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An Evaluation of Parental Involvement Types in a Suburban Minority New Jersey Intermediate

School: A Quantitative Study

by

Patrice Clark

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A dissertation submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of
Doctor of Education
Department of Educational Leadership, Management and Policy

Seton Hall University

2020

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COLLEGE OF EDUCATION AND HUMAN SERVICES
SETON HALL UNIVERSITY

Patrice Clark has successfully defended and made the required modifications to the text of the doctoral dissertation for the **Ed.D** during **this Fall Semester 2020**.

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ABSTRACT

Parent involvement is crucial for student success in the K-12 school environment. Policies are in place to promote and encourage minority parent involvement in schools. It is still unclear how to increase minority parental involvement at the intermediate school level. The goal of this study is to determine the preferred involvement type of minority parents in a New Jersey suburban intermediate school. The study is quantitative in nature and explores the six parent involvement types according to Joyce Epstein (2001). The analysis of the data will determine if there is a preferred involvement type among the minority participants. This study concluded that minority parents prefer the parent involvement type “learning at home”. The parent involvement type “parenting” was the second preferred type.

DEDICATION

In loving memory of my Pop Pop, Henry Bryant Sr., who always encouraged me to set high educational and life goals. I love you.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to thank the many people who encouraged me and helped me throughout this endeavor.

To the members of my committee, thank you for your support and encouragement.

Dr. Thomas Shea, thank you for your support and guidance throughout the entire process. Your expertise and encouragement helped me to maintain focus and motivated me to finish strong.

Dr. Daniel Gutmore, you guided me in the right direction whenever I experienced doubt. Your though provoking classes and guidance with the dissertation have made me a better leader and researcher.

Dr. Melody Alegria, your dedication to the field of Special Education has encouraged me for years., I feel lucky to have had the opportunity to work with you.

To my mom, you are the main reason I decided to finish my degree. Thank you for always supporting me and pushing me towards my goals. Whenever I felt like giving up you always encouraged to go forward. With you by my side I can now say that I am a Doctor.

To my dad, thank you for always listening to me and encouraging me to finish what I start. Our morning talks helped motivate to keep pushing forward and not to give up. Thank you for loving me and supporting me.

To my friends, Jennifer, Nicole, Vanessa, Alicia, Christina, Don, Sheryl, Melody, thank you for always being a listening ear and keeping me motivated.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

The United States education system must continue to evolve and produce students who are academically and socially prepared to become contributing members of society. When determining what is considered to be a successful school, there is a heavy emphasis on the promotion of student achievement in preparation for college and/or career. Many school leaders focus their attention on producing students who are academically prepared for college or a career (Bragg & Taylor, 2014). In order for school leaders to support students who are prepared for post K-12 education, it is essential that parents are involved in the education of their children. The impact of educationally involved parents usually includes having improved grades, higher graduation rates, and improved attendance (Catsambis, 2001; J. L. Epstein, 2005; Henderson & Mapp, 2002). School leaders can rely on the data establishing the benefits of parental involvement on children's academic success to determine how and to what extent parents engage in their children's learning (Addi-Racah & Yemini, 2018). Parental engagement requires an ongoing collaborative and proactive approach (Raffaele & Knoff, 1999).

Parental involvement is a key factor in the academic success of students, but research shows differing perceptions on the definition of parent involvement (J. L. Epstein, 1995). The term "parental involvement" encompasses a wide range of behaviors tied to how parents and families with school-age children are involved in the educational process. Parents serve as the first and most enduring teachers who play a crucial role in helping their children learn (Miller, 2001). Parental involvement may vary in scope and intensity. Some parents tend to be passively engaged such that they simply follow teachers' advice on how to help their children. Some

parents tend to be intensively engaged such that they are hands-on or they hire professionals to help in their children's education. Some parents may not be involved at all (Hill & Tyson, 2009).

Background

Across the United States, schools strive to increase student achievement and prepare students for life after K-12 education. School leaders have the challenging task of improving student achievement, all while meeting state and federal regulatory standards (Burton, 2009; Dillon, 2009; Srikantaiah & Kober, 2009). Parental involvement is one of the key components of Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA). Under the ESSA, every school district is mandated to develop processes to ensure meaningful ways to engage parents. Parent and community involvement is an essential element in ensuring that our schools become high-performing, successful places that prepare our children to meet the challenges ahead (The Education Trust, 2003). Some challenges that can affect involvement are the parents' perceptions of how active they need to participate in their children's education. In the last 2 decades, the amount of research on parental involvement in education, especially for middle school, has increased exponentially (Deslandes & Bertrand, 2005; Halsey, 2004).

The need for parental involvement in education led to the establishment of the Parent Teacher Association (PTA) in 1897. The purpose of the PTA is to provide parents with support and advocacy for their child's education. In the 21st century, the PTA is continuing to offer support for parents and bring awareness to the notion that parental involvement is important. The local government requires that all schools maintain a two-way relationship with parents. Schools are constantly searching for ways to improve communication with parents. In knowing that parental involvement positively affects student achievement, schools are still faced with the

dilemma of how to increase parental involvement. Additional research needs to be conducted to determine which types of involvement that parents engage in.

Statement of the Problem

The general problem is that parental involvement tends to decline as students progress from primary school to middle school (S. Epstein, 1990; Lawson & Hodge, 2016; Zill & Nord, 1994). An extensive literature review revealed the impact of parental involvement on student academics, self-esteem, and overall performance. Initiatives are being implemented in schools across the United States, with the intent to improve parental participation, promote student achievement, and establish healthy school-home relationships (Mac Iver et al., 2018).

There is a limited amount of research on parents' perceptions of their type of involvement in their child's education at the intermediate school level (Ihmeideh et al., 2018). Several studies tend to focus on the perspectives and experiences of school principals and teachers, and tend to be limited in terms of parents' perceptions (Kaptich et al., 2019). Parent involvement is an important factor related to student development and achievement (J. L. Epstein, 2018a). Parents may not be given sufficient roles by the school to be more involved in their children's education. Roles that allow parents to be involved in decision-making and volunteering opportunities such as being mentors or assistant coaches are not given much attention by school leaders (Ihmeideh et al., 2018).

Variation in activities may also help increase parent involvement (Mac Iver et al., 2018). Identifying the type of involvement—parenting, communicating, volunteering, learning at home, decision-making, and collaborating with community—could determine effectiveness with respect to potential parental involvement (J. L. Epstein et al., 2018). Parent involvement may not be limited to in-school activities (Coleman, 2018). At home, parents could assist their children

with homework (Núñez et al., 2019). Homework assistance provided by parents to students from primary level to high school level appears to promote better academic performance than for those students who were not assisted by their parents (Núñez et al., 2019).

A number of factors could affect one's level of parental involvement including ethnicity, education level, and socioeconomic status (Hornby & Blackwell, 2018; Lechuga-Peña, & Brisson, 2018; Suárez et al., 2016). Ethnicity may impact parental involvement, particularly when the family is in the minority group (Suarez et al., 2016). Minority parents might have low proficiency in language and educational attainment (Badrasawi et al., 2019). Diverse classrooms may also need different kinds of involvement activities to accommodate the needs of marginalized groups (Kumar & Paul, 2019).

In addition, a study on developing countries revealed that J. L. Epstein's framework of parental involvement may not be applicable to poorer groups (S. W. Kim, 2018). The inapplicability of the framework to a specific group could be linked with the contexts influencing the lifestyle of the group, as described by Stevis and Boswell (2007) in the ecological systems theory. Exo- and macrosystems are part of Bronfenbrenner's ecological systems, in which the exosystem refers to the interaction of contexts where an individual has a direct participation and no direct participation (e.g., social services, government), while the macrosystem refers to the cultural context in which an individual is involved (Stevis & Boswell, 2007). S. W. Kim (2018) added that poorer groups tend to be impacted by exo- and macrosystems, and more weight tends to be given to collective outcomes rather than individual achievements. Poorer groups may rely more on bigger systems involving the society rather than smaller systems such as family and institutions (S. W. Kim, 2018). Bigger systems often involve intervention from the government such as the implementation of state or federal laws. Currently, the New Jersey Department of

Education (NJDOE) is mandating that all school districts implement a strategic plan to increase and sustain parental involvement in addition to parameters promulgated by the No Child Left Behind (NCLB) Act of 2001 (Steinberg & Quinn, 2017). Many school leaders appear to lack the knowledge regarding which types of parent involvement could help develop a strategic parental involvement plan. This current study is expected to contribute to the current body of research needed to address this problem, especially in a minority suburban intermediate school setting, by examining parent involvement types that are present in the school. Minority suburban families tend to consist of marginalized groups such as ethnic minorities and families with lower socioeconomic status; hence, this population may rely less on their own families and local institutions, and more on the government and social services (Stavis & Boswell, 2007).

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this quantitative study was to determine the most prevalent parent involvement type (parenting, communication, volunteering, learning at home, decision making, collaboration with community) of minority parents with children studying in a suburban intermediate school in New Jersey, based on J. L. Epstein's dimensions of parental involvement. The independent variable was the parents' minority status, and the dependent variable was the parent involvement type.

The way parents with intermediate school children perceive the six involvement types may determine effective ways to promote their involvement, as their interests and preferences are met (Veas et al., 2019). Determining the prevalent perceived type of parental involvement could help provide insight into how and to what extent parents are engaged; thus, school leaders and policy makers may develop methods to effectively increase engagement. Consequently, results of this research may assist school leaders to

gain further understanding to improve academic success including, but not limited to, increased graduation rates, improved grades, attendance, motivation, proficiency, literacy and numeracy, and homework completion (Joyce, 2017). The research was aimed at providing information on how to engage minority parents and promote involvement at the intermediate school level in New Jersey.

The literature suggests the decline of parental involvement from elementary school to middle school (Ma et al., 2016; Mills et al., 2018; Wei et al., 2019). In particular, a larger decline was witnessed in homework assistance than in academic socialization (Wei et al., 2019). However, no information was provided about the parents' perceptions and experiences regarding any changes in their involvement in their middle school children's education. Further research is needed to understand parental perspectives as it relates to the decline in parental involvement at the intermediate level (Wei et al., 2019).

As for minority parents with intermediate school children, some studies have shown the possible impact of ethnicity, along with other demographic factors such as parents' educational level and socioeconomic status, on minority parents' involvement in their children's education (Hornby & Blackwell, 2018; Lechuga-Peña, & Brisson, 2018; Suárez et al., 2016). However, information was generally limited to Spanish-speaking minority parents, and immigrant minority parents. More research is needed to measure the parental involvement type of minority parents in suburban settings.

Research Questions

The researcher of this study explored perceptions of parents' preferred type of involvement at the intermediate school level. This study was aimed to answer the following research questions:

RQ1: What are the differences among J. L. Epstein's six parental involvement types as measured through the perceived preference of minority parents with children studying in a suburban intermediate school in New Jersey?

H₀: There are no statistically significant differences among the parents' preferred involvement style.

H_a: There are statistically significant differences among the parents' preferred involvement style.

RQ2: Which among parent involvement styles (parenting, communication, volunteering, learning at home, decision making, collaboration with community) of minority parents with children studying in a suburban intermediate school in New Jersey is the most prevalent?

H₀2: There is no prevalent parent involvement style among minority parents with children studying in a suburban intermediate school in New Jersey.

H_a2a: Parenting type is the most prevalent parent involvement type among minority parents with children studying in a suburban intermediate school in New Jersey.

H_a2b: Communicating type is the most prevalent parent involvement type among minority parents with children studying in a suburban intermediate school in New Jersey.

Ha2c: Volunteering type is the most prevalent parent involvement type among minority parents with children studying in a suburban intermediate school in New Jersey.

Ha2d: Learning at home type is the most prevalent parent involvement type among minority parents with children studying in a suburban intermediate school in New Jersey.

Ha2e: Decision-making type is the most prevalent parent involvement type among minority parents with children studying in a suburban intermediate school in New Jersey.

Ha2f: Collaborating with community type is the most prevalent parent involvement type among minority parents with children studying in a suburban intermediate school in New Jersey.

Ha2g: There is an overlapping prevalent parent involvement type among minority parents with children studying in a suburban intermediate school in New Jersey.

Nature of the Study

This study was quantitative in nature. The independent variable was the minority status of parents with children studying in a suburban intermediate school in New Jersey, and the dependent variable was the parent involvement type (parenting, communication, volunteering, learning at home, decision-making, collaboration with community). A demographic information sheet and the close-ended Likert-type questionnaire Parent Survey on Family and Community Involvement in the Elementary and Middle Grades (Sheldon, 2007) were used to measure the variables. The questionnaire was developed to measure the extent to which the school and school

teachers communicate with parents and encourage parental involvement. Means were compared using *t* tests. Cross-sectional comparison was used to examine whether minority status was significant in the perceived type of involvement.

Definition of Key Terms

Barriers: The term used to refer to any social, emotional, cultural, or economic hardship that hinders the process of collaborating with parents.

Children: Children and students are used interchangeably. Children refer to students at elementary, intermediate, middle, or high school grade levels.

Economically disadvantaged (ED): ED students are those who qualify for the free or reduced lunch program under federal guidelines.

Intermediate school: A school for pupils in Grades 4 through 6.

National Parent Teacher Association (PTA): A PTA is a school association run by some of the parents and teachers to discuss matters that affect the children and to organize events to raise money. PTA is an abbreviation for the parent-teacher association.

Parent Involvement: Parent involvement refers to parents' participation in their children's schooling (Muller, 2018). J. L. Epstein described six types of parent involvement, including parenting, communicating, volunteering, learning at home, decision-making, and collaborating with the community (Stefanski et al., 2016).

Parents: The natural parent, legal guardian, or other person standing in loco parentis who is legally responsible for the child's welfare (United States Department of Education [USDOE], 2004).

Scope and Delimitations

This study employed a quantitative methodology only. Generalizations may be drawn from the results due to the nature of quantitative research. However, the researcher may not have been able to explore the meanings of the results due to the lack of qualitative inquiry and in-depth information (Connelly, 2016). The researcher, therefore, described the relationship of perceived school efforts and perceived extent of parent involvement based on the survey results.

The study site was a minority suburban intermediate school setting in New Jersey where the researcher is employed. Only parents with at least one intermediate school child were selected for this study.

Limitations

This study was limited to the population of minority parents with intermediate school children in suburban New Jersey. Quantitative methodology may have also limited this study. The use of surveys to collect data may have limited the study in terms of the truthfulness and accuracy of the participants' responses. The use of surveys may have made some participants more comfortable to answer than when face-to-face interviews are used. The researcher attempted to address these limitations through ensuring that participants knew that their results were kept confidential and protected.

Significance

Parent involvement has been the topic of study for many researchers in the field of education. However, most studies tend to be focused on the perceptions and experiences of teachers and school administration, while more studies are needed to emphasize parents' perceptions and experiences (Ihmeideh et al., 2018; Kaptich et al., 2019). The ESEA requires that "schools engage parents in regular, 2-way communication that is meaningful and pertains to

academic learning and other school activities” (NJDOE, 2016). The encouragement of two-way communication by school districts increases the ability to gain parents’ perspectives on academic learning and school activities.

Federal mandates regarding parent involvement are also included in the ESSA of 2015, thus intensifying the focus on engaging parents even further. Research has shown that children are more likely to have higher academic achievement levels and improved behavior when parents are involved in their education (Bryan, 2005; J. L. Epstein, 2018a; Henderson & Mapp, 2002; Núñez et al., 2019; Walker et al., 2005). Griffith (1996) concluded that parent involvement correlated with student test performance. A child’s educational journey begins at home with their family before they enter traditional school (Núñez et al., 2019). Amaral and Ford (2005) suggested that parent involvement should be viewed in two different categories and viewed parent involvement as school-centered and home-centered. The combination of the two involvement types promotes student achievement (Núñez et al., 2019).

Nonetheless, in a minority suburban intermediate school setting in New Jersey, parents may not be as involved in their children’s education as recommended by researchers due to factors such as ethnicity, education level, and socioeconomic status (Hornby & Blackwell, 2018; Lechuga-Peña & Brisson, 2018; Suárez et al., 2016). Spanish-speaking minority parents tend to have low proficiency in English, and tend to have low educational attainment, which could be barriers in school-centered and home-centered parent involvement in their children’s education (Badrasawi et al., 2019). Low language proficiency and low education level may also impact minority parents’ confidence in approaching and communicating with their children’s teachers (Conus & Fahrni, 2019). Immigrant Spanish-speaking minority parents also tend to have

completed their primary and secondary education overseas, and may not be confident in their familiarity with the American educational system (Inoa, 2017).

Minority parents' low language proficiency and low education level may also often be linked to low socioeconomic status (Badrasawi et al., 2019; Inoa, 2017). Badrasawi et al. (2019) revealed that parents with low education level and low socioeconomic status tend to value education, but may have difficulty being involved in their children's education. Such parents' lack of ability to assist their children with homework in addition to their lack of resources to hire tutors may be perceived by teachers as lack of interest in being involved in their children's education (Conus & Fahrni, 2019). This study is significant because it could present research focused on parental involvement at the intermediate school level with a high minority population.

In addition, the school administration of the study site currently faces challenges in increasing the number of parents who are involved at the intermediate school. Parents of intermediate school children tend to be less involved in their children's education than parents of primary school children (Núñez et al., 2019). However, the researchers added that parents of intermediate school children may only be practicing less involvement with the perception that children in the fourth to sixth grade tend to need less assistance than children below the fourth grade (Núñez et al., 2019).

The school administration recognized their lack of oversight in previous years and committed to improving parent involvement. The first area to improve was the evaluation of the current programs and activities in place to include parents. Additionally, the administration implemented a standard communication protocol that was to be used by teachers when communicating with parents. The research site described in this study has a detailed plan and

goals set to increase parental involvement. The overarching problem that the school faces is tied to poor student performance on standardized assessments and absenteeism. The students are performing below proficient on standardized assessments and benchmarks. In addition, school administration has observed an increase in the suspension rate. In an effort to bridge the gap and address some of the issues in the area of academics and behavior the administration implemented a school-wide positive behavior support system. The school continuously strives to involve parents in the educational process. This study was aimed to add more information to the educational setting by providing the school administration with knowledge of the parents' perception of their involvement, allowing the school to acknowledge how to increase parental involvement.

According to the NJDOE (2019), all schools receiving Title 1 funding should “conduct outreach to all parents and family members to implement programs, activities, and procedures for the involvement of parents and family members” NJDOE (2019). The purpose of Title 1 “is to ensure that all children have a fair, equal, and significant opportunity to obtain high quality education and reach, at minimum, proficiency on challenging state academic achievement standards and state academic assessments” NJDOE (2019). The NJDOE (2019) stated the following:

Schools receive Title 1 funding based on the percentage of their students' enrollment that qualifies as being low-income. Low-income students are the children that are on free or reduced lunch. The percentage of low-income students at a Title 1 school must be at least as high as the overall percentage of the district, or the percentage must be at least 35%. (p. 15)

The intermediate school described in this study receives Title 1 funding; 85% of the student population qualifies for free and reduced lunch. This study is significant because there is a need to identify practices and programs that can assist schools in increasing the involvement of minority parents with intermediate school children in a suburban setting in New Jersey.

Summary

The remainder of this study will be organized as follows. Chapter 2 is a review of the literature regarding parent perceptions of parental involvement. Chapter 3 covers the methodology used in the study, including the design of the instrument, gathering of the sample, data collection, and data analysis. Chapter 4 is a presentation of the data, and Chapter 5 includes a summary and discussion of the results.

CHAPTER 2

INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this quantitative study was to determine the most prevalent parent involvement type (parenting, communication, volunteering, learning at home, decision-making, collaboration with community) of minority parents with children studying in a suburban intermediate school in New Jersey, based on J. L. Epstein's dimensions of parental involvement. The independent variable was the parents' minority status, and the dependent variable was the parent involvement type. The conceptual framework in this section contains two major themes: theoretical literature and empirical literature. The theoretical literature introduces the definition of parental involvement in the K-12 educational setting, while the empirical literature includes the characteristics of parental involvement. The following topics are addressed: history of parental involvement, federal and state policies, benefits to involvement, and barriers to involvement as well as the highlighted literature and research that is directly related to parental involvement.

This literature review was designed to examine parent involvement in a minority school. It was aimed to reflect upon previous practices that school leaders implemented to increase parental involvement, and to examine the ways that school leaders can use this information to obtain home and community buy-in and support. This review provides a historical background on past studies that influenced parental involvement. The results from prior studies highlight some of the current benefits and challenges to the implementation of parental involvement.

Literature Search Strategy

Literature for this review was obtained from the following databases: ASCD, ERIC, ProQuest, and Google Scholar. The following keywords were used: Parent, parental,

involvement, rural, education, perceptions, teachers, administrators, perceptions, strategies, and activities.

The following criteria were used in this literature review: research that is relevant to parental involvement in the last 10 years, peer-reviewed dissertations, New Jersey policies and statutes, and studies that focused primarily on intermediate education (Grades 5–8). Studies that involve primary education and higher education were excluded. Policies and statutes outside of New Jersey were not included.

Federal Policies

In the 1960s, parental involvement became a focus in the United States after it was observed that parents were limiting their involvement in the school systems. The creation of the Head Start organization became prevalent in the educational system in an effort to increase the awareness of early childhood education. The Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965 (ESEA) was implemented such that parental involvement was mandated. The ESEA provides a definition of parent involvement, in which parents are expected to actively include themselves in their children’s school-related activities through “regular, two-way, and meaningful communication” with their children’s school, and through assisting their children with school-related work. Parents are also expected to attend school events, and play a role in making school-related decisions (ESEA, 1965, Section 1118).

The original aim of ESEA was to address education inequities experienced by low-income families. The federal government recognizes the importance of engaging parents in the educational process. Under the ESEA, parents were given the right to become full partners in their child's education. As the schools are constantly undergoing change, federal and local

governments must continually adjust their policies to increase parental involvement. The ESEA was reauthorized in 2001 with the NCLB Act and in 2015 with the ESSA.

The ESEA was reauthorized in 2001 to legally obligate parents and schools to work together to benefit students academically (USDOE, 2004). However, prior to the reauthorization of the ESEA, the primary function of a school principal was to be accountable for the operation of the school (Rigby, 2016). The principal's manager role may not be the most ideal in fostering a full relationship with parents; this might have been addressed in the NCLB in which principals fill the role of instructional leaders (Rigby, 2016). J. L. Epstein's six types of parental involvement could be related to the ESEA through identifying how schools can help promote parental involvement; however, the typology was not specific to an ethnic-racial, social, or cultural group, or to activities such as attendance at school events, academic socialization, and homework assistance (Anderson et al., 2019).

No Child Left Behind Act

The NCLB (2001) reemphasized the ESEA (1965). The initiatives brought forth in the NCLB (2001) mandated schools to have the framework of family-school-community relationships that are emphasized to develop teaching and learning. The family-school-community framework may be related to J. L. Epstein's (2011) theory of parental involvement, encompassing parental involvement typology within the overlapping spheres of family, school, and community. The three overlapping spheres are all connected to the students, and may influence student performance in school. In the NCLB (2001), the principles identified by J. L. Epstein (2011) were characterized as parents becoming "full partners" of school when assisting their children in education (NCLB, 2001, p. 547).

Under the NCLB, schools that received more than \$500,000 in Title 1 funding were mandated to spend 1% on parent involvement initiatives, and allocate the remaining 99% however school administrators perceived to best benefit the school (USDOE, 2004). The Act was intended to close the achievement gap and incorporate more opportunities for students to succeed.

After the implementation of the NCLB in 2002, school districts generally took initiatives to identify what hindered parents from being involved in school (Matthews et al., 2017). As a result, one of the programs developed by several school districts was related to cultural events to promote cultural competence (Hamlin & Flessa, 2018). The NCLB Act was replaced with the ESSA in 2015 by President Barack Obama.

Every Student Succeeds Act

The ESSA is the reauthorization of the ESEA of 1965, which was last reauthorized in 2002 as the NCLB. In 2002, when the NCLB was implemented, Henderson and Mapp (2002) emphasized the need to include all family members, not just parents, to invest in a child's education to increase chances of academic success. The USDOE revised the term "parent involvement" to "family engagement" in the ESSA (2015), and defined family engagement as the fostering of "partnerships between home and school" with the use of the local schools' and districts' discretion for developing the strategies needed to build the partnership. The reason for changing the terminology remains unclear, but the ESSA of 2015 is clearly an expansion of the NCLB (2001; Fenton et al., 2017). Partnership implied active engagement and mutual participation from families and schools (Ratliffe & Ponte, 2018). The partnership emphasized by the researchers may be linked back to J. L. Epstein's (2011) family-school partnership, in which families and schools have shared responsibilities in ensuring the academic success of a child.

Under the ESSA, schools are required to engage families through thoughtful, consistent communication and must engage them in programs and activities to promote consultation with families. Schools are required to set aside money to directly work in the area of family engagement. Specific guidelines are placed around the mandated procedures to ensure that schools are in compliance with the Act. The legislation included guidelines for the development of strategies, which include (a) policy involvement by parents at the school and district level; (b) shared school-family responsibility for high academic performance, as expressed in school-parent compacts; and (c) the development of school and parent capacity for productive mutual collaboration (ESSA, 2015). Basically, the ESSA gives parents and families more power to contribute to decision-making in the school, and legally binds them to do so (Fenton et al., 2017).

Critiques of the ESSA, however, include its potential inequity toward minority students due to the following aspects: fair funding, equitable assignment of efficient teachers, quality of learning, and economic and cultural diversity (K. J. Robinson, 2018). Among the factors, the lack of economic and cultural diversity will potentially impact the minority groups in this study. K. J. Robinson (2018) emphasized that the limited power representing minority groups in the school board, as well as in most state legislatures further adds to the issue. Even if minority parents become actively involved in school-related decision-making, minority parents may not hold enough sway to influence change (K. J. Robinson, 2018). Sociocultural integration could help address the inequity faced by minority groups; however, the ESSA missed the opportunity to include the integration to prevent further economic and cultural segregation, and promote social capital across schools in the United States (K. J. Robinson, 2018). Social capital is defined as an asset built from relationships to be able to exchange favors and information (Jacobs et al.,

2019). Social capital was established to have a greater impact on children’s academic achievement than financial capital (Salloum et al., 2018).

State Policies

General Statutes of New Jersey ESSA (2015) encourage schools to include a comprehensive parent involvement plan as a part of the school improvement plan. The vision of New Jersey for every public school is that students will graduate ready for postsecondary education and work, prepared to be a globally engaged and productive citizen (NJDOE, 2019). In order to accomplish this vision, the NJDOE has implemented district- and school-level requirements that promote “the participation of parents in regular, two-way, and meaningful communication involving student academic learning and other school activities” (ESSA, 2015, p. 10). Schools are required to incorporate the following procedures:

- **Communication:** Facilitate regular, two-way, and meaningful communication between home and school. The communication format should be understandable to parents and guardians. Parents must be provided with a school-parent compact.
- **Title 1 Parent Meeting:** School districts must host an annual parent meeting focusing on parental involvement and offering parents knowledge on the district’s curriculum as well as ways for them to get involved.
- **Training:** Assess the parents’ informational needs and offer consistent parent training based upon those needs.
- **Advocacy:** Encourage parents to take an active role in their child’s education and to advocate for them.

At the local level, school leaders are required to encourage and involve parents and families by providing multiple opportunities for involvement while recognizing and respecting

the diverse needs of families in their communities. Schools are encouraged to work with parents through the child's educational career. If there is a deficient area of communication, it is expected that schools revise their approach to facilitate the home-school partnership. Schools that are receiving Title 1 funds are mandated to have a parent involvement policy. However, schools that are not receiving Title 1 funds are encouraged to adopt the mandates outlined for Title 1 schools.

National Parent Teacher Association

The National Parent Teacher Association (NPTA, 2010) has been in existence for 120 years. The NPTA's goal is to support parents and teachers in building a collaborative environment for students (NPTA, 2019). The NPTA provides resources for parents in the areas of college and career readiness, health, safety, and special education. The NPTA now serves as a voice for parents and advocates for all educational needs. The NPTA supports local PTAs in development and advocacy for their individual schools and constantly seeks ways to keep parents informed of current trends of education and encourages them to remain active members in their child's educational journey. The NPTA understands the needs of the school and can help schools fulfill their responsibilities for parent involvement requirements under the NCLB (NPTA, 2008).

New Jersey PTA

The New Jersey PTA (NJPTA, 2019) emphasized the need for schools to promote family engagement through the implementation of six standards set by the NPTA to help students earn higher grades, have better attendance and behavior, and be more likely to seek higher education. The six standards are (a) welcoming all families into the school community, (b) communicating effectively, (c) supporting student success, (d) speaking up for every child, (e) sharing power,

and (f) collaborating with the community. The standards set by the NPTA and implemented by NJPTA are based on J. L. Epstein's typology of parental involvement, yet a gap in the literature exists on how the standards impact parental involvement of families from diverse backgrounds (Ferrara, 2019).

History of Parental Involvement

Historically, parental involvement has been established as a factor in academic achievement (Povey et al., 2016; Vance, 2018). As early as 1642, the Massachusetts colony passed a law requiring parents to provide their children with readings (Hiatt-Michael, 1994). In the early 19th century, parents were responsible for educating their children at home unless the parents could afford to send their children to private schools (Anfara & Mertens, 2008). By the mid-19th century, public schools were established, and parents were involved in building the schools and voting for eligible teachers to educate their children. In the late 19th century, teachers became the primary resource person responsible for children's education while in school, and parents continued to assist the children with school work at home. Parents also began to be involved with school organized activities (Okeke, 2014). In the 20th century, as more women entered the workforce, a shift in parental involvement occurred. Socioeconomic status became a more prominent factor in parental involvement, as high-income parents tend to be more involved with their children's education, while low-income parents tend to focus more on their jobs (Antara & Mertens, 2008). With parents' different focuses, the USDOE developed the PTA after the observation that parents were experiencing difficulty navigating the school system in coordination with their home and work lives (Hiatt-Michael, 1994). The PTA was observed to increase parental involvement over the years (Tekkin, 2011). In addition, the DOE (2016)

developed the PTA to provide parents with support and advocacy for their child's education. The increase in parental involvement can be seen with the work conducted by the NPTA.

Benefits of Parental Involvement

Parental involvement is established to have school-related benefits such as higher grades, better attendance, better behavior, and greater likeliness to seek higher education (NJPTA, 2019). Empirical data revealed benefits such as increased autonomous motivation, graduation rate, proficiency, literacy and numeracy, and homework completion across diverse ethnic groups (Inoa, 2017; Joyce, 2017; Suizzo et al., 2016). In addition, benefits on teacher efficacy were also observed with increased parent involvement in middle school, which may in turn help boost the performance of low-performing schools (Joyce, 2017). Minority group parents, a population that was typically marginalized, may also benefit from continuous involvement through increased feelings of empowerment when they present a united front in the PTA (Joyce, 2017; Ma et al., 2016).

Student-reported high levels of parental involvement revealed positive impacts on socialization with peers and early adolescent development (Garbacz et al., 2018). Garbacz et. als' study indicated that parental involvement promotes positive peer affiliation in the sense that middle school children tend to associate more with peers with appropriate behaviors than with peers with delinquent behaviors. As such, the researchers suggested that parental involvement may be a promoting process rather than a discouraging process. With ethnicity as a moderator between parental involvement and peer affiliation, however, Garbacz et. al., reported that the relationship between parental involvement and positive peer affiliation appeared to be less for Hispanics than Caucasians, but remained the same for parental involvement for supporting education at home and family-school relationship. The findings mean that as parental

involvement in school activities increased, levels of positive peer affiliation could decrease in Hispanic students. The researchers explained that the cultural value of “familismo” may be influencing Hispanic parents’ parental involvement for school activities (Garbacz et al., 2018). School activities tend to take time away from home and family, which Hispanic parents may not appreciate, and therefore, may not support or choose to be involved with. Hence, in examining benefits of parental involvement, school leaders and policymakers may take cultural differences in consideration.

Several studies have indicated that increased parental involvement can yield better-behaved students. The authors stated, “Parent involvement with the school is important for all children, it is especially important for children and youth with behavioral needs” (Strawhun et al., 2014, p3).

J. L Epstein’s Six Parental Involvement Types

The theoretical foundation of this present study was J. L. Epstein’s framework of parental involvement. In the 1990s, J. L. Epstein and researchers at Johns Hopkins University conducted studies to identify and understand the benefits and barriers to family engagement in schools. As a result, J. L. Epstein (1995) created the seminal conceptual model of family-school partnerships in which the spheres of families, schools, and communities were revealed to have overlapping responsibilities in ensuring the education of a child. J. L. Epstein (2011) later revealed that the family-school partnership may also socially and emotionally benefit a child. According to J. L. Epstein (2008), the benefits to the model result from placing the child at the center. Children who feel supported to learn are more likely to successfully read, write, calculate, and learn other skills and talents and to remain in school (J. L. Epstein, 2001).

However, in the seminal work, J. L. Epstein (1995) noted a problem that minority parents tend to be less involved than mainstream parents are when engaging in school activities and school committees. Some of issues noted by J. L. Epstein (2001) included the inability of minority parents to attend workshops or meetings at the school. Several mainstream public schools may have problems making use of information related to culture collected from minority families; thus, mainstream schools may not be addressing the needs of minority students.

J. L. Epstein's (2001) conceptual model of family-school partnership highlights six parent involvement typologies in an attempt to understand and address the issues experienced by families and schools: The typologies are (a) parenting: assisting parents in child-rearing skills; (b) communicating: school-parent communication; (c) volunteering: involving parents in school volunteer opportunities; (d) student learning at home: involving parents in home-based learning; (e) decision-making: involving parents in school decision-making; and (f) collaborating with the community: involving parents in school-community collaborations (J. L. Epstein, 2001). After conducting a confirmatory factor analysis, Erdener (2016) found there are six factors of parent involvement. Each type will be further described in the subsections that follow.

Type 1: Parenting

The literature defines the parenting type of parental involvement as meeting the needs of children to build a home environment supportive of learning (NJDOE, 2016; Smith et al., 2020). Children's needs include basic necessities like food, shelter, health, clothing, safety, and other needs such as transportation and play (Eisenhower et al., 2016; Gahwaji, 2019; Povey et al., 2016). Families that lack the resources to provide for their children's education may still benefit from the parenting type of parental involvement through attending parenting workshops provided by the school, or through homework assistance (Caño et al., 2016; NJDOE, 2016). Caño et al.

(2016) found statistically significant differences between the performance of students who received and did not receive homework assistance from their parents.

It is important for schools to collect and analyze data yearly from the parents that they serve (Daniel, 2016; J. L. Epstein, 2018a). The accumulation of data will give school leaders and teachers a perspective on parents' experiences and objectives as well as a clearer understanding of what they need to partner with the school. By gathering this information, schools may develop an understanding of the parents' expectations and concerns, and help to build a positive relationship with the parents (Epstein, 2018a; Mapp, 2012; NJDOE, 2016). When effective parenting is in place, stakeholders can benefit from increased support at the school. However, not all families are actively engaged in the school environment (Vance, 2018). Families with low income, or who are unfamiliar with the school system and experience language barriers are among the stakeholders who are not as involved in the school as mainstream parents (Morrison et al., 2015). To assist as several families as possible, educators are encouraged to learn about families from diverse backgrounds to address their needs (Daniel, 2016).

Educators can assist families with information on developing parenting skills needed to help parents identify their roles in their child's development (Ihmeideh et al., 2018; Langford et al., 2018). Parenting practices can be observed in different forms throughout a child's life. Parenting intervention may also benefit the children in terms of coping with life stressors such as living in a low-income household (Povey et al., 2016). Family engagement in their children's education was established to help increase mental and emotional resilience of children such that they gain the ability to cope with stressors (Morrison et al., 2015; Povey et al., 2016; Thomas et al., 2019).

Type 2: Communicating

The communicating type of parental involvement involves the conversation of families and schools regarding school-based and home-based activities that impact children's education (Bordalba & Bochaca, 2019; J. L. Epstein, 2001; Snell et al., 2020). Educators are tasked to open a two-way line of communication to allow families and schools to share information about the children from school-to-home and home-to-school (Bacigalupa, 2016; J. L. Epstein, 2018a). Consistent ongoing meaningful communication is key to keeping parents engaged. Through the implementation of two-way communication, school leaders maintain a working relationship with parents and community members. Communication may come in many forms such as robo calls, emails, flyers, text messaging, and through the school website (J. L. Epstein, 2001). In recent years, communication has been noted to occur through social media apps such as Facebook and Instagram, and messaging apps such as WhatsApp (Ihmeideh et al., 2018). The use of digital communication has been noted by parents and school personnel alike to be a more convenient means than communicating face-to-face (Blau & Hameiri, 2010; Wasserman & Zwebner, 2017).

A recent study showed the use of social media to promote parent-school relationships and parent engagement. Addi-Racah and Yemini (2018) reported that social media allows parents from diverse groups to freely communicate with the school without fears of judgment and discrimination. In Israel, several primary and secondary schools utilized the social media platform WhatsApp to communicate with parents. Classroom teachers used WhatsApp to send private messages or group chats to the parents to provide classroom updates. Parents may also use the app to communicate with other parents; thus, use of the app was perceived to promote a sense of community (Park & Holloway, 2017). In addition, parents' use of WhatsApp to communicate with teachers was perceived to provide parents with a sense of control on when

and how they would communicate. WhatsApp allowed parents to communicate mundane tasks such as asking about what the children need for school the next day, to raising concerns and complaints (Addi-Racah & Yemini, 2018).

In school-to-home communication, teachers are urged to communicate with families, particularly in relation to the children's academic progress (Doss et al., 2018; Hurwitz et al., 2015; Snell et al., 2020). Families are made aware of when developmental reports and report cards will be received (Snell et al., 2020). They are invited to open houses and conferences within the school. In addition, school leaders are encouraged to be open to receive feedback from their stakeholders. The feedback may come in a form of constructive criticism, suggestions from the PTA, and comments from community partners (T. E. Smith et al., 2020).

In the home-to-school communication, parents are encouraged to initiate communication during the parent-teacher conference or through the means of communication opened by the teachers to discuss their children's academic progress, behavior, and other school-related activities. Ma et al. (2016) concluded that the home-to-school communication empowered parents to speak up about their queries and concerns about their children's education. T. E. Smith et al. (2020) yielded similar results when parents initiated communication with the school, and added that home-to-school communication could benefit students' academic achievement as well.

The American Federation of Teachers (AFT, 2020) highlighted the benefits that are associated with effective communication for the parents, students and teachers including academic, social, and emotional growth (T. E. Smith et al., 2020). Furthermore, mutual trust and respect are fostered with consistent two-way exchange between schools and families (Bordalba

& Bochaca, 2019). Legislators continue to promote and push two-way communication amongst schools and parents especially after the implementation of the NCLB (2001).

Despite the known support for and benefits of the communicating type, schools and families still appeared to experience challenges with communicating (Bordalba & Bochaca, 2019; Henderson & Mapp, 2002; Murray et al., 2015). Some communications may be of low-quality generally due to a language barrier, inability to come to the school, access to phones or mobile phones, or some families' mistrust of the school (Bordalba & Bochaca, 2019). Cultural differences and different socioeconomic statuses have also been reported as barriers to communication (Murray et al., 2015). Many school districts encourage schools to incorporate a parent resource center. The parent resource centers are designed to offer a meeting place for parents, and references. Space is dedicated solely for parent usage, and some spaces include a computer workspace for parents to utilize to access school records and conduct school-related business.

Type 3: Volunteering

Volunteering may involve one of three activities: volunteering in the school, volunteering on behalf of the school, and volunteering to attend school events (Morrison et al., 2015).

Volunteering is an opportunity to invite parents and members into the school and could strengthen the home-school relationship (J. L. Epstein, 2018b; Povey et al., 2016).

Empirical data showed that the volunteering type was not as prevalent as the other types of parent involvement (Park et al., 2017; Povey et al., 2016). However, families get opportunities to meet other families when volunteering; thus, families may be able to build their network of support (Park et al., 2017). Minority parents could benefit from such support networks (Povey et al., 2016).

Type 4: Learning at Home

Educators can encourage parents to partake in home-based activities such as homework and academic socialization (Beck, 2017; Hill & Tyson, 2009). Assisting children with homework can improve their content-related knowledge, literacy, and numeracy. Academic socialization refers to a form of parental involvement that involves parents verbalizing how they valued education, and what their expectations for their children were with regard to academic outcome (Hill & Tyson, 2009). Academic socialization is often linked with autonomous motivation, such that students are driven to perform school-related tasks by themselves (Suizzo et al., 2016).

The learning at home type was established in literature to decline as children progressed in school. McQuiggan and Megra (2017) reported that 83% of parents were satisfied with helping their children in kindergarten to the second grade, while 75% of parents were satisfied with helping their children in third to fifth grades. In recent years, J. L. Epstein (2018a) emphasized that learning at home may not be limited to homework assistance and academic socialization. Families may encourage learning through real-world experiences such as traveling. However, some families may not have the resources to do such activities (Povey et al., 2016).

Type 5: Decision-Making

Researchers define the decision-making type of parental involvement as participation in school decisions through committees, action teams, or other organizations (Geller, 2016; Ihmeideh et al., 2018; Vance, 2018). Involvement in decision-making has been shown to increase equity among stakeholders (Geller, 2016). Parents and students have an awareness of policies, a feeling of ownership, and an understanding of student rights (J. L. Epstein, 2001).

The decision-making type is promoted by the NPTA (2019), stating that such involvement could allow families to be part of the school's problem-solving, as well as to be part

of positive change. Families who actively offer ideas and suggestions were found to have stronger influence within the school, and in turn could strengthen the child's influence in school as well (Coombe et al., 2017).

Some schools use surveys and parent focus groups to involve parents in decision-making. However, language, culture, and socioeconomic status were reported to hinder this type of parental involvement (J. L. Epstein, 2018b). Schools are encouraged to continuously develop methods to include all families in decision-making.

Type 6: Collaborating with the Community

The collaborating with the community type of parental involvement refers to participation in allocating and utilizing resources and services from the community to partner with the school, and to expose students to the community (Coombe et al., 2017; J. L. Epstein, 2018b; Langford et al., 2018). The community can increase students' knowledge, life skills, and social skills (Coombe et al., 2017). Parents engaged with the community can result in better academic, social, and emotional outcomes for students. The result of collaboration with families has several benefits such as increasing awareness of community support and extracurricular activities (J. L. Epstein, 2001).

Collaborating with families can vary depending on what age the student is. Green (2007) found that there is a decline in family involvement from first through sixth grades in the home and school environment. As children mature, the way in which families are involved needs to change (Hill et al, 2004; Jeynes, 2007; Spera, 2005). As students enter intermediate school, families must continue the appropriate level of engagement (Tumkaya, 2017).

Sahin (2019) administered a survey to 243 parents of sixth-grade students in 29 middle schools in Denizli, Turkey and found that parents of middle school children did not prefer to use

collaborating with the community when gender, socioeconomic status, and educational attainment were not measured. In addition, Sahin found that the parents showed preference for parenting, learning at home, and decision-making. The top three prevalent parent involvement types among the parents in Sahin's study were considered by Tumkaya (2017) to involve traditional involvement activities such as homework assistance and attending PTA meetings. In addition, the NCLB (2001) obligated parents to partake in school meetings, which could be related to decision-making. On the contrary, collaborating with the community involved cooperation with local organizations, which parents might perceive as unnecessary (Sahin, 2019).

Critiques of the Theory

Some researchers suggested that J. L. Epstein's theory may not be a complete framework that explains parental involvement. Jeynes (2017) proposed that the theory may be too simplistic such that the framework may only be applicable to the general student population, and not targeted to specific groups. According to Ee (2017), minority group parents' involvement may not be predicted by demographic factors such as income, educational attainment, and foreign-born status, but by their social ties. Social ties may be based on the parents' involvement in the community which could enhance interaction, and parents' English language ability which could encourage participation. It's noted that J. L. Epstein's six typologies of parental involvement may not characterize how minority parents engage in their own community and in their children's education. Hamlin and Flessa (2018) revealed in their study that the parenting category may be too broad a concept such that subcategories may be developed. In their study, initiatives involving support for well-being and parent-child communication appeared to be

overlapping within the parenting category (Hamlin & Flessa, 2018). Nonetheless, J. L. Epstein's model has been used in several studies and yielded valid and reliable results (Erdener, 2016).

Minority Parental Involvement

The United States is quickly becoming more diverse. Schools are gaining an influx of students who are not White and are new to the United States. The ability to recognize the obstacles that minority parents face will enable schools the information needed to address the situation. Minority students and parents often face obstacles when trying to become more involved in their child's education (Crosnoe & Ansari, 2015; Ma et al., 2016).

Race

The minority races in New Jersey generally comprise Hispanic or Latino (20.6%), African American (15%), Asian (10%), bi-racial or multiracial (2.3%), and other racial origins (0.1%; U.S. Census Bureau, 2019). Previous literature indicated that non-White parents tend to be less involved in their children's education; however, a recent study showed that ethnic minority parents tend to have, and benefit from, their own community (Ee, 2017). Therefore, understanding how parents from specific minority groups are involved in their children's education can result in helpful methods in promoting their involvement. The following subsections show a synthesis of Latino, African American, and Asian parents' involvement based on existing studies.

Latino Parents' Involvement

Involvement of Latino parents in their intermediate school children's education has been established to impact academic achievement and school behavior (Jeynes, 2017). In a meta-analysis, Jeynes (2017) analyzed 28 peer-reviewed studies to compare Latino parents' parental involvement from preschool to college freshman level. Overall results based on a random-error

rather than a fixed-error assumptions yielded a statistically significant relationship between parental involvement and academic achievement.

Jeynes (2017) also found that Latino parents' level of involvement remained at a similar rate for elementary and intermediate school children. Ee (2017) revealed similar findings. These findings are contrary to McQuiggan and Megra's (2017) argument that parents tend to reduce parental involvement, particularly homework assistance, when their children reach intermediate school. In addition, the Latino cultural concept of familismo may hinder Hispanic parents from supporting school-based activities that require their children to be away from home (Zhou & Zhong, 2018).

Jeynes (2017) suggested that Latino parents either had the same high level or low level involvement as their children transitioned from elementary school to intermediate school. According to Jeynes (2017), Latino parents may be more persistently involved in their children's lives from birth to young adulthood suggesting high involvement, or Latino parents may not be as involved as parents from other races to begin with due to their jobs which suggests low involvement. Jeynes's (2017) latter explanation is contradictory to the concept of familismo, but may be in line with Inoa's (2017) findings about Latino parents granting their children more autonomy as they grew older. Inoa (2017) reported that middle class Latino parents tend to start academic socialization just before their children enter middle school, sometimes as early as the third grade. Not only did the parents speak about academic socialization, they also spoke of their general confidence in their children's schooling and school-related goals. As a result, middle class Latino parents typically granted their children autonomy in choosing school-related activities for themselves, only providing guidance and advice (Inoa, 2017). Some researchers argue that parental involvement does not need to be directly assisting children with school work

(Inoa, 2017; J.-S. Kim & Bang, 2017). Inoa (2017) revealed that middle class Latino parents tend to acquire the help of professionals such as private tutors and child psychologists when their children faced struggles in school.

A case study conducted in a Texas elementary school was focused on Mexican parent involvement and suggested that in general, teachers did not recognize the influence that language, parent cliques, parents' education, and cultural influences have an effect on their level of involvement (Peña, 2000). However, Ee (2017) contended that Latino parents are more involved in their elementary to high school children's education than parents from any other racial background when demographic variables (i.e., household income, educational attainment, English language ability, foreign-born status, participation in a Dual Language Immersion program, and child's grade level) were controlled.

Latino parents tend to value their children's education, and are typically subtle and enthusiastic about supporting their children (Jeynes, 2017). In addition, immigrant Latino parents in particular reported feeling uncomfortable with the American school system (Ee, 2017). Hence, Jeynes, (2017) suggested that Latino parents did not need to be involved with parental involvement programs provided by the school to express their support for their children.

African American Parents' Involvement

African American families were found to experience discrimination in their children's schools due to their race and their financial capability in sending their children to school (Latunde & Clark-Louque, 2016). Discrimination appeared to be more prominent when school leaders and teachers did not come from the same demographics as such families.

The case of *Brown v. Board of Education of Topeka, Kansas* highlighted the inequalities that African American students face in the U.S. school systems (Archer-Banks & Behar-

Horenstein, 2008). In a study based on the case, Archer-Banks and Behar-Horenstein (2008) determined the factors that influence African American parents' involvement in their children's middle school experiences. They conducted interviews and asked the African American parents attending churches and visiting beauty salons a series of questions on their views of parent involvement. The results of the study indicated that "family structure and socioeconomic status, school personnel's expectations of parents, and the practices and policies of middle school personnel influenced their level of involvement" (Archer-Banks & Behar-Horenstein, 2008, p. 5).

African American students in K-12 were shown to benefit from their parents' increased academic socialization and increased homework assistance (Day & Dotterer, 2018), which contrasted with McQuiggan and Megra's (2017) findings. However, Day and Dotterer (2018) reported that Caucasian K-12 students academically benefit more from their parents' increased academic socialization and decreased homework assistance. Day and Dotterer (2018) explained that the contrast between the two groups of students might be due to a cultural factor such that African American children tend to respond positively to their parents' "no-nonsense" strict parenting style, while Caucasian children tend to respond positively to "natural growth" in which their parents allow their children to progress by themselves (Inoa, 2017; Lareau, 2017). African American families are more prone to the practice of "concerted cultivation" in which parents dictate their children's activities to gain skills (Lareau, 2017, p. 7). African American families tend to practice concerted cultivation in an attempt to promote racial skills and knowledge to their children living as a minority race (Manning, 2019). African American parents also tend to use concerted cultivation to help their children develop racial identity, and prepare them to live in a world where they are likely to be racially discriminated (Underhill, 2018).

Asian Parents' Involvement

Asian parents tend to express their willingness to be involved in their children's education despite hindrances such as a language barrier (Ee, 2017; Zhou & Zhong, 2018). Zhou and Zhong (2018) found that Mandarin-speaking Chinese parents expressed their desire to participate in PTA meetings despite low proficiency in English, as they wanted to receive updates about their children's academic progress during the allotted time. Chinese immigrant parents tend to support school-based activities in the form of complying with requirements of the school (Zhou & Zhong, 2018). Minority Chinese parents in the American school system tend to be passive rather than actively voicing out their opinions and ideas to school staff (Hill & Taylor, 2004).

In a study conducted in China, parents from a rural ethnic minority tended to hire tutors to help their middle school children with school work (Badrasawi et al., 2019). The parents generally placed high value on their children's education, but had low educational levels themselves; therefore, the parents tended to have difficulty assisting their children. Despite the efforts of the school to conduct meetings with the parents, Badrasawi et al.'s (2019) study revealed that the meetings were not of much help, and hiring tutors was considered a better alternative in helping their children, thus suggesting passive participation (Hill & Taylor, 2004).

Similarly, J.-S. Kim and Bang (2017) revealed that Korean parents with high educational attainment also placed value on their children's English education, and tended to be more than willing to pay the price for hiring private tutors. However, the majority of Korean-speaking minority parents tend to be more participative in school activities and be more interactive with other parents when the school has a successful dual-language immersion (DLI) program (Ee, 2017). DLI programs entail that non-English speaking students are learning English and another

“partner language” (i.e., Spanish, Mandarin Chinese, Korean, French, German, or Italian). The aim of DLI programs is to produce bilingual and biliterate students (Christian, 2016). DLI programs started in the United States in the 1960s, and have been shown to increase parental involvement of immigrant parents. DLI programs are currently more prominent in California, Arizona, and Massachusetts (Christian, 2016; Dual Language Schools, 2017).

General Experience of Misconceptions and Perceived Barriers

According to Conus and Fahrni (2019), parental involvement tends to benefit from face-to-face interactions between teachers and parents; however, they found that teachers expected parents to initiate the interaction, while parents expected teachers to initiate the interaction. Expectation of parental initiative may be a barrier for minority parents. For most minority parents, organizational bureaucracy, time constraints, location, and organizational culture of the school may pose barriers to parent-teacher interactions. Some parents experience barriers such as perceived teachers’ availability, perception of being demanding, perceived lack of legitimacy of inquiries, and maintaining good relationships with teachers. For parents from minority groups, however, the additional barrier was their lack of confidence in their communication skills (Conus and Fahrni (2019). As such, parents from minority groups reported feeling uncomfortable approaching their children’s teachers. Consequently, teachers tend to develop a misconception about minority parents that they seemed uninterested in their children’s education.

Similar findings were reported by Koyama and Bakuza (2017), who conducted a qualitative case study in an urban school district, and found that teachers generally perceived that minority parents were not good school volunteers due to difficulty in communication. Koyama and Bakuza concluded that while teachers were able to identify the issues they faced with minority group parents, none of the teachers were able to share solutions to resolve the problems.

Conus and Fahrni (2019) shared that teachers also appeared to prefer the “no news is good news” mentality such that they did not interact with parents unless the children were in trouble. The teachers’ no news is good news mentality, coupled with the barriers experienced by parents tend to result in fewer parent-teacher interactions. Teachers in Conus and Fahrni’s study, nonetheless, generally reported that regardless of actual or perceived barriers, their line of communication with the parents always remained open.

Socioeconomic Status

Lareau (2017) reported that parents’ socioeconomic class may also affect their parental involvement. A little over half of U.S. families (52%) belong to the middle class, while 29% of U.S. families belong to the lower middle class (U.S. Census Bureau, 2018). The median household income in New Jersey was \$79,363 (U.S. Census Bureau, 2019). Middle class parents tend to raise their children through natural growth, in which parents let their children flourish by themselves, and provide assurance of love and basic needs. Lower middle-class parents tend to raise their children through concerted cultivation, in which parents choose the activities of their children to hone skills and abilities (Inoa, 2017; Lareau, 2017). Manning (2019) argued that concerted cultivation was “racialized” parenting practice; for instance, including activities that cultivated racial identity development.

Parents with higher income also tend to have a more positive attitude when fostering school-parent relationships (Matthews et al., 2017). However, parents with lower income appeared to want to be involved in their children’s schooling. The parents may simply feel uncomfortable building a school-parent relationship, or may not know how to build a relationship. Similar to the findings of Matthews et al. (2017), Preston et al. (2018) revealed that regardless of ethnicity and socioeconomic status, as well as religion and language proficiency, all

parents tend to want to do what they can to support their children in school. Seminal studies showed that volunteerism by parents with poverty level income tend to be discredited or disregarded by teachers (Cullingford & Morrison, 1999; Lareau & Horvat, 1999). Matthews et al. (2017) argued that the Mid-Eastern Suffolk Teachers Center (MESTRACT, 2020) located in Long Island, New York offers seminars for teachers to learn how to empathize with students and parents from different socioeconomic status.

In addition, low income Black and Latino parents tend to practice concerted cultivation (Sonnenschein & Sawyer, 2018), while middle class Latino parents also tend to practice the same child-rearing method (Inoa, 2017). Low income parents may practice concerted cultivation, as low income parents tend to have high ambition for their children (Amponsah, Milledzi, Ampofo, & Gyambrah, 2018). On the other hand, Inoa (2017) shared that middle class Latino parents actively looked for extracurricular activities for their children, whether the activities were in the community or in private institutions. The parents were revealed to be willing to sacrifice resources in order to enroll their children in activities. Concerted cultivation, however, appeared be a similar trait among the participants' regarding their children's autonomy. The parents in Inoa's (2017) study revealed that they merely guided and advised their children; the children had the final choice of their preferred activities. The reason for this parenting behavior may be the language use related to concerted cultivation (Ishizuka, 2018). Parents practicing concerted cultivation tend to use more reasoning and negotiation than directives and lack of reasoning language use of parents practicing natural growth (Ishizuka, 2018).

Parents from minority groups generally held multiple jobs and lived in double-income households (Inoa, 2017). According to Inoa (2017), the majority of barriers experienced by Latino parents may be related to socioeconomic status such that lower income parents tend to

experience more barriers than higher income parents from minority groups. Henderson and Mapp (2002) revealed that minority parents from low income households also tend to be challenged by job-related responsibilities, transportation, and childcare.

Promoting Parental Involvement

Different methods of promoting parental involvement have been reported in the literature. Addi-Racah and Yemini (2018) reported that parent involvement varied in terms of scope and intensity. Some parents practiced passive engagement, such as following teachers' advice to help their children. Some parents practiced active engagement, such as participation in school activities, while some parents practiced intensive engagement such as taking professional classes in supporting their children's education.

Promoting Involvement of Parents With Intermediate School Children

Hill and Tyson (2009) noted that parents tend to be involved with their middle school children's education through academic socialization, in which parent and child talked about school and future school-related goals. The type of parental involvement may be influential in promoting initiatives (Hamlin & Flessa, 2018). Parents of older children in secondary education tend to want to be involved in initiatives that help support their children's mental health, while parents of younger children in primary school tend to want to be involved in initiatives that help with their children's literacy and numeracy. Both groups of parents, however, need support in home-based learning of their children.

Schools can provide parents with evidence-based intervention and continuing family education to promote parenting (J. L. Epstein, 2018a; Povey et al., 2016). Schools can open their lines of communication, as well as provide access to communication for parents with intermediate school children (Murray et al., 2015). School leaders can generally promote

parental involvement in intermediate school when communication is consistent and transparent (Bordalba & Bochaca, 2019). Such communication is linked with positively reinforcing the relationship between families and schools through fostering mutual trust (Bordalba & Bochaca, 2019; Ratliffe & Ponte, 2018). In intermediate schools, volunteering opportunities for parents are usually in the form of chaperoning field trips and extracurricular activities (Knapp et al., 2013). When learning at home, parents with intermediate school children typically reduce their homework assistance and increase their academic socialization (McQuiggan & Megra, 2017). Parents also attend PTA, answer surveys, or participate in focus groups to exercise their decision-making involvement (Coombe et al., 2017). Lastly, parents help with community activities to promote collaboration (Coombe et al., 2017; Sahin, 2019).

Promoting Involvement of Minority Parents

Based on the existing literature on minority parental involvement, the following methods to promote the involvement of minority parents are identified: addressing language barrier, promoting cultural diversity, providing private tutorial services for students, and authorizing contextual assistance for parents. The obstacles faced by minority parents may be real or perceived, and unique to minority groups (Hamlin & Flessa, 2018). It is also not known which of J. L. Epstein's (1995) six types of parental involvement minority parent preferred.

Addressing the Language Barrier

Minority parents may need language support in school; otherwise, this population may not choose to be involved in home-to-school communication, volunteering, and collaborating with the community (Antony-Newman, 2019; Zhou & Zhong, 2018). Addressing language barriers through providing translations has proved to help build minority parents' trust in the school leaders (Northouse, 2016) and in the community (Due & Riggs, 2016).

According to Koyama and Bakuza (2017), teachers generally recognize the issues posed by the language barrier when engaging with minority group parents, but the school system usually lacked a language support program. In addition, minority parents who barely spoke English often experience linguistic discrimination when attempting to volunteer in school activities. In a follow-up study involving refugee minority group parents, assistance from the Department of Refugee Services through mentorship included language support for families in addition to helping students assimilate to their new home (Koyama & Ghosh, 2018). Mentors from the Department of Refugee services emphasized the need to support the whole family in assimilation in order to resolve the language barrier and to get families to be engaged with the local community including the local school district (Koyama & Ghosh, 2018). The findings for refugee parents may be applicable to minority parents with low English proficiency, and who benefit from mentorship, as they were also described to experience language barrier and difficulty navigating the American school system (Koyama & Ghosh, 2018).

Conus and Fahrni (2019) revealed that not all minority parents experience a language barrier. Immigrants who recently arrived in the United States tend to be more reluctant in their communication skills than are immigrants who have stayed longer in the local area. Ee (2017) and De Jong (2016) proposed that parents and students from minority groups in recent years did not need to be classified according to their ethnic and racial origins, but may be given support based on whether they belonged to the English language majority group or language minority group.

The introduction of parental programs specific to their linguistic group rather than racial or ethnic group could help promote parental involvement, such as in the study of Korean parents who actively participated in a successful DLI program in California (Ee, 2017). The majority of

Korean-speaking minority parents also tend to be more participative in school activities and be more interactive with other parents when the school has a successful DLI program (Ee, 2017). DLI programs entail that non-English speaking students are learning English and another “partner language” (i.e., Spanish, Mandarin Chinese, Korean, French, German, or Italian). The aim of DLI programs is to produce bilingual and biliterate students (Christian, 2016). DLI programs started in the United States in the 1960s, and have been shown to increase the parental involvement of immigrant parents. DLI programs are currently more prominent in California, Arizona, and Massachusetts (Christian, 2016; Dual Language Schools, 2017).

Ee (2017) explained that the impact of linguistic groups and DLI programs on the involvement of minority parents may be due to the difference between parent interaction and parent participation. Parent interaction refers to the parents’ communication with members of the school community with whom they feel comfortable; therefore, parent interaction may be more commonly practiced among individuals of the same racial or linguistic groups. Parent participation, on the other hand, refers to general contacts with other parents and school staff in relation to school events. Regardless of whether minority parents practiced interaction or participation, both activities tend to promote their social network beneficial to their children’s education (Ee, 2017).

Promoting Cultural Diversity

Latino parents tend to value family and have less appreciation for school-based activities, while Asian parents tend to value participating in school-based activities and complying with school requirements (Zhou & Zhong, 2018). Fenton et al. (2017) suggested that teachers might form preconceived notions about parents from specific backgrounds due to their cultural practices and behaviors, and teachers might have a bias toward parents who passively complied

with the requirements, and tend to favor them over more outspoken parents. Hence, parents do not become “true partners” of teachers, as depicted in the ESSA of 2015. While the law stipulates what type of relationship is needed among family-school-community, the law might not be applied and implemented the way it was intended (Fenton et al., 2017).

One way of fostering the true partnership that is aligned with the ESSA of 2015 is through accounting for sociocultural factors (Fenton et al., 2017). School leaders are urged to familiarize themselves with the social, economic, and cultural composition of their local community in order to understand how to welcome all socioeconomic and cultural groups into the school (Fenton et al., 2017). The duty of school leaders includes acting as a liaison between families and the community such that families in need may be referred to proper agencies providing resources and services in the local community (Moreland & Levine, 2016).

Providing Private Tutorial Services for Students

Minority parents, regardless of racial or ethnic background, tend to value education, but generally experience difficulty assisting their children with homework (Badrasawi et al, 2019). Middle class Latino parents tend to prefer private tutors assisting children at home than leaving their children in school for school-based aid, which could be tied to the Latino familismo culture. Chinese parents and Korean parents also typically employ a private tutor to assist their children with content knowledge that parents with low English proficiency might find difficult to do (Badrasawi et al., 2019).

Authorizing Contextual Help

According to Hamlin and Flessa (2018), successfully promoting parental involvement of minority parents may be related to the initiatives implemented by the school. Initiatives that develop one’s well-being, skills for home-based learning, proving access to resources and

services, and building family-school-community partnerships appear to be widely used (Hamlin & Flessa, 2018).

School-authorized methods, including but not limited to parent-teacher meetings, newsletters, blogs, e-mails, handouts, and participation in class activities and field trips, could also promote parental involvement of minority parents (Preston et al., 2018). However, such methods were considered to be conventional, and did not promote *family vibrancy*, a concept introduced as “the belief that every parent, regardless of socioeconomic status, language abilities, ethnicity, religion, employment status, status in life, etc., supports his/her child’s education to the best of his/her ability” (Preston et al., 2018, p. 556). Family vibrancy was believed to promote acceptance and inclusiveness in school such that historical, lifestyle, and cultural differences in each family are acknowledged (Preston et al., 2018). Schools that promote cultural programs and foster inclusiveness generally promoted family vibrancy. As a result, such schools also promote parental involvement of minority parents.

Wong-Villacres et al. (2017) noted that parent involvement of minority parents may be practiced in two ways: formal and informal. Formal ways include functions such as school-organized groups or PTAs, while informal ways include initiatives by the parents such as communicating with other parents when picking up their children or communicating with teachers and other parents in social media. Wong-Villacres et al. noted that communication using social media could promote relationships outside social media. Spaces for formal ways of engagement such as the PTA often use social media as well. Parents can freely post on PTA Facebook pages, but a page facilitator from the school often decides what information is shared on the page. Thus, inequities may still exist in the use of social media to promote involvement (Wong-Villacres et al., 2017).

Parents with lower socioeconomic status tend to need more ways to access resources and services than parents with higher socioeconomic status. Resources and services may be accessible through the school, or at times through connections of the school in the community; hence, the parent-school-community partnership. Hamlin and Flessa (2018) referred to the parents' different needs as contextual differences. Berkowitz et al. (2017) described the conflicting perceptions of Caucasian parents and parents from some minority groups about school climate. Native American Indians and Alaskan Natives tend to have more negative perceptions about the school climate than do parents from other ethnicities; as a result, parents from these minority groups tend to be less involved. Hence, Berkowitz et al. suggested that policymakers may not be sufficiently addressing the needs of these parents or the school may not be presenting attractive methods to involve these parents. Berkowitz et al. also suggested that cultural discontinuity may be hindering Native parents' involvement. Therefore, in order to promote involvement of parents from certain minority groups, the researchers suggested for schools to practice cultural sensitivity and celebrate diversity. The researchers also suggested for teachers and school staff to embrace nonconventional forms of education to accommodate the culture of minority groups. Lastly, Berkowitz et al. (2017) suggested that schools could present more education opportunities for minority group parents to be more informed about the school curriculum and school culture.

Policies may help promote parental involvement. Whether policies were written at the federal, state, or even school district level, D. V. Robinson (2017) urged that policies serve as the initiator of parental involvement. Through written policies, parents tend to be informed channels through which they could be involved in their children's education. Parents also tend to become aware of their roles in the children's education, as well as the school's expectations of their

involvement. Berkowitz et al. (2017) reported that data-driven policies tend to be more effective, as policies developed based on data tend to consider parents' perceptions about the school climate more than non-data-driven policies. Data collection needed to be continuous and systematic. Statewide, at least in California, empirically-derived policies appear to be lacking (Berkowitz et al., 2017).

Summary

Parental involvement is crucial for the success of a student. The term can be defined several ways and is perceived by stakeholders in their own light. A continual effort to increase participation and communication can yield a better educational career for students. This review of literature contained a presentation of the resources, opportunities, benefits, and barriers of J. L. Epstein's six parental involvement types when applied to minority parents with intermediate school children. However, it is not known which of the six parental involvement types is preferred by the target population. The results from this research provided information regarding the areas of involvement preferred by minority parents such that the local school leaders could use the information to determine what initiatives and policies are sufficient and what areas need to be improved to accommodate the needs of as many families, particularly in a suburban intermediate school in New Jersey, as possible.

CHAPTER 3

METHODOLOGY

In order to explore the question of how parents of students in the intermediate school perceive their involvement, it was beneficial to gather a large data set that allowed me as the researcher to obtain perceptions of many parents. I focused on data from parents to learn their perspectives regarding how they are involved with their children's education and gain insight as to how the school can further involve parents. A quantitative approach, utilizing a survey method allowed me to collect data from a larger sample. The survey was used to collect data to determine how are parents currently involved in their children's education and what changes can be made to improve parent involvement.

Research Questions

This study was an exploration of the perceptions of parents' preferred type of involvement at the intermediate school level. The study was aimed to answer the following research questions:

RQ1: What are the differences among J. L. Epstein's six parental involvement types as measured through the perceived preference of minority parents with children studying in a suburban intermediate school in New Jersey?

H₀: There are no statistically significant differences among the parents' preferred involvement style.

H_a: There is a statistically significant difference among the parents' preferred involvement style.

RQ2: Which among parent involvement styles (parenting, communication, volunteering, learning at home, decision making, collaboration with community) of minority

parents with children studying in a suburban intermediate school in New Jersey is the most prevalent?

H₀2: There is no prevalent parent involvement style among minority parents with children studying in a suburban intermediate school in New Jersey

H_a2a: Parenting type is the most prevalent parent involvement type among minority parents with children studying in a suburban intermediate school in New Jersey.

H_a2b: Communicating type is the most prevalent parent involvement type among minority parents with children studying in a suburban intermediate school in New Jersey.

H_a2c: Volunteering type is the most prevalent parent involvement type among minority parents with children studying in a suburban intermediate school in New Jersey.

H_a2d: Learning at home type is the most prevalent parent involvement type among minority parents with children studying in a suburban intermediate school in New Jersey.

H_a2e: Decision-making type is the most prevalent parent involvement type among minority parents with children studying in a suburban intermediate school in New Jersey.

H_a2f: Collaborating with community type is the most prevalent parent involvement type among minority parents with children studying in a suburban intermediate school in New Jersey.

Ha2g: There is an overlapping prevalent parent involvement type among minority parents with children studying in a suburban intermediate school in New Jersey.

Research Design and Methods

I used a quantitative descriptive approach, utilizing data from a survey for this study. The research questions were developed to gain an understanding of parents' perceptions of their level of involvement in an intermediate school, as well as teachers' perceptions of current involvement. This was accomplished through the use of a descriptive rating, Likert-type survey used to collect the data. The methodology allowed for statistical analysis of the data. According to Creswell (2012), quantitative research methods would provide statistical information that I could use to better analyze trends and compare methods that are effective in engaging families of students in the targeted subgroups. Quantitative research provides a great deal of information if multiple stakeholders are surveyed to gain their insight into what parental involvement strategies have been effective in schools with similar demographics. Due to the nature and length of the study, observations and personal interviews would not provide the honesty that an anonymous survey provides.

Quantitative research is descriptive and explanation-oriented, uses predetermined instruments, is most often conducted in researcher-controlled environments where variables are manipulated, and then the data are collected and statistically analyzed (Creswell, 2012, Gay et al., 2012). Quantitative approaches are applied to describe current conditions, investigate relationships between two or more variables, and to study cause-effect phenomena (Creswell, 2012, Gay et al., 2012). Survey research determines the way things are; it involves collecting numerical data to test the hypotheses and/or research questions and is often used to describe

current conditions (Gay et al., 2012). Through this methodology, the study serves to describe the current challenges that the setting is faced with. This present study utilized a cross-sectional design using statistical tests of association to assess relationships among parental education, socioeconomic status, and involvement.

Sample

This study took place in a suburban school district located in New Jersey with a total student population of 4,567 students. The comprehensive school district has two early-childhood centers, three elementary schools, one intermediate school, one middle school, one high school, and one alternative high school. The population of the school system breaks down demographically in this manner: 2.7% Caucasian, 11% Hispanic, 1% multi-racial, 82.4% African American, and 1.8% Asian. The district's population has 63.4% of students who are coded as economically disadvantaged students. The district is currently facing challenges with parent participation as well as a transient population of students.

The intermediate school where the study took place has approximately 550 students enrolled in Grades 5 and 6. Participants will be the parents of students in Grades 5 and 6 in the school. Information gained from the review of literature indicated that parents tend to be more involved in their child's education when their children are younger (Constantino, 2016). This population was surveyed to gain information on the level of involvement of parents at this grade level span.

Prior to the distribution of the survey, permission was granted by the superintendent to conduct the research in the school. Participants who returned the survey provided information about their involvement in their children's education and the concepts of parent involvement they felt were most important. It was possible that these parents who participated in the surveys

would still engage in their child's education, but as supported by the literature, parents do tend to become less involved as students get older. With the survey, a statement of participation and intent of the research was clearly outlined and included a letter of explanation from me. A letter of explanation was included with the paper survey distributed to all participants.

At the time of study, the school had a total of 69 teachers on staff. The school follows a block schedule in which students rotate daily; teachers are responsible for approximately 150 students. The classes are not self-contained and are divided in accordance to their subject matter. The staff has a variety of experience and work alongside the administration to increase parental involvement.

Instrumentation

The perceptions of parents were compiled by means of a survey based on J. L. Epstein's framework of six dimensions of parental involvement. The survey was modified with permission of the author to measure parents' involvement according to J. L. Epstein's six types of involvement to omit and include questions. The survey consists of the following dimensions of parental involvement: (a) parenting, (b) communication, (c) volunteering, (d) learning at home, (e) decision-making, and (f) collaborating with the community (J. L. Epstein, 1995). The survey was based on the School and Family Partnerships Survey by J. L. Epstein and Clark-Salina (1993) for the Center of Schools, Family, and Community Partnerships of John Hopkins University. The length of the survey is one page and the time estimated for the parent to complete the survey was about 10 to 15 minutes. The question format enabled respondents to answer easily and the questions were worded in a manner that was be easy for the respondent to understand.

Validity

Validity is the extent to which an instrument measures what it is supposed to measure and performs as it is designed to perform (Gay et al., 2012; Glen, 2019). As a process, validation involves collecting and analyzing data to assess the accuracy of an instrument, which provides a more accurate data set (Gay et al., 2012; Glen, 2019). There are a number of statistical tests and measures to assess the validity of quantitative instruments, which generally involves pilot testing the instrument and a required by the researcher (Glen, 2019).

External validity is the extent to which the results of a study can be generalized from a sample to a population (Gay et al., 2012; Glen, 2019). Establishing external validity for an instrument means that a sample should be an accurate representation of a population, in the event that the total population may not be available (Gay et al., 2012; Glen, 2019). Content validity refers to the appropriateness of the content of an instrument (Gay et al., 2012; Glen, 2019). In other words, the measures (questions, observation logs, etc.) must accurately assess what a researcher wants to know (Gay et al., 2012; Glen, 2019). The adapted survey was analyzed using Cronbach's alpha for reliability to determine if the survey was consistent with the original survey.

Reliability

The Tools for Schools survey (Epstien, 2001) used in this research, was created by a leading expert in parent and community partnerships, J. L. Epstein. The Measure of School, Family, and Community Partnerships survey was published in partnership with Johns Hopkins University (J. L. Epstein et al., 2002). J. L. Epstein is currently employed by Johns Hopkins University and still conducting research in the area of parental involvement. In 1995, she established the National Network of Schools in Partnership (NNSP), which provides professional

development for leaders to create research-based programs for family and community engagement. With over 150 publications worldwide, J. L. Epstein's research to date is highly cited and utilized in schools and organizations across the United States.

Data Collection

The data were collected through Google survey. The survey link was sent electronically by the school's administrative assistant and returned via school email to the researcher. No names or identifying traits were used in the final compilation of the data. These surveys will be stored for 5 years and then destroyed according to federal guidelines and the Seton Hall IRB requirements.

The parent involvement survey was distributed to all families in the school during the 2019-2020 school year. The total population was 560 students. The goal was to obtain a 30–40% response rate to the surveys. I contacted prospective parents through a variety of measures. First, I informed parents through email contact about the purpose of the study and asked for their assistance in completing the survey prior to distribution. Once the surveys were sent, parents had 1 week to return the survey. If the submission was less than 30%, I sent a follow-up email, giving an additional 7 days for submission. I solicited the school's administrative assistant for help with the distribution of the surveys.

The survey was emailed to parents with email addresses from the school's information system, and included a request to complete them within 10 days. In addition, a reminder was placed on the school website. I emailed and informed teachers and support staff of the survey. The survey was also available in Spanish.

A survey package was distributed to each parent who was unable to complete the survey online. The package contained an overview of the research project as well as letters of consent

informing parents that it was a voluntary survey. I gave instructions for collection of the anonymous surveys. The parents had 2 weeks to return the surveys. An email was sent to parents the day that the survey was distributed, informing them of the study and encouraging them to complete the survey. Parents with more than one child attending the school were instructed to complete only one survey.

Data Analysis

The analysis procedure was conducted using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS, Version 23) software program, including demographic, summary of analyses, detail of analyses, and summary of results sections. The demographic section included the profiles of participants responding to the survey. The summary of analyses included all hypotheses. Each of the research hypotheses were tested using a one-sample *t* test to evaluate candidate perceptions of parent's involvement according to the six types. Independent samples *t* tests and one-factor analysis of variance (ANOVA) were included in the analysis. The one-tailed *t* test was appropriate for the study because the data were analyzed in one direction. The dependent variable was classified as the minority status of the parent. The independent variable is the parent involvement type.

This data analysis included descriptive statistics, means, standard deviation, and frequency where applicable. For this analysis, alpha was set at $p = .05$, provided assumptions of normality were met. Descriptive statistics is the analysis of data that help describe, show, or summarize data in a meaningful way, such that patterns might emerge from the data (Gay et al., 2012; Salkind, 2011). The common types of descriptive statistics used for survey calculations are mean, standard deviation, and percentage (Gay et al., 2012). After all statistical tests have been

run, I created tables, charts, and graphs to allow for easy display. The tables, charts, and graphs were further explained in narrative form.

Multiple regression was used to test all hypotheses. This test determined if there was a relationship between the dependent variable (minority status) and the independent variable parental involvement (parenting, communicating, volunteering, learning at home, decision-making, collaborating with community).

Ethical Considerations

IRB approval from Seton Hall University was obtained for this study. My researcher bias includes my personal opinions on parental involvement at the school. At the time of the study, I was an Assistant Principal at the intermediate school. Understanding biases enabled me to be aware of any social desirability and cultural bias that may have arisen. Because of the small sample, anonymity could have become a concern for some of the participants. Some of the participants could have been reluctant to provide demographic information. Extra consideration for and assurance of confidentiality were provided to all participants in the data collection phase to promote their honest and informal responses to the surveys.

Summary

The purpose of this quantitative study was to determine the most prevalent parent involvement type (parenting, communication, volunteering, learning at home, decision-making, collaboration with community) of minority parents with children studying in a suburban intermediate school in New Jersey, based on J. L. Epstein's dimensions of parental involvement. This chapter included the research questions and hypotheses, a description of the population used in this study, the methods used in collecting and analyzing the data, the validity and reliability of

the survey instrument, ethical considerations, and a summary. Chapter 4 provides the findings based on the methodology and data collected as explained in Chapter 3.

CHAPTER 4

RESULTS

The purpose of this quantitative study was to determine the most prevalent parent involvement type (parenting, communication, volunteering, learning at home, decision-making, collaboration with community) of minority parents with children studying in a suburban intermediate school in New Jersey based on J. L. Epstein's dimensions of parental involvement. Determining the prevalent perceived type of parental involvement can help provide insight into how and to what extent parents are engaged; thus, school leaders and policymakers may develop methods to effectively increase engagement.

This study took place in a suburban school district located in New Jersey. The school district has a total student population of 4,567 students. The intermediate school where the study took place has approximately 550 students enrolled in Grades 5 and 6. Participants were the parents of students in Grades 5 and 6 in the school.

The perceptions of parents were compiled by means of the Parental Involvement Survey (PIS) based on J. L. Epstein's framework of six dimensions of parental involvement. The survey was modified with permission of the author to measure parents' involvement according to J. L. Epstein's six types of involvement to omit and include questions. The survey consisted of the following dimensions of parental involvement: (a) parenting, (b) communication, (c) volunteering, (d) learning at home, (e) decision-making, and (f) collaborating with the community (J. L. Epstein, 1995).

Survey data were collected through the development of a Google survey. The survey link was sent electronically by the school's administrative assistant and returned via school email to the researcher. The parents had 2 weeks to return the surveys. An email was sent to parents the

day that the survey was distributed, informing them of the study and encouraging them to complete the survey.

Chapter 4 is organized by an introduction, a discussion of the sample demographics, reliability analysis, descriptive statistics, data screening, research question/hypothesis testing, and a summary of the results. Data were analyzed with SPSS 23 for Windows. The following section is a discussion of the sample demographics.

Sample Demographics

The initial sample consisted of 63 participants: 11.1% ($n = 7$) were White or Caucasian, 65.1% ($n = 41$) were Black or African American; and 14.3% ($n = 9$) were Hispanic or Latino. The remaining racial categories represented included Other (6.3%, $n = 4$) and Asian (1.6%, $n = 1$). Parental race and ethnicity is presented in Table 1.

Table 1

Race and Ethnicity of Parents

Race	<i>n</i>	%	Valid %
Asian	1	1.6	1.6
Black or African American	41	65.1	66.1
Hispanic or Latino(a)	9	14.3	14.5
Other	4	6.3	6.5
White or Caucasian	7	11.1	11.3
Subtotal	62	98.4	100.0
No answer	1	1.6	
Total	63	100.0	

One parent did not answer the question regarding race. Thus, the initial sample consisted of 11.1% ($n = 7$) of White or Caucasian parents and the remaining 89.9% ($n = 55$) were minority parents. Since the focus of the study was on the parental involvement of minority parents with

children, data on the White or Caucasian parents were excluded from further analysis. Moreover, a group size of seven cases was insufficient for comparative analyses. Of the remaining parents who were minorities, 58.5% ($n = 31$) had children that attended the sixth grade in the 2019–2020 school year, whereas 41.5% ($n = 22$) had children that attended the fifth grade. Two parents did not answer the question on the survey. The educational attainment of the parents was approximately equally distributed among those with some college (29.1%, $n = 16$), college degrees (29.1%, $n = 16$), and graduate degrees (27.3%, $n = 15$); whereas 14.5% ($n = 8$) had high school diplomas or general education diplomas (GEDs). The majority of respondents who completed the surveys were mothers (83.6%, $n = 46$) and 12.7% ($n = 7$) were fathers. Others who completed the surveys included aunts (1.8%, $n = 1$) and guardians (1.8%, $n = 1$). Sample demographics are presented in Table 2.

Table 2

Sample Demographics

Variable	Description	<i>n</i>	%
My child attended this grade in the 2019–2020 school year.	Grade 5	22	41.5
	Grade 6	31	58.5
Highest education level	High school/GED	8	14.5
	Some college	16	29.1
	College degree	16	29.1
	Graduate degree	15	27.3
How do you describe yourself?	Asian	1	1.8
	Black or African American	41	74.5
	Hispanic or Latino(a)	9	16.4
	Other	4	7.3
	White or Caucasian	0	0.0%

Variable	Description	<i>n</i>	%
Who filled out the survey?	Aunt	1	1.8
	Father	7	12.7
	Guardian	1	1.8
	Mother	46	83.6

Note. $N = 55$ for all groups except grade, in which $N = 53$ due to two parents not answering the question.

Instrument Reliability for Sample

The reliability of the PIS was tested with Cronbach's alpha. The overall internal consistency of the PIS was good ($\alpha = .84$). Based on generally accepted criteria, reliability is excellent when $\alpha = .90-.99$, good when $\alpha = .80-.89$, fair when $\alpha = .70-.79$, questionable when $\alpha = .60-.69$, poor when $\alpha = .50-.59$, and unacceptable when $\alpha < .50$ (DeVellis, 2012).

Descriptive Statistics

The scores for the six dimensions of parental involvement were computed by summing the responses to the questions on each dimension and dividing the sum by the number of questions on each dimension. Learning at home had the highest degree of endorsement with scores ranging from 1.67 to 4.00 ($M = 3.21$, $SD = 0.68$). Parenting had the next highest endorsement with scores ranging from 2.00 to 4.00 ($M = 3.09$, $SD = 0.46$). Volunteering had the lowest degree of endorsement with scores ranging from 1.00 to 4.00 ($M = 1.82$, $SD = 0.71$). Descriptive statistics are presented in descending order of means in Table 3.

Table 3*Descriptive Statistics*

Variable	<i>n</i>	Minimum	Maximum	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>
Learning at home	55	1.67	4.00	3.21	0.68
Parenting	55	2.00	4.00	3.09	0.46
Communicating	55	1.00	3.67	2.52	0.60
Collaboration with the community	55	1.00	3.25	1.92	0.59
Decision-making	55	1.00	4.00	1.89	0.99
Volunteering	55	1.00	4.00	1.82	0.71

Individual responses to the survey questions on the PIS were reported in frequency distributions. For example, 38.2% ($n = 21$) of minority parents rarely participated in fundraising events at their child's school; 41.8% ($n = 23$) sometimes participated, 16.4% ($n = 9$) often participated, and 3.6% ($n = 2$) always participated. Participant survey responses are provided in Table 4.

Table 4*Survey Responses*

Item	Rarely	Sometimes	Often	Always
	<i>n</i> (%)	<i>n</i> (%)	<i>n</i> (%)	<i>n</i> (%)
I participate in fundraising events at my child's school.	21 (38.2)	23 (41.8)	9 (16.4)	2 (3.6)
I talk with my child's teachers on the telephone.	12 (21.8)	24 (43.6)	15 (27.3)	4 (7.3)
I meet with other families from my child's classroom outside of school.	30 (54.5)	19 (34.5)	6 (10.9)	0 (0)
I talk with other parents about school meetings and events.	24 (43.6)	20 (36.4)	8 (14.5)	3 (5.5)
My child has chores to do at home.	1 (1.8)	7 (12.7)	18 (32.7)	29 (52.7)
I volunteer in my child's classroom and/or school events.	23 (41.8)	19 (34.5)	9 (16.4)	4(7.3)

Item	Rarely	Sometimes	Often	Always
	<i>n</i> (%)	<i>n</i> (%)	<i>n</i> (%)	<i>n</i> (%)
I attend PTO/PTA meetings.	36 (65.5)	13 (23.6)	5 (9.1)	1 (1.8)
The teacher and I email each other about my child or school activities.	2 (3.6)	15 (27.3)	21 (38.2)	17 (30.9)
I bring home learning materials for my child (books, videos).	0 (0)	10 (18.2)	22 (40.0)	23 (41.8)
I participate in parent and family social activities at my child's school.	19 (34.5)	14 (25.5)	14 (25.5)	8 (14.5)
I maintain clear rules at home that my child should obey.	0 (0)	1 (1.8)	10 (18.2)	44 (80.0)
I talk with my child's teacher or principal about academic concerns.	2 (3.7)	17 (31.5)	11 (20.4)	24 (44.4)
I read with my child at home.	4 (7.3)	11 (20.0)	19 (34.5)	21 (38.2)
I sign up to be on committees at the school.	31 (56.4)	11 (20.0)	10 (18.2)	3 (5.5)
I help my child with studying and homework.	1 (1.8)	9 (16.4)	15 (27.3)	30 (54.5)
I attend school board meetings.	34 (61.8)	16 (29.1)	2 (3.6)	3 (5.5)
I teach my child home life skills (laundry, dishes, organization)	0 (0)	3 (5.5)	11 (20.0)	41 (74.5)
I offer suggestions and feedback to the school regarding school operations.	24 (44.4)	18 (33.3)	6 (11.1)	6 (11.1)

Data Screening

The data were screened for normality with skewness and kurtosis statistics and illustrated with histograms. In SPSS, distributions are normal if the absolute values of their skewness and kurtosis coefficients is less than 2 times their standard errors. Based on these criteria, three distributions for the parental involvement dimensions were normal and three were not normal. Skewness and kurtosis coefficients are presented in Table 5.

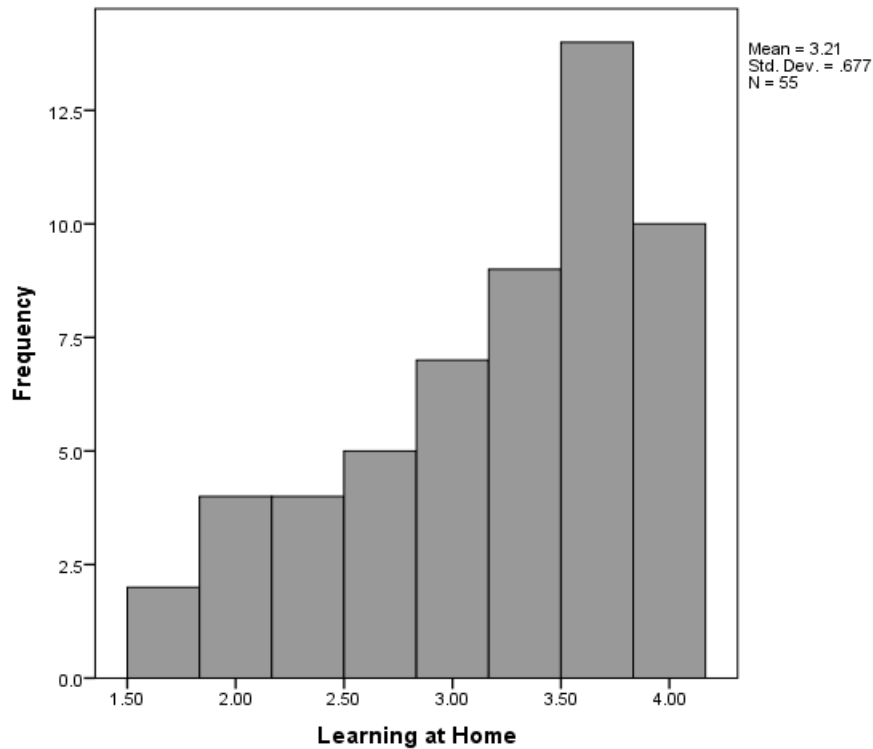
Table 5*Skewness and Kurtosis Coefficients*

Variable	Skewness		Kurtosis	
	Statistic	Std. error	Statistic	Std. error
Learning at home	-.707	.322	-.514	.634
Parenting	-.286	.322	-.116	.634
Communicating	-.272	.322	-.407	.634
Collaboration with the community	.448	.322	-.696	.634
Decision-making	.936	.322	-.135	.634
Volunteering	.902	.322	.356	.634

For learning at home, the skewness was 2.20 times the standard error. The kurtosis was 0.81 times the standard error. The histogram of learning at home is presented in Figure 1.

Figure 1

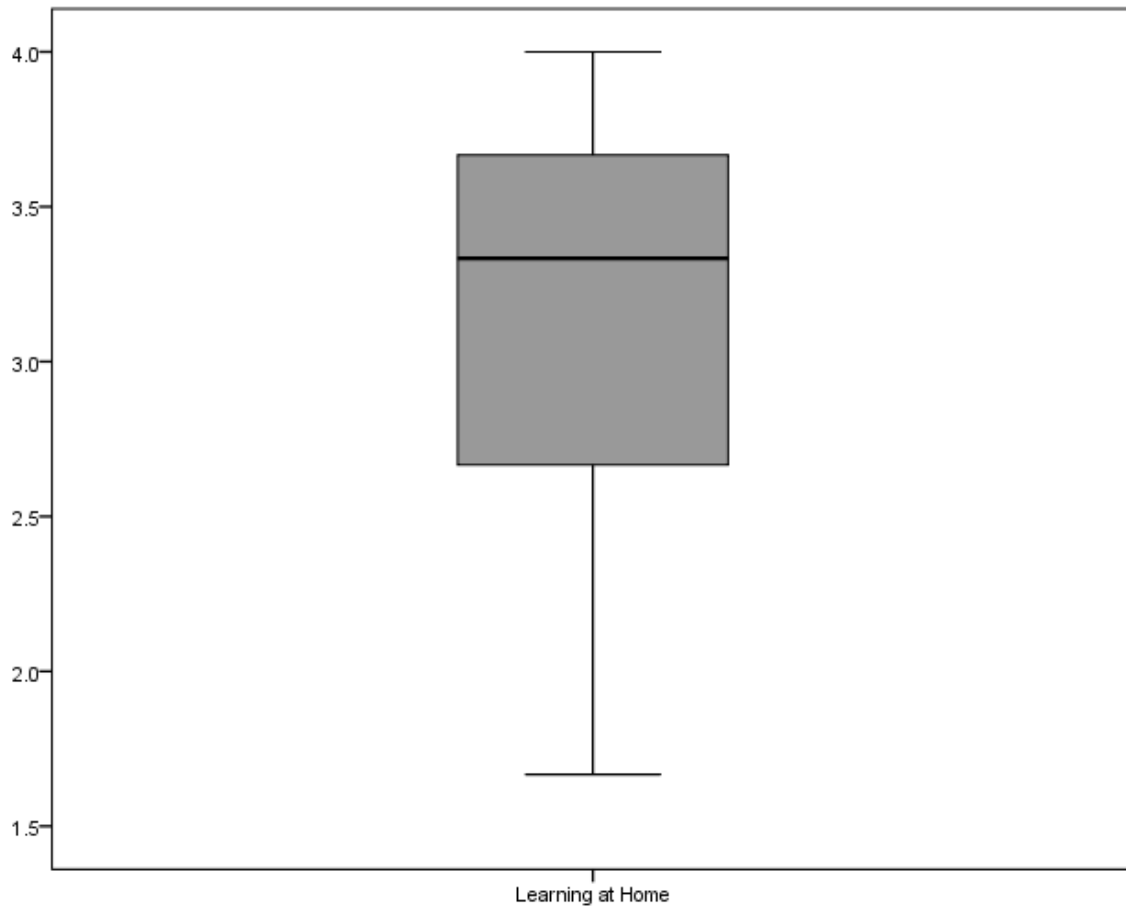
Histogram of Learning at Home



Next, the distributions were screened for statistical outliers with stem and leaf plots and also with box and whisker plots. Outliers are displayed as points beyond the whiskers in box and whisker plots. They are determined mathematically when they fall above or beyond 1.5 times the interquartile range (IQR). The interquartile range is the difference between the first and the third quartile. For learning at home, the median = 3.33. The IQR = 1.00. There were no statistical outliers. The box and whisker plot for learning at home is presented in Figure 2.

Figure 2

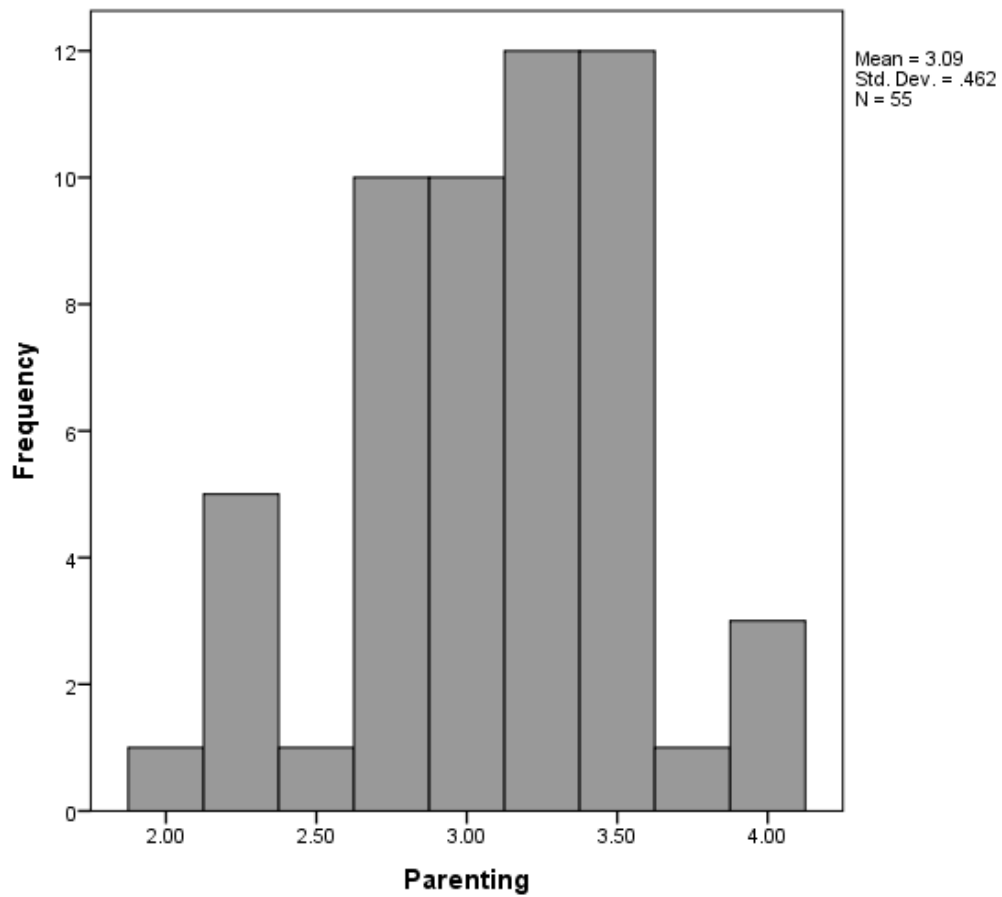
Box and Whisker Plot for Learning at Home



For parenting, the skewness was 0.89 times the standard error. The kurtosis was 0.18 times the standard error. The histogram of parenting is presented in Figure 3.

Figure 3

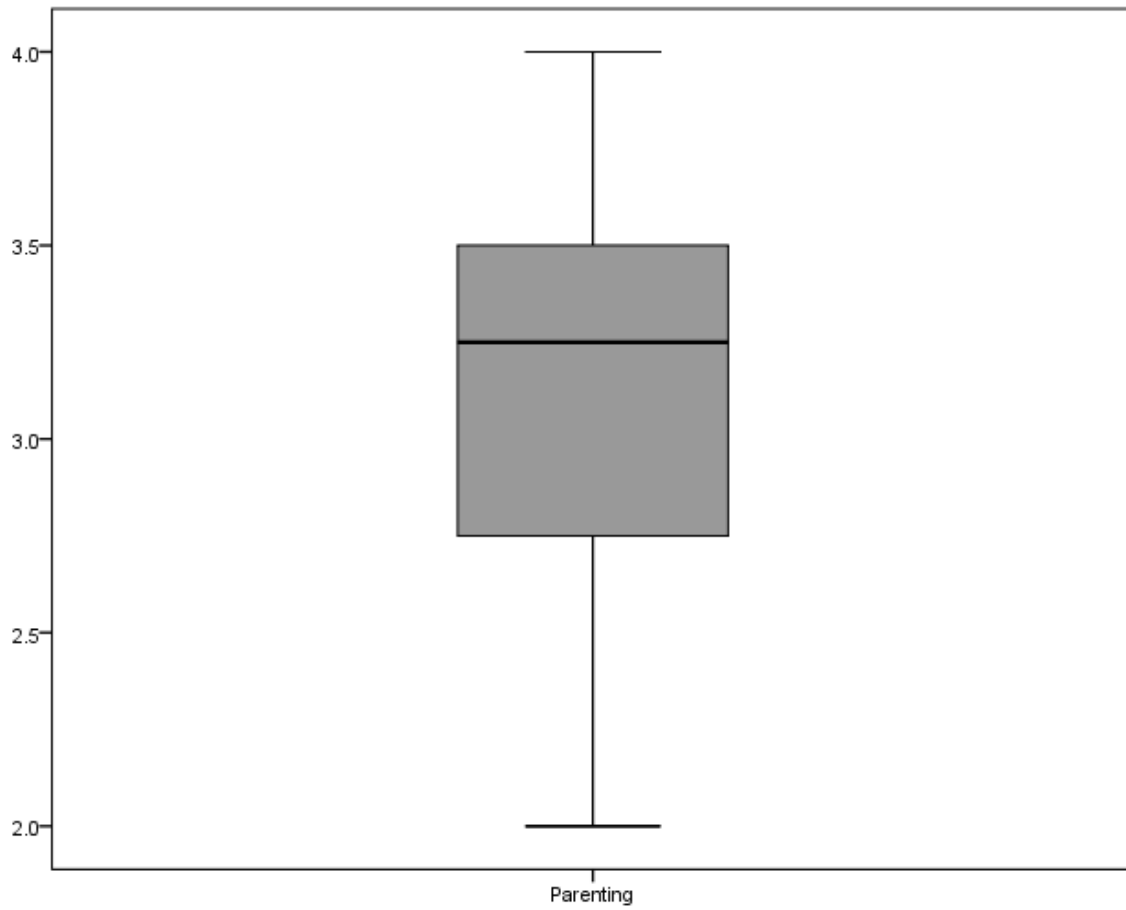
Histogram of Parenting



For parenting, the median = 3.25. The IQR = 0.75. There were no statistical outliers. The box and whisker plot for parenting is presented in Figure 4.

Figure 4

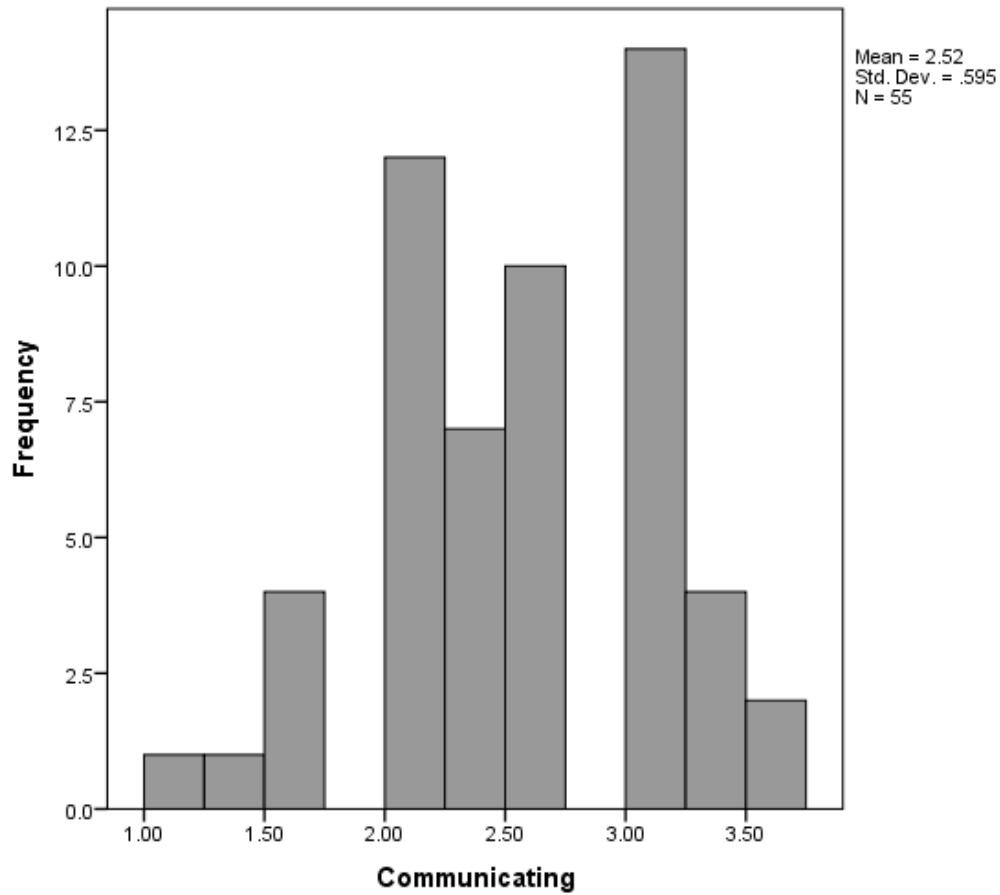
Box and Whisker Plot for Parenting



For communicating, the skewness was 0.84 times the standard error. The kurtosis was 0.64 times the standard error. The histogram of communicating is presented in Figure 5.

Figure 5

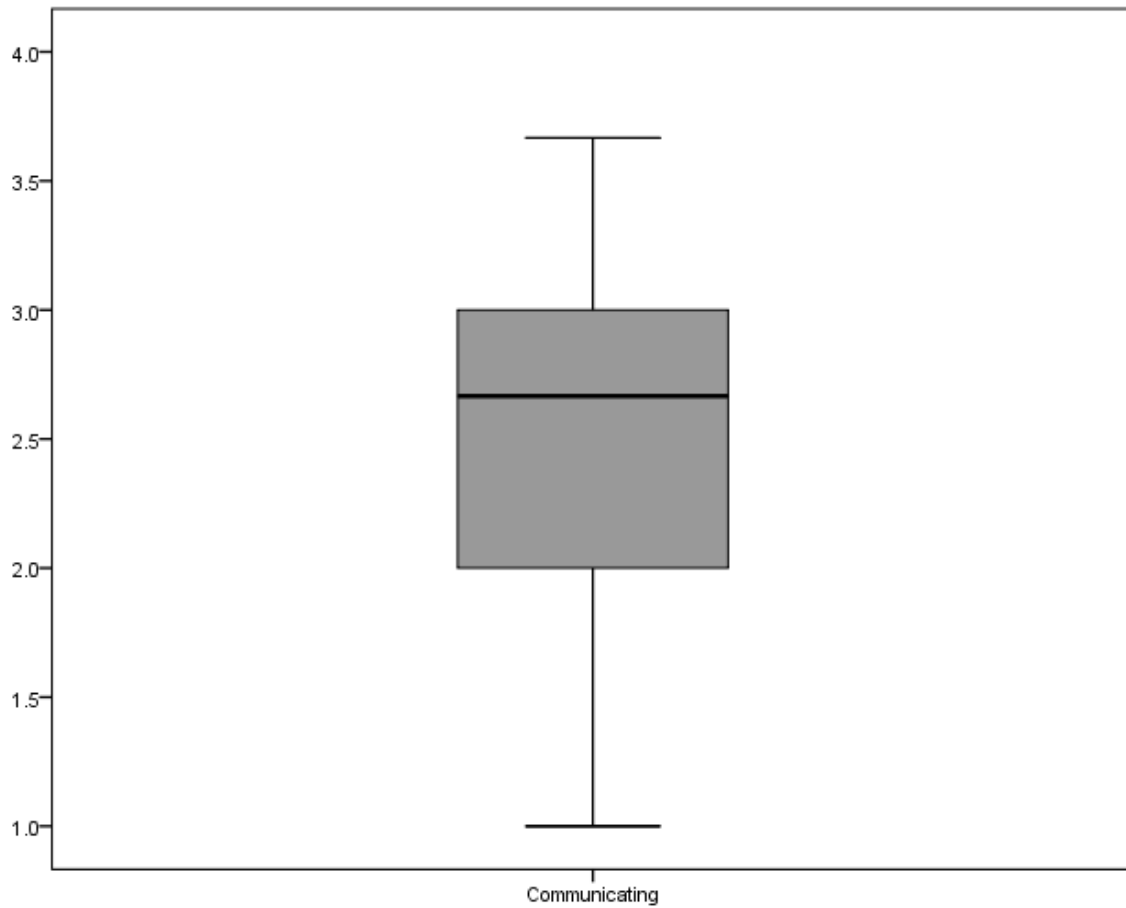
Histogram of Communicating



For communicating, the median = 2.67. The IQR = 1.00. There were no statistical outliers. The box and whisker plot for communicating is presented in Figure 6.

Figure 6

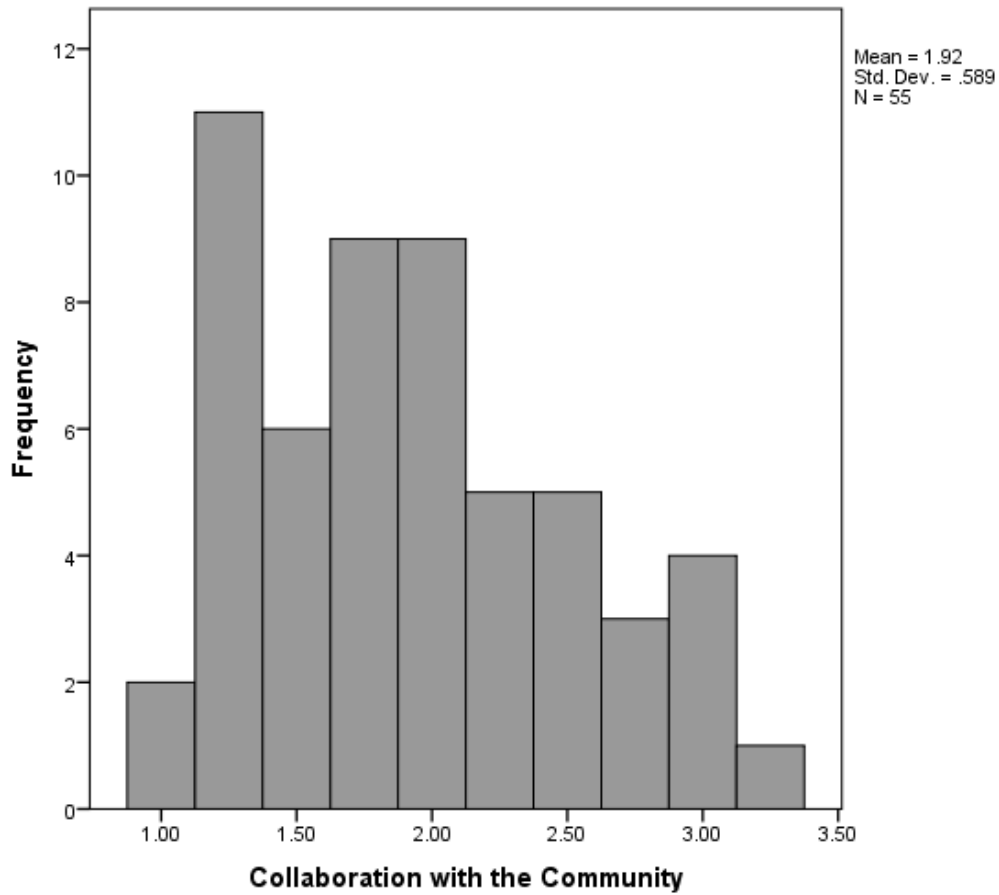
Box and Whisker Plot for Communicating



For collaboration with the community, the skewness was 1.39 times the standard error. The kurtosis was 1.10 times the standard error. The histogram of collaboration with the community is presented in Figure 7.

Figure 7

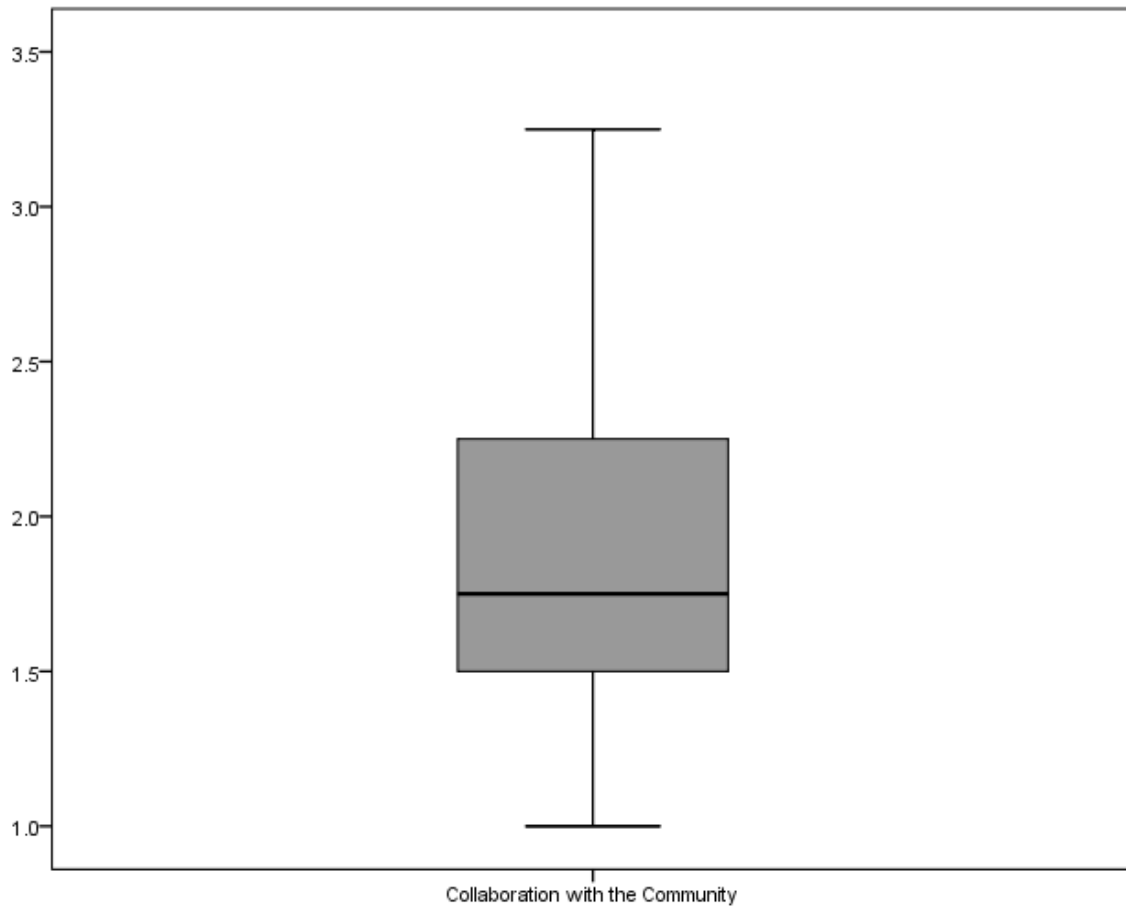
Histogram of Collaboration with the Community



For collaboration with the community, the median = 1.75. The IQR = 0.75. There were no statistical outliers. The box and whisker plot for collaboration with the community is presented in Figure 8.

Figure 8

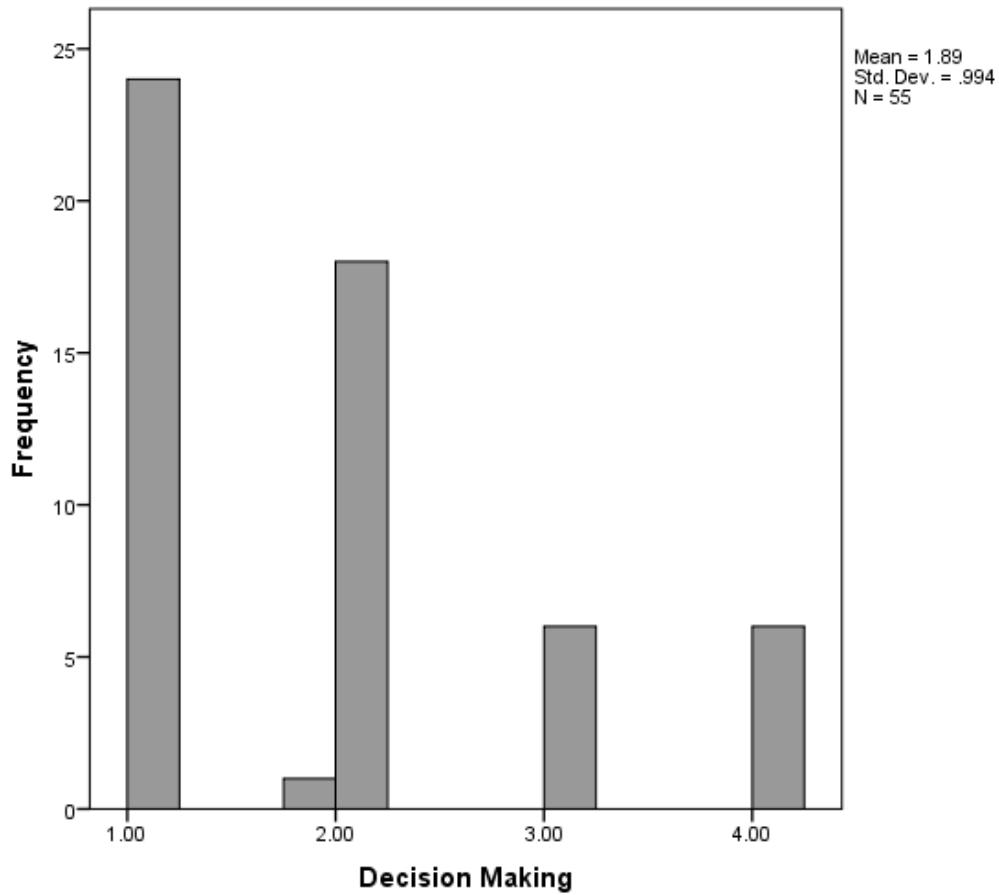
Box and Whisker Plot for Collaboration with the Community



For decision-making, the skewness was 2.91 times the standard error. The kurtosis was 0.21 times the standard error. The histogram of decision making is presented in Figure 9.

Figure 9

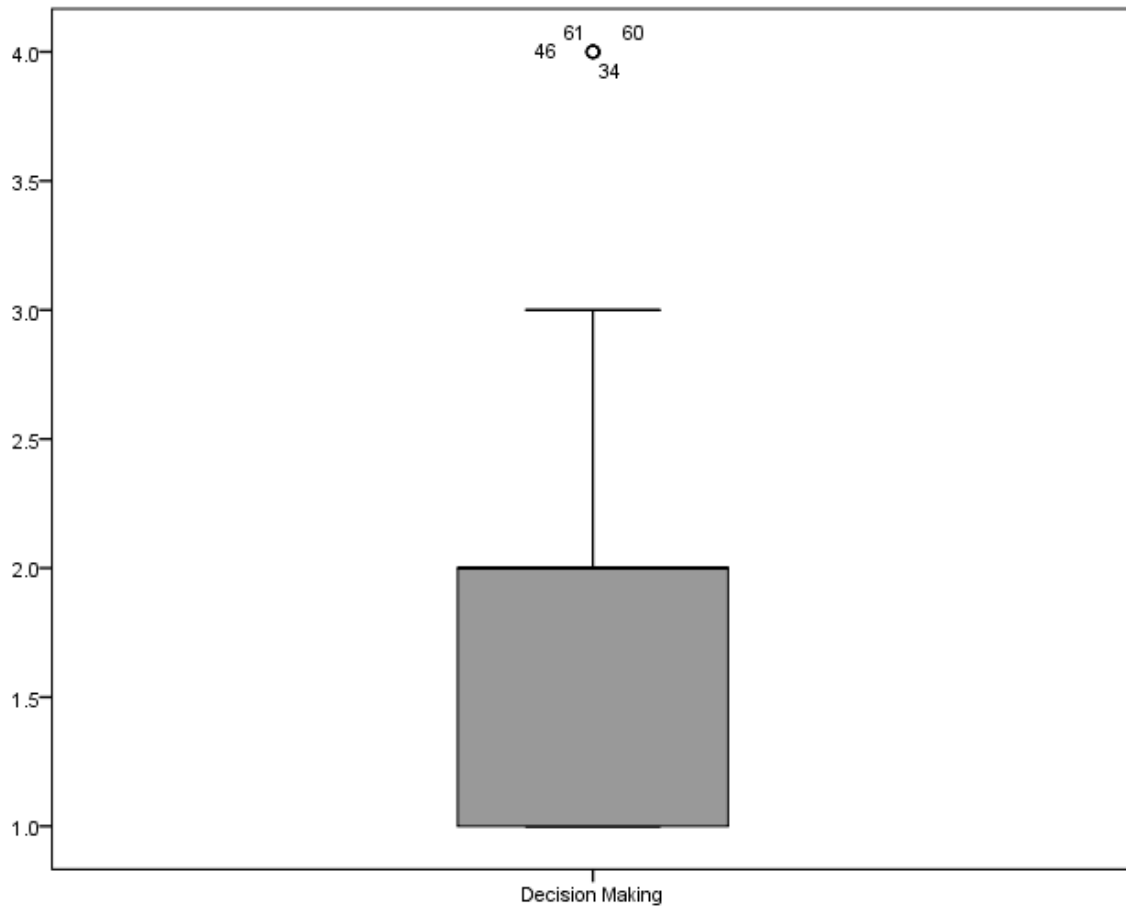
Histogram of Decision-Making



For decision-making, the median = 2.00. The IQR = 0.75. There were four statistical outliers ≥ 4.00 . The box and whisker plot for decision making is presented in Figure 10.

Figure 10

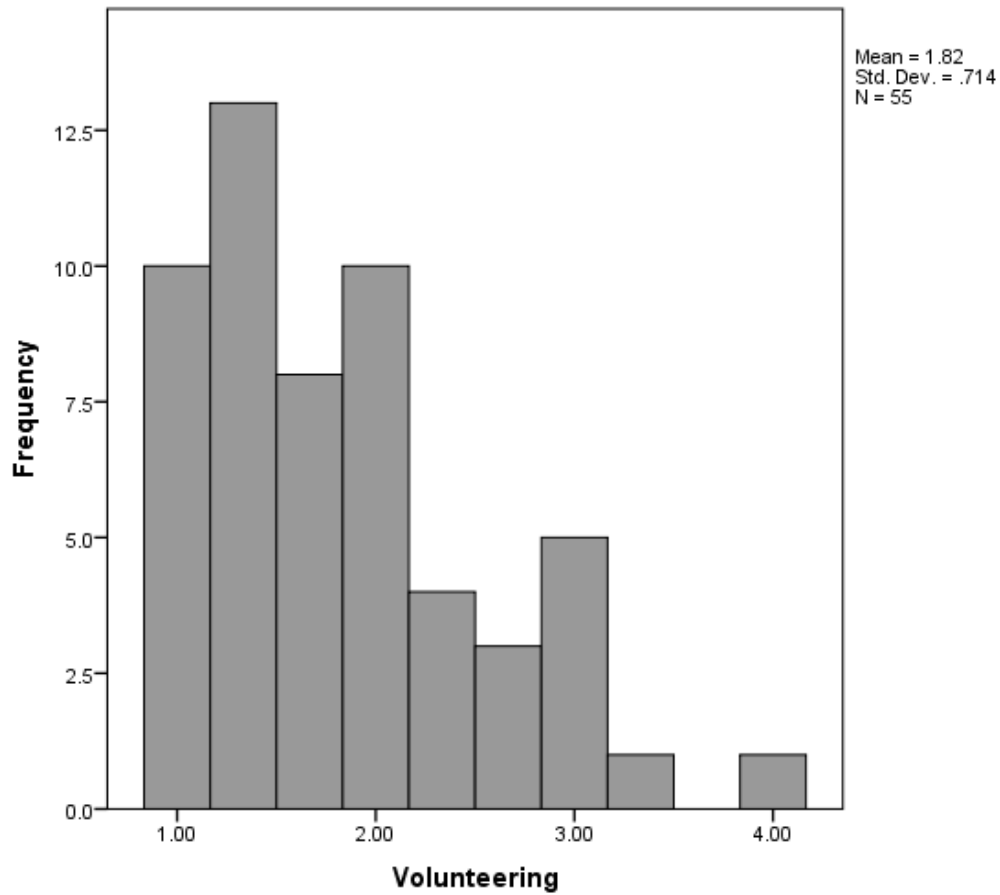
Box and Whisker Plot for Decision-Making



For volunteering, the skewness was 2.80 times the standard error. The kurtosis was 0.56 times the standard error. The histogram of volunteering is presented in Figure 11.

Figure 11

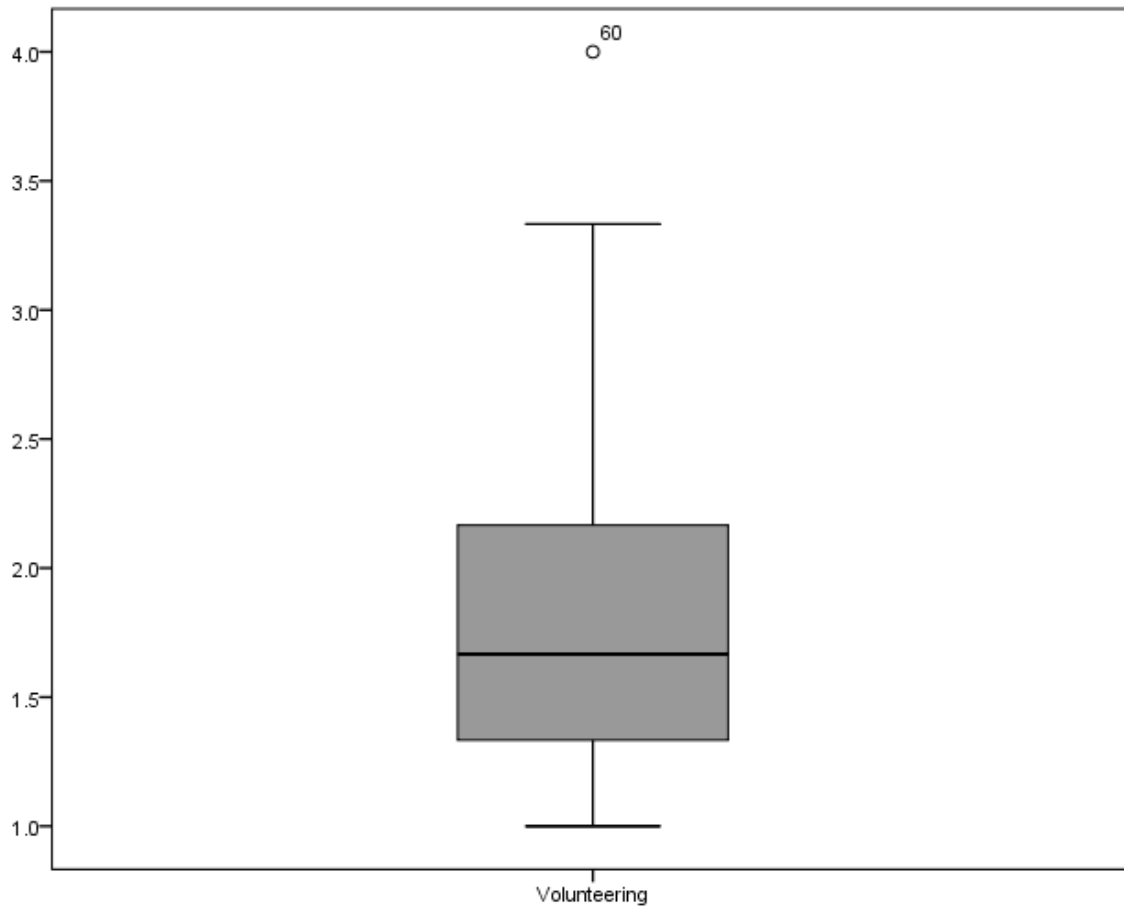
Histogram of Volunteering



For volunteering, the median = 1.67. The IQR = 0.75. There was one statistical outlier \geq 4.00. The box and whisker plot for volunteering is presented in Figure 12.

Figure 12

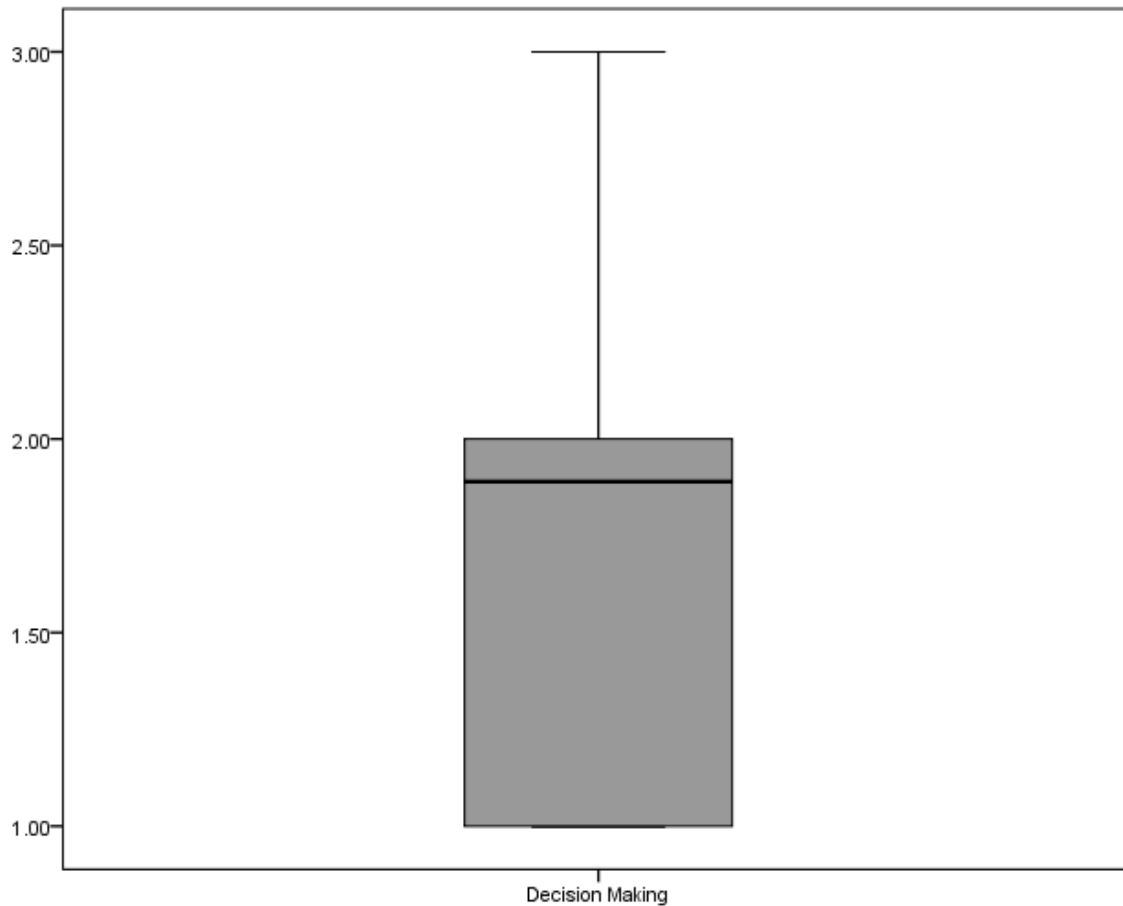
Box and Whisker Plot for Volunteering



To address the statistical outliers observed in the parental involvement dimensions of decision making and volunteering, the outliers were replaced with the mean values. For decision-making, the revised skewness = .556 ($SE = .322$) and the revised kurtosis = -.571 ($SE = .634$). Thus, the skewness was 1.93 times the standard error and the kurtosis was 1.12 times the standard error. The revised median = 1.73. The IQR = 1.00. There were no statistical outliers for decision-making once the outliers were replaced by the mean (see Figure 13).

Figure 13

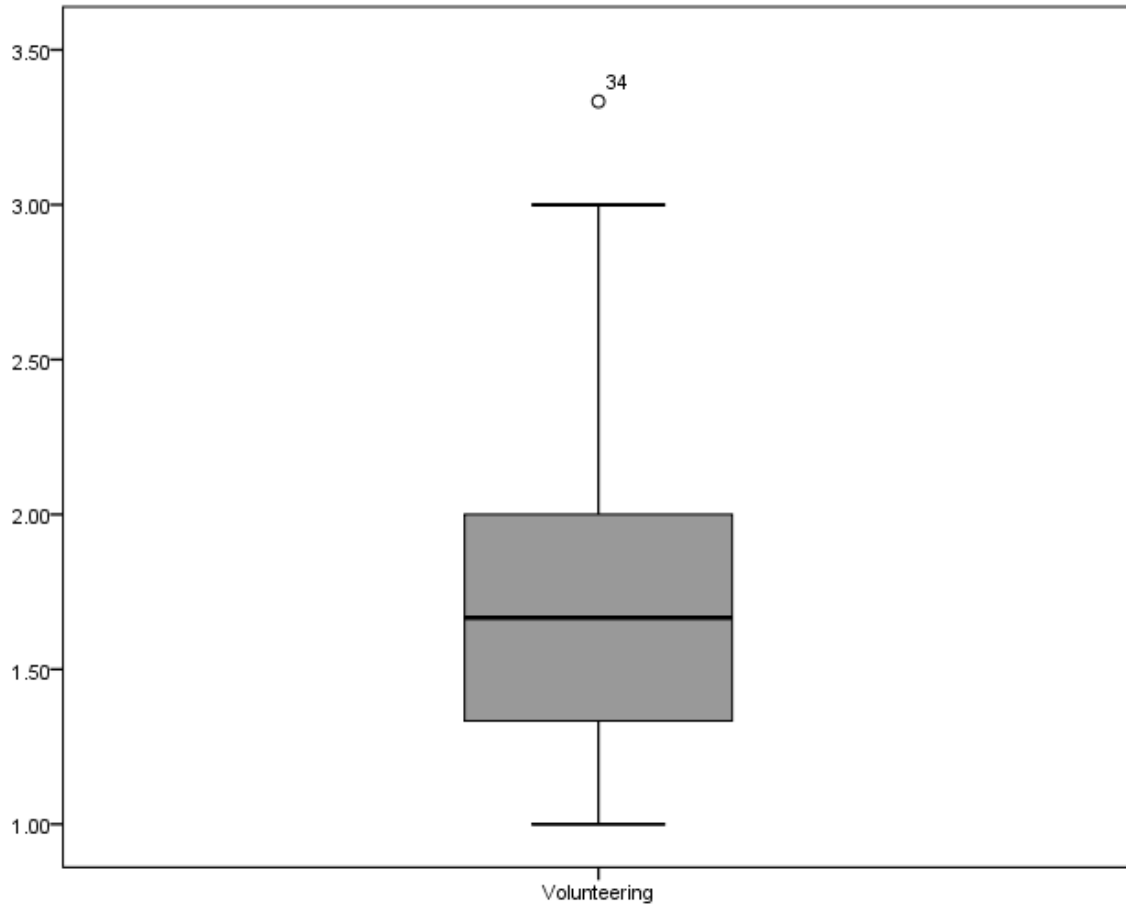
Box and Whisker Plot for Decision-Making: Outliers Replaced by Mean



For volunteering, the revised skewness = .668 ($SE = .322$) and the revised kurtosis = $-.458$ ($SE = .634$). Thus, the skewness was 2.07 times the standard error and the kurtosis was 0.72 times the standard error. The revised median = 1.67. The IQR = 0.67. However, there was still one statistical outlier (≥ 3.3) for volunteering once the outlier was replaced by the mean (see Figure 14).

Figure 14

Box and Whisker Plot for Volunteering: Outlier Replaced by Mean



Research Questions and Hypothesis Testing

This study was aimed to answer the following research questions:

RQ1: What are the differences among J. L. Epstein's six parental involvement types as measured through the perceived preference of minority parents with children studying in a suburban intermediate school in New Jersey?

H₀: There are no statistically significant differences among the parents' preferred involvement style.

Ha: There is a statistically significant difference among the parents' preferred involvement style.

RQ2: Which among parent involvement styles (parenting, communication, volunteering, learning at home, decision making, collaboration with community) of minority parents with children studying in a suburban intermediate school in New Jersey is the most prevalent?

H02: There is no prevalent parent involvement style among minority parents with children studying in a suburban intermediate school in New Jersey

Ha2a: Parenting type is the most prevalent parent involvement type among minority parents with children studying in a suburban intermediate school in New Jersey.

Ha2b: Communicating type is the most prevalent parent involvement type among minority parents with children studying in a suburban intermediate school in New Jersey.

Ha2c: Volunteering type is the most prevalent parent involvement type among minority parents with children studying in a suburban intermediate school in New Jersey.

Ha2d: Learning at home type is the most prevalent parent involvement type among minority parents with children studying in a suburban intermediate school in New Jersey.

Ha2e: Decision-making type is the most prevalent parent involvement type among minority parents with children studying in a suburban intermediate school in New Jersey.

Ha2f: Collaborating with community type is the most prevalent parent involvement type among minority parents with children studying in a suburban intermediate school in New Jersey.

Ha2g: There is an overlapping prevalent parent involvement type among minority parents with children studying in a suburban intermediate school in New Jersey.

The research questions and hypotheses were tested with a one-sample *t* test. Once the highest mean for the parental involvement dimension was determined, that value was used as the test value by which all the other dimensions were compared. It was previously determined that the dimension with the highest mean value was learning at home ($M = 3.21, SD = 0.68$).

Therefore, the remaining parental involvement dimensions were compared to the test value of 3.21. One-sample statistics are presented in Table 6 and t-test results are presented in Table 7.

Table 6

One Sample Statistics

Variable	<i>n</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>SEM</i>
Parenting	55	3.09	0.46	.06
Collaboration with the community	55	1.92	0.59	.08
Communicating	55	2.52	0.60	.08
Decision-making	55	1.66	0.66	.09
Volunteering	55	1.78	0.65	.09

Table 7*One-Sample t-Test Results*

	Test value = 3.21			95% confidence interval of the difference		
	<i>t</i>	<i>df</i>	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean difference	Lower	Upper
Parenting	-1.91	54	.061	-.12	-0.24	0.01
Collaboration with the Community	-16.21	54	.000	-1.29	-1.45	-1.13
Communicating	-8.62	54	.000	-.69	-0.85	-0.53
Decision-making	-17.37	54	.000	-1.55	-1.73	-1.37
Volunteering	-16.30	54	.000	-1.43	-1.60	-1.25

The alpha level used in the study was $p < .05$. However, it was adjusted for multiple comparisons using a Bonferroni correction. The adjusted alpha level is .01 (.05/5).

RQ1

What are the differences among the preferred parent involvement style (parenting, communication, volunteering, learning at home, decision-making, collaboration with community) of minority parents with children studying in a suburban intermediate school in New Jersey? Results of the *t* tests indicated that all parental involvement dimensions significantly differed from the dimension of learning at home, which had the highest mean value, with the exception of parenting. Parenting ($M = 3.09$, $SD = 0.46$) was not significantly different from learning at home ($M = 3.21$, $SD = 0.68$), $t(54) = -1.91$, $p = .061$, two-tailed. The mean difference = 0.12.

H₀ stated that there are no statistically significant differences among the parents' preferred involvement style. There were significant differences among the parents' preferred involvement style. Therefore, the null hypothesis was rejected.

RQ2

Which among parent involvement styles (parenting, communication, volunteering, learning at home, decision-making, collaboration with community) of minority parents with children studying in a suburban intermediate school in New Jersey is the most prevalent? The most prevalent parenting styles were learning at home and parenting. Learning at home was significantly higher than four of the dimensions, but not significantly higher than the parenting dimension.

H₀₂ stated that there is no prevalent parent involvement style among minority parents with children studying in a suburban intermediate school in New Jersey. Learning at home and parenting were the two most prevalent parent involvement styles among minority parents. They were significantly higher than all the other parent involvement styles. Therefore, the null hypothesis was rejected.

H_{a2a} stated that parenting type is the most prevalent parent involvement type among minority parents with children studying in a suburban intermediate school in New Jersey. Parenting type was statistically equal to learning at home, which had the highest mean value of the parenting types $t(54) = -1.91, p = .031$, one-tailed. Therefore, H_{a2a} is supported.

H_{a2b} stated that communicating type is the most prevalent parent involvement type among minority parents with children studying in a suburban intermediate school in New Jersey. Communicating type was not the most prevalent parent involvement type among minority parents with children studying in a suburban intermediate school in New Jersey. The mean for

communicating ($M = 2.52$, $SD = 0.60$) was significantly less than the mean for learning at home ($M = 3.21$, $SD = 0.68$), $t(54) = -8.62$, $p < .001$, one-tailed. Therefore, H_{a2b} was not supported.

H_{a2c} stated that volunteering type is the most prevalent parent involvement type among minority parents with children studying in a suburban intermediate school in New Jersey. Volunteering type was not the most prevalent parent involvement type among minority parents with children studying in a suburban intermediate school in New Jersey. The mean for volunteering ($M = 1.78$, $SD = 0.65$) was significantly less than the mean for learning at home ($M = 3.21$, $SD = 0.68$), $t(54) = -16.30$, $p < .001$, one-tailed. Therefore, H_{a2c} was not supported.

H_{a2d} stated that learning at home type is the most prevalent parent involvement type among minority parents with children studying in a suburban intermediate school in New Jersey. Learning at home type was the most prevalent parent involvement type among minority parents with children studying in a suburban intermediate school in New Jersey. It was significantly higher than four other dimensions with the exception of parent involvement. It was significant at the $p < .001$ level when compared to the other four dimensions. Therefore, H_{a2d} was supported.

H_{a2e} stated that decision-making type is the most prevalent parent involvement type among minority parents with children studying in a suburban intermediate school in New Jersey. Decision-making type was not the most prevalent parent involvement type among minority parents with children studying in a suburban intermediate school in New Jersey. The mean for decision making ($M = 1.66$, $SD = 0.66$) was significantly less than the mean for learning at home ($M = 3.21$, $SD = 0.68$), $t(54) = -17.37$, $p < .001$, one-tailed. Therefore, H_{a2e} was not supported.

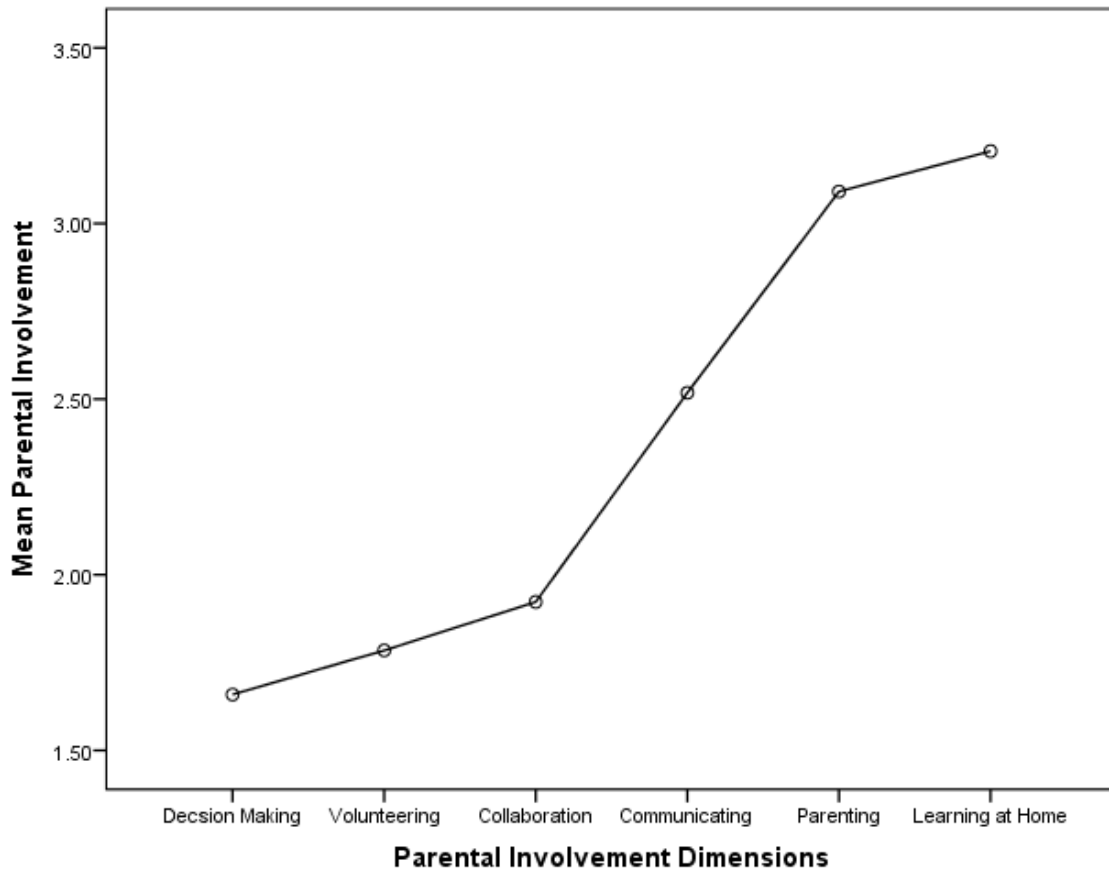
H_{a2f} stated that collaborating with community type is the most prevalent parent involvement type among minority parents with children studying in a suburban intermediate school in New Jersey. Collaborating with community type was not the most prevalent parent

involvement type among minority parents with children studying in a suburban intermediate school in New Jersey. The mean for collaborating with community ($M = 1.92, SD = 0.59$) was significantly less than the mean for learning at home ($M = 3.21, SD = 0.68$), $t(54) = -16.21, p < .001$, one-tailed. Therefore, H_{a2f} was not supported.

H_{a2g} stated that there is an overlapping prevalent parent involvement type among minority parents with children studying in a suburban intermediate school in New Jersey. There was an overlapping prevalent parent involvement type of learning at home and parenting. Learning at home was significantly higher than decision-making, volunteering, collaborating with the community, and communicating, but not significantly higher than parenting $t(54) = -1.91, p = .031$, one-tailed. Therefore, H_{a2g} was supported. A line graph comparing the parental involvement dimensions is presented in Figure 15.

Figure 15

Comparison of Parental Involvement Dimensions



Summary of Results

Five one-sample *t* tests were conducted on five parental involvement dimensions comparing them to the test value of parenting dimension with the highest mean, learning at home. It was determined that learning at home had a significantly higher mean and thus a significantly higher degree of endorsement among minority parents than the other parent involvement dimensions of decision-making, volunteering, collaboration, and communicating. Learning at home, however, was statistically equal to parenting in the degree of parental endorsement. The least prevalent parental involvement dimensions were decision-making and

volunteering while collaboration and communicating received a moderate degree of endorsement. Implications and recommendations will be discussed in Chapter Five.

CHAPTER 5

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Numerous school leaders focus their attention on delivering students who are academically ready for college or career (Bragg & Taylor, 2014). Parental involvement in the education of their children is vital to students' achievement and with the development of abilities that predict postsecondary success; studies conducted by Catsambis (2001), J. L. Epstein (2018), and Henderson and Mapp (2002) suggested that the impact of educationally involved parents usually includes having improved grades, higher graduation rates, and improved attendance.

The purpose of this quantitative study was to determine the most prevalent parent involvement type (parenting, communication, volunteering, learning at home, decision-making, collaboration with the community) of minority parents with children studying in a suburban intermediate school in New Jersey. The study was based on J. L. Epstein's dimensions of parental involvement in an effort to reflect upon previous practices that school leaders implemented to increase parental involvement and provides historical background on past studies that influenced parental involvement. Specifically, this research was aimed to provide insight into the areas of parental involvement favored by minority parents. The results can be utilized by local school leaders to determine areas in need of improvement in an effort to accommodate the desires of families with the goal of ultimately increasing parental involvement. Clarity and knowledge is needed to understand which of Epstein's six parental involvement types are preferred by parents.

The family-school-community framework may be related to J. L. Epstein's (2018) theory of parental involvement, encompassing parental involvement typology within the overlapping spheres of family, school, and community. The three overlapping spheres are all connected to the

students and may influence student performance in school. The results from prior studies highlight some of the current benefits and challenges to the implementation of parental involvement.

This chapter is focused on the findings from the quantitative research findings presented in Chapter 4. Results indicated that the learning at home and parenting dimensions were of vital importance among minority parents. The other parental involvement dimensions of decision-making, volunteering, collaboration, and communicating, are still important, but did not feature as prominently among the sample. This chapter begins with a discussion of the theory involved, both within the framework as well as of the literature reviewed. It ends with a discussion of the implications that the results and findings of this study have for policy, practice, and research.

Summary of Findings

The focus of the study was on the parental involvement of minority parents with children; therefore, the data on White or Caucasian parents were excluded from further analysis. The majority total of approximately 84% of survey respondents were mothers. The survey respondents also included almost 2% aunts and guardians, respectively.

RQ1

What are the differences among the preferred parent involvement style (parenting, communication, volunteering, learning at home, decision-making, collaboration with the community) of minority parents with children studying in a suburban intermediate school in New Jersey?

The results from the survey indicated that all parental involvement dimensions significantly differed from the dimension of learning at home. This parenting involvement style was the most preferred apart from parenting. Parenting was not much different from the learning

at home style and was also highly rated. Research suggests that when effective parenting is in place, schools can benefit from increased support. However, not all families are actively engaged in the school environment (Vance, 2018). Morrison et al. (2015) suggested that families with low income, who are unfamiliar with the school system and experience a language barrier, are among the stakeholders who are not as involved in the school as parents without these experiences. To assist as many families as possible, educators are encouraged to learn about families from diverse backgrounds to address their needs (Daniel, 2016).

The reviewed literature identified that family involvement in the education of their children was found to assist in increasing the mental and emotional resilience of children. This can assist to a level of them gaining the ability to cope with stressors (Povey et al., 2016). Parenting practices can be observed in different forms throughout a child's life. Parenting intervention may also benefit the children in terms of coping with life stressors such as living in a low-income household (Povey et al., 2016).

Cultural differences and different socioeconomic statuses, according to parents, creates obstacles to communication (Murray et al., 2015). Parents from minority groups reported feeling uncomfortable approaching their children's teachers. Due to this lack of response, teachers tend to develop a misconception about minority parents that they seemed uninterested in their children's education (Conus & Fahrni, 2019). Unfortunately, this negatively affected students since the perception of certain teachers was that of "no news is good news," resulting in fewer interactions between parents and teachers. The current researcher reported that respondents in the study generally reported that regardless of actual or perceived barriers, the communication with the parents was always good. The literature conveyed that trust and respect are cultivated between parents and teachers with ongoing and consistent communication between schools and

families (Bordalba & Bochaca, 2019). Hill and Tyson (2009) noted that parents of middle school children are more likely to be involved with their education. Through academic socialization, the parent and child are found to discuss future goals. The parents of older children in secondary education tend to want to be involved in initiatives that help support their children's mental health. The parents of younger children in primary school tend to want to be involved in initiatives that help with their children's literacy and numeracy. Regardless, the finding was that both groups of parents need support in home-based learning of their children.

RQ2

Which among parent involvement styles (parenting, communication, volunteering, learning at home, decision-making, collaboration with the community) of minority parents with children studying in a suburban intermediate school in New Jersey is the most prevalent?

The results of the research based on this research question point to the most prevalent parenting style as learning at home. Learning at home was significantly higher than four of the dimensions, but not significantly higher than the parenting dimension. Learning at home and parenting were the two most prevalent parent involvement styles among minority parents.

Coleman (2018) noted that parent involvement may not be limited to activities offered within the school. Parents could assist their children with homework when they are home. Students from the primary level to high school level whose parents assisted them with their homework appeared to have better academic performance than students who were not offered this assistance (Núñez et al., 2019).

A finding by Bordalba and Bochaca (2019) was that consistent and transparent communication from school leaders generally promoted parental involvement in intermediate school. Schools can provide parents with evidence-based intervention and ongoing family

education to promote parenting (Epstein, 2018a; Povey et al., 2016). Schools can open their lines of communication, as well as provide access to communication for parents with intermediate school children (Murray et al., 2015). In a study by McQuiggan and Megra (2018) they noted that parents with intermediate school children typically reduce their homework and learning at home assistance and increase their academic socialization (McQuiggan & Megra, 2017).

Lareau (2017) reported that the socioeconomic class of different parents may also affect their parental involvement. Middle class parents tend to let their children grow by themselves and assure them of their love and provide their basic needs. The parents from the lower-middle class tend to raise their children by choosing the activities that improve their skills and abilities (Inoa, 2017; Lareau, 2017).

High income earning parents are more likely to have a positive attitude when nurturing the relationships with their children's school (Matthews et al., 2017). However, parents with lower income appeared to want to be involved in their children's schooling, but may simply feel uncomfortable building this relationship or may not know how to build a relationship. Similar to this finding, Preston et al. (2018) showed that regardless of ethnicity and socioeconomic status, as well as religion and language proficiency, all parents are inclined to be involved and support their children in school.

Discussion

A conceptual framework was used which contains theoretical and empirical literature. The theoretical literature proposes the definition of parental involvement in the educational background of the students. The empirical literature includes the characteristics of parental involvement. The topics that were addressed in the study, was the history of parental

involvement, federal and state policies, benefits to parental involvement, and barriers to involvement.

Theoretical Framework

The proposals brought out in the NCLB (2001) instructed schools to follow a framework of relationship creation between families, schools, and communities to develop teaching and learning. This framework could be related to J. L. Epstein's (2011) theory of parental involvement. It includes parental involvement within the intersecting spheres of family, school, and community which are connected to the student. These areas can influence student achievement in school.

J. L. Epstein (2011) noted that a partnership between families and their schools may also socially and emotionally benefit a child. This places the child at the center from which the benefits to the model can be experienced. Children who are encouraged to learn were more likely to successfully read, write, calculate, and learn other skills and talents and to remain in school (J. L. Epstein, 2005).

J. L. Epstein (1995) noted a problem in that minority parents show less involvement than mainstream parents when engaging in school activities and school committees. Other issues that were highlighted by J. L. Epstein (2001) included the failure of minority parents to attend workshops or meetings within school premises. Numerous mainstream public schools have potential issues with information related to culture as collected from minority families. Therefore, mainstream schools may not be addressing the needs of minority students. The result of the partnership of schools with families has several benefits such as increasing awareness of community support and extracurricular activities (J. L. Epstein, 2001). Parents engaged with the community can result in better academic, social, and emotional outcomes for students.

In recent years, J. L. Epstein (2018b) stressed that learning at home may not be restricted to getting assistance with homework and academic networking. Activities such as families that travel can encourage learning through real-world experiences. This is true, however, Povey et al. (2016) noted that certain families may not have the resources to take part in such activities. J. L. Epstein (2018a) further highlighted that schools need to provide parents with evidence-based intervention and continuing family education to promote parenting.

Empirical Research

Veas et al. (2019) highlighted that the way parents with intermediate school children perceive the six parenting involvement types may impact on determining their participation as their interests and preferences are fulfilled. Finding the predominant type of parental involvement could help provide insight into the extent of parental engagement. Through this communication between school leaders and policymakers, methods to effectively increase engagement can be developed.

Volunteering is an opportunity to invite parents and members into the school and could reinforce the home-school relationship (J. L. Epstein, 2018a; Povey et al., 2016). Empirical data showed that the volunteering type was not as prevalent as the other types of parent involvement (Povey et al., 2016). This was also substantiated in the findings from the study. Park et al. (2017) noted that families get opportunities to meet other families when volunteering. This enables families to increase their network of support (Park et al., 2017). Minority parents could benefit from such a support network (Povey et al., 2016).

Not all minority parents experience a language barrier (Conus & Fahrni, 2019). Not all minority parents considered the language barrier as a hindrance to parental involvement. Some minority Mandarin-speaking parents revealed difficulty understanding English, but expressed

their willingness and desire to attend PTA meetings to track their children's academic progress (Zhou & Zhong, 2018).

Parental participation may have school-related benefits such as higher grades, better attendance, better behavior, and the probability to seek higher education (NJPTA, 2019). Empirical data revealed benefits such as increased autonomous motivation, graduation rate, proficiency, literacy and numeracy, and homework completion across diverse ethnic groups (Inoa, 2017; Joyce, 2017; Suizzo et al., 2016). Besides, benefits for teacher efficacy were also observed with increased parent involvement in middle school which may, in turn, help boost the performance of low-performing schools (Joyce, 2017). Minority group parents, a population that was typically marginalized, may also benefit from continuous involvement through increased feelings of empowerment when they present a united front in the PTA (Joyce, 2017; Ma et al., 2016).

Student-reported high levels of parental involvement revealed positive impacts on socialization with peers and early adolescent development (Garbacz et al., 2018). The results of the study indicated that parental involvement promotes positive peer affiliation in the sense that middle school children tend to associate more with peers with appropriate behaviors than decrease associations with peers with delinquent behaviors. As such, the researchers suggested that parental involvement may be a process of promoting actions rather than discouraging the student.

Assumptions

Parent involvement has been the topic of study for many researchers in the field of education. However, more studies tend to focus on the perceptions and experiences of teachers

and school administration. It is a finding that more studies are needed to emphasize parents' perceptions and experiences (Ihmeideh et al., 2018; Kaptich et al., 2019).

Research has shown that children are more likely to have higher academic achievement levels and improved behavior when parents are involved in their education (Bryan, 2005; J. L. Epstein, 2018b; Henderson & Mapp, 2002; Núñez et al., 2019; Walker et al., 2005). Griffith (1996) concluded that parent involvement correlated with student test performance. A child's educational journey begins at home with their family before they enter traditional school (Núñez et al., 2019).

Amaral and Ford (2005) suggested that parent involvement should be viewed in two different categories: school-centered and home-centered. The combination of the two involvement types promotes student achievement (Núñez et al., 2019). Nonetheless, in a minority suburban intermediate school setting in New Jersey, parents may not be as involved in their children's education as recommended by researchers due to factors such as ethnicity, education level, and socioeconomic status (Hornby & Blackwell, 2018; Lechuga-Peña & Brisson, 2018; Suárez et al., 2016).

Minority parents' low language proficiency and low education level may also often be linked to low socioeconomic status (Badrasawi et al., 2019; Inoa, 2017). Badrasawi et al. (2019) revealed that parents with low education levels and low socioeconomic status tend to value education. These parents however are found to display difficulty being involved in their children's education.

Limitations

A quantitative methodology was chosen for this study, which in itself presents limitations in the method of research. This type of methodology does not always provide a conclusive

reason for the existence or nonexistence of relationships among variables. The sample for the study came from a population of minority parents with intermediate school children in suburban New Jersey. It presented the challenge of receiving completed questionnaires back within the allocated timeframe, and it is not clear the degree to which or in what ways those who completed questionnaires might have differed from those who did not submit responses.

The use of a survey-type questionnaire to collect data may also have restricted the study in terms of the truthfulness and accuracy of the responses received back by the participants. By making use of a survey and about parenting styles and practices, the participants may have felt uncomfortable in answering the questions or doing so honestly. Face-to-face interviews would have been more personal; however, in-depth interviews are time-consuming and do not always deliver accurate responses. The researcher addressed these limitations by keeping all the results from the survey confidential.

Delimitations

This study employed a quantitative methodology only. Generalizations were drawn from the results due to the nature of quantitative research. However, the researcher was not able to explore the meanings of the results due to the lack of qualitative inquiry and in-depth information (Connelly, 2016). The researcher, consequently, described the relationship of perceived school efforts and perceived extent of parent involvement based on the survey results.

The study site was a minority suburban intermediate school setting in New Jersey. Only parents with at least one intermediate schoolchild were selected for this study. The researcher was an employee at the intermediate school.

Implications

Implications for Policy

The results of this study indicated the importance of parent involvement at the school level. Policies serve to inform parents of the channels through which they could be involved in their children's education. School leaders have the difficult task of improving student achievement, while they still have the responsibility of meeting state and federal regulatory standards (Burton, 2009; Dillon, 2009; Srikantiah & Kober, 2009). The U.S. Department of Education amended the term parent involvement, changing it to family engagement in ESSA (2015). The term "family engagement" was defined as the fostering of partnerships between home and school with the use of the local schools' and districts' responsibility to develop the strategies required to build the partnership.

Partnership implied active engagement and mutual participation from families and schools (Ratliffe & Ponte, 2018). The partnership emphasized by the researchers may be linked back to J. L. Epstein's (2011) family-school partnership, in which families and schools have shared responsibilities in ensuring the academic success of a child. J. L. Epstein (2011) showed that the family-school partnership could have a social and emotional benefit for children. The advantage of this model is that children are viewed as the center of the relationship. Through this they are positively encouraged to learn and proved to be successful in learning, develop skills and talents, and ultimately remain in school (J. L. Epstein, 2001). The AFT (2020) highlighted the advantages that are associated with effective communication for parents, students, and teachers including academic, social, and emotional growth (T. E. Smith et al., 2020). Furthermore, mutual trust and respect are cultivated with ongoing two-way communication between schools and families (Bordalba & Bochaca, 2019). Legislators continue to encourage

and push two-way communication amongst schools and parents especially after the implementation of the NCLB (2001).

The decision-making type of parental involvement is promoted by the NPTA (2019), which stated that such involvement could allow families to be part of problem-solving and positive change initiatives at the school. Families who actively offer ideas and suggestions were found to have a stronger influence within the school, and in turn could strengthen the child's influence in school as well (Coombe et al., 2017).

Also, the NCLB obligated parents to partake in school meetings, which could be related to decision-making. The NCLB instructed schools to adopt a family-school-community framework through which the development of teaching and learning was highlighted. This framework was related to J. L. Epstein's (2001) theory of parental involvement with intersecting areas of family, school, and community.

Through a survey questionnaire to parents of sixth grade students, Sahin (2019) found that parents of middle school children abstained from collaborating with the community when gender, socioeconomic status, and educational attainment were not measured. In addition, this research showed that the parents preferred parenting, learning at home, and decision-making. On the contrary, collaborating with the community involved cooperation with local organizations. Sahin (2019) noted that parents might perceive this action as unnecessary.

Since there are continuous changes within schools, federal and local governments must constantly adapt their policies to enhance parental involvement. Whether policies were written at the federal, state, or even school district level, D. V. Robinson (2017) urged that policies serve as the originator of parental involvement. Through written policies, parents are informed of the networks through which they could be involved in the education of their children. Parents and

students are also made aware and get a better understanding of their rights through policies (J. L. Epstein, 2001). Parents are motivated to become aware of the roles they fulfill in the education of their children, as well as the expectations of their involvement by schools.

Policies matter here because schools that receive Title I funding are required to have a specific policy that stipulates parental involvement. The results of this research can assist with knowledge relating to the areas of involvement preferred by minority parents. School leaders can ascertain which initiatives and policies are adequate and bring focus to the areas that need improvement to better address the needs of families.

Berkowitz et al. (2017) reported that data-driven policies are more inclined to be effective. These policies are developed from actual data and consider the perceptions of parents of the school environment more than policies that do not utilize data. Policymakers should be formulating guidelines to address the needs of parents that present attractive methods to involve them at their children's' schools.

Implications for Practice

The impact of academically engaged parents usually includes having improved grades, higher graduation rates, and improved attendance (Catsambis, 2001; J. L. Epstein, 2005; Henderson & Mapp, 2002). Parents serve as the first and most persistent teachers who play a crucial role in helping their children learn (Miller, 2001). Many school leaders seem to lack the knowledge of how which types of parent involvement could help develop a strategic parental involvement plan.

The results of this research may assist school leaders to gain further understanding to improve academic success. Benefits may extend to increased graduation rates, improved grades, attendance, motivation, proficiency, literacy and numeracy, and homework completion (Joyce,

2017). The research is aimed at providing information on how to engage minority parents and promote involvement at the intermediate school level in New Jersey. Establishing the prevalent type of parental involvement could help provide insight into how and to what extent parents are engaged. School leaders and policymakers can, therefore, develop methods to effectively increase engagement from this knowledge. Subsequently, the results of this research may assist school leaders to obtain a further understanding to improve academic success. This includes increased graduation rates, improved grades, attendance, motivation, proficiency, literacy and numeracy, and homework completion (Joyce, 2017).

Schools must collect and analyze data yearly from the parents of school children (Daniel, 2016; J. L. Epstein, 2018a). The accumulation of data will give school leaders and teachers a perspective on parents' experiences, objectives, and a clearer understanding of what they need to partner with the school. By gathering this information, schools may develop an understanding of the parents' expectations, concerns, and help to build a positive relationship with the parents (J. L. Epstein, 2018b).

Hill and Tyson (2009) referred to academic socialization as a form of parental involvement that entails parents expressing their value for education and their expectations for their children concerning the academic outcome. This involvement can stimulate discussion between parents and their children regarding their experiences at school and their future school-related goals. Teachers can encourage parents to take part in home-based activities such as homework and academic socialization (Beck, 2017; Hill & Tyson, 2009). Assisting children with homework can improve their knowledge, literacy, and numeracy. These findings were also emphasized by J. L. Epstein (2018), who argued that learning at home may not be limited to homework assistance and academic socialization. McQuiggan and Megra (2017) pointed out that

learning at home is an intervention for parents of intermediate school children to reduce their homework assistance and increase their academic socialization. The finding of the importance of learning at home as a crucial form of parental involvement echoed through the feedback from the questionnaires, and it is here that relationships between parents and their children are maintained.

Certain schools use surveys and parent focus groups to involve parents in decision-making. However, language, culture, and socioeconomic status were reported to hinder this type of parental involvement (S. Epstein, 2018). Schools are urged to constantly develop methods to make decision making available to all families. Involvement in decision-making was shown to increase equity among stakeholders (Geller, 2016).

Parents and students have an awareness of policies, a feeling of ownership, and an understanding of student rights (J. L. Epstein, 2001). As such, parents from minority groups reported feeling uncomfortable approaching their children's teachers. Consequently, teachers tend to develop a misconception about minority parents that they seemed uninterested in their children's education.

Therefore, to encourage the involvement of parents from certain minority groups, Berkowitz et al. (2017) suggested for schools to practice cultural sensitivity and celebrate diversity. Berkowitz et al. (2017) suggested that schools could present more education opportunities for minority group parents to keep them informed of the school curriculum and school culture.

Implications for Research

There is a limited amount of research on the perceptions of parents of their type of involvement in the education of their children at the intermediate school level (Ihmeideh et al., 2018). Several studies focus on the perspectives and experiences of school principals and

teachers and are limited in terms of the perceptions of parents (Kaptich et al., 2019). School leaders can rely on the data establishing the benefits of parental involvement on children's academic success to determine how and to what extent parents engage in their children's learning (Addi-Racah & Yemini, 2018). Parental engagement requires an ongoing collective and proactive approach (Raffaele & Knoff, 1999).

Some challenges that can affect involvement are the perceptions by parents of their need to actively participate in their children's education. In the last 2 decades, the amount of research on parental involvement in education, especially for middle school, has increased exponentially (Deslandes & Bertrand, 2002). In particular, a larger decline was witnessed in homework assistance than in academic socialization (Wei et al., 2019). No information was provided about the perceptions of parents and their experiences regarding changes in their involvement in the education of their children in middle school. Further research is needed to understand parental perspectives as it relates to the decline in parental involvement at the intermediate level (Wei et al., 2019). This research and findings may assist schools in developing an understanding of the parents' expectations and concerns, resulting in policies that encourage positive parent-teacher relationships (J. L. Epstein, 2018b).

Conus and Fahrni (2019) found that parental involvement tends to benefit from face-to-face interactions between teachers and parents and that teachers expected parents to initiate the interaction, while parents expected teachers to initiate the interaction. The expectation of parental initiative could be a barrier for minority parents. For most minority parents, organizational bureaucracy, time limitations, location, and the organizational culture of the school may present obstacles to the parent-teacher relations. Some parents have perceived barriers such as the

availability of teachers, being demanding, lack of legitimacy of inquiries, and maintaining relationships with teachers.

Several studies have indicated that increased parental involvement can produce students with better manners. According to Strawhun et al. (2014), “Parent involvement with the school is important for all children, it is especially important for children and youth with behavioral needs” (p. 2). This shows the importance of parental involvement and especially parenting students with behavioral needs. It not only contributes to their emotional and behavioral needs as growing individuals, but also grows the relationship building with the family context.

Recommendations for Future Research

Several recommendations emerge from the study’s limitations and to further explore the phenomenon. For instance, a larger sample group could have been used for this study to ensure the plausibility and validity of the results. A low statistical power, resulting from a sample size of 55 parents, could have compromised the accuracy of the results of the study. Further research should replicate this study with a larger sample size since an increased sample of participants might yield statistically significant results.

Future research could also sample from a broader range of demographic groups within the district. It would be of interest to observe and compare the parental involvement of all demographic groups. The sample in this study was composed mostly of female respondents. Hiatt-Michael (1994) showed that parents have different focuses and that the DOE developed the PTA after the observation that parents were experiencing difficulty navigating the school system in coordination with their home and work lives. The importance of the parental involvement of fathers must not be downplayed, and studies that include more fathers should be considered. To overcome this limitation through future studies, researchers should use additional platforms for

the distribution of the survey and increasing the timeframe for completion. This did present a concern due to the timeframe and also the reliance of the school administrator to return the completed surveys to the current researcher. To reduce researcher bias and ensure the trustworthy and honest completion of the survey questions, the respondents should not be placed under pressure to complete the survey.

J. L. Epstein (2018a) noted that language, culture, and socioeconomic status predicted levels of parental involvement. Parents from minority groups speaking languages other than English and with low socioeconomic status participated less than other parents. While the findings of the current study contribute insights related to this participation, quantitative research is unable to determine mechanisms by which relationships are present. A case study conducted in a Texas elementary school by Peña (2000), focused on Mexican parent involvement. The results of the study indicated that teachers mostly did not acknowledge the impact that language, parent groups, education levels, and cultural influences have on their level of involvement (Peña, 2000). Given these findings, future researchers should examine the ways these variables, particularly parent level of education, are associated with parent involvement style. Finally, additional studies should utilize qualitative methods, with face-to-face interviews used as an alternative to survey completion. Such a study would help to explore the experiences of parents and their perspectives more fully than can be done with a solely quantitative study.

Conclusion

Expectations of parental initiative may be a barrier for minority parents. For most minority parents, organizational bureaucracy, time constraints, location, and organizational culture of the school may pose barriers to parent-teacher interactions. For parents from minority groups, however, the additional barrier was their lack of confidence in their communication

skills was identified. Parental involvement is crucial for the success of a student. School leaders can rely on the data establishing the benefits of parental involvement on children's academic success to determine how and to what extent parents engage in their children's learning (Addi-Raccah & Yemini, 2018). Parental engagement requires an ongoing collaborative and proactive approach (Raffaele & Knoff, 2003).

Parental involvement is a key factor in the academic success of students. Research, however, shows differing perceptions on the definition of parental involvement (J. L. Epstein, 1995). Miller (2001) correctly stated that parents serve as the first and most enduring teachers who play a crucial role in helping their children learn. The present study succeeded in providing better knowledge on those parental involvement initiatives which prove to be more effective and efficient in improving the academic results and success of students. The results from this study provided insight for schools to enable them to formulate and build on existing programs to grow the parent-teacher as well as parent-student relationships for minority parents.

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**APPENDIX A
IRB APPROVAL FORM**

July 9, 2020



July 9, 2020

Patrice Clark

Re: Study ID# 2020-114 Dear Ms. Clark:

The Research Ethics Committee of the Seton Hall University Institutional Review Board reviewed and approved your research proposal entitled, “An Evaluation of Parental Involvement Types in a Suburban Minority New Jersey Intermediate School: A Quantitative Study” as resubmitted. This memo serves as official notice of the aforementioned study’s approval as exempt. If your study included an informed consent form, letter of solicitation or flyer, a stamped copy is included for your use.

The Institutional Review Board approval of your research is valid for a one-year period from the date of this letter. During this time, any changes to the research protocol, informed consent form or study team must be reviewed and approved by the IRB prior to their implementation.

You will receive a communication from the Institutional Review Board at least 1 month prior to your expiration date requesting that you submit an Annual Progress Report to keep the study active, or a Final Review of Human Subjects Research form to close the study. In all future correspondence with the Institutional Review Board, please reference the ID# listed above.

Sincerely,

Mara C. Podvey, PhD, OTR
Associate Professor
Co-Chair, Institutional Review Board

Office of the Institutional Review Board Presidents Hall · 400 South Orange Avenue · South Orange, New Jersey 07079 · Tel: 973.275.4654 · Fax 973.275.2978 ·

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