitudes of parents at Shady Lane Elementary School, it was necessary that my sample be made up of parents at Shady Lane Elementary School. Therefore, I purposely chose to draw my sample from that population.

Of the four subtypes of probability sampling described by Trochim and Donnelly (2008), modal instance sampling, expert sampling, quota sampling, and heterogeneity sampling, none matched the conditions in my study exactly. However, the conditions associated with heterogeneity sampling resembled the conditions in my study. The underlying premise of heterogeneity sampling is that the researcher's goal is to gather a diverse range of data about ideas rather than to find out about specific people (Trochim & Donnelly, 2008). In this study, I intended to generate diverse data about parents' attitudes toward the school and toward parental involvement. In this respect, I did not intend to learn about only positive attitudes parents might hold, but rather about all attitudes parents might hold. Unlike studies with typical heterogeneity samples, however, I was interested in a particular group of people (parents of students at Shady Lane Elementary School) because the purpose of this study was to generate data that may be used to promote change at that particular school.

The sample for this study was not drawn from the sampling frame of parents of students in Grades 1-5 at Shady Lane Elementary School. Rather, all caregivers of students in Grades 1-5 at Shady Lane Elementary School were invited to participate in the study and self-selected to participate. Any permanent caregiver of a child enrolled in

Shady Lane Elementary School was considered an eligible parent provided that person was of legal age to consent to participate in the study. When samples are reliant on participant self-selection, the consideration of sample size is especially relevant because it is always possible that not enough participants volunteer to be part of the study.

To determine the needed sample size for this study, I conducted a priori analysis using G*Power software (Version 3.1.5). I used a medium effect size (.30), an α error of probability of .05, and a power of .80. Based on this analysis, I determined that I would need a sample size of 85 to determine significance.

Procedures for Recruitment, Participation, and Data Collection

All of the documents needed to recruit participants and collect data were distributed to parents in a hard copy survey packet. Because of concern for parent privacy, the school would not grant me access to parents' contact information. For this reason, recruiting parents using an information packet was a feasible option. In addition, the school regularly communicated with parents via letters sent home with children. This method worked well at the school.

After I received approval to conduct my study from both Walden University's institutional review board and the focus school, I began to recruit participants and collect data. During a faculty meeting, the principal at Shady Lane Elementary School informed the teachers of my study and their anticipated participation in the distribution of the survey packets. Only teachers were informed that I was conducting a study on parent attitudes and that they were being asked to hand out one packet to each child in each of their classrooms. Teachers were not told details about the study so that they would not be in a position to answer any student questions beyond the general purpose of the packet. In

this way, teachers were not considered research assistants but rather uninvolved administrative assistants in the participant recruitment process.

If teachers were unwilling to pass out the packets, I planned to make arrangements to stand outside classrooms as classes ended and distribute the surveys myself. This process would have been time consuming and ineffective. However, it was normal for teachers to be asked to distribute communications from the main office to parents via children. It was not a cumbersome task, and I did not anticipate that teachers would refuse to help.

Because the teachers were only being asked to complete the simple process of passing out packets to students, no formal written instructions were provided. They were instructed once in the faculty meeting and then again when I delivered the packets to them. I determined that these two explanations should have been sufficient for them to complete the task successfully.

I delivered survey packets to teachers in sealed envelopes addressed to the parents of students at the school. The packets included an invitation to participate in the study (Appendix A), a consent form, and the parent involvement survey (Appendix C) through which the data for this study were collected. Included in the instructions for the survey and at the close of the survey were directions for parents to return the completed survey to the school via their child using the same envelope in which the survey was delivered. In the letter of invitation to participate in the study, I provided a link to SurveyMonkey. Parents might have navigated to the electronic survey website to complete the survey anonymously online.

I asked parents to consider their parental involvement for the 2016-2017 school year and to provide demographic information about their level of education, employment status, and income. I also asked parents to complete only one survey. This instruction was necessary because some participants may have had more than one child enrolled in the school. A collection box for the surveys was placed in the main office of the school, which was staffed by at least one administrative assistant at all times.

Participants who completed the hard copy survey demonstrated consent by completing and returning the survey to the school via their child. I anticipated that parents who did not give their consent to participate in the study would not complete or return the survey. Participants who completed the survey using SurveyMonkey were asked to agree to the terms of participation in the consent form. Participants who indicated they agreed to the terms of participation in the study would be allowed to navigate to the first survey item. Participants who indicated that they did not agree to the terms of participation in the study were directed to another webpage where they were thanked for their time and then exited from the survey.

Participants may have exited the study at any time during the data collection processes by choosing to stop responding to the survey questions. Participants who completed a hard copy survey were exited from the survey once their child deposited the completed survey in the collect box. Participants who completed the survey online were exited from the survey after they responded to the final survey item.

Baruch and Holtom (2008) found that response rates among individuals in organizational research was 52.7%. Because I anticipated parents may have been less likely to participate in a survey than the participants from organizations represented in the

Baruch and Holtom study, it was feasible to assume a more conservative response rate of 20%. At a 20% response rate, 425 parents needed to be invited to participate in the study. However, because parental participation at Shady Lane Elementary School was especially low compared to the other 13 elementary schools in the Alcott School District, I anticipated that participation in this study was going to be especially low as well. For this reason, I determined it was important to consider ways to improve the response rate in this study and ensure I achieved the needed sample size to determine significance of the findings.

To ensure I achieved the needed sample size, I planned to send invitations to parents of all the students in Grades 1-5 at Shady Lane Elementary School (originally anticipated to be approximately 666 students). Inviting more parents than I expected I would need to achieve my needed sample size increased the chances that I would achieve the needed sample size. In addition, offering parents the opportunity to respond to the survey using both hard copy and digital formats may have helped improve response rates. Also, in the invitation to participate in the study and in the letter of consent, I identified myself as a former teacher at Shady Lane Elementary School. Although the primary reason for doing so was to ensure full disclosure of my association with the study site, I anticipated that my connection to the school would have motivated parents to participate in the study. Finally, at the beginning of the second week of data collection, I distributed a second survey packet to parents via teachers with a letter thanking those who had already participated and reminding those who had not participated that they were welcome to do so (Appendix D). Data collection was scheduled to occur during the last 2 weeks of May, 2017.

Instrumentation and Operationalization of Constructs

There were two research questions for this study. The independent variable in Research Question 1 was parents' attitudes toward the school, and the independent variable in Research Question 2 was parents' attitudes toward parental involvement. The dependent variables for both research questions were the three types of parental involvement: communicating, volunteering, and learning at home. The covariates for both research questions were parents' level of education, parent employment status, and parent income. To collect data about these variables that would enable me to answer the research questions posed for this study, I used select items from Epstein and Salinas's (1993) School and Family Partnerships Survey of Parents in Elementary and Middle Grades, and Sheldon and Epstein's (2007) Parent Survey of Family and Community Involvement in the Elementary and Middle Grades.

To collect data about parents' attitudes toward Shady Lane Elementary School, I used the seven of the 17 items from Question 1 of Epstein and Salinas's (1993) School and Family Partnerships Survey of Parents in Elementary and Middle Grades that make up the parents' attitudes toward the school scale (see Appendix C, Survey Items 9-15). In an earlier version of the instrument, the scale was made up of five items (Epstein, Salinas, & Horsey, 1994). For those five items, Epstein, Salinas, and Horsey (1994) calculated a Cronbach's alpha reliability coefficient of .81 using a sample of 2,115 parents in 15 elementary and middle schools. ("Typically, a 'high' reliability coefficient is considered to be .90 or above, 'very good' is .80 to .89, and 'good' or 'adequate' is .70 to .79" [Multon & Coleman, 2010].) Because Epstein and Salinas also found relatively low standard errors of measurement, they suggested that the scales could be used with

confidence. Although Epstein et al. identified two additional scale items that could be included in the scale, they did not include an updated reliability coefficient including these variables.

To collect the data about parents' attitudes toward parental involvement, I used all 10 items from Question 4 of Sheldon and Epstein's (2007) Parent Survey of Family and Community Involvement in the Elementary and Middle Grades (see Appendix C, Survey Items 16-25). For the scale parents' attitudes toward parental involvement, Sheldon and Epstein reported a Cronbach's alpha reliability coefficient of .88. Using Multon and Coleman's (2010) parameters for reliability coefficients, this scale may be considered very good. The reliability coefficient for parents' attitudes toward parental involvement was based on 396 parents of students in Grade 6 (elementary school) and Grade 8 (middle school) in a large city in a Midwestern state (Sheldon & Epstein, 2007).

To collect data about the parental involvement types communicating, volunteering, and learning at home, I used 14 of 17 items from Question 3 of Sheldon and Epstein's (2007) Parent Survey of Family and Community Involvement in the Elementary and Middle Grades (see Appendix C, Survey Items 26-39). Of the 14 items, two items make up the communicating scale (Survey Items 26 and 29), two items make up the volunteering scale (Survey Items 27 and 28), and 10 items make up the learning at home scale (Survey Items 30-39).

Although I measured communicating and volunteering as separate scales, Sheldon and Epstein (2007) reported combined reliability data for these scales. For the two communicating and two volunteering items, Sheldon and Epstein reported a Cronbach's alpha reliability coefficient of .76. Although the items were all grouped together, the

coefficient is suggestive of a scale that, according to Multon and Coleman (2010), is good or adequate. The reliability coefficient data for the parental involvement types communicating and volunteering were based on responses from 404 parents of students in Grade 6 (elementary school) and Grade 8 (middle school) in a large city in a Midwestern state (Sheldon & Epstein, 2007). For the scale learning at home, Sheldon and Epstein reported a Cronbach's alpha reliability coefficient of .90. Using Multon and Coleman's (2010) parameters for reliability coefficients, this scale may be considered to be highly reliable. The reliability coefficient for learning at home was based on 392 parents of students in Grade 6 (elementary school) and Grade 8 (middle school) in a large city in a Midwestern state (Sheldon & Epstein, 2007).

Both the independent and dependent variables in the research questions were measured using ordinal scales. The scale used for parents' attitudes toward the school and parents' attitudes toward parental involvement was a 5-point Likert scale: 1 (*strongly disagree*), 2 (*disagree*), 3 (*neither disagree / agree*), 4 (*agree*), and 5 (*strongly agree*). This scale was adapted from the 4-point Likert-type scale used in the original instrument: 1 (*strongly agree*), 2 (*agree*), 3 (*disagree*), 4 (*strongly disagree*). This change was made to allow for more flexibility in participant responses. The scale for the parental involvement types communicating, volunteering, and learning at home was never (*0 times a year*), rarely (*1-3 times a year*), occasionally (*4-9 times a year*), frequently (*at least twice a month*), very frequently (*at least once a week*). This scale was adapted from a four-item scale: 1 (*everyday / most days*), 2 (*once a week*), 3 (*one in a while*), 4 (*never*). The scales were adjusted to make them more descriptive and thorough and to allow for the collection of a broader range of responses.

Changes were based on the direction of Epstein and Salinas (1993) and Sheldon and Epstein (2007) who encouraged researchers to adapt the survey to meet their local needs. Although Epstein and Salinas and Sheldon and Epstein specifically mentioned the length and content of the survey with regard to adaptation, their flexibility regarding these aspects suggested that they likely also would support my changes to the scales. I did, however, receive written permission from Joyce Epstein to adapt the survey (Appendix E).

The selected items from School and Family Partnerships Survey of Parents in Elementary and Middle Grades (Epstein & Salinas, 1993) and the Parent Survey of Family and Community Involvement in the Elementary and Middle Grades (Sheldon & Epstein, 2007) made up the majority of the parent involvement survey that was used in this study. The remainder of the survey was made up of items pertaining to demographic data. Responses to these demographic items were used to answer both Research Questions 1 and 2. Specifically, data were collected about parents' level of education, employment status, and income. Additional demographic data about participants' ethnicity, gender, age, marital status, and number of children were collected in order to describe the sample. The complete parent involvement survey that was used for this study is presented in Appendix C.

Data Analysis Plan

Once the data collection period was complete, I began the data analysis process. The first step in this process was to organize the data I collected. To organize the data, I entered into an Excel spread sheet participant responses from the hard copy surveys. I also exported into an Excel spread sheet participant responses to the electronic survey on

SurveyMonkey. Once the data from the two survey formats were inputted to Excel spread sheets, I combined the data and upload them to SPSS for analysis.

The research questions and hypotheses for this study were

Research Question 1: At Shady Lane Elementary School, what is the relationship between parents' attitudes toward the school and three types of parental involvement, communicating, volunteering, and learning at home, while controlling for parents' level of education, employment status, and income?

H₀1: At Shady Lane Elementary School, the variable parents' attitudes toward the school does not predict the three types of parental involvement, communicating, volunteering, and learning at home, while controlling for parents' level of education, employment status, and income.

H_A1: At Shady Lane Elementary School, the variable parents' attitudes toward the school does predict the three types of parental involvement, communicating, volunteering, and learning at home, while controlling for parents' level of education, employment status, and income.

Research Question 2: At Shady Lane Elementary School, what is the relationship between parents' attitudes toward parental involvement and three types of parental involvement, communicating, volunteering, and learning at home, while controlling for parents' level of education, employment status, and income?

H₀1: At Shady Lane Elementary School, the variable parents' attitudes toward parental involvement does not predict the three types of parental involvement, communicating, volunteering, and learning at home, while controlling for parents' level of education, employment status, and income.

H_{A1}: At Shady Lane Elementary School, the variable parents' attitudes toward parental involvement does predict the three types of parental involvement, communicating, volunteering, and learning at home, while controlling for parents' level of education, employment status, and income.

Before conducting the inferential analyses for this study, I conducted factor analysis to ensure the cohesiveness of the scale items for measuring the study variables as suggested by Peng and Mueller (2004) and Sawilowsky (2007). By conducting factor analysis, I could ensure that the items on the scale accurately measured the variables I intend to measure. Also, I calculated Cronbach's alpha reliability coefficients for the instrument scales to ensure the scales are reliable as suggested by Multon and Coleman (2010). By calculate Cronbach's alpha reliability coefficients, I could ensure that the items on the scales were appropriate for my particular sample.

For both research questions, correlations and multiple regressions were calculated to determine the relationships between the variables. For Research Question 1, the proposed relationship was between parents' attitudes toward the school and the parental involvement types communicating, volunteering, and learning at home. Parents' attitude toward the school was the independent variable, and the parental involvement types communicating, volunteering, and learning at home were the dependent variables. For Research Question 2, the proposed relationship was between parents' attitudes toward parental involvement and the parental involvement types communicating, volunteering, and learning at home. Parents' attitudes toward parental involvement was the independent variable, and the parental involvement types communicating, volunteering, and learning at home were the dependent variables.

The covariates for the multiple regression for each question were parents' level of education, employment status, and income. It was important to consider covariates in this study to ensure that any significant results I achieved were due to the independent variables parents' attitudes toward the school and parents' attitudes toward parental involvement rather than due the impact of the covariates. These particular covariates were included in the analyses because these variables have been shown in the literature to have an impact on parental involvement. Level of education has been shown to impact the degree to which parents are involved (Fishman & Nickerson, 2015; Hayes, 2012) and the type of parental involvement activities in which they engage (Abel, 2012; Toldson & Lemmons, 2013). Employment demands have been shown to impact the types of parental involvement activities in which parents engage (Hoover-Dempsey & Sandler, 1995, 2005). Socioeconomic status has been shown to be a barrier to parental involvement (Dauber & Epstein, 1989; Renth et al., 2015) and to impact the types of parental involvement in which parents engage (Hogland et al., 2015; Toldson & Lemmons, 2013; Zhang et al., 2011).

Before conducting any analyses, I cleaned and screened the data. To clean the data, I looked for participants who were missing critical data. Specifically, I planned to exclude participants who did not provide demographic data for the covariates level of education, employment status, and income. To screen the data, I planned to remove any outliers from the sample. To identify the outliers, I used stem-and-leaf plot analysis. Cleaning and screening of data can help ensure the accuracy of the study findings.

Threats to Validity

Threats to validity may be internal or external. According to Creswell (2014), “internal validity threats are experimental procedures, treatments, or experiences of the participants that threaten the researchers’ ability to draw correct inferences from the data in an experiment” (p. 174). Furthermore, Trochim and Donnelly (2008) stated that internal validity is only a concern when researchers are trying to establish cause and effect or determine causal relationships. According to Creswell (2014), “external validity threats arise when experimenters draw incorrect inferences from the sample data to other person, other settings, and past or future situations” (p. 176). In this study, I was not (a) attempting to establish cause and effect or to determine causal relationships, (b) conducting experimental research, (c) implementing treatments that could affect participant experiences, or (d) trying to generalize data to other populations. Therefore, threats to internal and external validity were not issues in this study.

Construct validity refers to the extent to which an instrument accurately measures the construct, or concept, that the researcher claims it measures (Creswell, 2014; Trochim and Donnelly, 2008). In this sense, establishing construct validity is an issue of test validation (Peng & Mueller, 2004) and is related to the appropriateness of the instrument a researcher uses (Creswell, 2014). The context of this appropriateness is test validation. Construct validity can be threatened when researchers do not appropriately define variables and measures (Creswell, 2014).

To ensure construct validity in this study, I conducted factor analysis on the instrument as suggested by Peng and Mueller (2004) and Sawilowsky (2007). In addition, I used an established instrument with scale reliability analyses indicating that the scales

are all either good or very good. However, to ensure the scales were equally appropriate with the population in this study, I also conducted scale reliability analysis for the measures of the five variables as suggested by (Lauriola, 2004).

Statistical conclusion validity refers to the accuracy of inferences based on the adequacy of the statistical power used to conduct the analyses and the statistical assumptions of the analyses (Creswell, 2014). The question this test answers is, “Does a relationship exist between the two variables?” (Drost, 2011, p. 115). In practice, demonstrating statistical conclusion validity is important so that researchers can be sure the treatments and interventions they claim have an impact on an outcome actually are responsible for that outcome. “Threats to statistical conclusion validity . . . arise when experimenters draw inaccurate inferences from the data because of inadequate statistical power or the violation of statistical assumptions” (Creswell, 2014, p. 176). These threats can be mitigated through careful data analysis planning.

To ensure statistical conclusion validity, researchers must use the appropriate statistical power for the type of analyses being conducted (Cohen, 1992). Failure to use the appropriate statistical power for analyses can lead to a Type II error, an instance in which the researcher fails to reject the null hypothesis (Cohen, 1992). In this study, I used a power of .80, a power Cohen (1992) described as conventional. Using this power helped reduce the chance of obtaining a Type II error in this study.

Along with statistical power, effect size is important for ensuring statistical conclusion validity. For multiple regression analyses, Cohen (1992) identified three levels of effect sizes, small (.02), medium (.15), and large (.35). Using a small effect size may lead the researcher to exclude relevant data from analyses (Cohen, 1992), in which

case the researcher may not find significant results even though a pattern actually exists in the data (Creswell, 2014). On the other hand, using a large effect size may lead the researcher to include irrelevant data in analyses (Cohen, 1992), in which case the researcher may find significant results even though a pattern does not actually exist in the data (Creswell, 2014). To decrease the chances of accurately identifying significant relationships in this study, I used a medium effect size.

When considering statistical conclusion validity, it also is important that the researcher consider the assumptions of the statistical test being conducted (García-Pérez, 2012). The four assumptions of multiple regression are (a) the variables are normally distributed, (b) there is a linear relationship between the variables, (c) there is independence of errors, (d) there is homoscedasticity across all levels of the independent variable, and (e) there is multi (Osborne & Waters, 2002). To diagnosis violations of these assumptions, I used appropriate statistical techniques and tests as suggested by Keith (2015). I discuss these techniques in Chapter 4 along with the results of the data analysis.

Ethical Procedures

While conducting this study, I engaged in ethical research procedures. First, I did not begin collecting data until I received the appropriate approvals from Walden University's Institutional Review Board. Also, I provided parents with a letter of consent explaining the purpose and details of the study, including expectations for participation in the study (see Appendix B). Participation was voluntary, and parents could have chosen not to participate without any negative consequences. Return of the completed survey or online acceptance of the letter of consent on SurveyMonkey represented parents' consent

to participate in the study. I received permission to use the two instruments from which I garnered the survey items I used in my parent involvement survey (Appendix E) as well as permission from the school district's research planning department to conduct my study at Shady Lane Elementary School (Appendix F).

In this study, I was responsible for the generation, collection, and analysis of all data. Although I was a teacher at Shady Lane Elementary School for 2 1/2 years, I was not employed at the school at the time of data collection. I did not perceive that my previous employment at the school constituted an ethical concern in this study.

Participation in the study was strictly voluntary, and parents did not have to participate in the study if they did not feel comfortable doing so for any reason. Therefore, there should have been no undue pressure on any parent to participate in the study.

In addition, the survey data I collected were anonymous. I did consider the potential that participant anonymity could be compromised. It was possible that someone could have stood in the main office near the collection box for surveys, observed a student depositing a completed survey into the box, and retrieved the survey to identify the participant as the parent of the child who deposited the survey. However, this scenario was extremely unlikely because the collection box was locked and the office was staffed by at least one administrative assistant at all times. Although it was not the responsibility of the school staff to monitor the collection box, it was feasible to assume that anyone attempting to open or remove the box from the office would be noticed by office staff who would have intervened. Therefore, I did not anticipate any threats to the anonymity of the survey data I collected.

Finally, although the data I collected did not contain any identifying data, I planned to keep all the completed hard copy surveys in a locked filing cabinet in my home office. Also I planned to keep all digital records on a password protected computer in the same home office. In accordance with Walden University policy, I planned to destroy all raw data after 5 years.

Summary

The purpose of this study was to explore parents' attitudes associated with parental involvement at Shady Lane Elementary School. Specifically, I explored whether there was a significant relationship between parents' attitudes toward the school and three types of parental involvement identified by Epstein (1995): communicating, volunteering, and learning at home. Also, I explored whether there was a significant relationship between parents' attitudes toward overall parental involvement and the parental involvement types communicating, volunteering, and learning at home. There were three covariates in this study: level of parent education, parent employment status, and parent income.

The sample for this study consisted of parents of students in Grades 1-5 at Shady Lane Elementary School. I collected data using a survey based on items from Epstein and Salinas's (1993) Survey of School and Family Partnerships Questionnaire for Parents in Elementary and Middle Grades and Sheldon and Epstein's (2007) Questionnaire of Parent Survey of Family and Community Involvement in the Elementary and Middle Grades. To determine if there were significant relationships between the independent variables, dependent variables, and covariates, I conducted correlational and multiple regression analyses. Threats to construct and statistical conclusion validity existed in this

study. However, precautions were taken to mitigate the influence of these risks on study outcomes. In Chapter 4, I present the results of the data analyses.

Chapter 4: Results

The purpose of this study was to determine the relationship between parents' attitudes toward Shady Lane Elementary School (school quality, teacher concern, and child learning) and three types of parental involvement (communicating, volunteering, and learning at home) while controlling for demographic variables and to determine the relationship between parents' attitudes toward parental involvement and the three types of parental involvement (communicating, volunteering, and learning at home) while controlling for demographic variables. This study of parental involvement at Shady Lane Elementary School was focused around two research questions. The research questions and associated hypotheses are presented here:

Research Question 1: At Shady Lane Elementary School, what is the relationship between parents' attitudes toward the school (school quality, teacher concern, and child learning) and three types of parental involvement, communicating, volunteering, and learning at home, while controlling for parents' level of education, employment status, and income, a condition that potentially could impact student achievement at the school?

H_01 : At Shady Lane Elementary School, the variable parents' attitudes toward the school (school quality, teacher concern, and child learning) does not predict the three types of parental involvement, communicating, volunteering, and learning at home, while controlling for parents' level of education, employment status, and income, a condition that potentially could impact student achievement at the school.

H_A1 : At Shady Lane Elementary School, the variable parents' attitudes toward the school (school quality, teacher concern, and child learning) does predict the three types of parental involvement, communicating, volunteering, and learning at home, while

controlling for parents' level of education, employment status, and income, a condition that potentially could impact student achievement at the school.

Research Question 2: At Shady Lane Elementary School, what is the relationship between parents' attitudes toward parental involvement and three types of parental involvement, communicating, volunteering, and learning at home, while controlling for parents' level of education, employment status, and income?

H₀2: At Shady Lane Elementary School, the variable parents' attitudes toward parental involvement does not predict the three types of parental involvement, communicating, volunteering, and learning at home, while controlling for parents' level of education, employment status, and income, a condition that potentially could impact student achievement at the school.

H_A2: At Shady Lane Elementary School, the variable parents' attitudes toward parental involvement does predict the three types of parental involvement, communicating, volunteering, and learning at home, while controlling for parents' level of education, employment status, and income, a condition that potentially could impact student achievement at the school.

To measure the variables parents' attitudes toward the school and parents' attitudes toward parental involvement, I used items from Epstein and Salinas's (1993) School and Family Partnerships Survey of Parents in Elementary and Middle Grades, and Sheldon and Epstein's (2007) Parent Survey of Family and Community Involvement in the Elementary and Middle Grades. The remainder of this chapter contains a discussion of the data collection processes and results of data analysis.

Data Collection

At the time of data collection, a staff member in the school's main office informed me that there were 600 parents connected to students in Grades 1-5 in the school. For this reason, I invited 600 parents to participate in the study rather than the original 666 I intended to invite. Originally, data collection was scheduled to occur during the last 2 weeks of May, 2017. However, I did not receive approval to conduct my study until June 12, 2017. Therefore, I delivered the survey packets to teachers June 13, 2017, and the teachers distributed the packets on June 14, 2017. No teachers refused to help distribute the survey packets. One teacher forgot to distribute the survey packets on the assigned distribution day, but she distributed them the next day. After 8 days of data collection, on June 22, 2017, I distributed to teachers the second set of survey packets that included a letter thanking those who had already participated and reminding those who had not participated that they were welcome to do so. Teachers distributed those survey packets on June 23, 2017. Because I did not have an adequate number of responses at the end of the planned 2 weeks of data collection, I extended the data collection from 2 weeks to 3 weeks.

Baseline Description of the Sample

As planned, survey packets were sent to parents of all students in Grades 1-5 at Shady Lane Elementary School. Of the 600 parents invited to participate in the study, 108 parents returned surveys. This represented an 18% response rate. The frequency data for demographic variables used solely for describing the sample (i.e., demographic variables that were not used for inferential analyses) are presented in Table 2.

Table 2

Frequency Counts for Selected Demographic Variables (N = 108)

| Variable | <i>n</i> | % |
|---------------------------------|----------|------|
| Gender | | |
| Female | 96 | 88.9 |
| Male | 12 | 11.1 |
| Age ^a | | |
| 29 and younger | 27 | 25.0 |
| 30-39 | 45 | 41.7 |
| 40-49 | 26 | 24.1 |
| 50-59 | 5 | 4.6 |
| 60-69 | 5 | 4.6 |
| Ethnicity | | |
| Asian | 2 | 1.9 |
| Black | 84 | 77.8 |
| Hispanic/Latino | 11 | 10.2 |
| Multiracial | 6 | 5.6 |
| White | 5 | 4.6 |
| Marital status | | |
| Single | 70 | 64.8 |
| Married | 15 | 13.9 |
| Separated | 10 | 9.3 |
| Divorced | 9 | 8.3 |
| Widowed | 4 | 3.7 |
| Number of children ^b | | |
| 1 | 10 | 9.3 |
| 2 | 22 | 20.4 |
| 3 | 53 | 49.1 |
| 4 | 23 | 21.3 |

| Variable | <i>n</i> | % |
|---------------------------------|----------|------|
| Level of Education ^c | | |
| Less than high school diploma | 30 | 27.8 |
| High school diploma | 45 | 41.7 |
| Some college | 10 | 9.3 |
| Associate's degree | 6 | 5.6 |
| Bachelor's degree | 9 | 8.3 |
| Master's degree | 7 | 6.5 |
| Doctoral degree | 1 | 0.9 |
| Employment status | | |
| Unemployed | 15 | 13.9 |
| Self-employed | 1 | 0.9 |
| Employed part time | 9 | 8.3 |
| Employed full time | 83 | 76.9 |
| Annual income ^d | | |
| Below \$10,000 | 34 | 31.5 |
| \$10,000-20,000 | 10 | 9.3 |
| \$21,000-40,000 | 40 | 37.0 |
| \$41,000-60,000 | 11 | 10.2 |
| \$61,000-80,000 | 11 | 10.2 |
| More than \$80,000 | 2 | 1.9 |

^a*Mdn* = 34.5 years. ^b*Mdn* = 3 children. ^c*Mdn* = high school diploma. ^d*Mdn* = \$30,500.

As shown in Table 2, most of the parents surveyed were female (88.9%). Ages ranged from 29 and younger (25.0%) to 60–69 (4.6%) with a median age of 34.5 years. Most of the respondents were Black (77.8%) or Hispanic/Latino (10.2%). Most parents were single (64.8%). Almost 5 times more parents were single than were married (13.9%). The number of children ranged from one (9.3%) to four (21.3%) with a median of three children. There was a broad range of levels of education represented for the parents, with most having either a high school diploma (41.7%) or less than a high school diploma (27.8%), and the median education level was high school diploma. Parents who had less than a high school diploma ($n = 30$) almost equaled the number of parents who had some college or a college degree ($n = 33$). Most parents were employed full time

(76.9%). Annual income ranged from below \$10,000 (31.5%) to more than \$80,000 (1.9%) with a median income of \$30,500 per year.

No data about parents were available from Shady Lane Elementary school prior to the collection of data for this study. For this reason, it was not possible to determine whether the characteristics of the sample were proportional to the characteristics of the larger population of parents at the school. However, it was known that Shady Lane Elementary School is a predominantly Black Title I school. For this reason, I expected that most parents who responded to the survey would be Black and have low levels of income, which turned out to be the case. Most parents who responded to the survey were Black (77.8%) and had an annual income of less than \$40,000 (77.8%). Based on the 2017 poverty guidelines from the Office of the Assistant Secretary for Planning and Evaluation (2017), it is likely that many of these families were living below the poverty line. The characteristics (single parent household and low level of education) found among the parents who responded to the survey (64.8% and 69.5%, respectively) also contribute to low levels of income and support conditions associated with parents of children who attend Title I schools. Based on this logic, it was reasonable to assume that the sample in this study was similar to the larger population of parents at Shady Lane Elementary School.

Data Cleaning

Box plots were used to test the assumption of univariate normality (Appendix G). In the first round, 15 outliers were found from eight respondents. Those eight respondents were removed and another round of box plots was created using the data from the remaining 100 participants. In this second round, eight outliers were identified from

seven respondents. Those seven respondents were removed, and another round of box plots was created using the data from the remaining 93 respondents. In this third round of boxplots, 16 outliers were identified from 15 respondents. Given the extensive reduction of the sample after data cleaning, a decision was made to use the entire available sample ($N = 108$) but test the hypotheses using bivariate Spearman correlations.

Justification of Covariates

Spearman nonparametric correlations for the covariates are presented in Table 3. Results of these analyses indicated that communicating was significantly correlated with four of seven of the covariates at the $p < .05$ level. Specifically, the communicating score had the strongest positive correlations with education ($r_s = .39, p = .001$) and annual income ($r_s = .41, p = .001$). In addition, volunteering was significantly correlated with five of seven covariates at the $p < .05$ level. Specifically, the strongest correlations for the volunteering score were with being male ($r_s = .31, p = .001$), being from a racial/ethnic group other than Black ($r_s = -.35, p = .001$), having more education ($r_s = .35, p = .001$), and having more annual income ($r_s = .38, p = .001$). Also, learning at home was significantly correlated with three of seven covariates at the $p < .05$ level. Specifically, higher scores for learning at home were related to having more education ($r_s = .58, p = .001$) and having more annual income ($r_s = .57, p = .001$).

Table 3

Spearman Correlations for Demographics and Potential Covariates with Communicating, Volunteering, and Learning at Home Scales (N = 108)

| Variable | Communicating | Volunteering | Learning at home |
|-----------------------------------|---------------|--------------|------------------|
| Gender ^a | .15 | .31**** | .17 |
| Age | .21* | .21* | .22* |
| Black ^b | -.24** | -.35**** | -.10 |
| Number of children | -.09 | -.05 | -.13 |
| Level of education | .39**** | .35**** | .58**** |
| Full-time employment ^b | .12 | .17 | .18 |
| Annual income | .41**** | .38**** | .57**** |

^aGender: 1 = *Female*, 2 = *Male*. ^bCoding: 0 = *No*, 1 = *Yes*.

* $p < .05$. ** $p < .01$. *** $p < .005$. **** $p < .001$.

Results

Results of data analyses are presented in this section. Both descriptive and inferential statistics are provided. Because the entire available sample ($N = 108$), inclusive of outliers, was used for data analysis, the baseline description of the sample presented in Table 2 represents the description of the actual sample used for data analysis. Therefore, no additional description of the sample is provided here. However, descriptive statistics for parents' attitudes and types of involvement are presented. Then, results of preliminary analyses are presented. Finally, analyses conducted to answer the research questions are presented.

Descriptive Statistics for Parents' Attitudes and Types of Parental Involvement

Descriptive statistics for survey items about parents' attitudes and types of parental involvement are presented in this section. Descriptive statistics for parents' attitudes toward the school are presented in Table 4. When responses for the parents'

attitudes toward the school scale were examined by scale item, results showed that more parents responded positively (agree or strongly agree) than negatively (disagree or strongly disagree) to four of the seven parents' attitudes toward the school items. Those four items were (a) the teachers care about my child, (b) my child is learning as much as he/she can at this school, (c) this school is a good place for students and for parents, and (d) the school views parents as important partners. These results indicated that, in general, parents had a positive attitude toward the school. However, when individual responses were examined, results showed that more parents responded negatively to survey items ($n = 459$) more often than they responded positively to survey items ($n = 344$). Based on this interpretation of the data, it was prudent to describe parents' attitudes toward the school as negative.

Table 4

Descriptive Statistics for Parents' Attitudes Toward the School (N = 108)

| Survey item and responses | <i>N</i> | % |
|-----------------------------------|----------|------|
| This is a very good school. | | |
| Strongly disagree | 7 | 6.5 |
| Disagree | 61 | 56.5 |
| Don't know | 1 | .9 |
| Agree | 35 | 35.0 |
| Strongly agree | 4 | 3.7 |
| The teachers care about my child. | | |
| Strongly disagree | 7 | 6.5 |
| Disagree | 33 | 30.6 |
| Don't know | 3 | 2.8 |
| Agree | 51 | 47.2 |
| Strongly agree | 14 | 13.0 |
| Survey item and responses | <i>N</i> | % |
| I feel welcome at the school. | | |
| Strongly disagree | 9 | 8.3 |
| Disagree | 69 | 63.9 |

| | | |
|--|----|------|
| Don't know | 1 | .9 |
| Agree | 20 | 18.5 |
| Strongly agree | 9 | 8.3 |
| My child is learning as much as he/she can at this school. | | |
| Strongly disagree | 6 | 5.6 |
| Disagree | 31 | 28.7 |
| Don't know | 2 | 1.9 |
| Agree | 65 | 60.2 |
| Strongly agree | 4 | 3.7 |
| This school is a good place for students and for parents. | | |
| Strongly disagree | 3 | 2.8 |
| Disagree | 43 | 39.8 |
| Don't know | 4 | 3.7 |
| Agree | 53 | 49.1 |
| Strongly agree | 5 | 4.6 |
| The school views parents as important partners. | | |
| Strongly disagree | 9 | 8.3 |
| Disagree | 41 | 38.0 |
| Don't know | 3 | 2.8 |
| Agree | 49 | 45.4 |
| Strongly agree | 6 | 5.6 |
| The community supports this school. | | |
| Strongly disagree | 3 | 2.8 |
| Disagree | 66 | 61.1 |
| Don't know | 10 | 9.3 |
| Agree | 27 | 25.0 |
| Strongly agree | 2 | 1.9 |

Descriptive statistics for parents' attitudes toward parental involvement are presented in Table 5. When responses for the parents' attitudes toward parental involvement scale were examined by scale item, results showed that parents responded more positively (*agree* or *strongly agree*) than negatively (*disagree* or *strongly disagree*) to five of the 10 parents' attitudes toward parental involvement items. Those five items were (a) Make sure that their child learns at school, (b) Keep track of their child's

progress in school, (c) Show an interest in their child's schoolwork, (d) Help their child understand homework, and (e) Know if their child is having trouble in school. Parents responded more negatively than positively to four of the 10 items. Those items were (a), Show their child how to use things like a dictionary or encyclopedia, (b), Contact the teacher as soon as academic problems arise, (c) Test their child on subjects taught in school, and (d) Contact the teacher if they think their child is struggling in school. Positive and negative responses were equal for one of the 10 items: Teach their child to value schoolwork.

These results indicated that, in general, parents had a positive attitude toward the school. When individual responses were examined, results showed that, overall, parents responded positively to survey items ($n = 548$) more often than they responded negatively to survey items ($n = 512$). Based on this interpretation of the data, parents' attitudes toward parental involvement could be interpreted as positive. However, the difference between total positive responses and total negative responses was not notably substantial. For this reason, it was prudent to describe parents' attitudes toward parental involvement as divided or not clearly distinct.

Table 5

Descriptive Statistics for Parents' Attitudes Toward Parental Involvement (N = 108)

| Survey item and responses | <i>n</i> | % |
|--|----------|------|
| Make sure that their child learns at school. | | |
| Strongly disagree | 8 | 7.4 |
| Disagree | 34 | 31.5 |
| Don't know | 3 | 2.8 |
| Agree | 49 | 45.4 |
| Strongly agree | 14 | 13.0 |
| Teach their child to value schoolwork. | | |

| | | |
|--|----------|------|
| Strongly disagree | 19 | 17.6 |
| Disagree | 34 | 31.5 |
| Don't know | 2 | 1.9 |
| Agree | 44 | 40.7 |
| Strongly agree | 9 | 8.3 |
| Show their child how to use things like a dictionary or encyclopedia. | | |
| Strongly disagree | 1 | .9 |
| Disagree | 78 | 72.2 |
| Don't know | 4 | 3.7 |
| Agree | 16 | 14.8 |
| Strongly agree | 9 | 8.3 |
| Contact the teacher as soon as academic problems arise. | | |
| Strongly disagree | 5 | 4.6 |
| Disagree | 68 | 63.0 |
| Don't know | 5 | 4.6 |
| Agree | 23 | 21.3 |
| Strongly agree | 7 | 6.5 |
| Test their child on subjects taught in school. | | |
| Strongly disagree | 2 | 1.9 |
| Disagree | 75 | 69.4 |
| Don't know | 2 | 1.9 |
| Agree | 24 | 22.2 |
| Strongly agree | 5 | 4.6 |
| Keep track of their child's progress in school. | | |
| Strongly disagree | 3 | 2.8 |
| Disagree | 17 | 15.7 |
| Don't know | 1 | .9 |
| Agree | 77 | 71.3 |
| Strongly agree | 10 | 9.3 |
| <hr/> | | |
| Survey item and responses | | |
| | <i>n</i> | % |
| <hr/> | | |
| Contact the teacher if they think their child is struggling in school. | | |
| Strongly disagree | 2 | 1.9 |
| Disagree | 61 | 56.5 |
| Don't know | 1 | .9 |
| Agree | 32 | 29.6 |
| Strongly agree | 12 | 11.1 |
| Show an interest in their child's schoolwork. | | |
| Strongly disagree | 2 | 1.9 |
| Disagree | 14 | 13.0 |
| Don't know | 2 | 1.9 |

| | | |
|--|----|------|
| Agree | 75 | 69.4 |
| Strongly agree | 15 | 13.9 |
| Help their child understand homework. | | |
| Strongly disagree | 0 | 0 |
| Disagree | 33 | 30.6 |
| Don't know | 3 | 2.8 |
| Agree | 69 | 63.9 |
| Strongly agree | 3 | 2.8 |
| Know if their child is having trouble in school. | | |
| Strongly disagree | 0 | 0 |
| Disagree | 49 | 45.4 |
| Don't know | 4 | 3.7 |
| Agree | 46 | 42.6 |
| Strongly agree | 9 | 8.3 |

Descriptive statistics for types of parental involvement are presented in Table 6.

When responses for the types of parental involvement scale were examined by scale item, results showed that most parents had low (*Never* or *Rarely*) or moderate (*Occasionally*) levels of involvement. Parents reported low levels of involvement for both the communicating items, Talk to your child's teacher and Visit your child's school, and both the volunteering items, Go to a school event (e.g., sports, music, drama) or meeting and Volunteer in the classroom or at the school. Parents also reported low levels of involvement for six of the 10 learning at home items: (a) Read with your child, (b) Review and discuss the schoolwork your child brings home, (c) Go over spelling or vocabulary with your child, (d) Help your child prepare for math tests, (e) Ask your child to read something he/she wrote, and (f) Check to see if your child finished his or her homework. Parents reported moderate levels of involvement for four of the 10 learning at home items: (a) Help your child with math, (b) Help your child prepare for math tests, (c) Ask your child to read something he/she wrote, and (d) Check to see if your child

finished his or her homework. No parents reported high (*Frequently* or *Very frequently*) levels of parental involvement for any parental involvement scale items. Based on these results, it was reasonable to describe levels of parents' involvement at the school as low. These results confirmed data retrieved from the school prior to the start of this study.

Table 6

Descriptive Statistics for Types of Parental Involvement (N = 108)

| Survey item and responses | N | % |
|--|----|------|
| Communicating | | |
| Talk to your child's teacher? | | |
| Never (0 times a year) | 8 | 7.4 |
| Rarely (1-3 times a year) | 66 | 61.1 |
| Occasionally (4-9 times a year) | 21 | 19.4 |
| Frequently (At least twice a month) | 7 | 6.5 |
| Very Frequently (At least once a week) | 6 | 5.6 |
| Visit your child's school? | | |
| Never (0 times a year) | 64 | 59.3 |
| Rarely (1-3 times a year) | 15 | 13.9 |
| Occasionally (4-9 times a year) | 19 | 17.6 |
| Frequently (At least twice a month) | 6 | 5.6 |
| Very Frequently (At least once a week) | 4 | 3.7 |

| Survey item and responses | <i>N</i> | % |
|---|----------|------|
| Volunteering | | |
| Go to a school event (e.g., sports, music, drama) or meeting? | | |
| Never (0 times a year) | 75 | 69.4 |
| Rarely (1-3 times a year) | 12 | 11.1 |
| Occasionally (4-9 times a year) | 16 | 14.8 |
| Frequently (At least twice a month) | 0 | 0.0 |
| Very Frequently (At least once a week) | 5 | 4.6 |
| Volunteer in the classroom or at the school? | | |
| Never (0 times a year) | 75 | 69.4 |
| Rarely (1-3 times a year) | 18 | 16.7 |
| Occasionally (4-9 times a year) | 10 | 9.3 |
| Frequently (At least twice a month) | 2 | 1.9 |
| Very Frequently (At least once a week) | 3 | 2.8 |
| Learning at home | | |
| Read with your child? | | |
| Never (0 times a year) | 35 | 32.4 |
| Rarely (1-3 times a year) | 21 | 19.4 |
| Occasionally (4-9 times a year) | 0 | 0.0 |
| Frequently (At least twice a month) | 43 | 39.8 |
| Very Frequently (At least once a week) | 9 | 8.3 |
| Review and discuss the schoolwork your child brings home? | | |
| Never (0 times a year) | 56 | 51.9 |
| Rarely (1-3 times a year) | 15 | 13.9 |
| Occasionally (4-9 times a year) | 10 | 9.3 |
| Frequently (At least twice a month) | 21 | 19.4 |
| Very Frequently (At least once a week) | 6 | 5.6 |
| Help your child with math? | | |
| Never (0 times a year) | 7 | 6.5 |
| Rarely (1-3 times a year) | 6 | 5.6 |
| Occasionally (4-9 times a year) | 77 | 71.3 |
| Frequently (At least twice a month) | 7 | 6.5 |
| Very Frequently (At least once a week) | 11 | 10.2 |
| Go over spelling or vocabulary with your child? | | |
| Never (0 times a year) | 4 | 3.7 |
| Rarely (1-3 times a year) | 70 | 64.8 |
| Occasionally (4-9 times a year) | 11 | 10.2 |
| Frequently (At least twice a month) | 14 | 13.0 |
| Very Frequently (At least once a week) | 9 | 8.3 |

| Survey item and responses | <i>N</i> | % |
|--|----------|------|
| Learning at home | | |
| Ask your child about what he/she is learning in math? | | |
| Never (0 times a year) | 2 | 1.9 |
| Rarely (1-3 times a year) | 14 | 13.0 |
| Occasionally (4-9 times a year) | 69 | 63.9 |
| Frequently (At least twice a month) | 9 | 8.3 |
| Very Frequently (At least once a week) | 14 | 13.0 |
| Help your child with reading/language arts homework? | | |
| Never (0 times a year) | 2 | 1.9 |
| Rarely (1-3 times a year) | 12 | 11.1 |
| Occasionally (4-9 times a year) | 73 | 67.6 |
| Frequently (At least twice a month) | 10 | 9.3 |
| Very Frequently (At least once a week) | 11 | 10.2 |
| Help your child prepare for math tests? | | |
| Never (0 times a year) | 2 | 1.9 |
| Rarely (1-3 times a year) | 69 | 63.9 |
| Occasionally (4-9 times a year) | 13 | 12.0 |
| Frequently (At least twice a month) | 12 | 11.1 |
| Very Frequently (At least once a week) | 12 | 11.1 |
| Ask your child how well he/she is doing in school? | | |
| Never (0 times a year) | 7 | 6.5 |
| Rarely (1-3 times a year) | 6 | 5.6 |
| Occasionally (4-9 times a year) | 60 | 55.6 |
| Frequently (At least twice a month) | 21 | 19.4 |
| Very Frequently (At least once a week) | 14 | 13.0 |
| Ask your child to read something he/she wrote? | | |
| Never (0 times a year) | 6 | 5.6 |
| Rarely (1-3 times a year) | 63 | 58.3 |
| Occasionally (4-9 times a year) | 0 | 0.0 |
| Frequently (At least twice a month) | 26 | 24.1 |
| Very Frequently (At least once a week) | 13 | 12.0 |
| Check to see if your child finished his or her homework? | | |
| Never (0 times a year) | 55 | 50.9 |
| Rarely (1-3 times a year) | 15 | 13.9 |
| Occasionally (4-9 times a year) | 9 | 8.3 |
| Frequently (At least twice a month) | 14 | 13.0 |
| Very Frequently (At least once a week) | 15 | 13.9 |

Preliminary Data Analyses

To test the statistical assumptions for the data analyses, regression assumption testing was performed using normal P-P plots and residual scatterplots. Given that some of the assumptions for this regression model were not met (normality, independence of errors and homoscedasticity), these regression findings need to be interpreted cautiously. The normal P-P plots are presented in Appendix H, and the residual scatterplots are presented in Appendix I.

Scale reliability analysis was conducted to test the internal consistency of the scales. The psychometric characteristics for the five summated scale scores, parents' attitudes toward school, parents' attitudes toward parental involvement, communicating, volunteering, and learning at home, are presented in Table 7. The Cronbach's α reliability coefficient ranged from $\alpha = .62$ to $\alpha = .87$. Two of the scales had alpha coefficients $\alpha < .70$ which was not surprising given only two items were used in each scale (Multon & Coleman, 2010). Based on these results, it is suggested that these scales be interpreted with caution.

Research Questions

As stated previously, the assumptions for multiple regression were not met so the hypotheses were tested using Spearman correlations even though bivariate correlations do not allow for the inclusion of control variables. The three regression models that were originally proposed are included later in this chapter in the Additional Findings section. A cautionary footnote about the models not meeting basic assumptions is included with these results.

Table 7

Psychometric Characteristics for Summated Scale Scores (N = 108)

| Score | No. of items | <i>M</i> | <i>SD</i> | Min. | Max | α |
|--|--------------|----------|-----------|------|------|----------|
| Parents' attitudes toward the school ^a | 7 | 2.94 | 0.69 | 1.00 | 5.00 | .74 |
| Parents' attitude toward parental involvement ^a | 10 | 3.09 | 0.68 | 1.60 | 5.00 | .83 |
| Communicating ^b | 2 | 2.11 | 0.88 | 1.00 | 5.00 | .62 |
| Volunteering ^b | 2 | 1.56 | 0.86 | 1.00 | 5.00 | .66 |
| Learning at home ^b | 10 | 2.78 | 0.79 | 1.00 | 5.00 | .87 |

^aScale based on a 5-point metric: 1 (*Strongly Disagree*) to 5 (*Strongly Agree*).

^bScale based on a 5-point metric: 1 (*Never, 0 times a year*) to 5 (*Very frequently, At least once a week*).

Research Question 1 was, “At Shady Lane Elementary School, what is the relationship between parents’ attitudes toward the school (school quality, teacher concern, and child learning) and three types of parental involvement, communicating, volunteering, and learning at home, while controlling for parents’ level of education, employment status, and income, a condition that potentially could impact student achievement at the school?” and the related null hypothesis (H_01) was, “At Shady Lane Elementary School, the variable parents’ attitudes toward the school (school quality, teacher concern, and child learning) does not predict the three types of parental involvement, communicating, volunteering, and learning at home, while controlling for parents’ level of education, employment status, and income.”

The Spearman correlations used to test the null hypothesis for the predictor variables in Research Question 1 along with the three types of parental involvement, communicating, volunteering, and learning at home, are presented in Table 8. Parents’ attitudes toward the school was significantly correlated ($p < .05$) with all three parental

involvement types: communicating ($r_s = .47, p = .001$), volunteering ($r_s = .36, p = .001$), and learning at home ($r_s = .67, p = .001$). Parents' attitudes toward parental involvement also was significantly correlated ($p < .05$) with all three parental involvement types: communicating ($r_s = .49, p = .001$), volunteering ($r_s = .54, p = .001$), and learning at home ($r_s = .55, p = .001$). Because the use of control variables was not available in bivariate Spearman correlations, these findings provided only partial support to reject the null hypothesis for Research Question 1.

Table 8

Spearman Correlations for Parents' Attitudes Scores with Communicating, Volunteering, and Learning at Home Scales (N = 108)

| Variable | Communicating | Volunteering | Learning at home |
|---|---------------|--------------|------------------|
| Parents' attitudes toward the school | .47**** | .36**** | .67**** |
| Parents' attitude toward parental involvement | .49**** | .54**** | .55**** |

* $p < .05$. ** $p < .01$. *** $p < .005$. **** $p < .001$.

Research Question 2 was, "At Shady Lane Elementary School, what is the relationship between parents' attitudes toward parental involvement and three types of parental involvement, communicating, volunteering, and learning at home, while controlling for parents' level of education, employment status, and income?" The related null hypothesis (H_02) was, "At Shady Lane Elementary School, the variable parents' attitudes toward parental involvement does not predict the three types of parental involvement, communicating, volunteering, and learning at home, while controlling for parents' level of education, employment status, and income." The Spearman correlations used to test the null hypothesis for the predictor variables in Research Question 2 along

with the three types of parental involvement, communicating, volunteering, and learning at home, are presented in Table 8.

Results showed that higher scores for communicating were related to higher scores for parents' attitudes toward parental involvement ($r_s = .49, p = .001$). In addition, higher scores for volunteering were related to higher scores for parents' attitudes toward parental involvement ($r_s = .54, p = .001$). Also, higher scores for learning at home were related to higher scores for parents' attitudes toward parental involvement ($r_s = .55, p = .001$). Because the use of control variables was not available in bivariate Spearman correlations, these findings provided only partial support to reject the null hypothesis for Research Question 2.

Additional Findings

As stated previously, Spearman correlations were used to partially test the hypothesis because some of the assumptions for this regression model were not met (normality, independence of errors and homoscedasticity). As an additional set of findings to suggest possible avenues for future research, the three originally proposed regression models are included here. However, these findings need to be interpreted cautiously.

The results of the multiple regression analysis model that predicted the communicating score based on the predictor variables are presented in Table 9. The five-variable model was statistically significant ($p = .001$) and accounted for 43.5% of the variance in the dependent variable. Specifically, higher scores for communicating were related to more education ($\beta = .34, p = .008$), higher scores for parents' attitudes toward

the school ($\beta = .21, p = .04$), and higher scores for parents' attitudes toward parental involvement ($\beta = .38, p = .001$).

Table 9

Prediction of Communicating Scale Score Based on Selected Variables. Multiple Regression (N = 108)

| Variable | <i>B</i> | <i>SE</i> | β | <i>p</i> |
|--|----------|-----------|---------|----------|
| Intercept | -0.08 | 0.41 | | .84 |
| Level of education | 0.20 | 0.07 | .34 | .008 |
| Employment status | -0.10 | 0.07 | -.12 | .17 |
| Annual income | -0.10 | 0.09 | -.16 | .25 |
| Parents' attitudes toward the school | 0.26 | 0.13 | .21 | .04 |
| Parents' attitudes toward parental involvement | 0.50 | 0.13 | .38 | .001 |

Note. Final Model: $F(5, 102) = 15.69, p = .001. R^2 = .435$. Given that some of the assumptions for this regression model were not met (normality, independence of errors and homoscedasticity), these findings need to be interpreted cautiously.

The results of the multiple regression analysis model that predicted the volunteering score based on the predictor variables are presented in Table 10. The five-variable model was statistically significant ($p = .001$) and accounted for 35.5% of the variance in the dependent variable. Specifically, higher scores for volunteering were related to higher scores for parents' attitudes toward parental involvement ($\beta = .45, p = .001$). The parents' attitudes toward the school score was not significant, $\beta = .15, p = .17$.

Table 10

Prediction of Volunteering Scale Score Based on Selected Variables. Multiple Regression (N = 108)

| Variable | <i>B</i> | <i>SE</i> | β | <i>p</i> |
|--|----------|-----------|---------|----------|
| Intercept | -0.71 | 0.43 | | .10 |
| Level of education | 0.11 | 0.08 | .19 | .16 |
| Employment status | -0.03 | 0.08 | -.04 | .70 |
| Annual income | -0.07 | 0.09 | -.11 | .43 |
| Parents' attitudes toward the school | 0.18 | 0.13 | .15 | .17 |
| Parents' attitudes toward parental involvement | 0.57 | 0.13 | .45 | .001 |

Note. Final Model: $F(5, 102) = 11.21, p = .001. R^2 = .355$. Given that some of the assumptions for this regression model were not met (normality, independence of errors and homoscedasticity), these findings need to be interpreted cautiously.

The results of the multiple regression analysis model that predicted the learning at home score based on the predictor variables are presented in Table 11. The five-variable model was statistically significant ($p = .001$) and accounted for 66.8% of the variance in the dependent variable. Specifically, higher scores for learning at home were related to more education ($\beta = .41, p = .001$), higher scores for parents' attitudes toward the school ($\beta = .29, p = .001$), and higher scores for parents' attitudes toward parental involvement ($\beta = .27, p = .001$).

Table 11

Prediction of Learning at Home Scale Score Based on Selected Variables. Multiple Regression (N = 108)

| Variable | <i>B</i> | <i>SE</i> | β | <i>p</i> |
|--|----------|-----------|---------|----------|
| Intercept | 0.48 | 0.28 | | .09 |
| Level of education | 0.21 | 0.05 | .41 | .001 |
| Employment status | -0.05 | 0.05 | -.07 | .29 |
| Annual income | 0.01 | 0.06 | .02 | .88 |
| Parents' attitudes toward the school | 0.33 | 0.09 | .29 | .001 |
| Parents' attitudes toward parental involvement | 0.32 | 0.09 | .27 | .001 |

Note. Final Model: $F(5, 102) = 41.09, p = .001. R^2 = .668$. Given that some of the assumptions for this regression model were not met (normality, independence of errors and homoscedasticity), these findings need to be interpreted cautiously.

Summary

Survey responses from 108 parents of students at Shady Lane Elementary School were used to test the null hypotheses for the two research questions posed for this study. For Research Question 1, data analysis was conducted to determine the relationship between parents' attitudes toward Shady Lane Elementary School (school quality, teacher concern, and child learning) and three types of parental involvement, communicating, volunteering, and learning at home, while controlling for demographic variables. For Research Question 2, data analysis was conducted to determine the relationship between parents' attitudes toward parental involvement and the three types of parental involvement, communicating, volunteering, and learning at home, while controlling for demographic variables. Results of data analysis showed partial support to reject the null hypothesis for Research Question 1, that parents' attitudes toward the school (school quality, teacher concern, and child learning) does not predict the three types of parental

involvement, communicating, volunteering, and learning at home, while controlling for parents' level of education, employment status, and income. Results of data analysis also showed partial support to reject the null hypothesis for Research Question 2, that parents' attitudes toward parental involvement does not predict the three types of parental involvement, communicating, volunteering, and learning at home, while controlling for parents' level of education, employment status, and income. As stated previously, these findings should be interpreted with caution. In Chapter 5, these findings are compared to the literature, conclusions and implications will be drawn, and a series of recommendations will be suggested.

Chapter 5: Discussion, Conclusions, and Recommendations

The purpose of this study was to determine the relationship between parents' attitudes and types of parental involvement at Shady Lane Elementary School. The first associated relationship I explored was the relationship between parents' attitudes toward Shady Lane Elementary School (school quality, teacher concern, and child learning) and three types of parental involvement (communicating, volunteering, and learning at home) while controlling for demographic variables. The second relationship I explored was the relationship between parents' attitudes toward parental involvement and the three types of parental involvement (communicating, volunteering, and learning at home) while controlling for demographic variables. This study was a quantitative correlational study using a survey approach to data collection. Data for this study were collected from parents of students in Grades 1-5. Invitations to participate in the study were distributed to 600 parents. Data were collected using a parent involvement survey, which included selected items from Epstein and Salinas's (1993) School and Family Partnerships Survey of Parents in Elementary and Middle Grades, and Sheldon and Epstein's (2007) Parent Survey of Family and Community Involvement in the Elementary and Middle Grades.

This study was conducted to address a gap in practice at Shady Lane Elementary School that could lead to social change. The gap in practice was that no exploration had been conducted at the school to determine how parents' attitudes toward the school and parents' attitudes toward parental involvement might have been impacting parental involvement although the literature has shown connections between these variables. This gap in practice was of interest in this study because it was possible that parents' attitudes toward the school and parents' attitudes toward parental involvement were negatively

impacting parental involvement at the school, which could in turn have been negatively impacting student achievement directly and indirectly by impacting student attendance, behavior, and self-efficacy.

Results of the Spearman correlations showed that parents' attitudes toward the school (school quality, teacher concern, and child learning) and parents' attitudes toward parental involvement were significantly and positively related to communicating, volunteering, and learning at home. Because the use of control variables was not available in the bivariate Spearman correlations conducted on the data, these findings provided only partial support to reject the null hypothesis for Research Questions 1 and 2. Results of the multiple regression analysis models showed that parents' attitudes toward the school and parents' attitudes toward parental involvement were significantly and positively related to communicating and learning at home. In addition, parents' attitudes toward parental involvement were significantly and positively related to volunteering.

Interpretation of the Descriptive Findings

Results of descriptive data analyses are presented in Chapter 4. In this section, I discuss those results in relationship to the literature. The discussion is organized by topics: attitudes toward the school, attitudes toward parental involvement, and types of parental involvement in which parents engaged.

Attitudes Toward the School

Descriptive data for attitudes toward the school were examined in two ways. First, results were examined using the seven items that made up the parent attitudes toward the school scale. When examined this way, results suggested that parents' attitudes toward

the school were more positive than negative: more parents replied positively to four of the seven parents' attitudes toward the school scale items.

Results from previous studies also showed that parents have positive attitudes toward their children's schools. For example, Tompson et al. (2013) found that parents perceived the quality of their children's school to be either good or excellent. The contributors factors to school quality were characteristics of stakeholders, school safety, management of the school budget, and student performance (Tompson et al., 2013). Also, Kimelberg and Billingham (2013) found that parents had positive attitudes toward their children's schools with regard to the amount of student diversity evident in the schools.

Second, results were examined using the scale response options: 1 (strongly disagree), 2 (disagree), 3 (neither disagree / agree), 4 (agree), and 5 (strongly agree). The responses agree or strongly agree were interpreted as responses that reflected positive parent attitudes toward the school, and the responses disagree or strongly disagree were interpreted as responses that reflected negative parent attitudes toward the school. When the data were examined in this way, results showed that more parents responded negatively to survey items ($n = 459$) than they responded positively to survey items ($n = 344$). These results were interpreted to mean that more parents had a negative attitude toward the school than a positive attitude. Because the data representing the scale response options (agree, strongly agree, disagree, strongly disagree) were direct measures of parents' attitudes, this interpretation of the data was determined to be more accurate.

Results from previous studies also showed that parents have negative attitudes toward their children's schools. Rodriguez et al. (2014) found that parents expressed negative attitudes toward the school when the school failed to inform them of what they

considered to be vital information. Additionally, parents had negative attitudes toward the school when they perceived it was out of compliance with state mandates (Rodriguez et al., 2014). McKenna and Millen (2013) found that mothers expressed negative feelings toward the school with regard to the school's communication with parents, inclusion of parents in decision-making processes, and opportunities for parents to participate.

Attitudes Toward Parental Involvement

Descriptive data for attitudes toward parental involvement were examined in two ways. First, results were examined using the 10 items that made up the parent attitudes toward parental involvement scale. When examined this way, results suggested that parents' attitudes toward parental involvement were positive. For five of the 10 scale items, parents responded more positively than negatively, and for four of the 10 scale items parents responded more negatively than positively. Parent responses for one scale item were equally positive and negative. When examined this way, results suggested that parents' attitudes toward the school were more negative than positive. Second, results were examined using the scale response options: 1 (*strongly disagree*), 2 (*disagree*), 3 (*neither disagree / agree*), 4 (*agree*), and 5 (*strongly agree*). The responses *agree* or *strongly agree* were interpreted as responses that reflected positive parent attitudes toward the school, and the responses *disagree* or *strongly disagree* were interpreted as responses that reflected negative parent attitudes toward the school. When the data were examined in this way, results showed that parents' negative responses were almost equal to their positive responses. For this reason, it was prudent to describe parents' attitudes toward parental involvement as divided or not clearly distinct.

Results from previous studies also showed mixed results with regard to parents' attitudes toward parental involvement. For example, in a quantitative study of parents of elementary school children, Bracke and Corts (2012) found that parents identified by teachers as involved and parents identified by teachers as uninvolved both had positive attitudes toward parental involvement. However, parents identified by teachers as uninvolved were less likely to perceive parental involvement as a social norm (Bracke & Corts, 2012), a condition, according to Azjen and Fishbein's (1973) theory of planned behavior, that could impact their intent to become involved and ultimately their actual involvement. Also, among Black fathers in particular, Abel (2012) found that when compared to fathers who did not graduate from high school or earn a GED, fathers with higher levels of education had more positive perceptions about home-based parental involvement activities, such as talking to their children about school and the value of school, helping their children with homework, or listening to their children read. Finally, Zhou (2014) found that parents attitudes toward parental involvement were positive with regard to their beliefs that parents should engage in activities outside of school that help support their children's academic learning.

Types of Parental Involvement in Which Parents Engaged

Descriptive data for types of parental involvement in which parents engaged were examined by scale item. Results showed that most parents had low (never or rarely) or moderate (occasionally) levels of involvement. Parents reported low levels of involvement for the communicating items and the volunteering items. Parents also reported low levels of involvement for six of the 10 learning at home items and moderate levels of involvement for four of the 10 learning at home items. No parents reported high

(frequently or very frequently) levels of parental involvement for any parental involvement scale items. Based on these results, it was reasonable to describe levels of parents' involvement at the school as low.

Research that directly supports these findings is lacking. Although much research has been conducted on the relationships between a variety of independent variables and types of parental involvement, research reviewed for this study did not include statements regarding the actual levels of parental involvement found at the study sites. However, Poza et al. (2014) showed that Latino parents may be less likely to engage in school-related parental involvement behaviors because they feel inhibited by perceived language barriers. Also, ongoing efforts by state (State of Texas Education Code, 1995) and national (Education Commission of the States, 2015; Harvard Family Research Project, 2015; No Child Left Behind Act of 2001, 2002) level agencies to improve levels of parental involvement in schools is evidence that levels of parental involvement, including communicating, volunteering, and learning at home, are low in the United States.

Interpretation of the Inferential Findings

Results of inferential data analyses are presented in Chapter 4. Results of the Spearman correlations showed that parents' attitudes toward the school (school quality, teacher concern, and child learning) and parents attitudes toward parental involvement were significantly and positively related to communicating, volunteering, and learning at home. Results of the multiple regression model also showed that parents' attitudes toward the school were related to communicating and learning at home and that parents' attitudes toward parental involvement were related to communicating, volunteering, and learning at home. Results also showed relationships between the covariates level of education and

two types of parental involvement explored in this study: communicating and learning at home. Other researchers reported similar findings, which I discuss in the next section. I also discuss the study findings in relation to the theoretical framework for this study, Ajzen and Fishbein's (1972) theory of planned behavior.

Support for Findings in the Literature

Support for the study findings are evident in the literature. In this section, the discussion of the support from the literature is divided into three sections. The first two sections are focused on the two independent variables in this study: parents' attitudes toward the school and parents' attitudes toward parental involvement. The third section is focused on the covariates in this study.

Parents' attitudes toward the school. Results of the Spearman correlations showed that parents' attitudes toward the school were significantly and positively related to communicating, volunteering, and learning at home. Results of the multiple regression model also showed that parents' attitudes toward the school were related to communicating and learning at home. Other researchers who studied low income, Black, and other minority and marginalized populations found similar results. For example, Toldson and Lemmons (2013) found that parents who perceived their children's schools to be supportive were more likely to participate in their children's education by visiting the school, an example of the parental involvement type volunteering. Murray et al. (2014) found that parents were more likely to volunteer at the school when they had a positive perception of the school with regard to their relationships with teachers and invitations to participate at the school. When parents perceived interactions with teachers

to be hostile or aggressive, they were less likely to volunteer at the school (Murray et al., 2014).

Myers (2015) found that parents who perceived they were not treated with respect or were judged in some way by their children's teachers had negative attitudes toward their children's school. Parents who had more positive attitudes toward the school were more likely to volunteer and communicate with teachers (Myers, 2015). Barr and Saltmarsh (2014) found that parents' attitudes toward school principals and teachers, who can be interpreted as representatives of a school, impacted the degree to which parents were physically engaged at the school and the extent of academic distance they maintained. For example, parents who held negative attitudes toward principals and teachers at their children's schools were less likely to volunteer at the school or help their children learn at home.

McKenna and Millen (2013) found that parents who perceived that they had a voice and a place at their children's school were more likely to communicate with teachers, be active in the school setting, and help their children at home. In other words, it could be assumed that the parents in that study who did not feel supported by the school (i.e., had negative attitudes toward the school) were less likely to be involved in communicating, volunteering, and learning at home. Similarly, Yoder and Lopez (2013) found that parents who perceived they were ignored, dismissed, or otherwise marginalized were less likely to engage in activities that constituted communicating, volunteering, and learning at home.

Parents' attitudes toward parental involvement. Results of the Spearman correlations showed that parents' attitudes toward parental involvement were

significantly and positively related to communicating, volunteering, and learning at home. Results of the multiple regression model also showed that parents' attitudes toward parental involvement were related to communicating, volunteering, and learning at home. Other researchers found similar results. For example, Grolnick (2015) found that parents who perceive they have more autonomy with regard to whether they engage in their children's education are more motivated to engage in parental involvement behaviors, specifically school involvement, cognitive involvement, and personal involvement. Examples Grolnick provided for each of these three types of parent involvement behaviors reflected the parenting involvement types communicating (e.g., talking to teachers), volunteering (e.g., attending activities and events at the school), and learning at home (e.g., asking what the child is learning in school). Considering Hoover-Dempsey and Sandler's (2005) model of parental involvement, parents' motivational beliefs can be considered a representation of their attitudes toward parental involvement. Interpreted in this way, these results support the findings in this study that parents' attitudes toward parental involvement are related to the parental involvement activities communicating, volunteering, and learning at home.

Covariates. Results of the Spearman correlations showed that the covariates level of education and income were significantly and positively related to communicating, volunteering, and learning at home. These findings are supported in the literature, which I discuss in this section. Specifically, I provide support for level of education followed by income represented by socioeconomic status.

Level of education. Abel (2012) found, for Black fathers in particular, engagement in home-based parental involvement activities is more evident for fathers

with advanced levels of education compared to fathers with a general education degree or no high school diploma. Examples of activities Abel included in the variable home-based parental engagement were “listening to their child read a story, talking with their child about school, telling their child that school is important, discussing what is watched on television with the child, and helping the child practice skills” (p. 168). These activities represent the parental involvement type learning at home and provide support for findings in this study that showed a relationship between level of parent education and learning at home.

Hayes (2012) found that level of education can significantly and positively impact levels of school-based parental involvement. Among Black parents in particular, Hayes found that parents with higher levels of education were more likely to volunteer at the school by attending and participating in school events. Similar to Hayes (2012), Fishman and Nickerson (2015) found that parents with higher levels of education are more likely to engage in activities that take place in the school. Although Fishman and Nickerson did not clearly define what they meant by activities that take place in the school, based on Epstein’s (1995) explanations of types of parental involvement, it is possible that the activities that take place in the school to which Fishman and Nickerson refer could represent the parental involvement type communicating, if the school-based activity involved meeting with teachers or principals for example, or volunteering, if the school-based activity involved helping teachers in the classroom or at other school functions.

Toldson and Lemmons (2013) also found that level of education was related to parental involvement activities in the school. Specifically, the researchers found that, in general, parents with less than a high school diploma are less likely to engage in parental

involvement activities associated with school visits when compared to parents with higher levels of education (Toldson & Lemmons, 2013). Like Fishman and Nickerson (2015), Toldson and Lemmons did not clearly define what they meant by school visits. It would be feasible to assume that parents' visited the school for the purpose of attending an activity or event, in which case the type of parental involvement would be considered volunteering. However, Toldson and Lemmons also discuss the connection between visits to the school and parents' interests in their children's academic success after high school as well as satisfaction with teacher quality and academics, a connection that indicates the purpose for the parents' visits to the school was likely for the purpose of discussing their children's academic progress with teachers or other school staff members. Based on this interpretation of the variable visit the school, the results in Toldson and Lemmons's study can be considered support for findings in this study that connect parents' level of education to the parent involvement type communicating.

Socioeconomic status. Renth et al. (2015) found that income was associated with levels of parental involvement. In particular, Renth et al. found that parents from low socioeconomic backgrounds lacked resources which would allow them to participate in their child's education by communicating, volunteering, and learning home. In the qualitative study, parents explained that they often were unable to access student grades and otherwise communicate with the school because the school initiated contact with parents electronically, and parents did not have access to technology. Parents also explained that sometimes lack of money for gas kept them from attending school functions (Renth et al., 2015; i.e., income prohibited parents from volunteering at the school). Finally, parents explained that sometimes they were unable to bring their

children to the library to access needed material to complete assignments or that they otherwise personally lacked the knowledge needed to help their children in this capacity (Renth et al., 2015; i.e., parents were unable to help their children learn at home).

In a quantitative study, Zhang et al. (2013) also found that parents characterized as members of low socioeconomic households are less likely to engage in parental involvement activities that require them to visit their children's schools. Zhang et al. considered a parent to have been engaged in a school activity if the parent had "(a) attended a general school meeting, (b) attended a school/class event, (c) volunteered at their child's school, or (d) attended a parent/teacher conference other than an IEP (individualized education program) meeting" (p. 32). The first three activities Zhang et al. described are examples of volunteering, and the last activity described is an example of communicating. Based on this interpretation, Zhang et al.'s results support the findings in this study that income is related to the parental involvement types communicating and volunteering.

Toldson and Lemmons (2013) found that parents who live in communities characterized by high levels of poverty are less likely to engage in parental involvement activities that require them to visit their children's schools. As discussed previously, Toldson and Lemmons did not clearly define what they meant by school visits. However, based on other discussions in their study, it is reasonable to interpret school visits as the parental involvement type communicating.

Hoglund et al. (2015) found that parents characterized as members of low socioeconomic households are less likely to assist their children with homework or to provide school-based support. Although helping with homework is a clear example of the

parental involvement type learning at home, the interpretation of school-based support is less obvious. Hoglund et al. described school-based support as “engagement in child’s schooling [and] encouragement of child’s learning” (p. 521), both of which can be interpreted as the parental involvement type learning at home. However, if engagement in a child’s schooling includes discussing a child’s behavioral or academic issues, the parental involvement activity engagement in a child’s schooling also could be considered communicating. Although these distinctions were not made clear in Hoglund et al.’s study, results of their study support the connection between income and at least one parental involvement type I explored in this study.

Relation of Findings to the Theoretical Framework

Descriptive data in this study indicated that parents’ attitudes toward Shady Lane Elementary School are negative, and parents’ attitudes toward parental involvement are mixed. Parents are never or rarely engaged in communicating or volunteering behaviors. Also, they are typically never or rarely engaged in learning at home, although some parents are occasionally engaged in learning at home. Results of the Spearman correlations showed that parents’ attitudes toward the school and parents’ attitudes toward parental involvement were significantly and positively related to communicating, volunteering, and learning at home. Results of the multiple regression model showed that that parents’ attitudes toward the school and parents attitudes toward parental involvement were related to communicating and learning at home.

Findings from this study can be explained, in part, by considering aspects of Ajzen and Fishbein’s (1972, 2002, 2012) theory of planned behavior. In their theory, Ajzen and Fishbein (2012) posited that behavior is the result of a person’s intent to

behave, which may be predicted by examining three specific determinants. These determinants are (a) attitude toward the behavior, (b) the extent to which a person perceives that he or she has control over successful engagement in the behavior, and (c) a person's beliefs about how important others expect him or her to behave (Ajzen, 2012). Important others may be situated in familial, work, or social settings (Ajzen, 2002).

Attitude toward the school. Using the scale response options ranging from *strongly disagree* to *strongly agree*, parents' attitudes toward the school were interpreted as negative. Results of this study showed that parents, the majority of whom were Black (77.8%) or Hispanic (10.2%), had a negative attitude toward the school and that parents' negative attitudes were related to communicating, volunteering, and learning at home. According to the literature, minority parents may have negative attitudes toward the school when they perceive the school to be culturally insensitive (McKenna & Millen, 2013; Yoder & Lopez, 2013) or when the school culture is one in which they feel marginalized (Yoder & Lopez, 2013). If people feel marginalized, it is reasonable to assume that they would share these negative feelings with people in their lives who are important to them (e.g., friends, spouses, coworkers, or other parents of children at the school), who likely would express a similar negative attitude in response. However, it also is likely that the important others would express their perceptions about expected response behavior; in other words, it is likely that the important others would give advice about how to behave in response to the marginalizing culture of the school. According to Ajzen and Fishbein (2012), people develop normative beliefs based on their perceptions of how important others expect them to behave. These normative beliefs form a person's

subject norm, which then impacts the person's attitude toward the behavior, behavioral intent, and, ultimately, behavior.

The process by which important others' feelings of marginalization may be transformed into subjective norms that can impact parents' attitudes and ultimately behavior can be applied in this study to help explain the relationship between parents' negative attitudes toward the school and their lack of engagement in the parental involvement behaviors communicating, volunteering, and learning at home. It is possible that conditions at Shady Lane Elementary School reflect a negative culture where Black and other minority populations feel marginalized. If parents at the school feel marginalized, it is reasonable to assume that they would share these feelings with people in their lives who are important to them, people who in turn would be likely to express their perceptions of appropriate response behavior for the parent. One possible suggested response behavior might be to avoid engaging with the school, a behavior inherently associated with the parental involvement behaviors communicating, volunteering, and learning at home. The parent would then internalize these suggestions as normative beliefs, which then would contribute to the development of the parents' subjective norms. If parents believed that important others in their lives expected them not to engage with the school as a response to being marginalized, it is likely that this influence would be reflected in parents' negative attitudes toward parental involvement, which would negatively impact their behavioral intent, and, ultimately, their behavior. As a result, parents would not engage in parental involvement behaviors, inclusive of communicating, volunteering, and learning at home.

Attitude toward parental involvement. Using the scale response options ranging from *strongly disagree* to *strongly agree*, results of this study showed that parents' attitudes toward parental involvement were equally positive and negative. In addition, attitudes toward parental involvement were significantly and positively related to communicating, volunteering, and learning at home, a relationship also found by Grolnick (2015). According to Azjen and Fishbein (2012), attitude toward a behavior is directly related to behavioral intent and, ultimately, behavior. Applied to this study, the assumption is that parents who had negative attitudes toward parental involvement would have low levels of intent to engage in parental involvement activities associated with communicating, volunteering, and learning at home and thus be unlikely to engage in those parental involvement activities and that parents who had positive attitudes toward parental involvement would have had higher levels of intent to engage in parental involvement activities associated with communicating, volunteering, and learning at home and thus be more likely to engage in those parental involvement activities.

Findings from the literature may help explain the underlying connection Azjen and Fishbein (2012) made between behavior beliefs and attitude toward the behavior as it is applied in this study. Grolnick (2015) found that parents who perceived they have more autonomy with regard to whether they engage in their children's education were more likely to do so. Therefore, it is possible that some parents at Shady Lane Elementary School did not perceive they had autonomy with regard to the parental involvement behaviors communicating, volunteering, and learning at home, in which case they would not have believed that the behaviors would have the intended consequences, and thus would have had negative attitudes toward parental involvement. Conversely, it is possible

that some parents at Shady Lane Elementary School did perceive they had autonomy with regard to the parental involvement behaviors communicating, volunteering, and learning at home, in which case they would have believed that the behaviors would have the intended consequences, and thus would have had positive attitudes toward parental involvement.

Also, according to Bracke and Corts (2012), one reason that parents may have a negative attitude toward parental involvement is because they may not perceive the education of their children to be their responsibility but rather the responsibility of the school. In this regard, if parents in this study held the same behavior belief (i.e., that it was not their responsibility to educate their children), they would be likely to have a negative attitude toward parental involvement, and thus not engage in parental involvement behaviors. Conversely, if parents in this study believed that it was their responsibility to educate their children, they would have been more likely to have a positive attitude toward parental involvement, and thus engage in parental involvement behaviors.

Types of parental involvement. Results of this study showed that parents at Shady Lane Elementary School had low levels of parental involvement. Shady Lane Elementary School is a Title 1 school. Therefore, it was not surprising to find that the majority of the study sample reported having low incomes (i.e., \$40,000 or less). It also was not surprising to find that parents had low levels of parental involvement, because according to the literature, socioeconomic status is negatively associated with the parental involvement types communicating (Renth et al., 2015; Toldson & Lemmons, 2013; Zhang et al., 2013), volunteering (Renth et al., 2015; Zhang et al., 2013), and learning at

home (Hoglund et al., 2015; Renth et al., 2015). Renth et al. (2015) explained that the connection between socioeconomic status and communicating, volunteering, and learning at home may be a function of lack of resources.

Considering Azjen and Fishbein (2012) theory of planned behavior with regard to the relationship between socioeconomic status and communicating, volunteering, and learning at home, it is possible that the control beliefs of the low income parents in this study negatively impacted their perceived behavioral control, which in turn negatively impacted both their attitude toward the behaviors and behavioral intent, and, ultimately, their behavior. If parents believed their capacity to engage in their children's education by communicating, volunteering, and learning at home was limited by their income, they would not feel like they had control over those behaviors. That negative perception about their behavioral control could then have contributed to their negative attitude toward communicating, volunteering, and learning at home, which then would have kept them from becoming involved in these ways.

A similar explanation might account for study findings that showed a negative correlation between level of education and the parental involvement type earning at home. The majority of parents in this study either had a high school diploma (41.7%) or less than a high school diploma (27.8%). As shown in the literature, when compared to parents with high levels of education (i.e., parents with postsecondary education), parents with lower levels of education are less likely to engage in the parental involvement behavior learning at home (Abel, 2012). Considering Azjen and Fishbein (2012) theory of planned behavior with regard to the relationship between income and learning at home, it is possible that the control beliefs of parents in this study with low levels of education

negatively impacted their perceived behavioral control, which in turn negatively impacted both their attitude toward the behaviors and behavioral intent, and, ultimately, their behavior. If parents believed their capacity to help their children with homework or other academic assignments was limited by their lack of knowledge about subject content, they would not feel like they had control over those behaviors. Parents' negative perceptions about their behavioral control with regard to helping their children learn at home could then have contributed to their negative attitude toward the parental involvement behavior learning at home, which then would have kept them from becoming involved in this way.

Limitations of the Study

Limitations of this study were identified during data analysis. First, results of scale reliability analysis indicated that two of the five scales fell below the acceptable cut off of .70 representing an adequate scale. The Cronbach's α reliability coefficient for the communicating scale was .62, and the Cronbach's α reliability coefficient for the volunteering was .66. Because these reliability coefficients were below the acceptable range, it is suggested that results of analyses for these scales be interpreted with caution.

Second, the sample size was not large enough to determine statistical significance. Before conducting this study, I conducted a priori analysis and determined that 85 participants were needed to determine statistical significance of the data analyses. A total of 108 parents returned surveys or completed the survey online. After completing boxplots to test the assumption of univariate normality, 31 outliers were identified. However, after removing the 31 outliers from the original sample, the sample size was

77. The decision was made to conduct the data analyses with the full original sample, a decision that could skew the results of the inferential analyses.

Third, the assumptions for multiple regression were not met. Therefore, the results of the multiple regression analyses must be interpreted cautiously. Also, because the assumptions for multiple regression were not met, the decision was made to test the hypotheses using Spearman correlations even though bivariate correlations do not allow for the inclusion of control variables.

Recommendations

Recommendations for future research are discussed in this section.

Recommendations are based on both the findings from this study and the literature.

Recommendations based on the findings from this study include the use of a larger sample size, the use of a more reliable instrument, and the use of a qualitative research design. Recommendations based on the literature are focused on (a) opportunities to engage in parental involvement, (b) attitudes of teachers and principals, (c) school culture, (d) parent demographic factors including marital status, (e) ethnicity and culture, and (f) student characteristics.

Based on the Study Findings

As indicated previously, the small sample size was a limitation in this study.

Although the original sample size, $N = 108$, was adequate to determine statistical significance of the analyses, after outliers were removed, there were fewer than the needed 85 respondents. For this reason, I suggest the study be repeated using a larger sample size. It is likely that more parents would participate in a similar study if the study was sponsored by the school and better promoted. If teachers or administrators from

Shady Lane Elementary School conducted a future study, they could actively promote the study prior to actual data collection. Parents could be informed of the importance of their participation in the school newsletter or during conferences or other school events.

Parents also could be asked to encourage other parents to participate, a type of sampling technique called snowball sampling. Through such efforts, teachers and administrators might achieve higher response rates and an adequate sample size.

Another way to achieve a larger sample size would be to include more schools from the district. Logically, it would make sense to include other schools that were achieving below the average for this district, as was the case with students at Shady Lane Elementary School. Future researchers, including teachers, administrators, or other stakeholders and researchers, could determine how many additional schools should be included based on the 18% response rate achieved in this study, assuming that the response rate achieved at other schools in the district would be similar to that achieved in this study. If an appropriate sample size is not achieved after adding additional schools and provided that time for data collection is not limited in the way that it was in this study, future researchers could collect additional data from schools, one at a time, until the needed sample size is achieved.

Also noted previously, the instrument used to collect data included two scales that fell below the .70 cut off representing an adequate scale. For this reason, I suggest that future researchers collect data using another well-established instrument that includes more items per scale. Future researchers also could add additional items to the scales. The new instrument could be field tested so that factor analysis and scale reliability analysis could be conducted prior to using the instrument with the target population. Although

these tests would be representative of scale appropriateness for the population used for field testing, the results would provide an indication of the scale appropriateness for the target population. Any scale items that showed extremely low levels of appropriateness could be removed before using the instrument to collect data with the target population. Using an instrument with consistently reliable scales could help improve the reliability of future studies on this topic.

A final recommendation based on the findings in this study is that a qualitative study design be used to explore the conditions surrounding parental involvement at Shady Lane Elementary School. The use of a qualitative research design would allow for the collection of more detailed information about the types of parental involvement in which parents engage as well parents' attitudes toward both the school and parental involvement. Administrators at Shady Lane Elementary School could use these detailed data to develop programs focused on specific barriers to involvement indicated by parents. In this way, administrators could use their resources most effectively and increase the chances of improving parental involvement at the school.

Based on the Literature

Researchers have found connections between numerous variables and parental involvement. As discussed previously in the literature review, those variables include (a) parents' attitudes toward the school (Barr & Saltmarsh, 2014; McKenna & Millen, 2013; Murray et al., 2014; Myers, 2015; Rodriguez et al., 2014; Toldson & Lemmons, 2013; Yoder & Lopez, 2013); (b) parent's attitudes towards parental involvement (Grolnick, 2015); (c) opportunities to engage in parental involvement (Fishman & Nickerson, 2015; Galindo & Sheldon, 2012; Sheridan, Kim, et al., 2012); (d) parent expectations (Bracke

& Corts, 2012); (e) parent demographic factors including marital status (Hayes, 2012; Myers & Myers, 2015); (f) ethnicity and culture (Bower & Griffin, 2011; Myers & Myers, 2015; O'Donnell & Kirkner, 2014; Poza et al., 2014; Toldson & Lemmons, 2013; Vera et al., 2014; Wolfe & Duran, 2013; Zhang et al., 2011); (g) logistical challenges to parental involvement (Abel, 2012; Bennett-Conroy, 2012; Bracke & Corts, 2012; Fishman & Nickerson, 2015; Rodriguez et al., 2014; Shiffman, 2013; Williams & Sanchez, 2013; Yoder & Lopez, 2013); (h) self-efficacy (Abel, 2012; Dweck, 2012; Shiffman, 2013); and (i) student characteristics (Hayes, 2012; Hoglund et al., 2015; Shiffman, 2013; Zhou, 2014). The recommendations for future research I offer here are based on the extent to which I deemed it feasible to influence the variables.

Of the nine variables identified here, I determined that one variable, opportunities to engage in parental involvement, represents a condition that could fairly easily be improved at the school. To offer more opportunities to engage in parental involvement, the school only would have to plan and implement more activities in which parents could communicate with teachers and the school, volunteer at the school, and help their children learn in the home setting. For this reason, I recommend additional research be conducted to determine the types of opportunities to engage in parental involvement that yield the best results with regard to improved parental involvement. Based on the data from such research, administrators at Shady Lane Elementary School could focus on developing opportunities for parents to become engaged that best align with parent preferences and, in this way, improve levels of parental involvement, which could ultimately result in improved student achievement.

Of the remaining eight variables, I determined that five variables represent conditions that would be more challenging to influence. Those variables are (a) parents' attitudes toward the school; (b) parent's attitudes towards parental involvement, including the variable parents' self-efficacy for helping; (c) parent expectations; and (d) logistical challenges to parental involvement. However, researchers have identified two specific aspects of the variable parents' attitudes toward the school that feasibly could be impacted with focused effort from the school's teachers and administrators: teachers' and principals' attitudes toward parents (e.g., Barr & Saltmarsh, 2014; Myers, 2015) and school culture (McKenna & Millen, 2013; Yoder & Lopez, 2013). However, at the time of this study, no research had been conducted on the attitudes of teachers and principals or the school culture at Shady Lane Elementary School.

Because it is possible that teachers and principals at the school have negative attitudes towards parents, it is possible that teachers and principals are unknowingly negatively impacting levels of parental involvement at the school. For this reason, I recommend that research be conducted to determine the attitudes of teachers and principals toward parents and if the attitudes of teachers and principals are related to levels of parental involvement at the school. If results show that teachers and principals have negative attitudes toward parents and that these attitudes are negatively correlated to parental involvement, steps could be taken to improve teachers' and principals' attitudes toward parents, which could contribute to improved levels of parental involvement at the school and, ultimately, student achievement.

Because it is possible that the culture at the school is negative and that it is negatively impacting parental involvement, I recommend that research be conducted to

determine the condition of the culture at the school and if it is related to levels of parental involvement at the school. If results show that the culture of the school is negative and that it is negatively correlated to parental involvement, steps could be taken to improve the culture at the school. By improving the culture of the school, levels of parental involvement at the school could also be improved, which ultimately could help improve student achievement.

The three remaining variables identified in the literature as variables related to levels of parental involvement are (a) parent demographic factors including marital status, (b) ethnicity and culture, and (c) student characteristics. Although it is not possible to promote change in these variables as a means of impacting levels of parental involvement, it is possible that administrators at Shady Lane Elementary School could promote parental involvement based on what is known about the impact of these characteristics on levels of parental involvement. Therefore, it also could be helpful for future researchers to consider exploring the impact of these variables on levels of parental involvement.

Implications

Historically, the accepted focus of change in education has been on educators and administrators in the field (Garcia-Huidobro, Nannenmann, Bacon, & Thompson, 2017). However, it is well-recognized that parental involvement is linked to student achievement (e.g., Hoover-Dempsey & Sandler, 1997, 2005; Levin & Aram, 2011; Yuen, 2011). Therefore, I focused on parental involvement in this study and recognized parents as an essential element of change at Shady Lane Elementary School.

This study was not without limitations and the results of the inferential data analysis depicting the relationships between variables must be considered cautiously. However, this study still has value and the potential to promote positive social change in the form of improved student achievement as the result of improved parental involvement. In this section, I describe one recommendation for practice based on the findings of this study, a recommendation that could lead to improved parental involvement and, ultimately, student achievement at Shady Lane Elementary School. I also provide three practical suggestions for addressing this recommendation.

Results of this study confirmed previous knowledge that parents at Shady Lane Elementary School demonstrate low levels of parental involvement through volunteering but also that parents demonstrate low levels of parental involvement through communicating and learning at home as well. Based on the literature that has shown a connection between the three parental involvement types communicating, volunteering, and learning home, and student achievement, I recommend that steps be taken at Shady Lane Elementary School to improve levels of parental involvement in these areas. In the remainder of this section, I provide three suggestions for improving levels of parental involvement in these areas. These suggestions are tied to (a) parents' attitudes toward the school, which, overall, were found to be negative; (b) parents' attitudes toward parental involvement, which to a notable degree were found to be negative; and (c) Azjen and Fishbein's (2012) theory of planned behavior.

Educating parents. An initial effort could be to develop and implement a parental involvement education program focused on educating parents about the positive impact of their involvement on social and academic outcomes for their children. If

parents were aware of the importance of their involvement, it is likely that they would have a better attitude about parental involvement and be more likely to become involved. This recommendation is supported by Azjen and Fishbein's (2012) theory of planned behavior which shows that a person's beliefs about the outcome of a behavior (behavior beliefs) can impact their attitude toward a behavior, which can impact a person's behavioral intent, and, ultimately, impact their behavior.

Educating students. Parents also might be motivated to become involved in their children's education through the implementation of a parental involvement education program for students. According to Ajzen and Fishbein (2012), people's attitudes toward a behavior are developed, in part, based on their perceptions of what people who are important to them believe about a behavior. If students are taught the value of their parents' involvement in their education, it is likely that they would share their new knowledge, in the form of an opinion, with their parents. If this scenario occurs, student beliefs about the value of the involvement of their parents in their education could influence parents' normative beliefs about parental involvement, beliefs that would in turn contribute to parents' subjective norms. If parents believed that their children wanted them to become involved in their education, according to Azjen and Fishbein's theory of planned behavior, those parents would then develop a positive attitude toward parental involvement and, ultimately, be more likely to become involved.

Improving school culture. A final way to help improve parental involvement at Shady Lane Elementary School is to improve school culture. A committee of volunteer teachers could be established to collaborate with parents and members of the community to implement a school culture campaign. Elements of the campaign could be varied.

One element of the campaign could be professional development for teachers and the principal. According to the literature, parents are more likely to become involved if they perceive that principals are welcoming (Barr & Saltmarsh, 2014), that they are involved in parent-teacher relationships characterized by mutual respect (Myers, 2015) and trust (Young, Rodríguez, & Lee, 2015), and that the school's overall environment is supportive (Toldson & Lemmons, 2013) and culturally sensitive (McKenna & Millen, 2013; Yoder & Lopez, 2013). To promote a school culture characterized by these conditions then, teachers and principals can participate in sensitivity and diversity training. If teachers and principals learned how to better interact and communicate with the parents at the school, the parents would be more likely to feel respected and less likely to feel ignored, dismissed, or otherwise marginalized, in which case they would have better attitudes toward the school and be more likely to become involved in their children's education.

In addition, because monolingual Spanish speakers (O'Donnell & Kirkner, 2014), English language learners (Vera et al., 2014), and first generation immigrants (Poza et al., 2014) may have difficulty communicating in the school setting, the school culture committee could organize translation services for these parents. The translators could be volunteer based and provided during a variety of scheduled hours and during school events to ensure availability for all parents who need them. By offering translation services, monolingual Spanish speakers, English language learners, and first generation immigrants who may have difficulty communicating in the school setting may feel more welcome in the school. In addition, the provision of translators also may help monolingual Spanish speakers, English language learners, and first generation

immigrants better understand the school's expectations for their children as well as their role in their children's education, which may help parents feel more capable of helping their children. According to Azjen and Fishbein (2012), people who feel they are capable of performing a behavior are more likely to perceive themselves as in control of that behavior and thus have a better attitude toward that behavior, which can influence a person's behavioral intent and, ultimately, their behavior. Therefore, if parents feel more capable of helping their children, they may be more likely to do so.

A third element of the campaign could be the formation of a parent outreach subcommittee, which would be responsible for organizing various outreach events throughout the school year. The initial outreach event for the school year should be held in August and serve to establish relationships with parents. During the year, additional events would serve to develop those relationships. The goal would be to develop a strong rapport with parents so that they perceive themselves as members of the school community. These events could take place at the school but also should take place within the community and could be incorporated into other community events at which the attendance of parents in the community is likely. So that the school appears unified in its intent, the principal, teachers, and other school staff members all should be involved in these outreach events. If strong relationships exist between parents and the school, parents will be more likely to have better attitudes toward the school and be more likely to become involved in their children's education.

Conclusion

The education system is a complex structure. "From some perspectives, educational change [associated with this structure] frequently is an irrational process"

(Shirley, 2016, p. 281) that requires consideration of multiple factors and stakeholders as well as ongoing evaluation and planning to overcome the challenges that inevitably will arise as part of the process, including resistance from stakeholders impacted by the change (Shirley, 2016). Some of these challenges are the result of weak educational infrastructures (Hopkins & Woulfin, 2015). Other challenges are the result of the social (Loogma, Tafel-Viia, & Ümarik, 2013), cultural (Connolly, James, & Beales, 2011), and emotional (Saunders, 2012) nature of change in education. Despite the challenges of initiating change, “the first step towards getting somewhere is to decide that you are not going to stay where you are” (Chauncy Depew). As such, I undertook this study as a first step toward achieving change at Shady Lane Elementary School.

Results of this study showed that, overall, parents at Shady Lane Elementary School have negative attitudes toward the school, negative attitudes toward parental involvement, and low levels of parental involvement with regard the parental involvement types communicating, volunteering, and learning at home. As cited throughout this study, the literature has shown a connection between both parents’ attitudes toward the school and parents attitudes toward parental involvement, and the three parental involvement types communicating, volunteering, and learning home. The literature also has shown a connection between parental involvement and student achievement. Based on the findings in this study and the evidence in the literature to support the argument for improving levels of parental involvement, I have recommended that targeted effort be put forth at Shady Lane Elementary School to accomplish this outcome.

Because the suggestions I provided in this study for improving parental involvement are based on research and theory, it is likely that if implemented at Shady Lane Elementary School, they will be successful in improving levels of parental involvement at the school. Also, it is possible that efforts to improve parental involvement on the part of administrators and teachers at the school will be recognized by parents as such, which could further motivate parents to become involved. This logic is based on research by Rodriguez et al. (2014), who found that parents may be motivated to engage in parental involvement behaviors when teachers and schools are perceived to be making a concentrated effort to include them in the educational process in some way. If stakeholders at Shady Lane Elementary School are successful in improving levels of parental involvement at the school, student outcomes can be improved.

The connection between parental involvement and student outcomes has clearly been established in the literature. For decades, parental involvement has been linked directly to academic achievement (Fan & Chen, 2001; Galindo & Sheldon, 2012; Gordon & Cui, 2015; Hayes, 2012; Henderson & Berla, 1994; Hoover-Dempsey & Sandler, 1997, 2005; Jeynes, 2012; Kim & Hill, 2015; LeFevre & Shaw, 2012; Levin & Aram, 2012; Miedel & Reynolds 1999; O'Donnell & Kirkner, 2014; Puccioni, 2015; Rattigan-Rohr et al., 2014; Witte & Sheridan, 2011; Yuen, 2011). This connection may be apparent because parental involvement may impact student attendance at school (Hayes, 2012) and student behavior (Hayes, 2012; Hill & Wang, 2015; Sheldon & Epstein, 2002; Serpell & Mashburn, 2012). It is feasible to assume that when students attend school regularly and are well-behaved, they will do better academically.

The connection between parental involvement and student achievement also may be facilitated by attributes of the child, including (a) academic self-efficacy (Doctoroff & Arnold, 2017; Fan et al., 2012; Gonida & Cortina, 2014; Hoover-Dempsey & Sandler, 2005); (b) social self-efficacy for relating to teachers; (c) self-regulatory strategy use; and (d) motivation to learn (Hoover-Dempsey & Sandler, 2005). When parents are engaged in their children's education, children observe parents encouraging them to achieve in school, modeling behaviors that support learning, reinforcing positive behaviors, and instructing them in academic subjects (Hoover-Dempsey & Sandler, 2005). Based on these observations, children then form positive perceptions of these behaviors, which in turn influence specific attributes that support academic achievement, such as academic self-efficacy, social self-efficacy for relating to teachers, self-regulatory strategy use, and motivation to learn (Hoover-Dempsey & Sandler, 2005). In other words, when children observe parents engaging in their education in positive ways, including communicating, volunteering, and learning at home, children (a) develop stronger beliefs in their own capacities to be successful, (b) become motivated to learn, (c) learn how to manage their own learning, and (d) develop stronger beliefs in their own capacities to have positive relationships with teachers. When students have strong levels of academic self-efficacy, social self-efficacy for relating to teachers, and self-regulatory strategy use and when they are motivated to learn, students are likely to be academically successful (Hoover-Dempsey & Sandler, 2005).

Thus, based on the findings from this study, the potential for positive social change exists in the possibility of improved student achievement at Shady Lane Elementary School as the result of improved parental involvement at the school. By

improving parental involvement at the school, students may (a) be more likely to attend school, (b) be better behaved in school, (c) feel more confident about their ability to be successful in school and to communicate positively with teachers, (d) become motivated to learn, and (e) learn how to manage their own learning, all conditions that can help students be more successful academically. This study was a first step in reaching this goal at Shady Lane Elementary School and thus a valuable endeavor.

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Appendix A: Invitation to Participate in the Study

Dear Parent,

You are being invited to participate in a study about parents' attitudes toward your child's school and about being involved in your child's education. You are being asked to complete a survey that should take approximately 15 minutes to complete. The details about this study and how you may help are outlined in the Consent Form included in this packet. Your time is valuable, and your participation is greatly appreciated. If you prefer to complete the survey online, you may do so at xxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxx. A copy of the consent form is included there as well.

***You must be at least 18 years of age or older to complete this survey. If you are not 18 years of age or older, please share this invitation to participate in the study with your child's legal guardian.**

*** Se le invita a participar en un estudio sobre la participación de los padres. Debe tener por lo menos 18 años de edad para completar este estudio. La encuesta está escrita en inglés. Si está interesado en aprender más acerca de participar en este estudio, comuníquese con el investigador en vaneia@yahoo.com.**

Sincerely,

Vaneia Williams

Vaneia Williams
Doctoral student at Walden University
Reading and math teacher at Shady Lane Elementary School

Note: The researcher did not obtain your personal contact information in order to hand out this study invitation. Rather, invitations to participate in the study were

handed out to all students in Grades 1-5 at the school. For this reason, if you have more than one child in the school, you may have received more than one invitation. Please complete and return only one survey.

Appendix B: Consent Form

CONSENT FORM

You are invited to take part in a research study of parents' attitudes. The researcher is inviting parents of Shady Lane Elementary School students in Grades 1-5 to be in the study. This form is part of a process called "informed consent" to allow you to understand this study before deciding whether to take part in it.

This study is being conducted by a researcher named Vaneia Williams, who is a doctoral student at Walden University. You may already know the researcher as a previous reading and math teacher at Shady Lane Elementary School, but this study is separate from that role.

***You must be at least 18 years of age or older to complete this survey. If you are not 18 years of age or older, please share this invitation to participate in the study with your child's legal guardian.**

*** Se le invita a participar en un estudio sobre la participación de los padres. Debe tener por lo menos 18 años de edad para completar este estudio. La encuesta está escrita en inglés. Si está interesado en aprender más acerca de participar en este estudio, comuníquese con el investigador en vaneia@yahoo.com.**

Background Information:

The purpose of the study is to look at the connection between parents' attitudes and the ways they are involved with their children's education. Two types of attitudes will be studied: attitudes toward Shady Lane Elementary School and attitudes toward parental involvement. Three types of parental involvement will be studied: communicating, volunteering, and learning at home.

Procedures:

If you agree to be in this study, you will be asked to complete a 39-item survey that will take approximately 15-20 minutes to complete.

- You may complete the study electronically by navigating to xxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxx or
- You may complete the hard copy survey and have your child return the survey to the main office of the school.

Here are some sample questions from the survey:

- How do you feel about your child's school right now?
 - This is a very good school.
 - I feel welcome at the school.

- It is a parent's responsibility to . . .
 - Make sure that their child learns at school.
 - Teach their child to value schoolwork.
- How often do you . . .
 - Talk to your child's teacher?
 - Visit your child's school?

Voluntary Nature of the Study:

This study is voluntary. Everyone will respect your decision of whether or not you choose to be in the study. No one at Shady Lane Elementary School will treat you differently if you decide not to be in the study. If you decide to join the study now, you can still change your mind later. You may stop at any time.

Risks and Benefits of Being in the Study:

Being in this type of study involves some risk of the minor discomforts that may be encountered in daily life, such as stress or emotional upset. Being in this study would not pose risk to your safety or overall well-being.

There are no direct benefits to you for participating in this study. However, your participation may help improve levels of parental involvement at Shady Lane Elementary School, which ultimately may help students do better in school.

Payment:

No payments, reimbursements, or gifts will be provided in exchange for your participation in this study.

Privacy:

Information collected for this study will be anonymous. Details that might identify the location of the study will not be shared. All hard copy information will be kept in a locked file cabinet at the researcher's residence. All digital information will be stored on a password protected computer. Data will be kept for a period of at least 5 years, as required by the university.

Contacts and Questions:

You may ask any questions you have prior to participating in this study, or, if you have questions later, you may contact the researcher via email at vaneia@yahoo.com. If you want to talk privately about your rights as a participant, you can call Dr. Leilani Endicott. She is the Walden University representative who can discuss this with you. Her phone number is 612-312-1210. Walden University's approval number for this study is ???? and it expires on ????.

Please keep this consent form for your records.

Statement of Consent:

I have read the above information and I feel I understand the study well enough to make a decision about my involvement. By returning the completed survey to the school, I am indicating that I agree to the terms of participation described in this consent form and that I consent to participate in this study.

Availability of Study Results

Upon final approval by Walden University, results of this study will be available on <http://scholarworks.waldenu.edu/dissertations/>. The full title of the study is “An Investigation of Parents’ Attitudes and Their Involvement in Elementary Schools.”

Appendix C: Parent Involvement Survey

Parents' attitudes and Involvement Survey

Your time and input are valuable. Thank you for completing this survey. Please respond to the items as accurately as possible. Please have your child return the survey in the original envelope. A collection box will be located in the main office at Shady Lane Elementary School.

Directions: For Items 1-8, please circle the answer that best describes you and your current situation.

1. Gender

Female

Male

2. Age

≤ 29

30-39

40-49

50-59

60-69

70+

3. Ethnicity

| | | | | | | |
|----------------------------------|-------|-------|-----------------|-------------|-------|-------|
| American Indian / Alaskan Native | Asian | Black | Hispanic/Latino | Multiracial | Other | White |
|----------------------------------|-------|-------|-----------------|-------------|-------|-------|

4. Marital status

| | | | | |
|--------|---------|-----------|----------|---------|
| Single | Married | Separated | Divorced | Widowed |
|--------|---------|-----------|----------|---------|

5. Number of Children

| | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|----|
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5+ |
|---|---|---|---|----|

6. Level of Education

| | | | | | | |
|-------------------------------|---------------------|--------------|--------------------|-------------------|-----------------|-----------------|
| Less than high school diploma | High school diploma | Some college | Associate's degree | Bachelor's degree | Master's degree | Doctoral degree |
|-------------------------------|---------------------|--------------|--------------------|-------------------|-----------------|-----------------|

7. Employment Status

| | | | |
|------------|---------------|--------------------|--------------------|
| Unemployed | Self-employed | Employed part-time | Employed full-time |
|------------|---------------|--------------------|--------------------|

8. Income

| | | | | | |
|--------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|------------------|
| below 10,000 | 10,000-20,000 | 21,000-40,000 | 41,000-60,000 | 61,000-80,000 | more than 80,000 |
|--------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|------------------|

Directions: For Items 9-25, please circle the answer that best describes your level of agreement with these items.

| How do you feel about your child's school right now? | | | | | | |
|--|--|-------------------|----------|------------|-------|----------------|
| 9. | This is a very good school. | Strongly disagree | Disagree | Don't Know | Agree | Strongly agree |
| 10. | The teachers care about my child. | Strongly disagree | Disagree | Don't Know | Agree | Strongly agree |
| 11. | I feel welcome at the school. | Strongly disagree | Disagree | Don't Know | Agree | Strongly agree |
| 12. | My child is learning as much as he/she can at this school. | Strongly disagree | Disagree | Don't Know | Agree | Strongly agree |
| 13. | This school is a good place for students and for parents. | Strongly disagree | Disagree | Don't Know | Agree | Strongly agree |

| | | | | | | |
|---|---|-------------------|----------|------------|-------|----------------|
| 14. | The school views parents as important partners. | Strongly disagree | Disagree | Don't Know | Agree | Strongly agree |
| 15. | The community supports this school. | Strongly disagree | Disagree | Don't Know | Agree | Strongly agree |
| It is a parent's responsibility to . . . | | | | | | |
| 16. | Make sure that their child learns at school. | Strongly disagree | Disagree | Don't Know | Agree | Strongly agree |
| 17. | Teach their child to value schoolwork. | Strongly disagree | Disagree | Don't Know | Agree | Strongly agree |
| 18. | Show their child how to use things like a dictionary or encyclopedia. | Strongly disagree | Disagree | Don't Know | Agree | Strongly agree |
| 19. | Contact the teacher as soon as academic problems arise. | Strongly disagree | Disagree | Don't Know | Agree | Strongly agree |

| | | | | | | |
|-----|--|-------------------|----------|------------|-------|----------------|
| 20. | Test their child on subjects taught in school. | Strongly disagree | Disagree | Don't Know | Agree | Strongly agree |
| 21. | Keep track of their child's progress in school. | Strongly disagree | Disagree | Don't Know | Agree | Strongly agree |
| 22. | Contact the teacher if they think their child is struggling in school. | Strongly disagree | Disagree | Don't Know | Agree | Strongly agree |
| 23. | Show an interest in their child's schoolwork. | Strongly disagree | Disagree | Don't Know | Agree | Strongly agree |
| 24. | Help their child understand homework. | Strongly disagree | Disagree | Don't Know | Agree | Strongly agree |
| 25. | Know if their child is having trouble in school. | Strongly disagree | Disagree | Don't Know | Agree | Strongly agree |

Directions: For Items 26-39, please circle the answer that best describes your level of involvement in the described activities.

| How often do you . . . | | | | | | |
|------------------------|---|---------------------------|------------------------------|------------------------------------|--|---|
| 26. | Talk to your child's teacher? | Never (0 times a year) | Rarely (1-3 times a year) | Occasionally (4-9 times a year) | Frequently (At least twice a month) | Very Frequently (At least once a week) |
| 27. | Go to a school event (e.g., sports, music, drama) or meeting? | Never (0 times a year) | Rarely (1-3 times a year) | Occasionally (4-9 times a year) | Frequently (At least twice a month) | Very Frequently (At least once a week) |
| 28. | Volunteer in the classroom or at the school? | Never (0 times a year) | Rarely (1-3 times a year) | Occasionally (4-9 times a year) | Frequently (At least twice a month) | Very Frequently (At least once a week) |
| 29. | Visit your child's school? | Never (0 times a year) | Rarely (1-3 times a year) | Occasionally (4-9 times a year) | Frequently (At least twice a month) | Very Frequently (At least once a week) |
| 30. | Read with your child? | Never (0 times a year) | Rarely (1-3 times a year) | Occasionally (4-9 times a year) | Frequently (At least twice a month) | Very Frequently (At least once a week) |

| | | | | | | |
|-----|---|---------------------------|------------------------------|------------------------------------|--|---|
| 31. | Review and discuss the schoolwork your child brings home? | Never (0 times a year) | Rarely (1-3 times a year) | Occasionally (4-9 times a year) | Frequently (At least twice a month) | Very Frequently (At least once a week) |
| 32. | Help your child with math? | Never (0 times a year) | Rarely (1-3 times a year) | Occasionally (4-9 times a year) | Frequently (At least twice a month) | Very Frequently (At least once a week) |
| 33. | Go over spelling or vocabulary with your child? | Never (0 times a year) | Rarely (1-3 times a year) | Occasionally (4-9 times a year) | Frequently (At least twice a month) | Very Frequently (At least once a week) |
| 34. | Ask your child about what he/she is learning in math? | Never (0 times a year) | Rarely (1-3 times a year) | Occasionally (4-9 times a year) | Frequently (At least twice a month) | Very Frequently (At least once a week) |
| 35. | Help your child with reading/language arts homework? | Never (0 times a year) | Rarely (1-3 times a year) | Occasionally (4-9 times a year) | Frequently (At least twice a month) | Very Frequently (At least once a week) |
| 36. | Help your child prepare for math tests? | Never (0 times a year) | Rarely (1-3 times a year) | Occasionally (4-9 times a year) | Frequently (At least twice a month) | Very Frequently (At least once a week) |
| 37. | Ask your child how well he/she is doing in school? | Never (0 times a year) | Rarely (1-3 times a year) | Occasionally (4-9 times a year) | Frequently (At least twice a month) | Very Frequently (At least once a week) |

| | | | | | | |
|-----|--|---------------------------|------------------------------|------------------------------------|--|---|
| 38. | Ask your child to read something he/she wrote? | Never (0 times a year) | Rarely (1-3 times a year) | Occasionally (4-9 times a year) | Frequently (At least twice a month) | Very Frequently (At least once a week) |
| 39. | Check to see if your child finished his or her homework? | Never (0 times a year) | Rarely (1-3 times a year) | Occasionally (4-9 times a year) | Frequently (At least twice a month) | Very Frequently (At least once a week) |

Thank you for completing this survey. Please have your child return the survey in the original envelope. A collection box will be available in the main office.

Appendix D: Reminder Invitation to Participate in the Study

Dear Parent,

Two weeks ago, you were invited to participate in a study about parents' attitudes toward your child's school and about being involved in your child's education. If you have already completed and returned the survey, thank you for your time. If you have not yet participated, you may still do so at this time.

You are being asked to complete a survey that should take approximately 15 minutes to complete. The details about this study and how you may help are outlined in the Consent Form included in this packet. Your time is valuable, and your participation is greatly appreciated.

***You must be at least 18 years of age or older to complete this survey. If you are not 18 years of age or older, please share this invitation to participate in the study with your child's legal guardian.**

Sincerely,

Vaneia Williams

Vaneia Williams
Doctoral student at Walden University
Reading and math teacher at Shady Lane Elementary School

Note: The researcher did not obtain your personal contact information in order to hand out this study invitation. Rather, invitations to participate in the study were handed out to all students in Grades 1-5 at the school. For this reason, if you have more than one child in the school, you may have received more than one invitation.

Appendix E: Permission to Use Instrument



Center on School, Family, and Community Partnerships
Johns Hopkins University • 2701 North Charles Street, Suite 300 • Baltimore MD 21218
TEL: 410-516-8800 • FAX: 410-516-8890 • nnps@jhu.edu

To: Users of Surveys of School, Family, and Community Partnerships
from Johns Hopkins University Researchers

From: Joyce L. Epstein, Ph.D. & Steven B. Sheldon, Ph.D.

Re: Permission to use and adapt surveys on family and community engagement

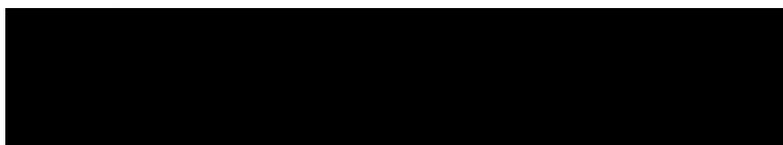
- Sheldon, S. B. & Epstein, J. L. (2007). Parent and Student Surveys of Family and Community Involvement in the Elementary and Middle Grades. Baltimore, MD: Center on School, Family, and Community Partnerships at Johns Hopkins University.
- Epstein, J. L. & Salinas, K. C. (1993). Surveys and Summaries: Questionnaires for Teachers and Parents in Elementary and Middle Grades. Baltimore, MD: Center on School, Family, and Community Partnerships at Johns Hopkins University.
- Epstein, J. L., Connors-Tadros, L., & Salinas, K. C. (1993). High School and Family Partnerships: Surveys for Teachers, Parents, and Students in High School. Baltimore, MD: Center on School, Family, and Community Partnerships at Johns Hopkins University.

This letter grants you permission to use, adapt, translate, or reprint the survey(s) noted above in your study.

We ask only that you include a full reference to the survey(s) and authors in the text and bibliography of your reports and publications.

Best of luck with your project.

Appendix F: School District Permission to Conduct the Study



November 7, 2016

Ms. Williams:

This letter confirms the receipt of your research request to survey parents at [REDACTED] Elementary School concerning parents' attitudes towards parental involvement. I have approved the request, and you may begin your research after you have received your IRB approval and have forwarded me the approval. Your point of contact at [REDACTED] Elementary will be [REDACTED], Principal.

I wish you well in your research.

Sincerely,



Director of Research, Planning and Evaluation



Appendix G: Three Rounds of Boxplots to Assess Univariate Normality

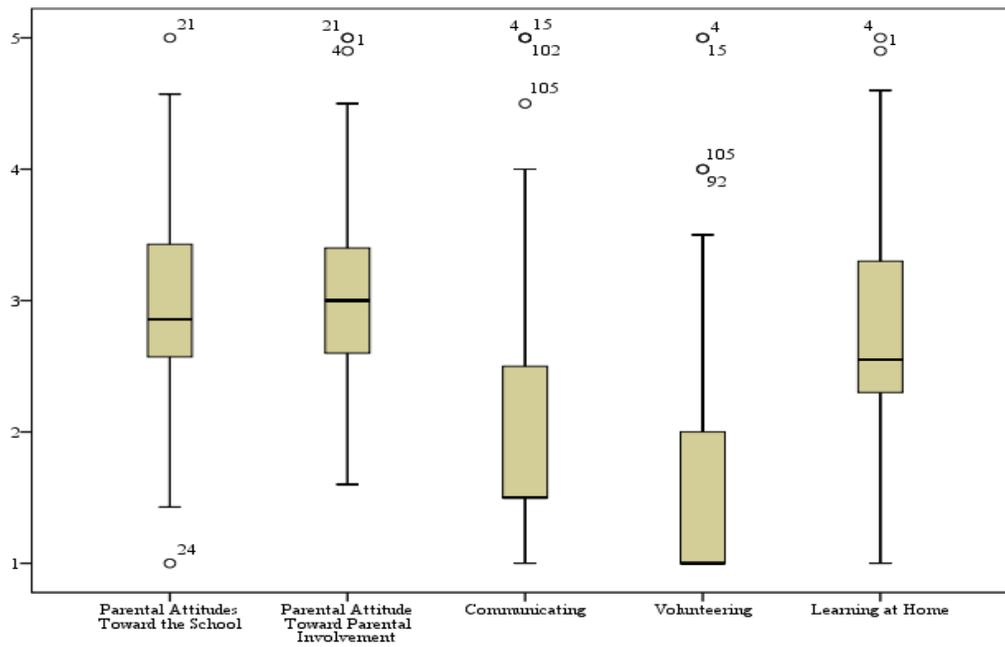


Figure G1. First round boxplot (N = 108).

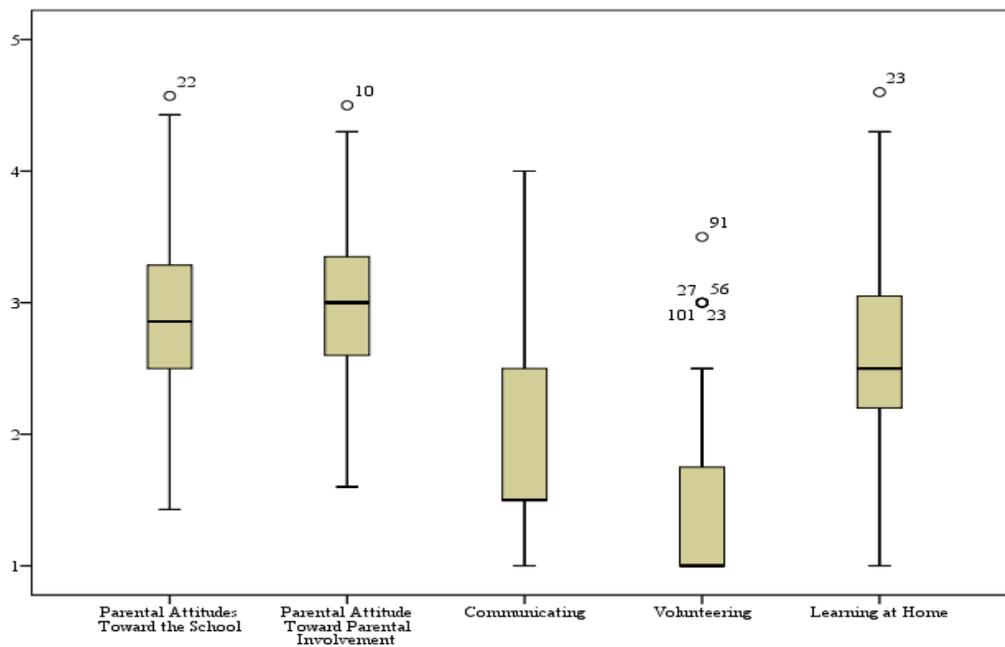


Figure G2. Second round boxplot (N = 100).

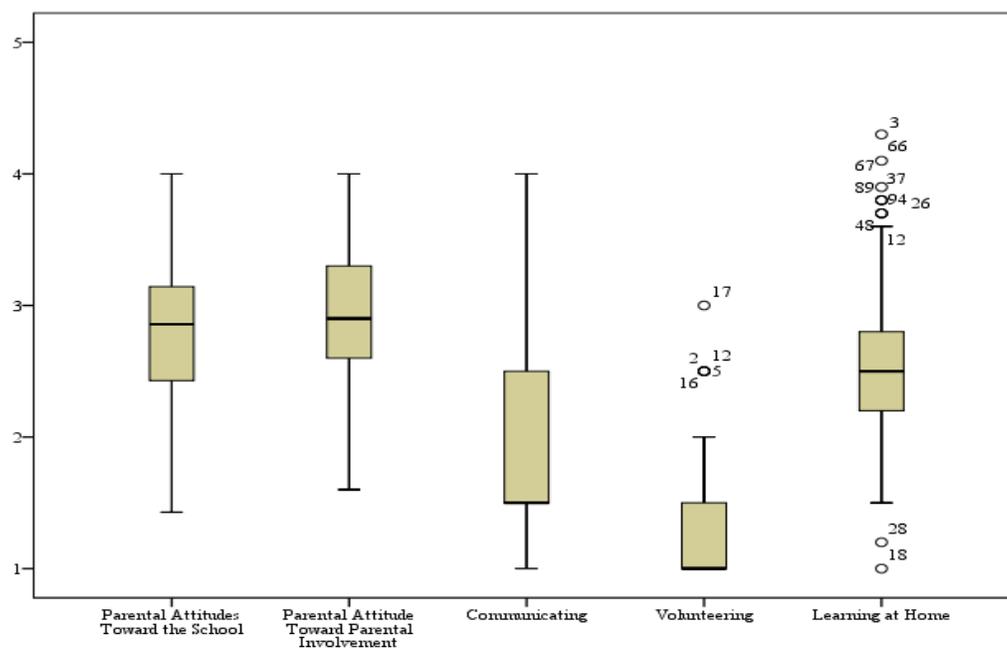


Figure G3. Third round boxplot ($N = 93$).

Appendix H: Normal P-P Plot of Regression Standardized Residuals for
Dependent Variables

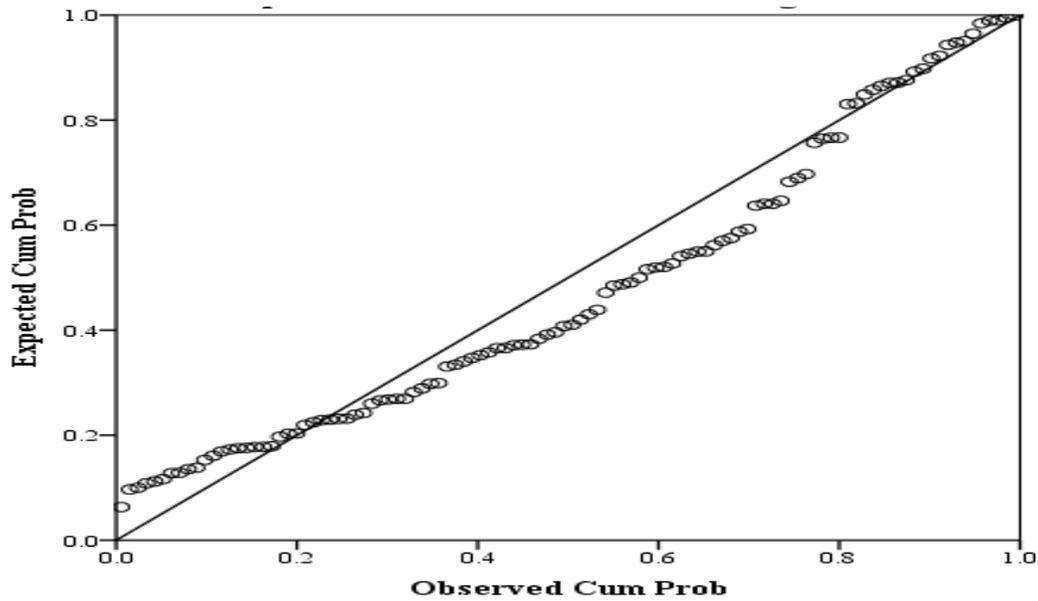


Figure H1. Normal P-P plot of regression standardized residual for dependent variable communicating.

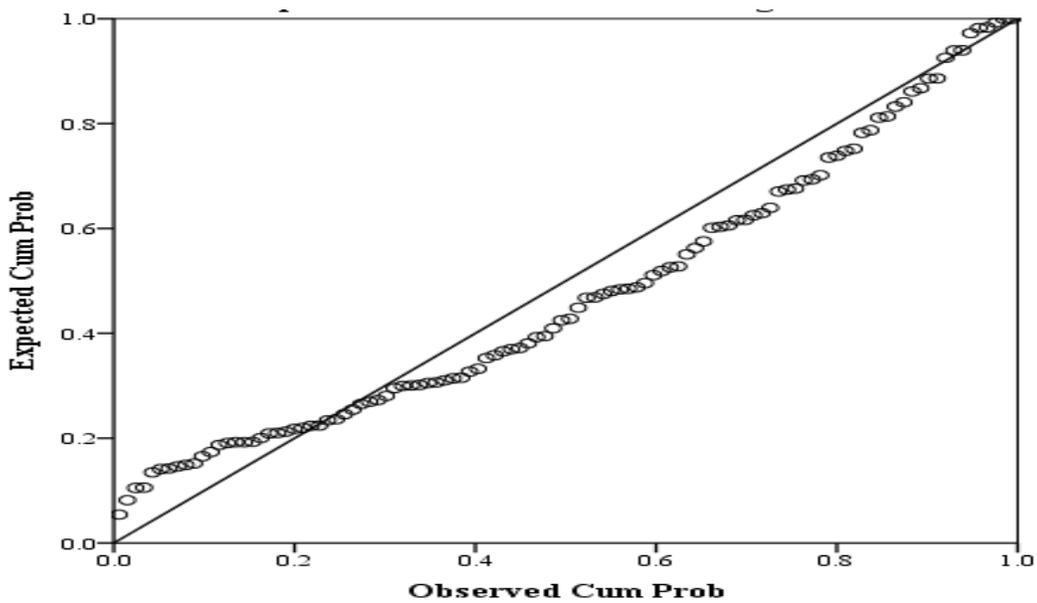


Figure H2. Normal P-P plot of regression standardized residual for dependent variable volunteering.

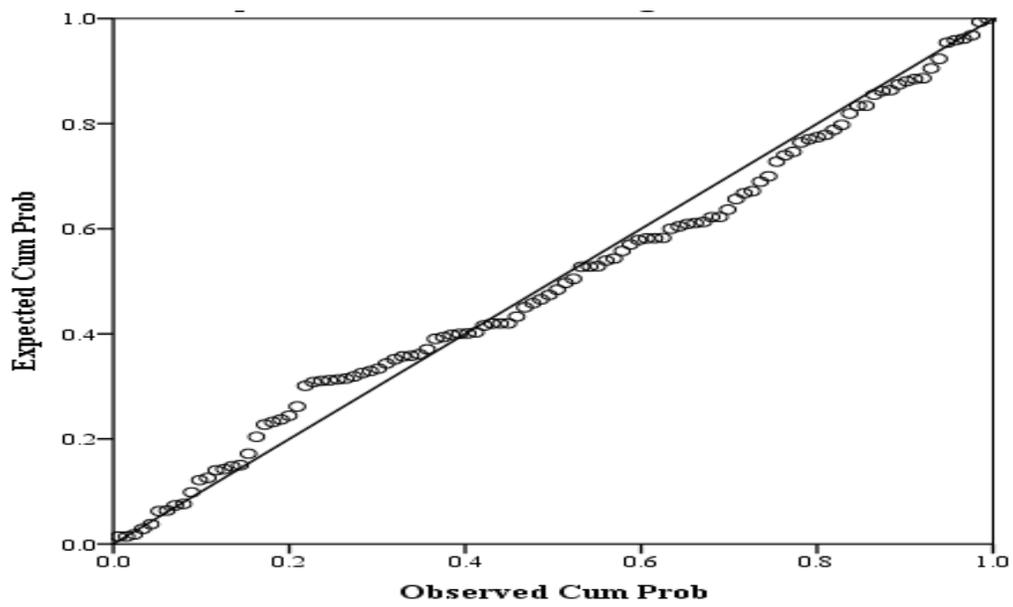


Figure H3. Normal P-P plot of regression standardized residual for dependent variable learning at home.

Appendix I: Residual Scatterplots for the Three Dependent Variables

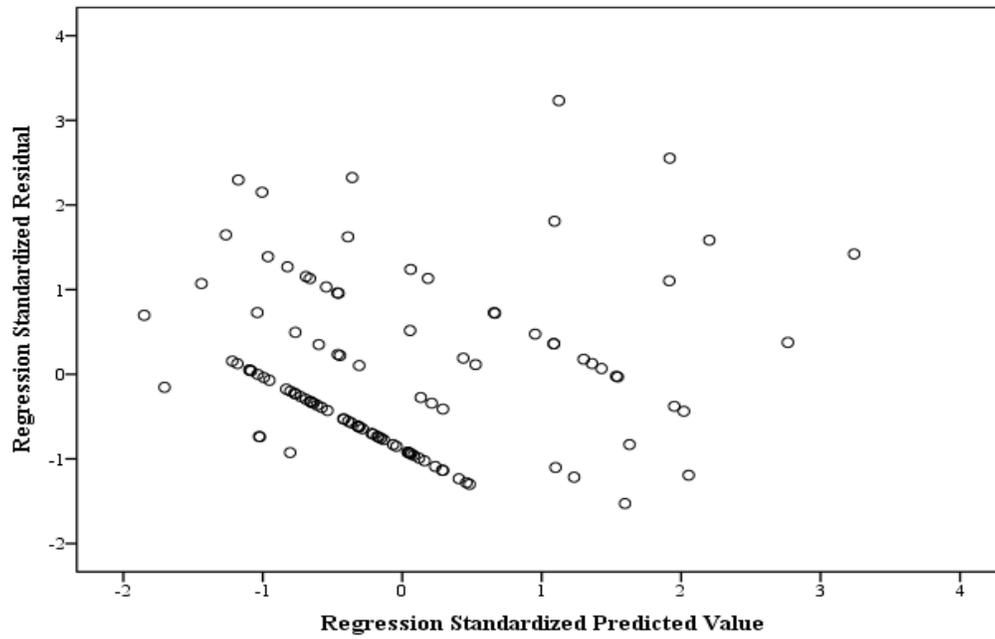


Figure 11. Residual scatterplot for dependent variable communicating.

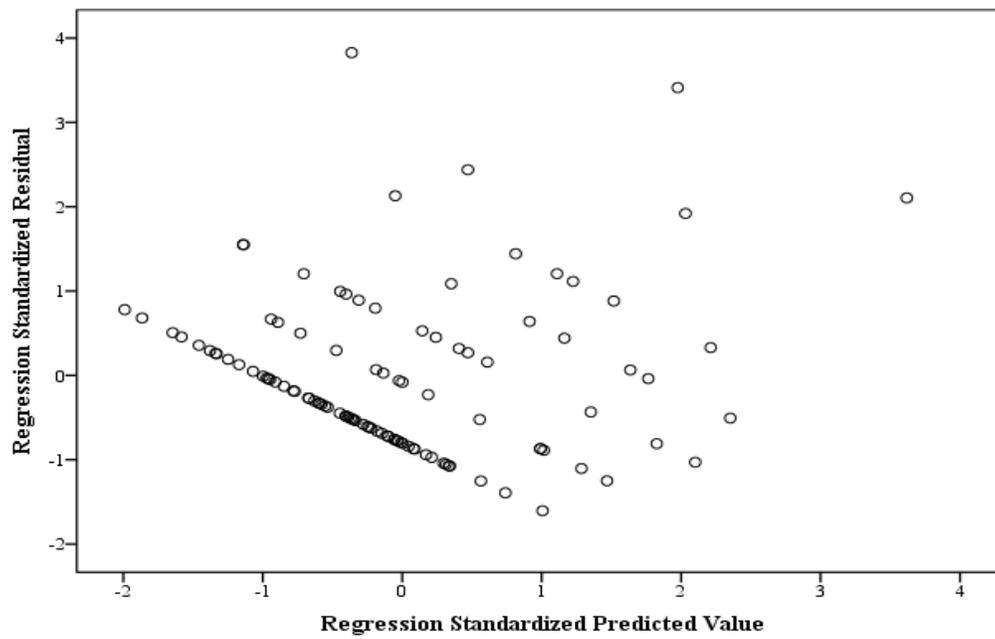


Figure 12. Residual scatterplot for dependent variable volunteering.

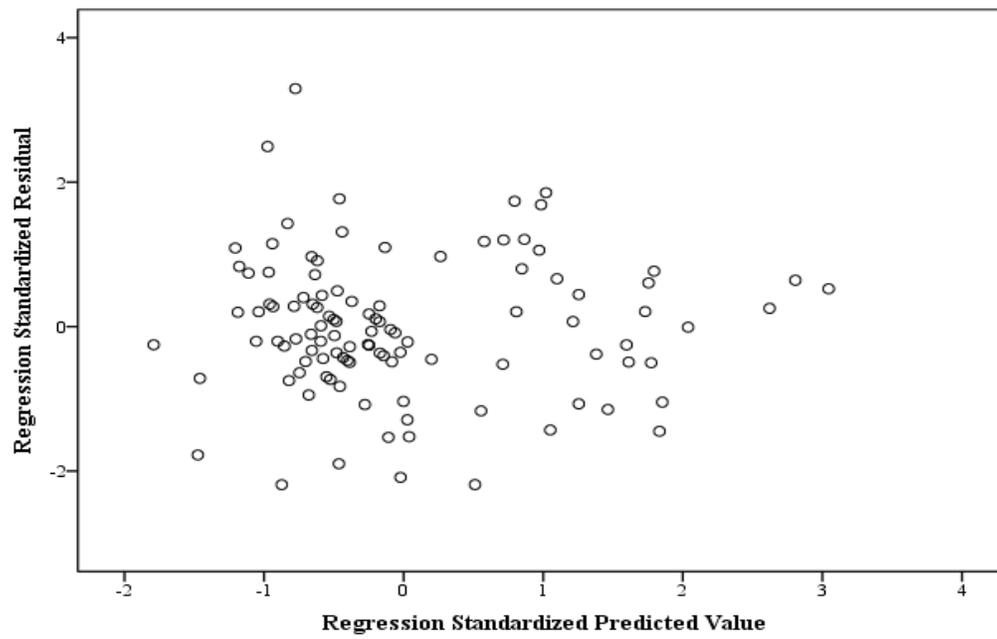


Figure 13. Residual scatterplot for dependent variable learning at home.