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LATINX FAMILIES' AND SCHOOL PERSONNEL'S PERCEPTIONS OF FAMILY
ENGAGEMENT IN VIRTUAL LEARNING IN FIVE NC ELEMENTARY SCHOOLS
DURING THE COVID-19 GLOBAL PANDEMIC

By
Elizabeth Schrecengost

A Dissertation Submitted to the
Gardner-Webb University College of Education
in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements
for the Degree of Doctor of Education

School Gardner-Webb University
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Approval Page

This dissertation was submitted by Elizabeth Schrecengost under the direction of the persons listed below. It was submitted to the Gardner-Webb University College of Education and approved in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Education at Gardner-Webb University.

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Dedication

To my mom and dad. You are the TRUE example of the American Dream. You came to this country with almost nothing and having a zero-support system, worked tirelessly your whole life for me and my brother to have all the opportunities you never did. You were the inspiration for the topic of my study, because despite having missed countless school events, never volunteering at school, and hardly ever talking to my teachers, I always knew you were very involved in my academics and always had the highest expectations for me. Mom, ever since I can remember, your words of encouragement (and dad's life lectures) were enough for me to know you valued my education and wanted me to succeed in life. To my girls, Emmie and Sophie, always remember no matter what challenges life throws at you, you are capable of anything!

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To my husband Cameron, thank you for all your support during this process as I spent countless hours working on my dissertation and sometimes letting my anxiety get the best of me. Thank you for being my number one supporter, always. Thank you to my girls, Emmie and Sophie, I love you more than you will ever understand. You were the main reason I pushed myself when I wanted to give up.

To my parents, Elizabeth Cornelio and Luis Plasencia, thank you for everything you have done, from helping with the girls to comforting me when I needed it the most. I cannot thank you enough for all the sacrifices you have made throughout your life for me to get where I am today. Thank you, mom and dad, for instilling my drive to do well academically by saying, “Ponte a leer porque el mejor ‘teacher’ es el libro” or “Read, because the best teachers are books.” I have not stopped since and do not plan on stopping either. Thank you for supporting me throughout my academic journey.

To Dr. Michelle Bennett, my dissertation chair, and committee members, Dr. Jennifer Putnam and Dr. David Fonseca, without your support and feedback, I would not have made it through this entire process! Dr. Jennifer Putnam, I am most thankful for you and your patience, your responsiveness, and your willingness to put my mind at ease during the tough parts of this process.

To those cohort members who were critical friends and provided a listening ear, who were also instrumental in providing me encouragement and feedback, I am grateful for everything you have done.

Abstract

LATINX FAMILIES' AND SCHOOL PERSONNEL'S PERCEPTIONS OF FAMILY ENGAGEMENT IN VIRTUAL LEARNING IN FIVE NC ELEMENTARY SCHOOLS DURING THE COVID-19 GLOBAL PANDEMIC. Schrecengost, Elizabeth, 2022: Dissertation, Gardner-Webb University.

The COVID-19 global pandemic of 2020 created many difficulties for both families and schools. Drastic lifestyle changes had to be made, and many schools across the United States were closed indefinitely, with a rapid transition to “remote/virtual/distance learning.” Latinx families, many from diverse backgrounds, were one of many special populations to struggle with the transition to virtual learning, for various reasons. This struggle with transition affected families' levels of engagement with their children's schools, which is a limited area of research. A myriad of research shows when there are strong partnerships among families, students, and schools and they work cohesively, students are more likely to be successful. Through this qualitative methods study, I sought to examine the perceptions of school personnel and Latinx families in regard to family engagement during the switch to virtual learning. Using two surveys, one for school personnel and one for Latinx families, I found the following themes: language barriers, lack of technology access/knowledge, economic constraints, and level of education. With a growing diverse group of students, it is imperative that stakeholders understand the Latinx special population to determine how to increase their engagement in their children's schools. This study offers several areas for future research.

Keywords: Latinx families, family engagement, school personnel perceptions, Latinx family perceptions, elementary school, virtual learning, learning during 2020

pandemic, COVID-19 virtual learning

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Chapter 1: Introduction

Overview

The COVID-19 global pandemic of 2020 created many obstacles for people all over the world, including families and schools. Drastic lifestyle changes had to be made, from self-isolation and stay-at-home orders to working from home and learning at home. Many schools across the United States were closed indefinitely, with a rapid transition to remote/virtual/ distance learning. According to the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), over 100 countries implemented nationwide school closures, which affected more than half of the worldwide student population (Onyema et al., 2020). Virtual learning, distance learning, remote learning, and online learning became the new most commonly used educational buzzwords. For the purposes of this study, I will use the term virtual learning.

Students and teachers had to transition into virtual learning with little to no time to fully adjust due to the global pandemic; the primary objective was to provide provisional access to instruction and related supports (i.e., family resources for basic needs, social-emotional support, etc.; Hodges et al., 2020). COVID-19 presented unique challenges for schools around the world, and related stakeholders (e.g., faculty, staff, families, and students) had to adapt to an unexpected event that resulted in modifying their instruction and practices to meet students' instructional needs (Hodges et al., 2020). Challenges for schools and families included but were not limited to social and emotional health, job security, financial struggles, stress-related conditions, schedules, and family-school relationship-building opportunities. Research has shown early school years are a crucial time for building family-school connections (Sibley & Dearing, 2014). The switch

to virtual learning due to the COVID-19 pandemic, along with the changing student demographics across the U.S., has resulted in an increasingly difficult time for families to build relationships and become engaged in their child's school. Virtual learning is not necessarily less effective than in-person learning, but it does require a partnership between parents, students, and educators (Wiseman et al., 2020). Epstein et al. (2019) stated, "Partnerships between home and school require an increase in teachers' understanding of students' families, and promoting more productive connections with families and the community that contribute to student success in school" (p. 17). Honest communication between schools and families is crucial to ensure each party is aware of the expectations (Epstein et al., 2019). Additionally, Wiseman et al. (2020) stated, "Partnerships require strong communication to be effective" (p. 11).

In looking at the importance of family-school partnerships, Epstein et al. (2019) identified three main environments in which students learn and develop: home, school, and community. When all three stakeholders work together, the child has an improved chance of being successful. Epstein et al. also emphasized that "all families care about their children, want them to succeed, and are eager to obtain better information from schools and communities in order to remain good partners in their children's education" (p. 15). Epstein et al.'s findings hold true for students inside the physical classroom, and it remains equally important in virtual learning. The parental role in a student's online learning experience is important for student success, and current literature regarding family engagement in schools emphasizes the importance of parent involvement in terms of student success. When families, students, and schools work cohesively, the student is more likely to be successful. Research has indicated parental involvement as a

constructive aspect for young children with a lasting effect through high school (LeFevre & Shaw, 2012). Parent *involvement* is typically used by educators to describe specifically what parents do within the school; on the other hand, *engagement* includes parents' understanding of the world and how those experiences frame the things they do (Carreón et al., 2005). Given the fact that many students' families in today's society are no longer in the traditional form of simply mother and father but can also include extended family members as active contributors in a child's education, I will use the term *family engagement* throughout the research study.

Family engagement can be described as a more equitable type of involvement that considers parent and school staff perceptions alike (Snell, 2018). In the past decade, education research has highlighted how consistent engagement among families, schools, and communities during elementary and middle school years leads to enhanced student achievement, irrespective of the ethnic, racial, religious, or socioeconomic backgrounds (Anderson, 2017; Epstein et al., 2019; Henderson & Mapp, 2002). Henderson and Mapp (2002) concluded family engagement is important for student achievement; however, several conditions must be met, including feelings of being welcome and feelings of being connected with their child's teacher. Family engagement is a critical factor in student achievement and continued educational development, and when engagement is deficient, it greatly affects student achievement (Caño et al., 2016). Researchers have suggested both school and home should work together for student success, and successful students come from a nurturing and supportive home (Caño et al., 2016).

In a recent study about the change in population, projections indicated that by 2043, the nation as a whole will become predominantly non-Caucasian, which will make

the U.S. one of the most culturally diverse nations on the planet (Taylor & Taylor, 2021). With Latinx students constituting the fastest-growing student population in the United States and affecting the social structure and overall institute of schools, family-school engagement is a critical predictor of achievement; however, family-school engagement has been found to be low among Latinx students in many schools across the U.S. (Carreón et al., 2005; Sibley & Brabeck, 2017). Zarate (2007) stated, “as schools and policymakers seek to improve the educational conditions of the Latinx community, parental influence in the form of school involvement is assumed to play some role in shaping students’ educational experiences” (p. 7). Sibley and Dearing (2014) emphasized, “schools are faced with increasing heterogeneity in family culture and parenting practices and understanding the ways in which parents are involved in their children’s education may be critical in efforts to promote the life chances of immigrant children” (p. 826). Ongoing research has shown that increased attention directed towards removing the cultural and structural difficulties that could limit immigrant parents being involved at school may lead to many benefits (Sibley & Dearing, 2014). Additionally, Epstein et al. (2019) emphasized,

Single parents, parents who are employed outside the home, parents who live far from the school, fathers, parents with diverse cultural and linguistic backgrounds, and those without easy access to new technologies are less involved at the school building, on average, unless, the school organizes opportunities for families to become involved at various times and in various places to support the school and their children. (p. 15)

Understanding the perceptions of Latinx families is important for stakeholders to know

how to best involve parents in the schools to increase school engagement and student achievement.

Statement of the Problem

With the COVID-19 pandemic beginning in 2020, many schools turned to virtual learning in an effort to continue student learning. Latinx families, many from diverse backgrounds, were one of many special populations to struggle with the transition to emergency remote learning, whether it was lack of internet access or childcare issues. This struggle with transition affected families' levels of engagement with their children's schools, which is a limited area of research. With a growing diverse group of students, it is imperative that stakeholders understand the Latinx special population to determine how to increase their engagement in their children's schools. The percentage of Latinx students has been increasing, going from 6 million in 1995 to 13.6 million in the fall of 2017 (National Center for Education Statistics [NCES], 2019). Latinx students went from making up 13.5% of public school enrollment to 26.8% during that time frame. NCES (2019) projected that Latinx enrollment will continue to grow, reaching 27.5% of public school enrollment by the fall of 2029. In a school system where power is predictably held by Caucasian, English-speaking, middle-class families, Latinx families are at a great disadvantage ethnically, socioeconomically, and linguistically (Ladson-Billings & Tate, 1995; Pavlakis et al., 2019).

In a systematic literature review, analyzing qualitative and quantitative studies, of Latinx parent involvement, a major theme emerged: how Latinx families culturally define family engagement. Family engagement is defined as supporting students with homework, providing transportation, and teaching appropriate behavior like manners,

morals, world knowledge, and values (De La Cruz, 2019). Although there is much research on the idea that Latinx parents have elevated expectations for their child's education and are eager to be participants in their child's success, many schools' definitions of family engagement and the families' definitions do not match. Latinx parents are often misunderstood in regard to family engagement because they often do not have a clear understanding of the term engagement as defined by their child's school (De La Cruz, 2019; Quiocho & Daoud, 2006). Latinx parents can reach the school's expectation of being involved if schools explicitly define what engagement involves. An improved cultural awareness of Latinx culture can improve the engagement of Latinx families. In order to increase school personnel's cultural awareness and improve family engagement, an initial measure of Latinx family and school personnel perceptions is necessary.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to collect and examine Latinx families' perceptions in five elementary schools with the highest Latinx student population percentage in a western North Carolina district, in regard to family engagement during the shift to virtual learning in March 2020 and during the subsequent school years affected by the pandemic. The study sought to provide information on Latinx families' and school personnel's perceptions of family engagement during virtual learning as well as during the following school years affected by the pandemic. The study yielded specific recommendations for schools regarding how to increase family engagement in the general school environment and virtual learning environments in current school environments in addition to post-pandemic eras.

Research Questions

This study was conducted to expand the current understanding of school personnel and Latinx family perceptions of family engagement. Research questions were generated to gather evidence regarding perceptions of school personnel and Latinx families. The following questions were developed:

1. How did Latinx families adapt to the change in family engagement in the shift to virtual/hybrid learning due to the global pandemic?
2. How did the shift to virtual/hybrid learning due to the global pandemic impact Latinx families' perceptions of their family engagement with their child's/children's school(s)?
3. How did the shift to virtual/hybrid learning (due to the global pandemic) impact school personnel's perceptions of Latinx families' engagement with their child's/children's school(s)?
4. How do Latinx families envision their engagement/involvement with their child's/children's school(s) in a post-pandemic school environment?

Definition of Terms

The following terms were used in this study:

COVID-19 Pandemic

Identified in Wuhan, China in December 2019. COVID-19 is caused by the virus severe acute respiratory syndrome coronaviruses 2 (SARS-CoV-2). COVID-19 was a new virus in humans causing respiratory illness which was spread from person to person at a rapid rate, causing the global pandemic (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, 2020).

Emergency Remote Teaching

A short-term change in teaching to an alternate delivery mode due to emergency situations. It involves the use of fully remote teaching solutions for instruction that would normally be face-to-face (or blended/hybrid courses) and that return to that format once the emergency has subsided (Hodges et al., 2020).

Family Engagement

The mutual dedication, cooperation, and support educators and parents, as well as other caregivers, share as students are being educated (Vereen, 2020).

Hispanic

A term that includes people who speak Spanish and/or are descended from Spanish-speaking Latin America, including countries/territories of the Caribbean or Spain (Lopez et al., 2020).

Latinx

The word Latinx is a gender-neutral alternative to Latino or Latina; it refers to people born in or with ancestors from Latin America and living in the U.S., including people from Brazil. The term does not include speakers of romance languages from Europe such as Italians or Spaniards (Lopez et al., 2020).

Latin American Countries

Over 20 countries in North, Central, and South America as well as in the Caribbean: Panama, Honduras, Guatemala, Mexico, El Salvador, Nicaragua, Argentina, Bolivia, Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Ecuador, Guyana, Paraguay, Peru, Suriname, Uruguay, Venezuela, Cuba, Haiti, Dominican Republic, and the U.S. territory of Puerto Rico, as well as the French overseas regions of French Guiana, Guadeloupe, Martinique, Saint

Martin, and Saint Barthelemy (Devlin, 2019).

Partnerships

The relationship between families and educators who recognize shared responsibilities and interests for children and collaborate to create improved opportunities for students (Epstein, et al., 2019).

Virtual Learning

An umbrella term used for instruction delivered through the Internet, software, or both. Learning that takes place inside or outside the physical building of the educational organization or where the learner is separated by time and place. Students have remote access to instructors, and content and instruction can be self-paced (where the learner can choose time, place, pace, and amount of learning) or via live web conferencing with instructors (Anohina, 2005; Fabriz et al., 2021).

Overview of Methodology

The study employed qualitative methods, including surveys and focus groups. There were two surveys, one for school personnel and one for Latinx families. The surveys consisted of multiple-choice questions (e.g., What school does your child attend? What is your race/ethnicity?) to collect demographic information and open-ended questions to gather perceptual data on family engagement. Surveys were sent electronically to five suburban and small city elementary school administrators, from schools with the highest percentage of Hispanic students, and the administrators were asked to forward the survey to their families. Once the survey was sent, it was open for 2 weeks. The survey contained a question at the end to determine which families were willing to participate in a face-to-face or virtual focus group. If they were interested, they

were directed to an external link where they provided their contact information. Once I received their information, 10 interested participants for each participating school were contacted to attend either an in-person or virtual focus group at the date/time determined by me. Ten families that indicated a willingness to participate in the interview at each elementary school were selected. If more than 10 families met the criteria and were willing to participate, I randomly selected participants using a random name-picking online tool, random-name-picker.org. If 10 families did not volunteer to be interviewed, then however many families volunteered participated in the virtual and in-person focus groups. Once families were selected, I conducted focus groups and asked a series of open-ended questions, which I transcribed and analyzed for emerging themes. Some themes I had anticipated were higher communication levels during the pandemic, mental health prioritization from school personnel and families, higher family involvement in child's academics due to lack of in-person instruction, and challenges in student motivation. The themes I discovered are discussed further in Chapter 4.

Theoretical Framework

This study used Epstein's (1987) theory of overlapping spheres and Moll et al.'s (1992) funds of knowledge theory as the theoretical framework. Epstein's (1987, 1992) theory of overlapping spheres of influence blends educational, sociological, and psychological perspectives on social institutions to explain the relationships between schools, parents, and communities. The three spheres are family, school, and community, with the child in the center.

The funds of knowledge theory refers to historically accrued and culturally developed bulks of essential knowledge and skills for domestic or individual performance

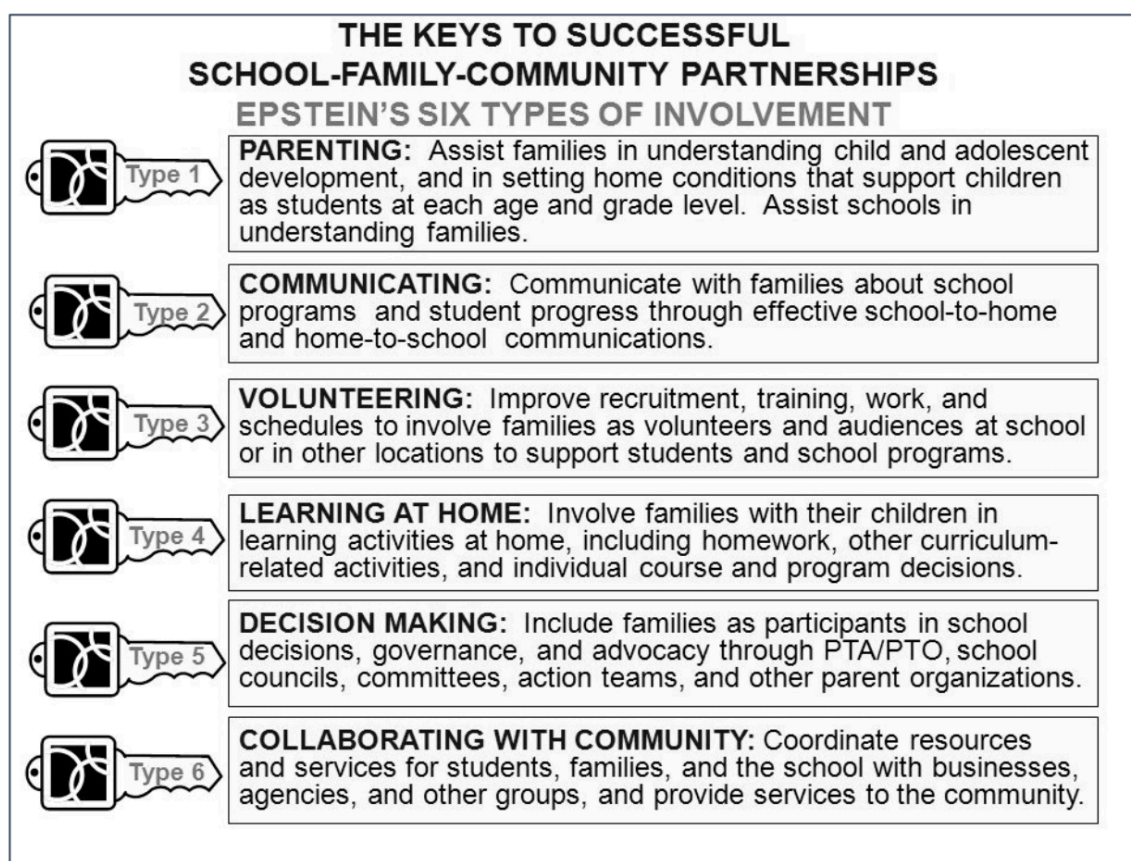
and well-being (Moll et al., 1992). Integrating funds of knowledge into classroom activities creates a deeper and more thoroughly scaffolded and relevant learning experience for students.

Conceptual Framework

This study used Epstein's (1995) six types of involvement and Hoover-Dempsey and Sandler's (1995) model of the parental involvement process as its conceptual framework. In Figure 1, Epstein's (1995) six types of family/community involvement can be seen.

Figure 1

Epstein's Six Types of Involvement



Note. From *School, Family, and Community Partnerships: Your Handbook for Action* (4th

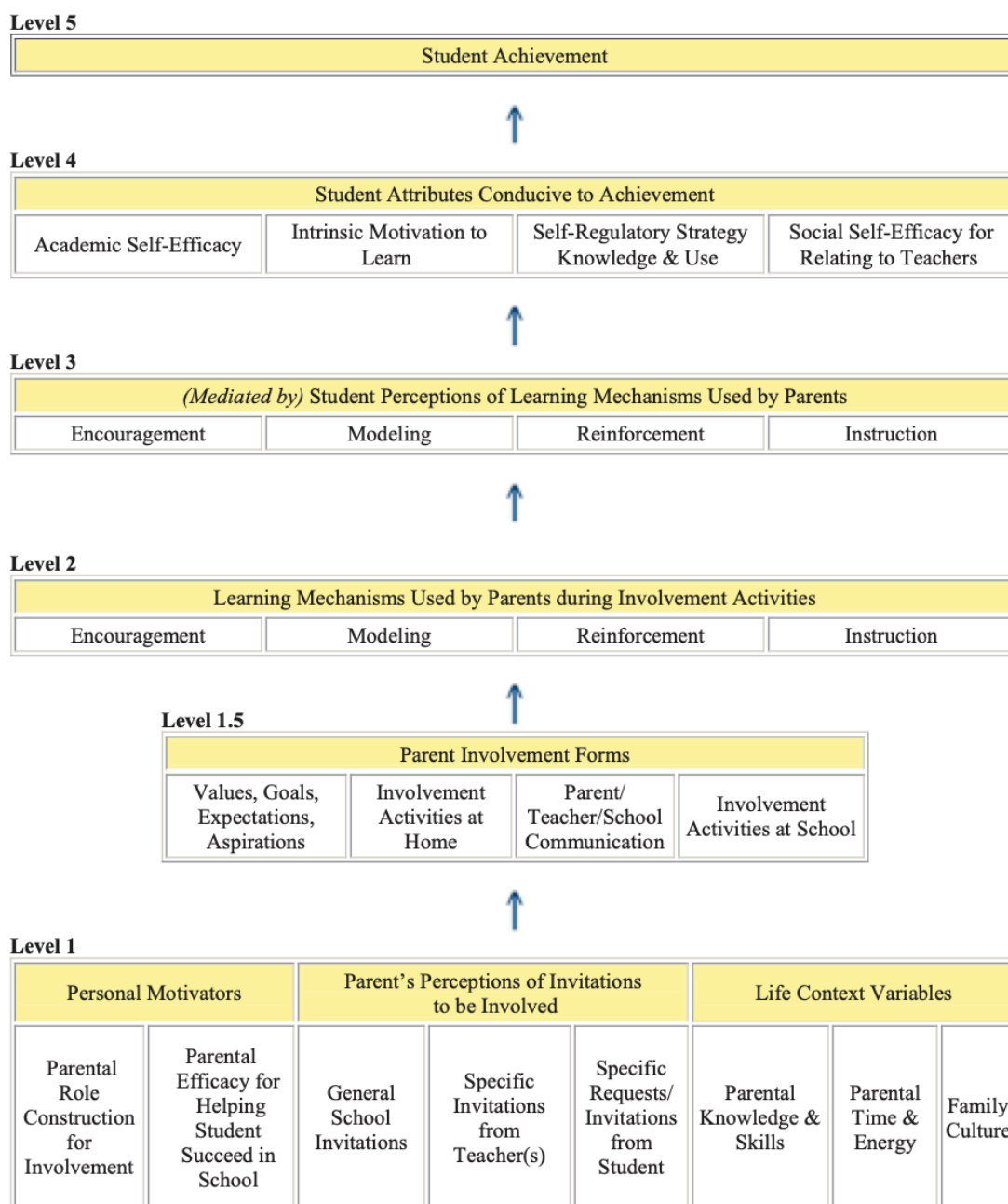
ed., p. 155) by J. L. Epstein et al., 2019, Corwin. Copyright 2019 by Corwin. Reprinted with permission.

Figure 1 describes Epstein's six types of involvement: parenting, communicating, volunteering, learning at home, decision-making, and collaborating with community. Each involvement includes a variety of practices and its own challenges and will likely lead to different results for different schools. Hoover-Dempsey and Sandler's (1995) model of the parental involvement process can be seen in Figure 2.

Figure 2

Hoover-Dempsey and Sandler Model of the Parental Involvement Process

Hoover-Dempsey & Sandler Model of the Parental Involvement Process



Note. From “Why Do Parents Become Involved in Their Children’s Education?

Implications for School Counselors,” by J. M. Walker, S. S. Shenker, & K. V. Hoover-

Dempsey, 2010, SAGE. Reprinted with permission.

Figure 2 shows the five levels of family involvement that aim to address why families become (or do not become) involved, what families do when they are involved, and how involvement makes a positive difference. Level 1 describes three major influences: personal motivators, parent perceptions of invitations to be involved, and life context variable. Level 1.5 defines involvement such as expectations, activities at home and school, and communication. Level 2 presents active ingredients that influence student achievement: encouragement, modeling, reinforcement, and instruction. Level 3 describes the active ingredients that translate into attributes for student achievement. Level 4 views student beliefs and behaviors that are conducive to student success. Level 5, student achievement, is the ultimate goal (Hoover-Dempsey et al., 2005).

The goal of the research was to determine how Latinx families from five elementary schools with the highest Latinx student population in a western North Carolina district perceive and define family engagement during the shift to virtual learning in March 2020 and during the subsequent school years. Collected data from the study informed each site of its strengths and opportunities for improvement in regard to Latinx family engagement in virtual learning, current school environment, and a post-pandemic school environment.

The study used Epstein et al.'s (2019) theoretical model which contains three overlapping spheres that influence children's learning: family, school, and community. Within these spheres, the external forces of experience, philosophy, and practices of family (as well as grade level and child's age) can increase or decrease involvement (Epstein et al., 2019).

The study also used Hoover-Dempsey and Sandler's (1995) model of the parental involvement process. This process includes five sequential levels that influence the involvement process (see Figure 1). Level 1 includes parental belief systems that contribute to the decision-making process, Level 2 describes specific forms of involvement. Level 3 describes the mechanisms through which parent involvement impacts the child's outcome. Level 4 includes strategies parents use that are conducive for student achievement, and Level 5 is the student's outcome.

Limitations

Limitations are influences that the researcher cannot control, and they can hinder the researcher's ability to draw certain conclusions from the study (PhDStudent, 2016). Limitations in this study included the fact that I am a Latina woman, and I may have biased perceptions towards Latinx families. It may have also affected the level of honesty of Latinx focus group participant responses, due to comfort levels and cultural differences. Also, as an outside researcher unfamiliar with the selected elementary schools in the district under study, focus group participant responses may have been affected. Additionally, there were cultural similarities with families; however, family responses may be limited due to the traditional educator-family relationship, where there is a certain level of personal perceptions that families want to disclose to a school staff member due to feelings of fear or indifference. Another limitation was the families that chose to participate, as some may have provided a more thorough response than others. Trust and honesty may have been another limitation because families may have provided responses that they believed I or the school wanted to hear. I personally did not know any of the Latinx families in the district.

Delimitations

Simon (2011) described delimitations as choices made by the researcher within the researcher's control, and they are the boundaries set for the study. Researchers cannot study everything at once; delimitations allow researchers to decide where to draw the line as far as what to research in order to answer their questions. Although the research problem of lack of mutual understanding of definitions of family engagement between schools and Latinx families could be applied to many schools, I focused on the elementary schools in a single district so the data gathered remained manageable and direct recommendations could be issued. Narrowing the focus to the Latinx population is another delimitation. The choice to focus on five schools in an eastern North Carolina district with the highest percentage of Latinx student population was made after considering the limited research into this population.

Summary

This study was intended to understand the perceptions of family engagement during virtual learning at the elementary level during the shift in March 2020 and current school environments, with a specific focus on the perceptions of Latinx families and school personnel. Through surveys and focus groups with Latinx families and school personnel, I uncovered emerging themes and how they adapted to the change in family engagement in virtual learning during the global pandemic and current school environments, as well as what the families' visions were for engagement in a post-pandemic era. The study used Epstein (1987) and Moll et al. (1992) as its theoretical framework and Epstein (1995) and Hoover-Dempsey and Sandler (1995) as its conceptual framework. Qualitative data were used to investigate family perceptions so

that recommendations could be made. A widespread review of literature is in Chapter 2, reviewing the definition of family engagement, the importance of family engagement, family engagement during the global pandemic of 2020, and the current research on Latinx family engagement. For this study, I implemented a phenomenological research design, where the researcher describes a phenomenon as described by participant experiences (Creswell & Creswell, 2018).

The study determined perceptions of Latinx families on family engagement in virtual learning. Families were surveyed, and focus groups were conducted to gain qualitative data. There were surveys with open-ended questions and a question at the end to identify the Latinx families willing to participate in the in-person or virtual focus group. In Chapter 3, the methodology for the study is more thoroughly described. Qualitative research methods, instruments, and analysis are thoroughly covered, in addition to information about protecting participants, my role, and eliminating bias. Chapter 4 provides an in-depth view of the research findings. Chapter 5 addresses the research questions as well as provides recommendations for selected sites and future research.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

Overview

The purpose of this study was to explore the perceptions of family engagement in virtual learning at the elementary level, specifically focusing on the Latinx population. This study also determined the level of family engagement from Latinx families during virtual learning. This chapter reviews literature related to family engagement and begins with a definition of family engagement, the importance of family engagement, the impact of the global pandemic on education, family engagement perceptions from Latinx families, school personnel perceptions of Latinx family engagement, obstacles for Latinx families, and common Latinx parenting practices that affect family engagement.

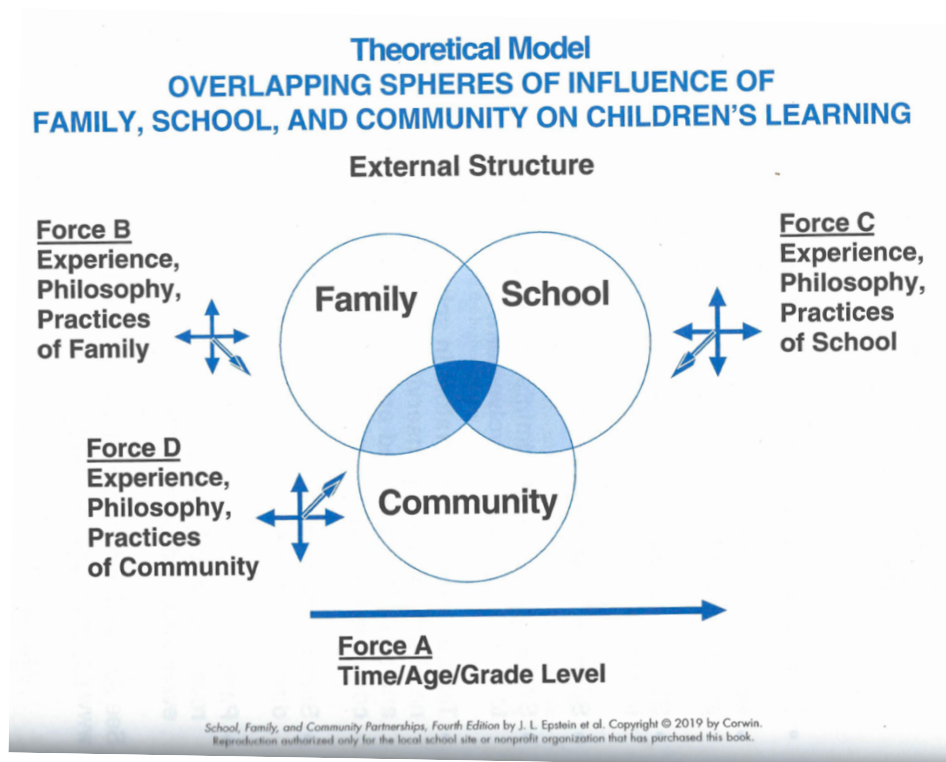
Theoretical and Conceptual Framework

Three Overlapping Spheres of Influence

This study was grounded in the research of Epstein et al. (2019) and the theoretical model of overlapping spheres. Figure 3 shows the external structure of the three overlapping spheres of influence of family, school, and community on student learning.

Figure 3

External Structure: Theoretical Model of Overlapping Spheres of Influence



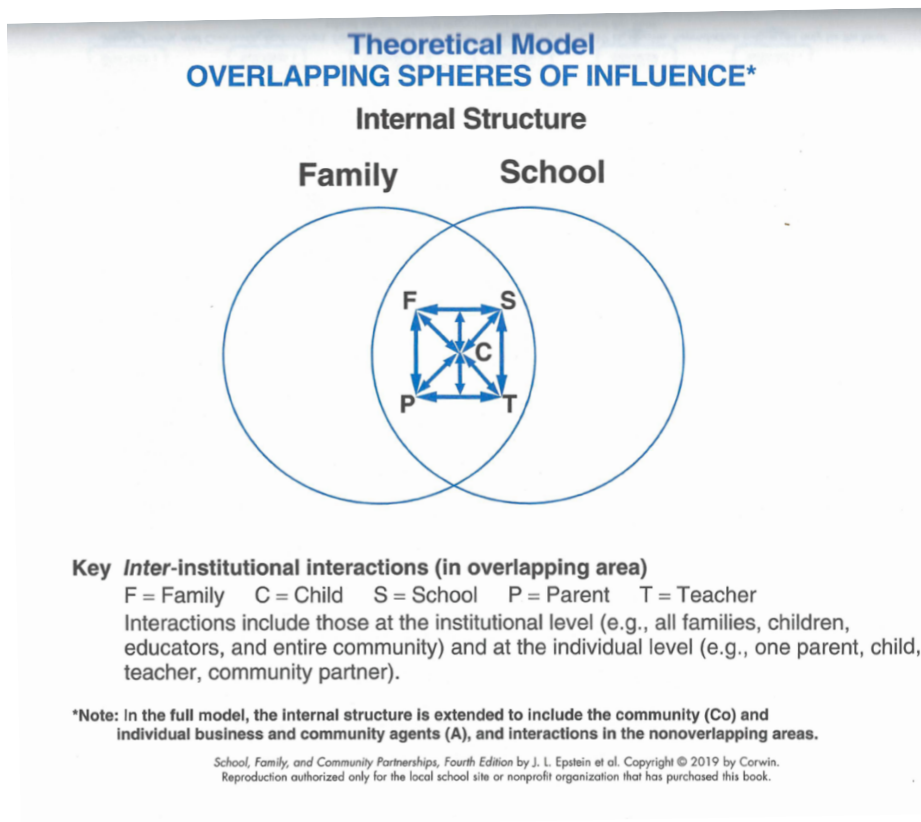
Note. From *School, Family, and Community Partnerships: Your Handbook for Action* (4th ed., p. 152) by J. L. Epstein et al., 2019, Corwin. Copyright 2019 by Corwin. Reprinted with permission.

External forces (i.e., experience, philosophy, and practices) can affect levels of family engagement. Figure 3 shows the three main factors that impact student learning and improvement. The overlapping areas show where family, school, and community share responsibilities. Different practices, histories, philosophies, and other forces create either more or less overlap (Epstein et al., 2019). The family sphere is affected by the experience, philosophy, and practices of families. The school sphere is affected by the experience, philosophy, and practices of the school. The community sphere is affected by the experience, philosophy, and practices of the community. All spheres are also affected

by time, age, and grade level. The practices and amount of overlap change over time with age and grade level. Figure 4 illustrates the internal structure of the theoretical model of overlapping spheres of influence.

Figure 4

Internal Structure: Theoretical Model of Overlapping Spheres of Influence



Note. From *School, Family, and Community Partnerships: Your Handbook for Action* (4th ed., p. 153) by J. L. Epstein et al., 2019, Corwin. Copyright 2019 by Corwin. Reprinted with permission.

In Figure 4, the internal structure of the model is displayed, showing connections that occur when stakeholders (communities, personnel in schools, and families) communicate and work together (Epstein et al., 2019). The student is at the center of those interactions and is the main focus in education. The three overlapping spheres of

influence (family, school, and community) relate to the study because each sphere is affected by experience, philosophy, and practices, and each one of these areas differs between Caucasian families and Latinx families. This study focused on the Latinx families and the experiences, philosophies, and practices that affected their family engagement in their child's school, thus affecting the overlap of each of the spheres.

Funds of Knowledge

This study was also grounded in the research of Moll et al. (1992) and the theoretical model of funds of knowledge. Funds of knowledge refers to the “historically accumulated and culturally developed bodies of knowledge and skills essential for household or individual functioning and well-being” (Moll et al., 1992, p.133). Figure 5 shows examples of household funds of knowledge.

Figure 5*Sample Funds of Knowledge***A Sample of Household Funds of Knowledge**

<i>Agriculture and Mining</i>	<i>Material & Scientific Knowledge</i>
Ranching and farming	Construction
Horse riding skills	Carpentry
Animal management	Roofing
Soil and irrigation systems	Masonry
Crop planting	Painting
Hunting, tracking, dressing	Design and archi- tecture
Mining	Repair
Timbering	Airplane
Minerals	Automobile
Blasting	Tractor
Equipment operation and maintenance	House maintenance
<i>Economics</i>	<i>Medicine</i>
Business	Contemporary medicine
Market values	Drugs
Appraising	First aid procedures
Renting and selling	Anatomy
Loans	Midwifery
Labor laws	Folk medicine
Building codes	Herbal knowledge
Consumer knowledge	Folk cures
Accounting	Folk veterinary cures
Sales	
<i>Household Management</i>	<i>Religion</i>
Budgets	Catechism
Childcare	Baptisms
Cooking	Bible studies
Appliance repairs	Moral knowledge and ethics

Figure 5 illustrates the different types of household knowledge that contribute to a child's funds of knowledge (e.g., construction, farming, sales, childcare, cooking). These sample funds of knowledge are part of the child's context of learning at home. The "teacher" in home-based contexts of learning will know the *whole* child not just as a student; taking into account or having knowledge about the multiple spheres of activities within which the child is enmeshed" (Moll et al., 1992, p. 133). Much of the instruction

and learning is driven by the child's interests and inquiries; the entirety of cultural structures and experiences of the household helps comprise the funds of knowledge children bring to school (Moll et al., 1992). Funds of knowledge relates to the study because Latinx families have strong familial bonds; these bonds provide children with a variety of experiences, which children then bring to school. These funds of knowledge also affect Latinx families' beliefs about family engagement in their child's school because they have a certain view of what their role is in their child's education and are experts of their own lives and their children's lives (Global Family Research Project, 2019). Funds of knowledge allow educators to tap into a child's home life from the family perspective and understand how to best support the child in the classroom.

Conceptual Framework

Six Typologies

This study was grounded in the research of Epstein et al. (2019) and the six typologies of parental involvement. Table 1 shows the six typologies.

Table 1*Six Typologies of Parental Involvement*

Type	Name	Description
Type 1	Parenting	Activities illustrate how schools are working to increase families' understanding of child and adolescent development.
Type 2	Communicating	Activities include strategies to improve two-way connections about school programs and students' progress.
Type 3	Volunteering	Activities mobilize parents and others who can share their time and talent to support the school, teachers, and student activities at the school or in other locations.
Type 4	Learning at home	Activities provide families with information about the academic work that their children do in class, how to help their children with homework, and other curriculum-related activities.
Type 5	Decision-Making	Activities enable families to participate in decisions about school, policies, programs, and practices that affect their own and other children.
Type 6	Collaborating with community	Activities encourage the cooperation of schools and families with community groups, organizations, agencies, and individuals. (Epstein et al., 2019).

The six typologies are not levels, meaning Type 6 is not higher than Type 1 or vice versa. Each type of involvement is significant for engaging families and the community in various ways (Epstein et al., 2019). The six typologies relate to the study because family involvement varies in each of the six typologies. Involvement in each of the six typologies depends on a family's beliefs and philosophies. The focus of this study was on Latinx families' experiences and perceptions, all of which affect how involved a family is in each of the typologies.

Hoover-Dempsey and Sandler Model

The study was also grounded in the research of Hoover-Dempsey and Sandler's model of the parental involvement process. The model is structured in five levels and addresses why families become involved, what families do when they are involved, and how family involvement makes a positive difference in students. Figure 6 illustrates the first level of the model; it shows three factors that influence the frequency of family involvement.

Figure 6

Level 1: Hoover-Dempsey and Sandler Model of the Parental Involvement Process

Level 1	Personal Motivators		Parent's Perceptions of Invitations to be Involved			Life Context Variables		
	Parental Role Construction for Involvement	Parental Efficacy for Helping Student Succeed in School	General School Invitations	Specific Invitations from Teacher(s)	Specific Requests/Invitations from Student	Parental Knowledge & Skills	Parental Time & Energy	Family Culture

Note. From “Why Do Parents Become Involved in Their Children’s Education? Implications for School Counselors,” by J. M. Walker, S. S. Shenker, & K.V. Hoover-Dempsey, 2010, SAGE. Reprinted with permission.

Figure 6 shows the factors that affect the variety and frequency of family engagement; these factors interact to shape the forms and frequency of family engagement. The Hoover-Dempsey and Sandler model relates to this study because it focuses on different levels of parent involvement; each subsequent level is affected by Level 1 factors which are personal motivators, parent perceptions of involvement invitations, and life context variables. The parental involvement process begins at Level 1, which includes parental role, efficacy, invitations, time, energy, knowledge and skills,

and family culture. This study focuses on Latinx families' perceptions of family engagement; these perceptions affect which level of involvement they achieve based on Level 1 factors in the Hoover-Dempsey and Sandler model.

Defining Family Engagement

Family engagement has often been interchangeably used in place of parent involvement. Both parent involvement and family engagement include interactions with families; however, their meanings differ. Parent involvement includes parent interaction with schools and teachers; it occurs when parents participate in activities (i.e., assist with meetings or special events; Valdes, 1996). Parent involvement might also include discussions and dialogue in order to keep an open communication line (Children's Bureau et al., 2017). Family engagement, on the other hand, happens when educators and families participate in a collaborating process of relationship-building showing reciprocated respect and responsiveness to language and culture (Children's Bureau et al., 2017). Family engagement is when families habitually engage as level partners with other stakeholders (i.e., educators) in making decisions in relation to their child's strengths and needs and reflects the family's ideas of success. The partnership is attached by shared authority, two-way communication, mutual respect, and a commitment to a shared vision and share goals for the child's success (youth.gov, 2020). Family engagement includes parents' worldly life experiences and how those experiences affect the things they do; it is a more equitable type of involvement that considers parents' and school personnel's ideas and perspectives (Carreón et al., 2005; Snell, 2018).

In recognizing today's diverse family units, *family* in family engagement includes adoptive, foster, and biological parents; legal guardians; service providers; adult siblings;

grandparents; and mentors they can trust and can count on (youth.gov, 2020). Family engagement in this study will refer to a student's family unit (parents, grandparents, etc.) that is equally partnered (in decision-making processes, communication, and common goals) with educators to address the needs of the student in order for them to be successful.

Importance of Family Engagement

Anderson (2017) found as schools move through the 21st century, the partnerships between schools, families, and communities continue to be supported by researchers. Research has shown that high levels of family engagement lead to the best possible results with students, including high academic and nonacademic achievement and stronger relationships between families and schools (Epstein et al., 2019; Mapp et al., 2017). Family engagement and meaningful partnerships with families allow students to succeed academically and socially; when families are involved, students

- make better grades
- consistently attend school
- are more prone to enroll in higher-level programs
- are more likely to graduate and attend college
- are more enthusiastic and optimistic about school and learning
- have fewer discipline concerns inside/outside class (Mapp et al., 2017).

With the numerous benefits that come from strong levels of family engagement, there is no question about how important it is for families to engage in their child's education, thus leading to short-term and long-term success for students. Wiseman et al. (2020) emphasized partnerships between families and schools provide a solid foundation for

mutual growth, and each member brings skills and strengths to the collaboration, and the unique contributions of each amplify the efforts of the other.

Family engagement has been associated with positive student outcomes across all grades, academically and socially (Orange, 2020). It begins with families feeling welcomed and valued for any level or type of involvement in which they participate, and they need to feel connected with their child's educators and their child's learning (Currie-Ruben & Smith, 2014; Mapp et al., 2017). Family engagement is essential and valued by educators because it contributes to the growth and development of the child as a whole (Carreón et al., 2005). Families are a critical support for children; those who provide a supportive home learning environment are most likely to be positively correlated with teacher evaluations of the reading and mathematics performance of children (Currie-Ruben & Smith, 2014; Lee & Bowen, 2006).

The No Child Left Behind Act in 2001, outlined parent participation as routine, two-way, and meaningful communication concerning student academic learning and additional school activities (U.S. Department of Education, 2004). This legislation also expected parents and educators to build a strong relationship to develop significant engagements; however, many families that are afflicted by poverty or fall below the middle class may find it hard to engage in their child's education (Anderson, 2017). Despite this, research shows that family, school, and community engagement enhance student achievement regardless of racial, cultural/ethnic, socioeconomic, or religious backgrounds (Anderson, 2017; LeFevre & Shaw, 2012).

Family engagement plays an important role and is a key predictor in shaping Latinx students' educational experiences and achievements (LeFevre & Shaw, 2012;

Quiñones & Kiyama, 2014). Family engagement embodies the aspirations of Latinx families, including academic and social achievement goals with a deep value for education, and the investments and sacrifices made to encourage goals to “move up” in the world and have a better life (Quiñones & Kiyama, 2014). Constantino (2021) suggested all families care about their children and are the first and most influential teachers in their lives; however, sometimes they may not express interest in the manner we wish nor in the manner we believe helps their children learn. Despite many obstacles and conflicting beliefs between Latinx families and schools, for Latinx families, both school and family practices are necessary factors for *una buena educación*, or “a good education” (Quiñones & Kiyama, 2014).

Virtual Learning During the Global Pandemic of 2020

In March 2020, an unprecedented global pandemic caused by a new coronavirus strand most commonly referred to as COVID-19 occurred. Onyema et al. (2020) found the pandemic caused many interruptions in daily life, from transportation to social gatherings/interactions, worship, sports, entertainment, economy, businesses, politics, and education, which remains one of the worst-hit sectors. According to the World Health Organization (2020), “COVID-19 is the infectious disease caused by the most recently discovered coronavirus, unknown before the outbreak began in Wuhan, China, in December 2019” (“What is COVID-19?” section). Many states across the U.S. began closing schools, affecting students, parents, teachers, and school districts and increasing frustrations as they swiftly transitioned to virtual learning (Taylor & Taylor, 2021). On March 14, 2020, North Carolina Governor Roy Cooper issued Executive Order No. 117 (2020), “prohibiting mass gatherings and directing the statewide closure of K-12 public

schools to limit the spread of COVID-19” (p. 1). Executive Order No. 117 stated “that all public schools close for students effective March 16, 2020 until March 30, 2020” (p. 2). The governor would later extend school closures through the end of the 2019-2020 school year. This executive order is just one example of many executive orders from across the U.S. and orders across the world. According to UNESCO, more than 100 countries implemented national school closures, affecting over half of the world’s student population (Onyema et al., 2020; VOA Learning English, 2020).

School closures triggered severe difficulties for students, educators, parents, and society regardless of specific demographics (Onyema et al., 2020). Taylor and Taylor (2021) stated areas that presented overwhelming challenges for K-12 students, families, and educators included technology, learning loss, mental health, meals, and income. Other challenges that stemmed from technology included distractions, inaccessibility or availability of the network, poor digital skills, network issues, and poor power supply. The increased pressure from numerous challenges caused families to become overwhelmed with the fact that students were home full-time and needed educational support as well as the duty of providing for the home (Onyema et al., 2020).

Online learning is not a new model; in fact, online learning has been in place since the early 1990s when the University of Phoenix became one of the first universities to offer online education programs through the Internet (Kentnor, 2015). Online education is a general model for teaching and learning online with the support of technology tools and programs; its success relies on several factors (i.e., digital skills, availability, internet connection and accessibility, and learning software; Onyema et al., 2020). Currie-Ruben and Smith (2014) emphasized the idea that online learning requires

extensive assistance, often more than a normal 7-hour school day, by a member of the student's family, making the parent/family role a crucial element to the child's success. Technology can be used to solve some of the fallout from school closures; however, it cannot replace the effects of in-person interactions between students and educators (Onyema et al., 2020).

Family Engagement: The Way Latinx Families See It

One major factor for families, when deciding to immigrate to the U.S., is access to public education. Families have high prospects about the quality of American schools and the opportunities that come with it, which makes them feel privileged (Hill & Torres, 2010). Latinx immigrant families demonstrate resilience and flexibility to adapt to a new lifestyle in the U.S. and do not want the opportunity for their children to be successful in school to be wasted (Hill & Torres, 2010; Sibley & Brabeck, 2017). Research has shown that Latinx family engagement is often seen in a nontraditional manner. This means that more often, Latinx families are not seen volunteering as classroom helpers, attending optional school fundraisers and events, or requesting meetings with teachers outside of the required parent-teacher conferences (Hill & Torres, 2010). Zarate (2007) proposed that Latinx parents' perceptions of parental involvement are sorted into academic involvement (i.e., activities associated with academics) and life participation (i.e., parents providing life education in and outside of school). Life education includes teaching children that education is a gateway to an improved life. Parents teach their children that manual work is challenging and seldom pays well and that getting an education is a way to obtain a better job (Hill & Torres, 2010). Latinx families also demonstrate involvement in their child's education by asking questions to fellow community members about how

to navigate the school system and by attending events they believe would be beneficial for their children's learning (Sibley & Brabeck, 2017). Parents have high hopes for their children's success and want to be active participants in their child's education and moral development, despite having high involvement in ways not typically considered to be participation from a Caucasian, American perspective (Quiocho & Daoud, 2006; Sibley & Brabeck, 2017).

Latinx Family Involvement: The Way Educators See It

Educators often make a dangerous assumption: Children are unsuccessful in school because their families do not support school efforts to educate their children (Constantino, 2021). However, the different face of engagement makes it difficult to define engagement which can lead to educators thinking families are not engaged in their child's learning (Anderson, 2017). Latinx families are frequently disregarded in schools due to class, race, and cultural differences, and many educators question whether Latinx parents care about their children's education (De Gaetano, 2007; Quiocho & Daoud, 2006). This suspicion is often due to Latinx families not providing formal support such as attending pot-luck dinners, volunteering in the classroom, or attending neighborhood meetings, and being unsupportive of homework policies because they are unable to help their children with homework, etc., leading educators to assume that Latinx families are not positive contributors, do not have high academic standards, and are uninvolved (De Gaetano, 2007; LeFevre & Shaw, 2012; Quiocho & Daoud, 2006).

Although the complexion of student populations in America's public schools has experienced a shift in the 21st century, the profile of teachers has remained practically unchanged during the past 3 decades. In 2019, NCES released a report indicating that

82% of all teachers in public schools were Caucasian, English-speaking, and middle-class. According to Taylor and Taylor (2021), over 80% of 69,000 teachers who participated in Princeton and Tufts Universities' Project Implicit indicated a racial bias. Project Implicit's data generated thousands of results of self-administered tests that measure implicit and explicit biases. Traditional methods of engagement can support a top-down structure that limits the participation of families to those who are more privileged and, in many schools, are seen as catering to Caucasian, privileged families, marginalizing low-income families and supporting feelings of institutional racism (Constantino, 2021). Through elementary school, some immigrant children experience unintentional discrimination and bias from their teachers. This can include teachers praising Latinx students less, behaving less positively toward them, penalizing them for low English language proficiency, and making generalizations, thus undermining students' sense of connection to the school (Hill & Torres, 2010; Sibley & Brabeck, 2017). Campos (2016) found that Latinx families regularly experience discrimination, which has an impact on a parent's capability to engage. This discrimination may come in the form of stereotypes. Stereotypes are assumptions people make about the traits of members of a group, and stereotypical Latinx families are thought to be Mexican, mostly uneducated, unskilled, and unprofessional, and whose children are different and have deficient literacy skills (Quiocho & Daoud, 2006; Taylor & Taylor, 2021). Educators also assume that Latinx families are stuck in a culture of poverty that prevents them from appreciating the value of education (Goldenberg et al., 2001). These assumptions and generalizations about the Latinx culture as a whole can be problematic for families and students and lead to reduced expectations for Latinx students. De Gaetano (2007) found

cultures of families that are different than the dominant culture are often ignored, belittled, and treated superficially. Discriminations can manifest in various ways; for example, teachers not calling on students based on ethnicity, teachers assuming a student's English is poor despite being proficient, and teachers stereotyping students as having behavior problems (Sibley & Brabeck, 2017). Unfortunately, these events occur to many students across different grades. The combined experience of discrimination leads to decreased levels of motivation, interest, and achievement in school, causing students and families to begin to reject the schools that reject them (Hill & Torres, 2010).

Latinx families have traditionally attended schools that have been unsuccessful in acknowledging the variety of forms of knowledge they have brought to school, validating only the events, behaviors, and activities of the dominant group (Ortiz & Ordoñez-Jasis, 2005; Valdes, 1996). Hill and Torres (2010) stated,

Despite a strong work ethic, an intense desire to succeed, an understanding of the value and utility of education, and a trust and belief in the quality of the American school system, the academic achievement of Latinx students lags behind others in the United States. (p. 96)

Research shows that the longer immigrant Latinx students live in the United States, the worse they perform academically. This may be a result of the lack of achievement-related parenting strategies of Latinx families being captured in models of family-school relationships (Hill & Torres, 2010). Family perceptions concerning their roles in school, community, and family engagement are apparent in their actions and interactions with the school. However, conventional examples of engagement overlook ways that are often used by Latinx families (Anderson, 2017; Pavlakis et al., 2019). Educators' discrepant

views of Latinx families can adversely impact family-school relations. For example, teachers can assume that families do not respect them or the job they do because families may not be as communicative as their Caucasian counterparts, or families may not be as comfortable participating in school events (Constantino, 2021). The gap between family and educator perceptions may stem from a lack of knowledge. When educators are not aware of Latinx families' expectations, experiences, or ambitions, they do not have the experience or information that might help them make sense of the lives of the people different from themselves, leading to misinterpretations and feelings of anger towards those families (Snell, 2018; Valdes, 1996).

Challenges/Obstacles for Latinx Families

Latinx families face a plethora of challenges when it comes to engagement. Among these challenges are role confusion, lack of U.S. school system knowledge, economic and time constraints, language differences, cultural practices, and racism/discrimination; all barriers to successful family engagement (Constantino, 2021; De Gaetano, 2007; Pavlakis et al., 2019).

Role Confusion and Lack of U.S. School System Knowledge

Many Latinx families, especially those from lower socioeconomic groups, have little knowledge and understanding of their roles and responsibilities in regard to family engagement in schools. These families are uncertain of ways they can support their children's success in school, giving the appearance of non-involvement or no regard for the value of education (Anderson, 2017; Snell, 2018). Many times, families and schools do not share a common understanding of family engagement. Latinx families often misunderstand their roles because they don't understand the notion of engagement as

outlined by the school system. For this reason, when families do not participate or respond to schools, they are doing what they think is right and expected (Constantino, 2021; Quiocho & Daoud, 2006). For example, families may not be aware that knowing the alphabet is an indicator of children's abilities and of families' engagement in their education. Families may also view their role at open houses and school events as visiting the child's classroom and looking at schoolwork, not seeing it as an opportunity to personally meet their child's teacher and a chance to ask questions and interact with other parents (Valdes, 1996). Constantino (2021) found family engagement in the U.S. is different than family engagement in other countries where school is an extension of the state government and parents play no role in the education of their children. Very few families have any concept or real understanding of what constitutes engagement in their child's education as clearly defined by schools (Valdes, 1996). Without effective communication, it is unreasonable for Latinx families to understand their expected role due to different learning styles, culturally embedded expectations, and styles of engagement (Hill & Torres, 2010). Lack of clarity about what to expect at meetings, conferences, school activities, and events poses a challenge for Latinx families and their relationship with schools (Keyes, 2000). How families view their role relative to school affects school-family relationships and determines the level of interaction and engagement from parents.

Many Latinx families do not understand the U.S. educational system, even though they hold high expectations that their children acquire as much formal schooling as possible (Goldenberg et al., 2001). Valdes (1996) found schools generally anticipate a *standard* family, a family whose members are familiar with the school system, well-

educated, and understand their role as supplementing the teachers' role in developing children's academic abilities. Adapting to life in the United States is difficult for poor and undocumented families, and this includes learning the unwritten rules rooted in school cultures, knowing their rights as parents, and understanding the curriculum and organization of U.S. schools, all of which limit the questions they might ask and the analyses they might make in regard to schooling practices (Carreón et al., 2005). Latinx families may lack the cultural knowledge to engage school personnel. They may not know that the more active families are given superior influence and voice (Hill & Torres, 2010). Lack of familiarity with the educational system may lead many Latinx families to be unsure of the questions to ask and how to participate in their child's school. For example, some families do not know the purpose of the Parent-Teacher Association (PTA), about volunteering opportunities at school, or about other ways they could be engaged in their child's education (Valdes, 1996). Lee and Bowen (2006) suggested that Latinx families may also be less involved at school because of their own negative educational experiences, feeling less confident communicating with school personnel. These negative experiences impact families' perceptions of school engagement due to differing opinions and attitudes (Constantino, 2021).

Economic and Time Constraints

Most of the literature on family engagement focuses on school-based activities, a behavioral area in which Latinx families, especially immigrant families, may be less involved compared with U.S.-born parents (Calzada et al., 2014). The most common challenges for Latinx families are economic and time constraints. Educators perceive that engaging families will take more time than they can devote, and even though many less-

educated families support learning, many teachers perceive the opposite and believe these families cannot help their children (Constantino, 2021). In many cases, immigrant Latinx families work extended hours at out-of-town job sites or hold jobs in fields that allow little to no schedule flexibility to meet with other parents or school personnel and attend school functions (Carreón et al., 2005). Some family members work two jobs, which is predictive of low family engagement, along with low English language proficiency (Campos, 2016). Demanding and inflexible work schedules cause a lack of time for family participation in school activities. Many Latinx families are hourly workers whose households usually require a minimum of two wage earners. This leads to wages being forgone if families want to participate in activities. Additionally, families may feel their employment would be risked if they habitually submitted time-off requests (LeFevre & Shaw, 2012; Zarate, 2007).

Other factors such as distance and issues of childcare are reasons for lack of engagement. Families may battle to coordinate transportation or childcare or maintain internet and phone access (Pavlakis et al., 2019). Many families may not respond when asked to come to school because, in some cases, the request may come at a bad time (when an English-speaking family member is away), notes (generally written in English) and asking parents to return calls and schedule an appointment may be interpreted as optional invitations and not requirements (Valdes, 1996).

Language Differences

Language is a tool of identity and power, and for this reason, many Latinx families lose some of their authority because they lack the knowledge of the distinctions of language used in certain situations (Carreón et al., 2005). Taylor and Taylor (2021)

emphasized, “when you think about how often you misunderstand someone in your own language, you can imagine the level of misunderstanding that can occur from someone speaking to you from a different cultural background” (p.41). For many Latinx families, their limited English abilities can prevent them from understanding messages delivered by educators, losing face with the school, or delivery of bad news, leading to feelings of embarrassment and less involvement (Anderson, 2017; Constantino, 2021). Despite the fact that many schools offer messages that are translated, translations may be inaccurate due to different dialects, illiteracy issues, or inadequate/unavailable translators thus leading to miscommunication (Campos, 2016; Pavlakis et al., 2019). The lack of bilingual staff or adequate translators is more than an inconvenience for Latinx families because it undermines the basic acts of family engagement that foster relationships between families and schools: communication (Hill & Torres, 2010). Parents may feel uncomfortable in normal family-school interactions (i.e., parent-teacher conferences, etc.), and those who do not feel confident in English many times use an older child or another relative who can serve as a translator (Valdes, 1996).

Flores et al. (2019) found that contrary to popular belief, Latinx students are supported at home in ways that are not considered traditional or resulting in high academic achievement. When engaging with school personnel, Latinx families often feel misunderstood and unwelcome, not only because of the language barrier but because there is no proper training for families about the expectations from schools. Many Latinx families do not recognize the unspoken expectations of U.S. schools, and even when they are involved in volunteering opportunities and PTA activities, they may get puzzled by the school structure and implied expectations (Carreón et al., 2005; Hill & Torres, 2010).

A feeling of abandonment is present when they are not aware of the politics between parents and school administration, and they are unsuccessful in acquiring information about their children's education (Hill & Torres, 2010).

Latinx Parenting Practices

Latinx families place great importance on their child's education and genuinely care about school success and academic progress (Carreón et al., 2005; De Gaetano, 2007; LeFevre & Shaw, 2012). In pursuing a better life, immigrant Latinx families hold strong values about the role of education in being successful in the United States (Hill & Torres, 2010). Culture clash is another challenge for Latinx families because parent practices and beliefs about education are different than the American culture. Latinx families are frequently uncomfortable with the idea of being equal partners with educators in regard to academics because they hold the profession of teaching and educators in high regard and highly trust the American education system (Hill & Torres, 2010; LeFevre & Shaw, 2012). Educators often perceive Latinx families to be uninvolved academically, but this lack of engagement may come from not understanding family engagement activity expectations and the high level of respect for educators as professionals (Snell, 2008). Families deem it disrespectful to confront teachers, so families are often hesitant to express their opinions. They do not want to unsettle the relationship, nor do they want to intrude on the teachers' domain (Hill & Torres, 2010). For this reason, many Latinx families may deliberately decide to avoid formal school participation out of respect for their children's teachers. LeFevre and Shaw (2012) found it is ordinarily considered that contacting the teacher directly is disrespectful because it challenges the teacher's authority, thus being counterproductive to the educational

experience.

Latinx families define well-educated in a more general sense than U.S. schools. For Latinx families, educación incorporates being well-behaved, respectful, honest, and responsible. Families believe they are accountable for developing these characteristics in their children, which are the groundwork of the academic education that is the school's territory (Hill & Torres, 2010; Quiñones & Kiyama, 2014). Latinx families see themselves as participating in their child's education by raising good and well-behaved human beings, but they do not see themselves as adjunct schoolteachers (i.e., teaching school subjects; Valdes, 1996). Families associate involvement in their children's education with involvement in their lives; partaking in their children's lives ensures that their formal schooling is accompanied by what is taught in the home (Zarate, 2007). Snell (2018) found this engagement at home suggests Latinx families view themselves as collaborators with educators to holistically educate their children. Mindfulness of their children's lives also leads to improved communication and trust and allows for timely intervention if a child strays in their behavior. Latinx families also feel that it is their end of an implicit agreement with the school to educate the whole child (Zarate, 2007).

Latinx families may be seen as not being involved in their child's school, however, they often participate in high levels of home-based involvement by engaging in educationally relevant home-based activities; for example, providing educational resources, adequate nutrition and rest, monitoring homework and curfews, and emphasizing educational values (Calzada et al., 2014; Hill & Torres, 2010; Quiocho & Daoud, 2006). Latinx families provide academic support for their children, such as discussing future plans with their children, encouraging scholastic endeavors, helping

with homework, or providing a quiet homework setting (LeFevre & Shaw, 2012; Zarate, 2007). Family stories are used to give guidance about school experiences through cultural narratives called *consejos*, or advice. Families provide emotional and moral support by talking with their children about the significance of education and future ambitions, which can be just as impactful on achievement as other normative forms of family engagement (LeFevre & Shaw, 2012; Pavlakis et al., 2019). Latinx family advice is frequently inspired by hardships and emphasizes the role of education, hard work, interdependence, maintaining respectful relationships, and persistence (Pavlakis et al., 2019). Latinx families warn their children against quitting school which leads to low-paying jobs, and some families openly connect academic success with college and adult financial security (De Gaetano, 2007; LeFevre & Shaw, 2012; Zarate, 2007). As a result of the high home-based involvement (i.e., moral support, emotional support, advice-giving), many Latinx students are more inspired to succeed in their educational careers in order to give back to their parents due to the sacrifices (e.g., financial struggles and hardships through immigration process) their families exhibited in supporting their education (Campos, 2016).

The Latinx culture values collectivism, which includes emphasis on family bonds, communal goals over individual goals, and valuing themselves through others (LeFevre & Shaw, 2012). Sibley and Brabeck (2017) also found the culture also emphasizes strong connections and high-quality relationships with immediate and extended family and friends, reciprocity, family obligations, and warmth. Other culturally rooted values that families instill in their children relating to achievement are *ganas*, the drive and will to succeed; *empeño*, the commitment and dedication to the task or goal; and *estudios*,

diligent study and effort that will lead to success (Auerbach, 2006; Hill & Torres, 2010). Additionally, Latinx families do not want their children to be prideful, so they instill *vergüenza*, defined as interpersonal honor, shame, humility, and self-respect (Hill & Torres, 2010; Olmedo, 2003). Latinx families highly value dignity in conduct, respect for others, love for the family, and affection for children (Calzada et al., 2015). Parenting practices among Latinx families are also characterized as strict or responsibility-oriented where children are expected to be productive and make good use of their time, take advantage of every opportunity, and be responsible, especially pertaining to family assistance (Hill & Torres, 2010).

Educational Equity

Latinos currently make up 25% of school children and will become one third of the U.S. population by 2050; however, educational equity is still out of reach for 5.4 million Latinx students (Latinos for Education, 2021). The Center for Public Education (2016) defined educational equity as being “achieved when all students receive the resources, they need so they graduate prepared for success after high school” (p. 1). De Gaetano (2007) pointed out one of the most compelling reasons given for the lack of educational equity and school involvement from Latinx families is their marginalization due to race. The composition of most schools is diverse in regard to ethnicity, race, and class; the number of Caucasian teachers and administrators with limited cultural knowledge of students and families is unreasonably high (Anderson, 2017). For this reason, Latinx families are at a disadvantage and are often misunderstood. Many Latinx families find schools to be disrespectful of their authority in the family and culture and do not trust their judgment (Hill & Torres, 2010; Lee & Bowen, 2006). Racism is a barrier

that Latinx families face and a general lack of understanding about how families currently engage (Snell, 2018). Racism is the systemic oppression of a racial group to the social, economic, and political advantage of another (Merriam-Webster, n.d.). The attitudes, motivations, and perceptions of school personnel impact their efforts to develop and sustain any type of family engagement, and generalizations are often made about the Latinx community (Anderson, 2017; Valdes, 1996). Generalizations about the Latinx communities with regard to educational success or failure are difficult to make because there are regional, linguistic, experiential, and generational differences among the various groups that make up the Latinx population. As families attempt to improve the quality of their child's education, they realize the opportunities for engagement are not equitable because they realize their beliefs have less power.

Morin (2020) indicated generalizations about a race can lead to stereotypes and discriminatory behavior, all of which impacts how people feel and behave. Comparably, Hill and Torres (2010) found teachers are trained to reproduce U.S. mainstream culture, which is manifested in the class structure, behavioral expectations, and overall school curriculum. Latinx families often feel school personnel approach them in a condescending manner, which negatively affects the family-school relationship (Campos, 2016). In some cases, Latinx families might express their interests and concerns, but the agenda is still set by the school. Oftentimes, Latinx families ask schools to hold high expectations, support their child's achievement, give them academic help, and make their child feel like a member of the school community by recognizing their culture and heritage (Carreón et al., 2005; Quiocho & Daoud, 2006). Generalizations and discrimination can weaken parent aspirations for their child's educational achievement.

Goldenberg et al. (2001) found this reduced aspiration comes from the discrimination and decreased job opportunities families might experience in the U.S., which offset the benefits expected from formal schooling.

Family Engagement in Virtual Learning

This section begins with a summary of how Latinx families were affected by virtual learning during the COVID-19 pandemic from very recent literature. There is a limited amount of research on the topic of Latinx family engagement affected by virtual learning because schools had never experienced a global pandemic, nor had they thought about how family engagement would look for virtual learners.

The COVID-19 pandemic led to many changes to everyday lifestyles, including parents. Many Latinx families not only had to adjust their social practices but their home schedules as well due to the rapid shift to virtual learning. This sudden shift to virtual learning is also referred to as emergency remote instruction, which means a temporary solution to an immediate problem by implementing virtual learning (Bozkurt & Sharma, 2020). The global pandemic affected the level of responsibility for parents in regard to their children's education. In a study conducted in 2020, in regard to Latinx family perceptions of parent-teacher collaboration during virtual learning in the global pandemic, two-way communication was strong and parents felt comfortable reaching out to teachers (Soltero-González & Gillanders, 2021). Similarly, teachers asked more regularly how everyone at home was doing. Parents also felt that teachers were encouraging, provided guidance, and genuinely cared about the family's well-being. Parents appreciated how flexible teachers were with communication (i.e., text, phone calls, emails). On the other hand, other families that did not have strong communication

practices with teachers felt isolated and unsupported due to the lack of interactions with their child's teacher and other parents.

In the same study, Latinx families felt teachers prioritized academic learning in the activities assigned to children. In contrast, few families felt some activities' instructions were hard to follow, child engagement was hard, and an excessive quantity of work that needed close parental support was assigned. Other challenges Latinx families had to endure during virtual learning in the global pandemic were

- Education and job uncertainty: not knowing when or if children would return to school or childcare and forcing parents to quit jobs to stay home with children.
- Children's and their families' mental health: stress, worry, and lack of socializing affected children and families.
- Home learning versus classroom learning: loss of motivation and lack of ability to maintain children's engagement due to learning in a different environment (Soltero-González & Gillanders, 2021).

Soltero-González and Gillanders (2021) conducted a study that concluded that given the unprecedented situation caused by the COVID-19 pandemic, Latinx parents assumed the main responsibility for their children's education by communicating with teachers, creating activities, and engaging their children at home in learning activities. These results contradict previous studies that Latinx families engage their children less frequently and provide less cognitive stimulation at home than U.S.-born Caucasian parents. Latinx families are resourceful and committed to their children's education, and it is possible that the global pandemic challenged parents' cultural models about their role

in their child's education (Soltero-González & Gillanders, 2021).

Another study focused on Portuguese parents' perceptions of their home-based parental involvement in their children's learning and school life during the COVID-19 global pandemic. This study found several barriers to virtual learning. These barriers included logistical (i.e., perceptions about the inadequacy of virtual learning), financial, personal (i.e., parents' lack of expertise in technology matters), and technical (i.e., lack of adequate technology and internet access). A majority of the home-based parental involvement focused on monitoring of attention in classes and task completion at all levels of education. Parents were spending an increasing amount of time ensuring their children stayed on task and completed work (Ribeiro et al., 2021).

Conclusion

Chapter 2 contained a review of literature pertaining to the research questions that are addressed in this study. A brief definition of family engagement was provided, along with the importance of family engagement. Perceptions of Latinx families and educators were discussed in regard to family engagement. Literature concerning challenges Latinx families face, including role confusion, lack of system knowledge, economic and time restraints, language differences, Latinx parenting practices, and racism/discrimination were reviewed and discussed. A brief discussion based on limited studies about family engagement in virtual learning during the COVID-19 global pandemic was presented. Chapter 3 contains an in-depth description of the study. Qualitative research methods, instruments, and analyses are presented. Additionally, my role, biases, and information about protecting participants are examined.

Chapter 3: Methodology

Chapter 3 discusses the research design and research methodology that was utilized to conduct this study. The chapter begins with an overview, followed by a restatement of the problem and research questions. The research design is detailed, followed by specific information regarding the protection of participants. Quantitative data analysis procedures are further discussed along with my responsibility, limitations, and delimitations.

Overview

The foundation of the study was based on Epstein et al.'s (2019) work with parent involvement and Moll et al.'s (1992) funds of knowledge theory, specifically, the Latinx families' and school personnel's perceptions of family engagement during virtual learning in the COVID-19 global pandemic.

Family and school personnel perceptions can differ based on experiences and beliefs. In this study, school personnel's and Latinx families' perceptions were explored and analyzed in a single district to generalize findings for other school districts. Allowing school personnel to share their perceptions of family engagement within the study ensured recommendations to be inclusive of all participants. Exploring perceptions of school personnel and Latinx families in regard to family engagement in virtual learning at K-5 elementary schools in a western NC county allowed me to make recommendations for selected sites and the district to improve family engagement opportunities and practices not just for virtual learners but for in-person learners as well. Through this research, perceptions of school personnel and Latinx families were explored.

This study determined the current perceptions of family engagement in virtual

learning due to the COVID-19 global pandemic from school personnel and Latinx families in elementary schools. The study also gathered data about how school personnel and Latinx families adapted to the change and how families want to be involved in a post-pandemic school environment; these data aided in informing districts on best practices to increase family engagement within the Latinx community.

Restatement of the Problem

Although there is much research on Latinx parents having high expectations for their child's education and being eager participants in their child's success, Latinx parents are often misunderstood because they often do not have an exact understanding of the term engagement as described by the school and do not share the same definition of family engagement with U.S. schools (De La Cruz, 2019; Quiocho & Daoud, 2006). Existing literature in the area of parent involvement focuses on the numerous benefits that result from family engagement, but the literature fails to focus on the Latinx special population, which will become crucial for school districts to analyze due to the rising number of immigrants from Spanish-speaking countries. There is limited literature addressing the perspectives and changes in definitions of family engagement from school personnel and Latinx families during the shift to virtual learning as a result of the COVID-19 global pandemic and in current school environments. The findings of this study are intended to add to that body of literature.

Research Questions

Although parent involvement is a topic of interest for many school districts, the research on the level of family engagement during the transition to virtual learning in March 2020 and in current school environments through the lens of Latinx families is an

evolving field. Family engagement is key to the success of students; however, I contended many teachers and administrators had misconceptions pertaining to the level of family engagement from Latinx families. The research questions generated to gather evidence pertaining to perceptions of school personnel and Latinx families were

1. How did Latinx families adapt to the change in family engagement in the shift to virtual/hybrid learning due to the global pandemic?
2. How did the shift to virtual/hybrid learning (due to the global pandemic) impact Latinx families' perceptions of their family engagement with their child's/ children's school(s)?
3. How did the shift to virtual/hybrid learning (due to the global pandemic) impact school personnel's perceptions of Latinx families' engagement with their child's/children's school(s)?
4. How do Latinx families envision their engagement/involvement with their child's/children's school(s) in a post-pandemic school environment?

Research Design

This research employed a qualitative phenomenological research design. Creswell and Creswell (2018) defined phenomenological research as when the “researcher describes the lived experiences of individuals about a phenomenon as described by participants; this description culminates in the essence of the experiences for several individuals who have all experienced the phenomenon” (p. 13). Phenomenology is the study of a lived experience of the world from an individual, and by examining experiences, new meanings and appreciations can be developed to inform or recalibrate how we understand that experience (Neubauer et al., 2019). Phenomenological studies

typically involve conducting interviews, discussions, and observations, and are focused on gathering deep information and perceptions to understand experiences and gain insights into people's motivations and actions (Lester, 1999). A phenomenological study was ideal because the purpose of this study was to gain more information and a deeper understanding of the experiences of school personnel and Latinx families during the virtual learning that took place as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic. A survey with open-ended questions with regard to perception that I designed and developed was distributed to school personnel and Latinx families. The survey included a question at the end to allow school personnel and Latinx families the option of participating in a focus group and providing their contact information via an external link. This survey was distributed to families by the participating elementary school principals. At the end of 2 weeks, I had only received seven responses from families, all of which were Caucasian. For this reason, I decided to make 50 paper copies of the Spanish version of the family survey to be distributed by each school to Latinx families. No participants of the survey volunteered to participate in the focus group, so no focus group data were collected. As a result, survey data were the primary data collected and analyzed for this study. Creswell and Creswell indicated surveys would provide a quantitative description and narrow down variables of a population, specifically race in the school family's population.

Population and Sampling

The target population for the study were participants from five small city and midsize suburban schools with the highest percentage of the Latinx student population in the selected district in western North Carolina. The target number of participants for the survey part of the study was as many school personnel and Latinx family participants as

possible. The target number of participants for the focus group part of the study was 10 Latinx families in each of the five elementary schools, for a total of 50 Latinx family participants. Table 2 shows the top five elementary schools in the selected district with the highest percentage of Hispanic students.

Table 2

Hispanic Student Population in Elementary Schools in Selected District (2020-2021)

Elementary school name	Locale	Title I	% of Hispanic students
School A	City–small	Yes	69.2%
School B	City–small	Yes	66.8%
School C	City–small	Yes	46.0%
School D	Suburb–midsize	Yes	11.2%
School E	Suburb–midsize	Yes	10.5%

Table 2 shows the percentage of the Hispanic student population at each elementary school in the selected district. I selected school personnel and families from five elementary schools with the highest percentage of Hispanic students. The top five schools were selected because they provided data from school personnel who had experience working with the selected special population, and the high percentage would increase the chance of willing participants. I used the participants from each group who completed the survey; no Latinx families volunteered to participate in the focus group, so no focus group data were collected. This phenomenological study used purposeful sampling in its family survey to specifically focus on Latinx families' responses. Purposeful sampling was conducted to select specific people or sites because the information collected would help solve a problem (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). Five western North Carolina district K-5 elementary schools were a focus of this study because of their high Latinx special population percentage. Being a predominantly

Caucasian school district, there was an elevated urgency for stakeholders in the county to understand and engage Latinx families. I used purposive sampling and focused on the elementary schools in a single district so the data gathered remained manageable and direct recommendations could be issued directly to schools within the selected school district.

Measures and Instruments

This study measured school personnel's and Latinx families' perceptions of family engagement through surveys and focus groups. The study used online and hard copy surveys to collect data, including open-ended questions to collect perceptual data and multiple-choice questions to collect demographic data such as school location and race. Specific information regarding the survey and focus groups is discussed throughout this section.

Latinx Family Survey

This instrument was designed to address the research questions of this study. I created this 29-question survey (see Appendix A) on Qualtrics for ease of access on a variety of devices (i.e., cellphone, tablet, laptop). The survey began with demographic questions asking about the participant's role, their specific site, race/ethnicity, age, annual income, primary language, etc. Twenty-three questions were multiple-choice and six were open-ended. The answers to these survey questions provided more information on the perceptions of Latinx families and their backgrounds. If families identified as Latinx and indicated they would be interested in participating in the focus groups, they were directed to an external link to provide their contact information for communication purposes. No Latinx families indicated an interest in participating in the focus groups.

Due to minimal participation in the online survey, I distributed 50 hard copies of the Spanish version of the Latinx family survey (see Appendix B) to each of the five elementary schools.

School Personnel Survey

This instrument was designed to address the research questions of this study. I created this 18-question survey (see Appendix C) in Qualtrics for ease of access on a variety of devices (i.e., cellphone, tablet, laptop). The survey began with demographic questions asking about the participant's role, their specific site, race/ethnicity, age, experience, etc. Twelve questions were multiple choice and six were open-ended. The answers to these survey questions provided more information on the perceptions of school personnel in regard to Latinx family engagement.

Latinx Family Focus Group

No Latinx families indicated an interest in participating in the focus groups. However, if Latinx families had participated in focus groups, I created the list of focus group questions on a Word document to be printed for in-person interviews and to be accessed during virtual focus groups as well (see Appendices D and E). Each focus group would have been audio recorded and/or video recorded on my personal laptop using an audio recorder and transcribed using the transcription software Otter.ai. This instrument was designed to gather more in-depth data on perceptions from Latinx families in regard to family engagement in virtual learning during the COVID-19 pandemic. The focus group questions would have been open-ended, and each focus group would have lasted 1 hour. To ensure accuracy, I would have shared a copy of the transcription with each participant to confirm the accuracy of their responses and made necessary changes.

Alignment of Methodology

My study methods were aligned as shown in Table 3. This table shows the alignment between my research questions and instruments for data collection.

Table 3

Alignment of Methodology

Research question	Survey item	Focus group questions
1. How did Latinx families adapt to the change in family engagement in the shift to virtual/hybrid learning due to the global pandemic?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Family Survey Item 23 • Family Survey Item 24 • Family Survey Item 25 	How did the switch to virtual learning impact your interaction with your child's school during the COVID-19 global pandemic in March 2020?
2. How did the shift to virtual/hybrid learning (due to the global pandemic) impact Latinx families' perceptions of family engagement with their child's/children's school(s)?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Family Survey Item 23 • Family Survey Item 25 	How did the switch to virtual learning impact your interaction with your child's school during the start of the 2020-2021 school year?
3. How did the shift to virtual/hybrid learning (due to the global pandemic) impact school personnel's perceptions of Latinx families' engagement with their child's/children's school(s)?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • School Personnel Survey Item 14 • School Personnel Survey Item 15 • School Personnel Survey Item 16 	Not Applicable
4. How do Latinx families envision their engagement/involvement with their child's/children's school(s) in a post-pandemic school environment?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Family Survey Item 26 	<p>Now that we're back to in-person learning, how is your interaction with your child's school different? How has it changed? How is it now?</p> <p>How did your level of engagement change during virtual/hybrid learning? Describe the change.</p>

I gathered qualitative data via surveys through open-ended questions for participants to describe their experiences and perceptions. Family Survey Items 23-25 are open-ended questions and aim to address Research Question 1; Family Survey Items 23 and 25 aim to address Research Question 2. Similarly, School Personnel Survey Items 14-16 are open-ended questions designed to address Research Question 3. Lastly, Family Survey Item 26 was designed to address Research Question 4.

Protecting Participants

To protect participants, I administered confidential surveys to school personnel and Latinx families. Surveys were completed and submitted electronically, and no identifying questions were asked. If any participants had chosen to participate in the focus groups, they would have been asked identifying information via an external link in order to gather their contact information for communication purposes only. Their names would have been changed for confidentiality. Each participant would have been assigned a specific letter and number, S for school location and F for family, and then assigned a number, 1-10. Letter and number codes would have been used for coding information into themes. Subsequently, if mentioned in the narrative, each individual would have been assigned a generic name. Generic names were given to conceal the participants' true identities and to preserve the authenticity of the study. Responses to the surveys and other evidences of the study were downloaded and saved to my personal computer, which has biometric security measures. Responses to the focus group questions, if there had been any, would have also been downloaded and saved to the same location. Also, data were stored as a backup in a password-protected USB drive. All files related to this research

and stored on the laptop and USB will be destroyed after 3 years.

In addition to the formerly stated procedures, participants had to read, agree to, and sign the informed consent form (see Appendices F-H) before participating in the study, both the survey and the focus group. The informed consent had the title of the study, both the survey and the focus group. The informed consent had the title of the study, researcher contact information, purpose/procedures of the study, risks/benefits, confidentiality measures, and voluntary information. Participants agreed to statements in the form before participation. Additionally, the informed consent was translated into Spanish for non-English speaking families. Participants were under no obligation to participate and had the right to withdraw from the study at any time without penalty.

Qualitative Data Analysis

Qualitative research is an approach for investigating the importance individuals or groups assign to a problem; the process involves developing questions, collecting data in the participants' settings, and gathering general themes from the data (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). Qualitative data analysis occurred from the open-ended questions in the Latinx family survey and the school personnel survey. There were no participants for the focus groups; however, focus group responses would have been coded for themes, emotions, and descriptions. Coding is systematically reviewing data to find and mark passages, quotes, or images that establish the unit of analysis, or the idea that clarifies significant features of the data so the research question can be answered (Foss & Waters, 2016). I used deductive coding, meaning I started with an anticipated set of codes from findings in the literature review and applied them to the new qualitative data (Medelyan, 2021). For example, some codes I anticipated from both Latinx families and school personnel were communication, mental health, and challenges in motivation. The codes

were classified and analyzed to determine larger themes within the data.

Researcher's Role and Access to Site

I had approval from the target district, thus I had full access to communication with the district and site school personnel and families concerning data. Since I was an outside researcher to the district, I did not know any students or their families personally.

My role in the study was to communicate with site school personnel, distribute survey information, collect survey information, analyze the data, and report the findings. As an educator and a Latinx parent of school-age children myself, it allowed me to see the study from two different perspectives and to relate to and understand from both perspectives.

Limitations and Delimitations

Limitations are influences that the researcher cannot control. Limitations can hinder the researcher's ability to draw certain conclusions from the study (PhDStudent, 2016). Limitations are different than delimitations because one is out of one's control and the other is within one's control. I was not able to (a) control the level of honesty in participant responses, or (b) control which families or school personnel opted to or did not opt to participate in the focus groups.

Delimitations are judgments made by the researcher. The choices are within the researcher's control, and they are the boundaries set for the study (Simon, 2011). Researchers cannot study everything at once, so delimitations allow researchers to decide where to draw the line as far as what to research in order to answer their questions. Collecting data from school personnel and Latinx families was a necessary delimitation to focus on certain perceptions.

Summary

I gathered information from Latinx families and school personnel via online and paper copy surveys to determine their perceptions of family engagement in virtual learning. The goal of this phenomenological study was to gain an awareness of the perceptions of elementary school personnel and Latinx families about family engagement during virtual learning in the midst of the COVID-19 pandemic. Chapter 3 provided a description of the methodology that was used to conduct the study. The study used surveys to gather qualitative data around the experiences of Latinx family engagement during the COVID-19 pandemic. The data collected supported the selected district in understanding school personnel and family perspectives to guide future practices in building meaningful opportunities for Latinx family engagement and family engagement in virtual learning. Chapter 4 gives an analysis of the data collected from the school personnel and Latinx family surveys. Data are presented in descriptions by thematic headings to address emerging themes from family and school personnel responses as related to the research questions.

Chapter 4: Results

Overview

The purpose of this qualitative study was to gain insight into the perceptions of elementary school personnel and Latinx families about family engagement during virtual learning in the midst of the COVID-19 pandemic. This study was completed in the summer of 2022 with 15 Latinx family participants and 22 school personnel participants from five elementary schools who agreed to participate in the study. I used online and hard copy surveys to address my research questions. This chapter outlines the research questions, data collection processes, and findings.

Research Questions

Four research questions guided this study:

1. How did Latinx families adapt to the change in family engagement in the shift to virtual/hybrid learning due to the global pandemic?
2. How did the shift to virtual/hybrid learning (due to the global pandemic) impact Latinx families' perceptions of their family engagement with their child's/children's school(s)?
3. How did the shift to virtual/hybrid learning (due to the global pandemic) impact school personnel's perceptions of Latinx families' engagement with their child's/children's school(s)?
4. How do Latinx families envision their engagement/involvement with their child's/children's school(s) in a post-pandemic school environment?

Data Collection Process

The methodology used for this study was a qualitative phenomenological research

design. I sought to seek participant perceptions, memory, and emotions in regard to their experiences during the switch to virtual/hybrid learning due to the 2020 global pandemic. The purpose of this study was to understand Latinx families' perceptions of family engagement and school personnel's perceptions of the engagement of Latinx families during virtual/hybrid learning. I created a survey in Qualtrics with specific questions on the survey addressing each of the research questions. The family engagement survey had 27 items, with 21 multiple choice items, and six open-ended questions included to gather perceptual data. The school personnel survey had 18 items, with 12 multiple-choice items to collect demographic data, and six open-ended questions to gather perceptual data. Both surveys were sent to five elementary schools in a western North Carolina public school district.

In May 2022, after receiving approval from the school district (see Appendix I), a link to the family engagement survey in Qualtrics was sent to principals at the chosen elementary school sites. Those principals sent the survey link to families via email and Class Dojo. The link to the school personnel survey was also sent to principals, who then sent the link to school personnel via email. Both survey links stayed active in Qualtrics for 3 weeks. At the end of 2 weeks, I had only received seven responses from families, all of which were Caucasian. For this reason, I decided to make 50 paper copies of the Spanish version of the family survey to be distributed by each school to Latinx families. After 1 week of distributing copies, 29 families had returned the surveys completed, with three of those families having completed the online version, for a participation rate of 11.6%. Of the 26 families that returned the paper copy of the survey, seven were incomplete, seven were mostly complete, and 12 were fully complete. Incomplete meant

there were more than six questions that were not answered, including the open-ended questions. Mostly complete meant all multiple-choice items were answered and fewer than three open-ended questions were answered. Three families completed the online survey. I was only able to analyze the data from the fully completed surveys, which totaled 15, for a final participation rate of 6% from Latinx families.

Focus groups were part of the original study design. Latinx participants who expressed interest in participating in a focus group would have had to submit their contact information via an external link found at the end of the Latinx family survey. Interested participants would have received a confirmation email and would have chosen from participating in a virtual or an in-person focus group. Because no Latinx family participants expressed interest in participating in the focus group, focus group data were not collected.

Data Analysis Process

My approach to the data analysis process represented a blend of methods by Rubin and Rubin (2005) and Saldaña (2009). Open-ended items from the Latinx family and school personnel surveys were analyzed for themes. I began the process by decoding the data or analyzing and reflecting on the data to determine meaning (Saldaña, 2009). I systematically reviewed data to find and mark quotes, which established the idea that clarified significant features of the data so the research question could be answered (Foss & Waters, 2016). I did several thorough readings of the data. During the first reading, I attempted to recognize patterns. I noticed certain words and phrases emerged from the data and were repeated by several participants. During the second reading, I highlighted certain phrases and words that began to form patterns; this helped with examining the

data as well as coding and labeling the text (Saldaña, 2009). I used deductive coding, meaning I started with an anticipated set of codes from findings in the literature review and applied them to the new qualitative data (Medelyan, 2021). The codes I anticipated from both Latinx families and school personnel were communication, mental health, and challenges in motivation. The highlighted phrases and words were grouped into the anticipated codes. Data that did not fit into anticipated codes were used to create new codes. Once all data were sorted, I began to refine the codes in order to identify emerging themes and connected them to my research questions (Rubin & Rubin, 2005). I repeated this process with the school personnel surveys. A careful analysis of the data revealed the following themes: language barriers, lack of technology access and knowledge, economic constraints, and level of education differences.

Data Findings

For the data analysis, I analyzed survey responses for participant demographic data and open-ended responses for commonalities and themes. I presented findings for the family engagement survey followed by school personnel survey findings.

Family Engagement Survey Findings

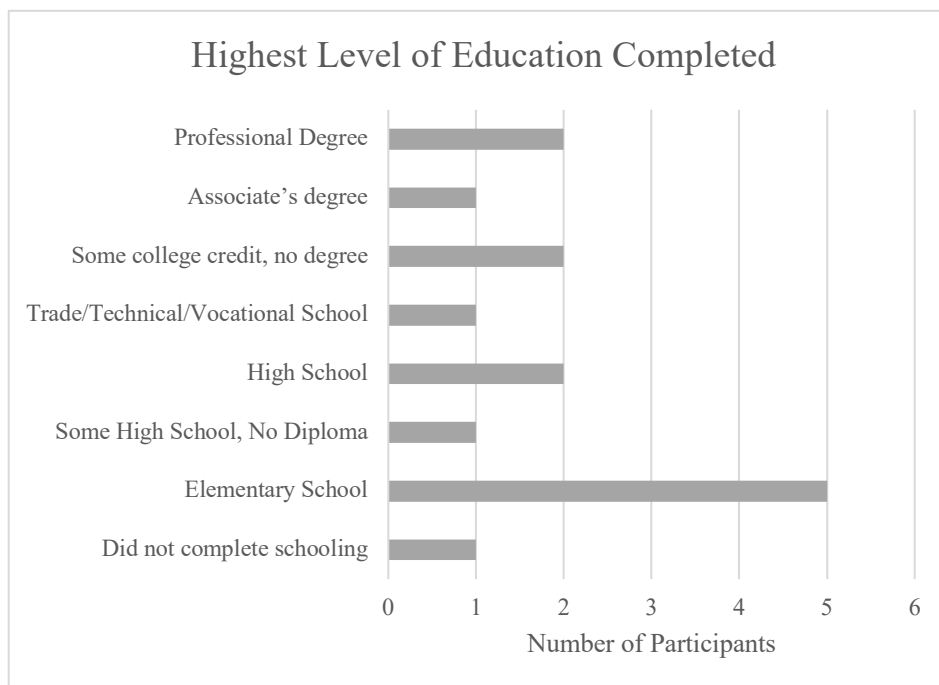
Data were collected throughout May 2022 via online and hard copy surveys, collecting qualitative data and demographic data. Latinx family participants came from various backgrounds and had varying degrees of education. I first analyzed participant demographic data to give background context for their responses.

Of the 15 Latinx families that completed the survey, 11 noted their country of origin as Guatemala, one noted their country of origin as the Dominican Republic, one noted their country of origin as Puerto Rico, one noted their country of origin as Mexico,

and one participant did not provide an answer to the country of origin question but did identify as Hispanic/Latino. Of the 15 Latinx families, 12 families noted their children were born in the United States, two noted their children were born in the Dominican Republic, and one noted their children were born in Guatemala. Of the 15 Latinx families, 14 marked Spanish as being the family's primary household language, one marked "Other: (Guatemalan Dialect)" as their primary household language, and zero marked English being their family's primary household language. Of 15 Latinx families, 12 noted living in their current city of residence for 7 or more years, one noted living in the area for 4 to 6 years, and two noted living in the area for 6 to 12 months. Figure 7 shows the Latinx family participants' levels of education.

Figure 7

Latinx Participants' Highest Level of Education Completed



Of 15 Latinx families, one did not complete schooling, five only completed elementary school, one completed some high school but no diploma, two completed high

school, one completed trade/technical/vocational school, two had some college credit but no degree, one had an associate's degree, and two had a professional degree. It was not clear if their highest level of education completed was in their country of origin or the United States, as there were no survey items that asked for this specification. In a survey item that asked parents if they felt familiarized with the U.S. education system, seven Latinx families marked "yes," eight families marked "a little," and zero families marked "no."

During the course of analyzing survey responses, some themes appeared more frequently than others. Many Latinx family participants provided one-word responses or minimal responses to open-ended questions; all were recorded and included in the data set. The length of responses affected how I determined emerging themes, as I used and relied on the more thorough responses to develop themes and commonalities. In the next section of this chapter, I discuss those themes that emerged as they related to the research questions.

Research Question 1. Research Question 1 asked, "How did Latinx families adapt to the change in family engagement in the shift to virtual/hybrid learning due to the global pandemic?" Table 4 describes the responses from Latinx families.

Table 4*Latinx Family Survey Responses to Item 23 and Item 24*

How did the switch impact your interaction?	How did you adjust to the change?
“Nos alejamos un poco” [We were distanced a bit]	“Facilmente” [Easily]
“No cambio nada” [Nothing changed]	“Mejorando al uso del Internet” [Showed improving in learning to use the Internet]
“There was less communication from the school system but the primary teacher was more involved with students and reached out to parents to make sure they understood how to help students at home”	“Change was rough. I had a full-time job and going to school for nursing and had to become the teacher at home as well. Had to get others involved in order for my daughter not to get behind on school work and was also understanding the lessons being taught on a screen.”
“El aprendizaje fue lento” [Learning was slow]	“Quedarse en casa” [Stayed at home]
“Todo estava cerrando” [Everything was shutting down]	“Fue dificil pero lo logramos” [It was hard but we made it]
“Fue un poco duro para que mis hijos se adaptaran al systema virtual” [It was a little hard for my children to adapt to virtual learning]	“Se adaptaron al cambio muy rapido le facilitaron material y applicaciones para conectarse a el Sistema escolar” [They adapted to the change very quickly, they provided materials and apps to connect with the school system]
“Mucho” [A lot]	“Hablando dinamicas; leyendo; baile; cuentos” [Talking dynamics; reading; dancing; stories]
“El cambio mayor era que los niños ya no iban a la escuela fisicamente, entonces no habia actividades o eventos escolares para que los padres participaran” [The biggest change was that children were no longer physically in school, so there were not activities or events for parents to participate in]	“Tuvimos que comprar Wi-Fi. Comunicamos mucho mas con las maestras por medio del correo electronico.” [We had to buy Wi-Fi. We communicated much more with teacher via email]
“At first it was hard because the programs were new to me, also the way to teach at home was very different and I personally did not want to confuse my child. Also as working parents, there were times where we could not sit our child for Zoom classes. Thankfully some teachers recorded the class so we could get on it when we got home at night.”	“We had to do what we could do, and we had to communicate a lot with teacher so they would not think our child was lazy, sometimes we just could not get her online at the times given, but made sure all work was done.”
“Personalmente me afecto con la tecnologia, el idioma y la falta de experiencia con el sistema educativo y el tiempo (en ese entonces trabajaba nocturno)” [Personally, I was affected by the technology, the language and the lack of experience with the educational system and time management (at the time I worked nights)]	“Con actitud positive, amor a la familia, y la seguridad de los niños” [With a positive attitude, love of family, and the children’s safety]

How did the switch impact your interaction?	How did you adjust to the change?
“A mi me costo mucho, porque no tengo estudio y no hablo ingles. Mijo de 13 años me ayudo mucho y mi hija de 9 años Tambien.” [It cost me a lot, because I don’t have an education and I don’t speak English. My 13 yr.-old son helped me a lot and my 9 yr.-old daughter too]	“Las maestras de la escuela nos ayudaron mucho.” [The teachers at school helped us a lot]
“Fue muy complicado” [It was very complicated]	“Muy difcil nos adaptamos al cambio” [Very hard, we adapted to the change]
“Afecto mucho. El apredizaje virtual para los niños no es muy bueno” [We were affected a lot. Virtual learning is not very good for children]	“Casi no nos adaptamos” [We almost didn’t adapt]
“Nos fue muy duro porque tuvimos que poner internet para que estudien los niños y nos quitaron horas de trabajo. Nos afecto mucho en la economia.” [It was very hard for us because we had to install the internet for the children to study and they reduced our work hours. It affected us a lot economically]	“Nos costo pero poco a poco fuimos entendiendo.” [It was hard but little by little we understood]
“Lento, difcil, mas trabajo de parte de los padres pero al igual bueno porque los padres podrian participar mas” [Slow, difficult, more work on the parents’ part but still good because the parents could be more involved]	“Bien la pequeña; los hijos mas grandes, mas tareas, mas trabajo, mas responsabilidad” [My little one did well; the older children had more homework, more classwork, more responsibilities]

Table 4 demonstrates a range of responses from Latinx families. Several families provided short-phrase or short-sentence responses, which provided limited data.

However, the responses from Latinx families that answered more thoroughly indicated the switch to virtual learning during the global pandemic of 2020 was extremely difficult. Latinx families also agreed the adaptation to the change was difficult but achievable. One family stated, “Fue un poco duro para que mis hijos se adaptaran al systema virtual,” or “It was a little hard for my children to adapt to virtual learning.” Another family simply stated, “Fue muy complicado,” or “It was complicated.” In connection to the change being achievable, one family stated, “Nos costo pero poco a poco fuimos entendiendo,” or “It was hard but little by little we understood.” Another wrote, “We had to do what we could do.”

Themes. According to the open-ended responses from Latinx family participants, the themes that emerged from the survey question, “How did the switch impact your interaction,” were language differences, lack of technology access/knowledge, economic constraints, and level of education differences. Several families wrote about interactions between them and school personnel that were impacted greatly due to language barriers; they were unable to read student assignments because they were all written in English. One family mentioned lacking the educational background necessary to help guide their child’s learning. They stated, “Personalmente me afecto con la tecnologia, el idioma y la falta de experiencia con el Sistema educativo y el tiempo (en ese entonces trabajaba nocturno),” or “Personally, I was affected by the technology, the language and the lack of experience with the educational system and time management (at the time I worked nights).” Another family stated, “A mi me costo mucho, porque no tengo studio y no hablo inglés. Mijo de 13 años me ayudo mucho y mi hija de 9 años Tambien,” or “It cost me a lot, because I don’t have an education and I don’t speak English. My 13-yr old son helped me a lot and my 9-year-old daughter too).” Most families also wrote about the lack of internet access in their homes during the switch to virtual learning and the lack of knowledge on how to use devices. Latinx families commented they had to purchase Wi-Fi and learn to work with student devices. One family wrote, “Nos fue muy duro porque tuvimos que poner internet para que estudien los niños,” or “It was very hard for us because we had to install the internet for the children to study.” Another family stated, “Mas trabajo de parte de los padres,” or “More work on the parents’ part.” Several families mentioned the switch being difficult due to economic constraints; some families’ work hours were reduced, and some parents worked both shifts so they were not able to

support their children's learning. One family stated, "Nos quitaron horas de trabajo. Nos afecto mucho en la economia," or "They reduce our work hours. It affected us a lot economically." Another parent stated, "As working parents, there were times where we could not sit [with] our child for Zoom classes." Overall, Latinx families believed the switch to virtual learning during the global pandemic in 2020 was difficult due to language differences, technology issues, economic constraints, and low levels of education.

According to the open-ended responses from Latinx family participants, the themes that emerged from the survey question, "How did you adapt to the change," were increased communication, adapt to technology, getting others involved, positive attitude, and family love. Several families wrote about having to communicate more frequently with teachers; some families even commented on how appreciative they were of the teachers' help. One family stated, "Comunicamos mucho mas con las maestras por medio del correo electronico," or "We communicated much more with teachers via email." Another family stated, "Las maestras de la escuela nos ayudaron mucho," or "The teachers at school helped us a lot." Families also commented on the need to purchase Wi-Fi for their children to be able to access their lessons. One family stated, "Tuvimos que comprar Wi-Fi," or "We had to buy Wi-Fi." Another stated, "Mejorando al uso del Internet," or "Showed improvement in learning to use the Internet." Families mentioned needing to rely on others to keep up with their child's education. One family stated, "I had to get others involved in order for my daughter not to get behind on schoolwork." One Latinx family, mentioned much of their success in adapting to the switch to virtual learning during the global pandemic was thanks to a "actitud positive, amor a la familia,

y la seguridad de los niños,” or “a positive attitude, love of family, and the children’s safety.” Despite many obstacles, Latinx families adapted to the change through increased communication, adaption to technology, getting others involved, a positive attitude, and the love of family.

Research Question 2. Research Question 2 was, “How did the shift to virtual/hybrid learning (due to the global pandemic) impact Latinx families’ perceptions of their family engagement with their child’s/children’s school(s)?” Item 25, “Now that we’re back to in-person learning, how are your interactions with your child’s school,” from the family engagement survey addressed this research question.

The data indicated a range of responses from Latinx families. Several families provided short one-word or short-phrase responses, which provided limited data. However, the responses from Latinx families that answered more thoroughly agreed they had a positive perception of their family engagement with their child’s school during the switch to virtual learning during the global pandemic of 2020. Seven families wrote, “Mejor [better],” or “Muy bien [Very good].” This comment may mean they are content with their engagement with their child’s school and did not have much to say or perhaps they did not know how to elaborate more on their answer.

Themes. According to the open-ended responses from Latinx family participants, the themes that emerged from the research question, “How did the shift to virtual/hybrid learning (due to the global pandemic) impact Latinx families’ perceptions of their family engagement with their child’s/children’s school(s),” were showed improvement, more involvement opportunities, and more encouragement at home. Most Latinx families mentioned their perceptions were more positive and improved, stating, “Mejor [better],”

or “Muy bien [Very good].” They also mentioned seeing more involvement opportunities from their child’s school. One family stated, “Tenemos la oportunidad de participar en eventos escolares,” or “We have the opportunity to participate in school events.” Another family stated, “Son mejores, pues pueden interactuar con los maestros mas rapido acerca de dudas en el aprendizaje,” or “They are better, now I can interact with teachers more quickly and I can talk about my doubts about their learning.”

One family mentioned being motivated to encourage their child academically more often at home, stating, “Agradecido con la escuela. Y yo animando a mis hijos de hacer Lexia or leer libros en casa,” or “Grateful to the school and I encourage my children to do Lexia or read books at home.” One family, from a differing perspective, noted they felt the communication between them and the school had decreased since the start of the global pandemic. They stated, “Teachers, however, are not as great at communicating and everything about students’ learning we don’t know about until parent-teacher conferences.” Overall, Latinx families’ believed family engagement improved because there were more involvement opportunities and they saw the need to encourage their students more at home.

Research Question 4. Research Question 4 asked, “How do Latinx families envision their engagement/involvement with their child’s/children’s school(s) in a post-pandemic school environment?” Item 26, “How do you envision your interactions with your child’s school in a post-pandemic time,” from the family engagement survey addressed this research question. Table 5 shows families’ responses.

Table 5*Latinx Family Survey Responses to Item 26*

Open-ended responses
“Regular”
“Mejor” [Better]
“Espero que sigan mejorando” [I hope they continue to improve]
“Normal”
“Espero que sea algo mas flexible. Por ejemplo, permitir que los padres participen en mas actividades escolares.” [I hope it’s a bit more flexible. For example, allowing parents to participate in more school activities]
“I hope it all goes back to normal; where we could go see our kids on field day, lunch, etc.”
“Espero que la comunicacion entre padre y maestro continue de manera positive.” [I hope that communication between parent and teachers continues in a positive way]
“Hechar ganas y esperar lo que viene.” [Put forth an effort and see what comes next]
“No se” [I don’t know]
“Seguir mejorando” [Keep improving]
“Seguir luchando como lo hicimos” [Keep fighting like we did]
“Bien” [Good]

Table 5 shows a range of responses from Latinx families. Several families provided short one-word or short-phrase responses, which provided limited data. However, the responses from Latinx families that answered more thoroughly agreed they envisioned a continuous improvement in the relationship between families and schools in a post-pandemic school environment. Families stated, “Mejor [better],” “seguir mejorando [keep improving],” and “espero que sigan mejorando [I hope they continue to

improve].”

Themes. According to the open-ended responses from Latinx family participants, the themes that emerged from the research question, “How do Latinx families envision their engagement/involvement with their child’s/children’s school(s) in a post-pandemic school environment,” were improvement, flexibility, and communication. Most families mentioned they wanted to keep seeing improvement in their engagement with their child’s school. Families stated, Mejor [better],” “seguir mejorando [keep improving],” and “espero que sigan mejorando [I hope they continue to improve].” One family mentioned wanting to see more flexibility in how families participate in schools. They stated, “Espero que sea mas flexible,” or “I hope it’s a bit more flexible.” Families would also like to continue to see positive communication between families and teachers. One family stated, “Espero que la comunicacion entre padre y maestro continúe de manera positive,” or “I hope that communication between parent and teachers continues in a positive way.” Overall, these Latinx families envisioned their engagement as continuing to improve and continuing to be flexible in all aspects, including communication.

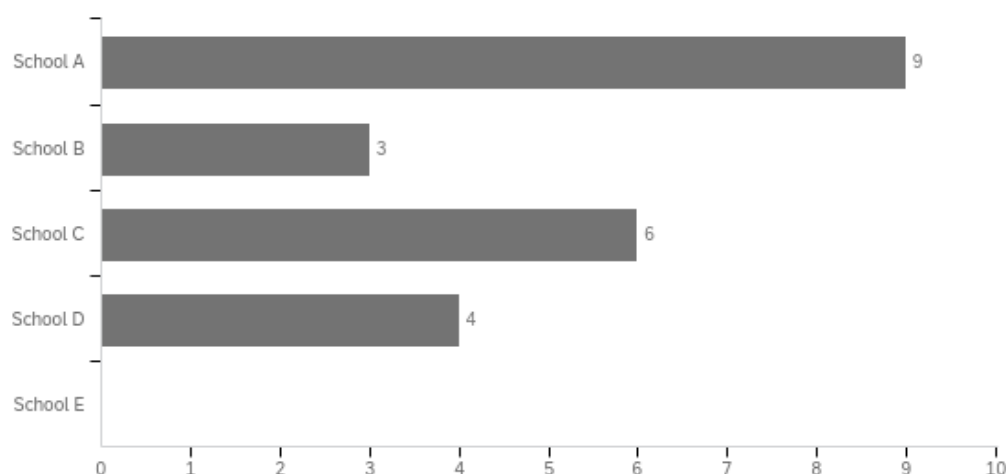
School Personnel Survey Findings

Data were collected through online surveys. Surveys collected qualitative data via open-ended questions to collect perceptual data. Demographic data were also collected. School personnel participants came from various backgrounds, such as classroom teachers versus administrators, experience levels from 1 year to over 20 years, and being at their current school for 1 year or less versus over 20 years. I first analyzed the participants’ demographic data to give background context for their responses. Data were collected in May 2022. Figure 8 shows how many school personnel completed the survey

from each site.

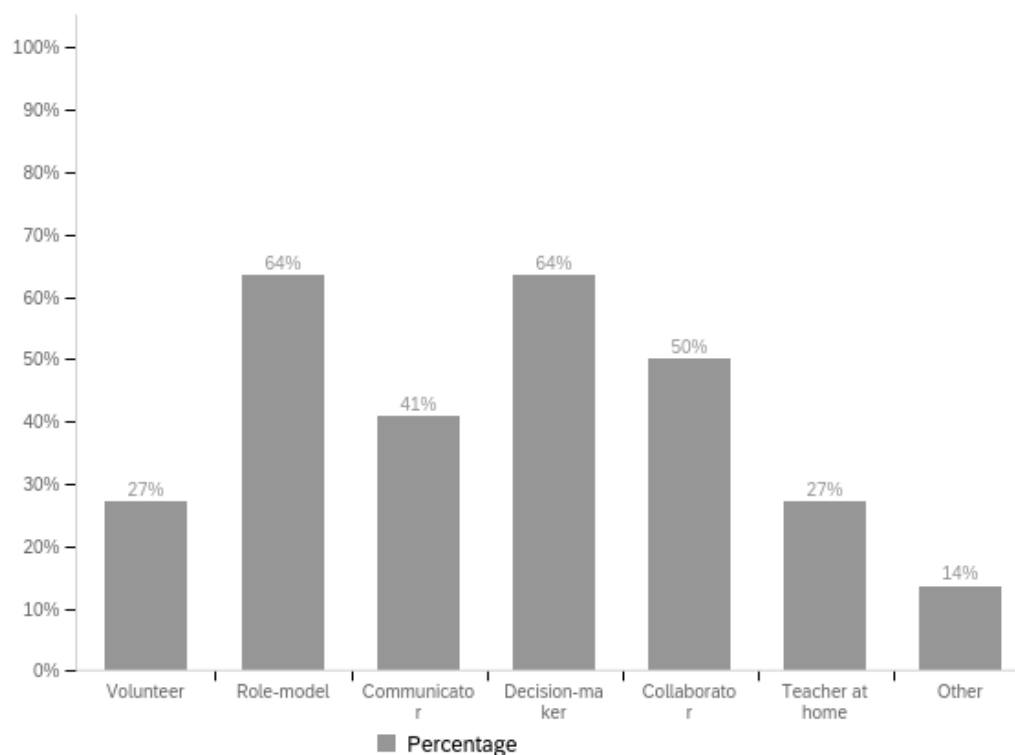
Figure 8

Number of School Personnel Participants Per Site



School A had nine participants, School B had three participants, School C had six participants, School D had four participants, and School E had zero participants. Of all 22 participants, 12 were classroom teachers, two were special area teachers, four were administrators, one was an instructional coach, and three identified as “other” (ESL, EC, and office paraprofessional). Of all 22 participants, 21 identified as Caucasian, and one identified as Hispanic or Latino.

Item 7 of the school personnel survey asked respondents, “In your opinion, what role do you think Latinx families play in their child’s education?” Figure 9 shows how school personnel responded.

Figure 9*School Personnel Responses to Item 7*

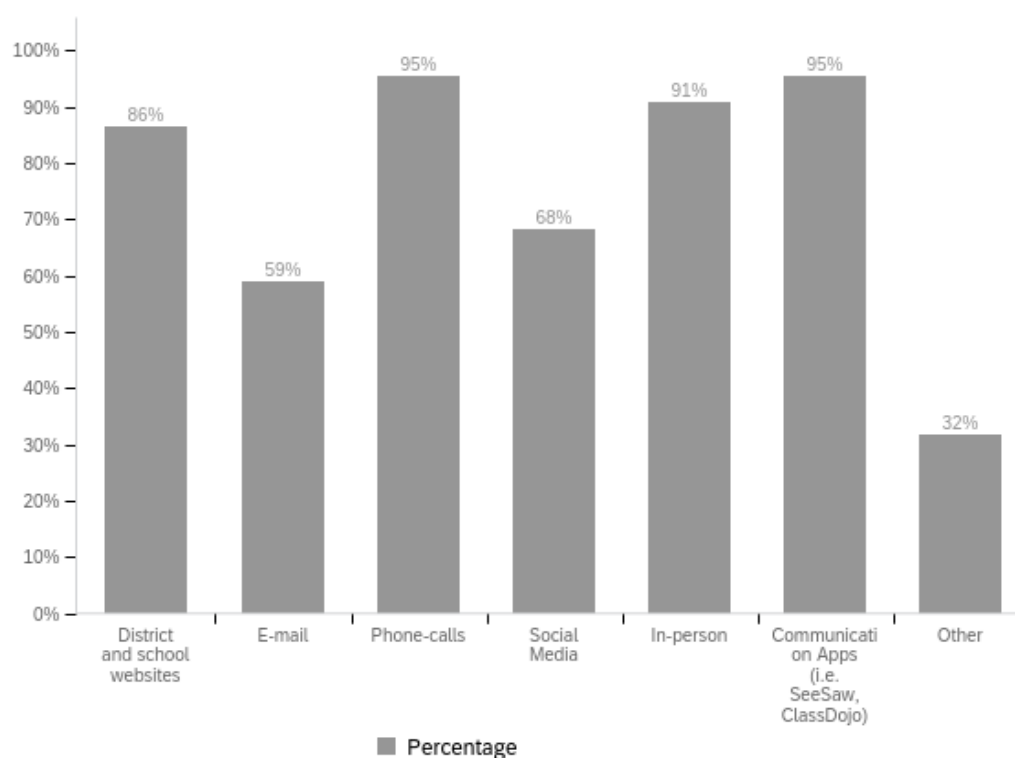
Of all 22 participants, six believed families take on the volunteer role, 14 believed families are role models, nine believed families are communicators, 14 believed families are decision makers, 11 believed families are collaborators, six believed families are teachers at home, and three selected other. Of the participants who answered “other,” one participant stated, “They generally trust educators to take the role, and parents generally support and trust the teacher as the expert”; another participant stated, “some Latinx families take a hands-off approach when it comes to their child’s education.” Item 8 asked participants, “In your opinion, does your school provide enough support for Latinx families?” Of all 22 participants, 18 answered “yes” and four participants answered “no.” The context and definition of the word support may have been different for each participant, and this issue might have affected how they answered the question. Overall,

school personnel believed Latinx families played many roles in their child's education, especially as role models and communicators.

Item 10 asked participants, "Describe the communication type between your school and Latinx students' families." Figure 10 shows how participants responded.

Figure 10

School Personnel Responses to Item 10



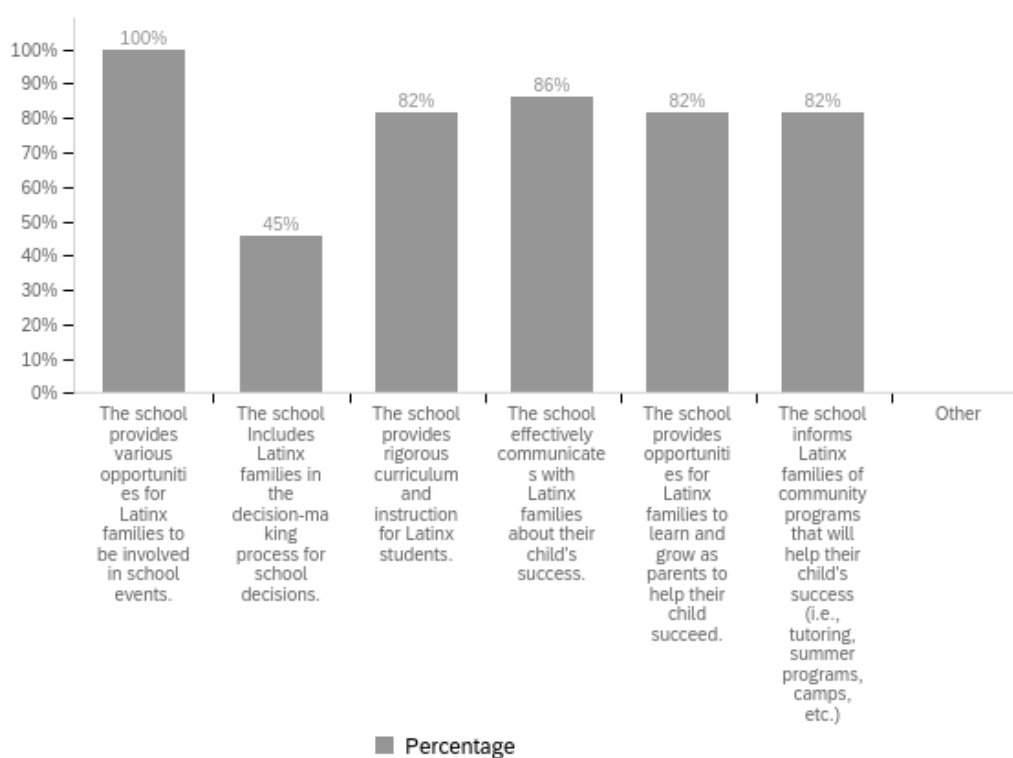
Of all 22 participants, 19 selected district and school websites, 13 selected email, 21 selected phone calls, 15 selected social media, 20 selected in-person, 21 selected communication app (i.e., Seesaw, ClassDojo), and seven selected other (fliers, letters/newsletters, video newsletters, community outreach, parent educator, and mother's group). Item 10.b asked participants to describe the communication level between the school and Latinx students' families. Fourteen participants believed their school had a

high level of communication (daily or weekly), and eight believed their school had a medium level of communication (every 2 weeks or monthly). Overall, school personnel noted there are various methods of communication their school uses to connect with Latinx families, especially phone calls and communication applications (i.e., See Saw and Class Dojo).

Item 11 asked participants, “Describe how your school helps support Latinx students and their families.” Figure 11 shows how participants responded.

Figure 11

School Personnel Responses to Item 11



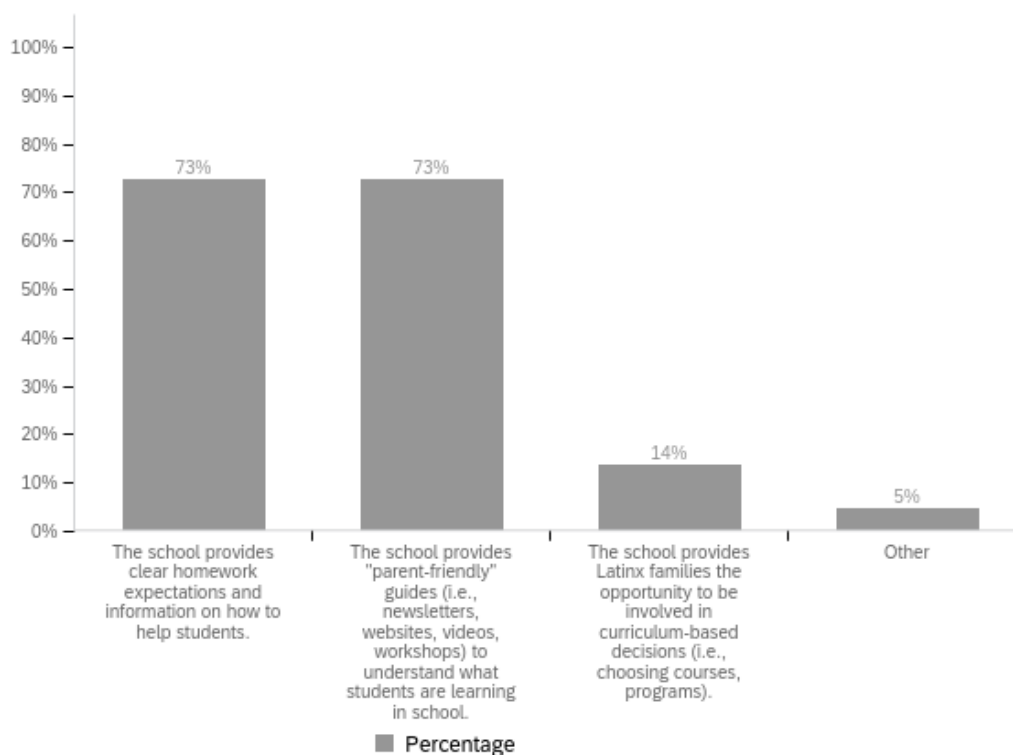
Of all 22 participants, 22 selected “The school provides various opportunities for Latinx families to be involved in school events,” 10 selected “The school includes Latinx families in the decision-making process for school decisions,” 18 selected “The school provides rigorous curriculum and instruction for Latinx students,” 19 selected “The

school effectively communicates with Latinx families about their child’s success,” 18 selected “The school provides opportunities for Latinx families to learn and grow as parents to help their child succeed,” and 18 selected “The school informs Latinx families of community programs that will help their child’s success (i.e., tutoring, summer programs, camps, etc.).” These data indicate these school personnel believe schools are actively communicating with families and providing them opportunities to be involved in their child’s success in school.

Item 12 asked participants, “Describe how your school helps Latinx parents understand the curriculum.” Figure 12 shows how participants responded.

Figure 12

School Personnel Responses to Item 12



Of all 22 participants, 16 selected, “The school provides clear homework expectations and information on how to help students,” 16 selected “The school provides

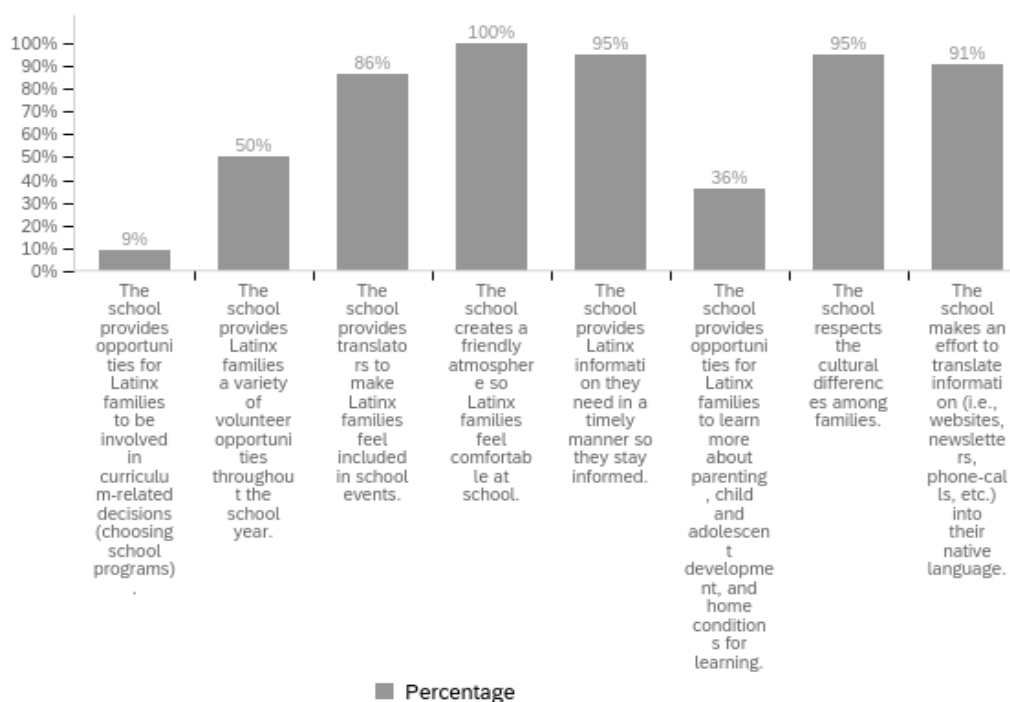
‘parent-friendly’ guides (i.e., newsletters, websites, videos, workshops) to understand what students are learning in school,” and three selected “The school provides Latinx families the opportunity to be involved in curriculum-based decisions (i.e., choosing courses, programs). One participant commented, “Parents are invited to grade-level curriculum nights.” These data indicate school personnel believe they make an effort to distribute parent-friendly guides to keep parents informed of what students are learning as well as provide clear homework expectations. The data also show the majority of school personnel participants do not believe their school does enough to include Latinx families in curriculum-based decisions.

Item 13 asked participants, “Describe how your school engages Latinx families.”

Figure 13 shows how participants responded.

Figure 13

School Personnel Responses to Item 13



All 22 participants selected “The school creates a friendly atmosphere so Latinx families feel comfortable at school.” Additionally, 21 participants selected “The school creates a friendly atmosphere so Latinx families feel comfortable at school” and “The school respects the cultural differences among families.” Based on this information, all school personnel survey participants believe their school creates a friendly atmosphere so Latinx families feel welcome. Additionally, they believe their school respects the cultural differences among families as well as provides Latinx families with the information they need in a timely manner so they stay informed.

Research Question 1. Research Question 1 asked, “How did Latinx families adapt to the change in family engagement in the shift to virtual/hybrid learning due to the global pandemic?” Item 14, “How did the switch to virtual learning impact your interaction with Latinx families during the COVID-19 global pandemic in March 2020,” addressed this change, and Table 6 describes the responses from school personnel.

Table 6*School Personnel Survey Responses to Item 14*

Open-ended responses
<p>“It was very difficult”</p> <p>“Our parent educator became an even more important part of our day-to-day operations.”</p> <p>“It was much harder to communicate with parents because many of them did not have Zoom on their phones or computers. I used Class Dojo and another app that translated information into Spanish so they understood my expectations and the homework that their child was to complete. Helping their child with their work was very difficult because the work was in English. That was an area of concern.”</p> <p>“Many came in person to the school. Most didn’t know how to use the devices. Many didn’t have access to the internet. It was hard”</p> <p>“There was a decrease in communication. Many of our families did not have devices which made it harder to express our goals and parent's questions. It was difficult for parents to understand the process but with home visits and communication, it was better. Not all families participated at all times”</p> <p>“Made communication difficult in person-had to rely on apps like Talking Points that provided translated emails; also, many students did not get the support needed to complete assignments or to join zoom sessions.”</p> <p>“We communicated more with our Latinx families, but often used older siblings to translate.”</p> <p>“Parent interaction became vital in the instruction process since they had to ensure students were learning and completing work. Communication was even more important than ever. Sometimes there was a lot of miscommunications between Parents and teachers.”</p> <p>“Had to have someone help to interpret if making phone calls”</p> <p>“Very negative with regard to language development, particularly in our newcomer families from indigenous backgrounds.”</p> <p>“I was still able to communicate with them using an interpreter over the phone and by using Google Meet to see them face to face with an interpreter All communication was translated Class Dojo messages were able to be translated by families We did interactive family nights over Google Meet Parent Coffees in the virtual environment”</p> <p>“It opened communication through dojo and the online session. Dojo was helpful due to the translate built into it.”</p> <p>“I relied heavily on our parent educator, translators, and communication apps”</p> <p>“This switch limited the impact of interaction for all families. Even more so with non-English speakers due to the lack of interpreters.”</p> <p>“All families received personalized contact. We checked in on all families to see what additional supports or resources that they needed.”</p>

Table 6 shows the responses from the school personnel survey that participants

gave to Item 14. Several school personnel agreed that the switch to virtual learning during the global pandemic of 2020 was difficult in terms of their interactions with Latinx families. One participant wrote, “Made communication difficult in-person, had to rely on apps.” Another participant stated, “The switch limited the impact of interaction for all families.”

Themes. According to the open-ended responses from school personnel participants, the themes that emerged from the survey question, “How did the switch to virtual learning impact your interaction with Latinx families during the COVID-19 global pandemic in March 2020” were communication difficulties caused by language barriers and technology issues. Several school personnel participants mentioned the switch being difficult and hard; they also wrote about the decrease in communication between them and Latinx families. One participant stated, “It was much harder to communicate with parents because many of them did not have Zoom on their phones or computers.” Another participant stated, “There was a decrease in communication. Many of our families did not have devices, which made it harder to express our goals and parents’ questions.”

Most participants also mentioned having to rely heavily on apps such as Class Dojo, Google Meets, Talking Points, and Zoom to communicate with Latinx families. One participant stated, “I used Class Dojo and another app that translated information into Spanish so they understood my expectations.” Another participant stated, “Had to rely on apps like Talking Points that provided translated emails.” Another participant wrote, “All communication was translated. Class Dojo messages were able to be translated by families.” Some participants commented some Latinx families relied on

older siblings to serve as translators, thus causing miscommunication between families and school personnel. One participant stated, “Sometimes there was a lot of miscommunications between parents and teachers.” Another stated, “We communicated more with our Latinx families but often used older siblings to translate.” Some participants also mentioned the lack of technology from families, thus also affecting communication as well as student learning. One participant stated, “Most didn’t know how to use the devices.” Another stated, “Many students did not get the support needed to complete assignments or to join zoom sessions.” Overall, school personnel agreed that communication difficulties caused by language barriers and technology issues impacted their interactions with Latinx families.

Research Question 3. Research Question 3 asked, “How did the shift to virtual/hybrid learning (due to the global pandemic) impact school personnel’s perceptions of Latinx families’ engagement with their child’s/children’s school(s)?” Item 16, “Now that we’re back to in-person learning, how are your interactions with Latinx families,” from the school personnel survey addressed this research question. Table 7 shows participant responses.

Table 7*School Personnel Survey Responses to Item 16*

Open-ended responses
<p>“Strong - I reach out to families via text and Dojo. Parents feel comfortable reaching out to me as well”</p> <p>“Parents can come to the school and talk to the teachers. I still communicate through Class Dojo and phone calls. I utilize our parent advocate when I need to communicate with parents on their child's behavior, other concerns, and progress in school as needed. The in-person learning helps students' progress more so than the online learning. It is much more beneficial for our students and their families.”</p> <p>“In-person, online, we have been trying to create more opportunities for involvement and volunteering”</p> <p>“In-person is some better because we see them on a daily basis and if they have questions parents are more willing to ask.”</p> <p>“I communicate with parents using Class Dojo, text messages, and notes that are translated.”</p> <p>“Much better communication with families”</p> <p>“Interactions are still positive, but not as frequent as it is harder to contact families during school hours”</p> <p>“It is not 100% back to normal but it has changed. There is more in-person meetings and family nights such as science night and winter reading night.”</p> <p>“Using the interpreter to help more frequently”</p> <p>“Much improved.”</p> <p>“Positive interactions with these families”</p> <p>“The interactions are getting better as the year has progressed. We still have dojo to communicate with the families or interpreters.”</p> <p>“I have more in-person interactions with those families”</p> <p>“We communicate mostly over Dojo, since there is a translate feature.”</p> <p>“Same as before. We continue to strive to make interaction with all families clear, concise, and informative.”</p> <p>“All families get a minimum of a weekly communication. The school and teachers continue to reach out to families to make sure they know what is going on and verify if there are any concerns or needs.”</p>

Table 7 shows responses from school personnel survey participants. Several school personnel agreed, despite the obstacles, that they had a positive perception of their engagement with Latinx families during the switch to virtual learning during the global pandemic of 2020. One participant stated, “Much better communication with families.” Another stated, “The interactions are getting better as the year has progressed.”

Themes. According to the open-ended responses from school personnel participants, the themes that emerged from the research question, “How did the shift to virtual/hybrid learning (due to the global pandemic) impact school personnel’s perceptions of Latinx families’ engagement with their child’s/children’s school(s),” were increased comfort and willingness, increased communication (apps, phone calls, email), and more positive interactions. Many school personnel commented there was better communication with Latinx families due to the increased reliability on apps (i.e., Class Dojo) that had a translation feature. One participant stated, “I still communicated through Class Dojo and phone calls.” Another stated, “We communicate mostly over Dojo, since there is a translate feature.” Another stated, “All families get a minimum of a weekly communication. The school and teachers continue to reach out to families to make sure they know what is going on and verify if there are any concerns or needs.” Additionally, many school personnel believe Latinx families are more willing and more comfortable to reach out to teachers in regard to student learning and other matters. One participant stated, “Parents feel comfortable reaching out to me as well.” Another stated, “In-person is some better because we see them on a daily basis, and if they have questions, parents are more willing to ask.” Also, school personnel mentioned an increase in in-person interactions among Latinx families. One participant stated, “In person, online, we have

been trying to create more opportunities for involvement and volunteering.” Another stated, “There is more in-person meetings and family nights such as science night and winter reading night.” Another stated, “I have more in-person interactions with those families.” In contrast, one participant stated, “Interactions are still positive, but not as frequent as it is harder to contact families during school hours.” Overall, school personnel agreed on seeing an increased level of comfort and willingness from Latinx families to reach out to teachers; an increased level of communication with Latinx families via apps, phone calls, and email; and overall more positive interactions.

Summary

This chapter provided an in-depth review of the data collected and analyzed during this study. To examine Latinx family and school personnel perceptions of family engagement in regard to the switch to virtual learning during the COVID-19 global pandemic and how Latinx families adjusted to the change, I used a qualitative research design with electronic and paper surveys to answer four research questions:

1. How did Latinx families adapt to the change in family engagement in the shift to virtual/hybrid learning due to the global pandemic?
2. How did the shift to virtual/hybrid learning (due to the global pandemic) impact Latinx families’ perceptions of their family engagement with their child’s/ children’s school(s)?
3. How did the shift to virtual/hybrid learning (due to the global pandemic) impact school personnel’s perceptions of Latinx families’ engagement with their child’s/children’s school(s)?
4. How do Latinx families envision their engagement/involvement with their

child's/children's school(s) in a post-pandemic school environment?

During the first stage of research, I surveyed school personnel and Latinx families from five elementary schools with the highest Latinx student population in a western North Carolina public school district. I found commonalities between school personnel and Latinx families' responses around communication barriers, language barriers, and lack of technology devices and knowledge. The original study design included focus groups; however, due to lack of participation, the focus groups were not held and data were not collected. Latinx families agreed that the switch to virtual learning was difficult due to economic constraints, time constraints, language differences, and a lack of technology knowledge. Overall, Latinx families and school personnel struggled during the switch to virtual learning but adjusted in any way they could out of necessity, as is evident throughout the responses provided in the survey. Chapter 5 provides a conclusion to the study and recommendations for further studies. Chapter 5 also connects the findings to the literature on the topic and discusses applications and recommendations for findings.

Chapter 5: Discussion

Overview of the Study

Throughout this study, I explored the perceptions of Latinx families and school personnel in regard to the switch to virtual learning during the COVID-19 global pandemic and how Latinx families adjusted to the change. Family engagement in this study refers to educators and families participating in a collaborative process of relationship-building, showing reciprocated respect and responsiveness to language and culture (Children's Bureau et al., 2017). Research shows family engagement is a critical piece for student success; it is important and valued within schools and contributes to development and student growth (Carreón et al., 2005). When families are involved in a child's education, there are positive student outcomes both academically and socially; this positive outcome begins at home with families providing a positive setting that supports student learning (Orange, 2020). It is important to understand how stakeholders perceive the value of family engagement in schools. A mutual understanding between perceptions and actions is crucial, and for this reason, it is necessary to examine family engagement from the families' perspectives, the school's perspectives, and the students' perspectives (Anderson, 2017). The framework for this study was grounded in the research of Epstein et al. (2019) and the theoretical model of overlapping spheres, as well as the research of Hoover-Dempsey and Sandler's model of the parental involvement process.

Research Questions

Four research questions guided this study:

1. How did Latinx families adapt to the change in family engagement in the shift

to virtual/hybrid learning due to the global pandemic?

2. How did the shift to virtual/hybrid learning (due to the global pandemic) impact Latinx families' perceptions of their family engagement with their child's/ children's school(s)?
3. How did the shift to virtual/hybrid learning (due to the global pandemic) impact school personnel's perceptions of Latinx families' engagement with their child's/children's school(s)?
4. How do Latinx families envision their engagement/involvement with their child's/children's school(s) in a post-pandemic school environment?

Discussion of the Findings

Chapter 4 presented an analysis of data based on the Latinx family survey and the school personnel survey. Literature around Latinx family engagement indicates there are conflicting perceptions and definitions of family engagement between schools and Latinx families. Latinx families are often perceived as uninvolved in their child's education because they do not participate in the traditional manner (i.e., classroom helpers, attending school events). However, Latinx families believe they support their child's education through other ways like providing support at home (i.e., life education and moral development). Latinx families believe a home-based and moral child-rearing practice in combination with school-based practices is crucial for their child to have a good education (Quiñones & Kiyama, 2014). Research examining perceptions of Latinx families in regard to the switch to virtual learning during the COVID-19 global pandemic is limited.

I collected qualitative data from Latinx family surveys and school personnel

surveys and found common themes in participants' lived experiences and similarities in their perceptions. The dominant themes that surfaced from the Latinx family survey were communication issues due to language differences and lack of technology access and knowledge, as well as economic constraints and low levels of education within the Latinx families. The Latinx family survey included five open-ended questions that allowed participants the opportunity to elaborate on their experiences.

Connection to Framework

The Hoover-Dempsey and Sandler (1995) model of parental involvement suggested three major factors influencing the variety and frequency of engagement from families: personal motivators, parent perceptions of invitations to be involved, and life context variables. Personal motivators include the parent's role construction which is influenced by their own childhood academic experiences, family systems, and recent experiences with their child's school. Parent perceptions of invitations to be involved include general invitations from the school, specific teacher invitations, and invitations from the child. Life context variables include parental knowledge and skills, parental time and energy, and family culture. These variables affect families' form of involvement in their child's school. Latinx families' engagement during the switch to virtual/hybrid learning was difficult due to lack of technology access at home and knowledge of how to use that technology, as well as families as having low levels of education. When families' beliefs about their abilities are positive, families are more likely to act; however, if families believe their skills or knowledge are inadequate, they are reluctant to take action (Hoover-Dempsey et al., 2005). Economic constraints were another factor in Latinx families' engagement. Many were constrained by long work hours or decreased work

hours which led to economic difficulties. These life context variables were affected, thus affecting Latinx families' forms of engagement in schools.

Epstein et al.'s (2019) second typology stated communication as a two-way, three-way, and many-way network of communication that connects schools, families, students, and the community. Effective communication is more likely to increase family awareness on how to help and guide their children towards learning goals (Epstein et al., 2019). Communication between schools and Latinx families during the switch to virtual/hybrid learning was difficult due to language barriers, as 100% of Latinx families noted Spanish being their primary household language. This theme aligns with data from previous studies that reflect communication as a barrier among Latinx families that are uncomfortable with English or whose primary language is Spanish (Pavlakis et al., 2019). School personnel stated, "This switch limited the impact of interaction for all families. Even more so with non-English speakers due to the lack of interpreters." For communication to be effective, schools must consider the readability, clarity, and form of communication; consider translators and interpreters for non-English speaking families; review the quality of communications; and establish a clear line of communication from home to school and vice versa (Epstein et al., 2019).

The Hoover-Dempsey and Sandler (1995) model of parental involvement Level 1.5 suggests four involvement forms: values, goals, expectations, aspirations; involvement activities at home; parent/teacher/school communication; and involvement activities at school. Parent/teacher/school communication was greatly affected by the switch to virtual learning due to the global pandemic. Latinx family survey data showed communication due to language barriers and technology issues were the biggest factors

that affected engagement, and 100% of Latinx family survey participants identified Spanish as their primary language at home. Additionally, school personnel survey responses identified language as being the biggest barrier to communicating with families; schools relied heavily on apps that translated messages or school interpreters if available.

This study aimed to find out how Latinx families adapted to the switch to virtual/hybrid learning during the global pandemic. Moll et al. (1992) and the theoretical model of funds of knowledge suggested families use their funds of knowledge in dealing with changing circumstances. Based on the data from this study, Latinx families stated they had to rely on their social networks to facilitate the transition. One Latinx family stated, “Change was rough. I had a full-time job and going to school for nursing and had to become the teacher at home as well. Had to get others involved in order for my daughter not to get behind on schoolwork.” The findings support the idea of the ability of Latinx families to adapt to the switch because their networks were flexible, adaptive, and active and perhaps involved multiple persons from outside the homes (Moll et al., 1992).

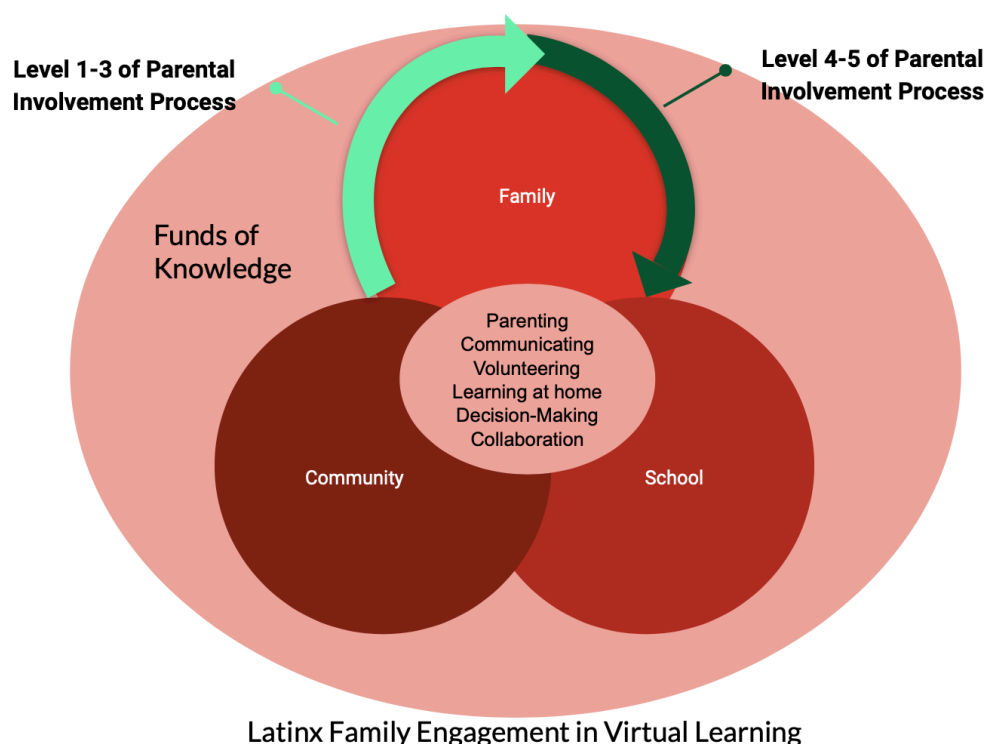
Based on the theoretical and conceptual framework used for this study, Latinx family engagement is affected by several factors. The factors in Hoover-Dempsey and Sandler’s Levels 1-3 affect the learning mechanisms families use, which affect Levels 4-5 of the parental involvement process. Epstein’s six types of involvement are at the center of the three main stakeholders (family, community, and school) because they are the key ingredients that all three parties must work cohesively with in order for students to be successful. Moll et al.’s (1992) funds of knowledge embodies all three stakeholders and all types and levels of involvement because a family’s broad and diverse knowledge

affects how they are involved and how much they are involved in their child's school.

Figure 14 shows how Hoover-Dempsey and Sandler's Level 1 of the parental involvement process (e.g., personal motivators, parent perceptions of invitations to be involved, and life context variables) affects how they are involved (i.e., Level 1.5: goals, involvement activities at home, communication, involvement activities at school).

Figure 14

Latinx Family Engagement in Virtual Learning



Note. This model shows how Hoover-Dempsey and Sandler's levels of parental involvement revolve around families to maximize their engagement. It also shows Epstein's three spheres of influence, family, community, and school, and how each typology is at the core of all three in order to maximize family engagement. Moll et al.'s (1992) funds of knowledge is the major factor that affects families' beliefs, their level of

involvement, and their level of engagement in each typology in the center.

The model found in Figure 14 connects with the findings of the research study in many ways. In survey responses, Latinx families' life context variables (i.e., parental knowledge and skill, parental time and energy, family culture) affected how much they were involved in their child's learning during the switch to virtual learning. Latinx families stated language was a barrier in communicating with schools, and their work schedule also conflicted with their ability to help their child log on to virtual meetings. One Latinx family wrote, "As working parents, there were times where we could not sit our child for Zoom classes. Thankfully some teachers recorded the class so we could get on it when we got home at night." Additionally, Latinx families stated their lack of knowledge of their child's devices affected their involvement. One Latinx family stated, "At first it was hard because the programs were new to me; also the way to teach at home was very different and I personally did not want to confuse my child."

The need to adapt to the switch to virtual learning, despite Latinx families' obstacles, affected how involved they were (Hoover-Dempsey & Sandler's Level 1.5: goals, activities at home, communication, activities at school). Communication levels between families and teachers increased out of necessity. One Latinx family stated, "We had to do what we could do, and we had to communicate a lot with teacher so they would not think our child was lazy." The global pandemic limited involvement activities at school, and families had to rely more on involvement activities at home, which also affected how families were involved in Epstein's six typologies (at the center of the three main stakeholders). The learning mechanisms (i.e., encouragement, modeling, reinforcement, and instruction) found in Hoover-Dempsey and Sandler's Level 2 were

affected by the above-mentioned obstacles (i.e., language barrier, lack of knowledge/skills, economic constraints, etc.), also affecting Levels 3 and 4.

Summarizing Research Questions

In response to Research Question 1, “How did Latinx families adapt to the change in family engagement in the shift to virtual/hybrid learning due to the global pandemic,” many Latinx families’ responses varied in length and depth. Latinx families responded with “fue muy dificil,” or “it was very difficult.” Latinx families also gave credit to teachers by saying, “las maestras de la escuela nos ayudaron mucho,” or “the teachers at school helped us a lot.”

Currie-Ruben and Smith (2014) suggested online teachers should work with families to ensure a successful and productive learning experience for students. Many families commented on the need to adapt to learning how to use technology not only to communicate with teachers but to be able to help their children as well.

Latinx families also commented on the difficulties of supporting their children in virtual learning due to conflicting work schedules, as some families worked during student virtual meeting times and were unable to help their children log in to meetings. Some research suggests that Spanish-only families have less access to digital technology than bilingual and/or English-only families (Pavlakis et al., 2019). All Latinx family survey participants identified Spanish as being the primary language, which meant the language barrier between Latinx families and schools also affected their access and knowledge of digital technology. School personnel survey participants also mentioned the difficulty in communication between them and Latinx families and stated language as one of the main obstacles to effective communication. A risk factor that impacts Latinx

families' level of engagement in their child's education includes language barriers (Campos, 2016). Overall, Latinx families' engagement was impacted during the shift to virtual/hybrid learning due to the global pandemic due to language barriers, technology limitations, and work schedules. Latinx families had to adapt to the change in the shift to virtual learning in order to support their child's education, which related to my first research question, "How did Latinx families adapt to the change in family engagement in the shift to virtual/hybrid learning due to the global pandemic?" Based on survey responses, Latinx families that did not have internet access had to obtain Wi-Fi for their homes, learn how to operate the software used for students to learn, increase communication with their child's teacher to ensure student learning, and rely on the community to help them due to conflicting work schedules. Based on school personnel survey responses, they had to rely on interpreters (those schools that had them) and applications with translation features to communicate in the Latinx families' home language.

In response to Research Question 2, "How did the shift to virtual/hybrid learning (due to the global pandemic) impact Latinx families' perceptions of their family engagement with their child's/children's school(s)," Latinx families responded with improved, more involvement opportunities, and more encouragement at home. Based on the information gathered from study participants, Latinx family engagement during the shift to virtual learning due to the pandemic impacted Latinx families' perceptions by overall improving it. Latinx families in the study stated communication between schools and families improved as the teachers at the school were very helpful and communicative. School personnel participants also stated they relied heavily on apps with

a translation feature and interpreters (when available) in order to effectively communicate with families. A result of effective communication is an awareness for both parties, teachers, and families, in regard to the use of various technologies to communicate and increase the ability to understand each other's views (Epstein et al., 2019). Latinx families' perceptions of family engagement improved, based on survey responses from families; they felt communication was stronger and felt school personnel (specifically classroom teachers) were helpful during the shift.

Research Question 3 asked, "How did the shift to virtual/hybrid learning (due to the global pandemic) impact school personnel's perceptions of Latinx families' engagement with their child's/children's school(s)?" Based on the information gathered from study participants, Latinx family engagement due to the shift to virtual learning due to the pandemic impacted school personnel perceptions by overall improving it. School personnel stated there was an increase in comfort and willingness from Latinx families to reach out to teachers. There was also an increase in communication; school personnel relied on apps with a translation feature to communicate with families as well as phone calls and email. Some school personnel participants relied on their school interpreter or parent advocate to effectively communicate with families. Positive interactions were another visible improvement. One participant stated, "Much better communication with families." When communication is effective, families are able to understand school programs, be aware of their students' progress, and interact with teachers and the school with ease (Epstein et al., 2019). School personnel's perceptions of Latinx families' engagement were impacted due to an increase in communication levels. Based on survey responses, school personnel saw a positive change in communication with most families

during the shift to virtual/hybrid learning.

In response to Research Question 4, “How do Latinx families envision their engagement/involvement with their child’s/children’s school(s) in a post-pandemic school environment,” based on the information gathered from study participants, Latinx families envision their family engagement with their child’s school as a work in progress, meaning they would like it to continue to improve. This improvement includes schools continuing to be flexible, especially with communication and involvement opportunities as well as continuing with positive communication. When schools set goals to help student achievement, they must have a clear plan to engage families (Epstein et al., 2019). Overall, Latinx families would like to continue to see improvement in the methods and opportunities for family engagement at their child’s school.

Limitations and Delimitations

Limitations are items that affect the study but cannot be controlled by the researcher. I originally planned to use survey and focus group data from families from five elementary schools. I distributed the family survey and school personnel survey to all five principals to forward to their staff and families. After about 1 week, I had only gotten responses from seven families in the online survey, and all of those families identified as Caucasian. Since the study was focused on Latinx families, the survey data were inadequate. For this reason, I decided to make paper copies for Latinx families to complete the survey. Fifty paper copies of the Spanish version of the family survey were made and distributed to each of the five participating elementary schools. Principals were asked to distribute their surveys to their most responsive Latinx families. I had no control over how many families participated in the survey. Additionally, I had no control over

who completed the survey or the level of honesty of each participating family. Also, the limited number of respondents from each site may have skewed the data.

Delimitations are variables I chose to limit the study. I chose to ground the study in Epstein's framework and Hoover-Dempsey's model. Using only five elementary schools is a delimitation that allowed me to ensure the qualitative data could be coded thoroughly and promptly. Creating surveys for Latinx families and school personnel was a delimitation that was needed to focus the research on the perceptions of those stakeholders only. Offering the survey to non-Latinx families and students would have allowed me to gain more insight into the full scope of family engagement at the site.

Recommendations

As discussed in Chapter 2, Epstein et al.'s (2019) overlapping spheres of influence stated family, school, and community all work together to ensure student success. Family roles and expectations need to be examined in order to develop a plan to effectively engage Latinx families (Epstein et al., 2019).

The findings of this study indicate Latinx families and schools need to work together to develop a family engagement framework. From the Latinx family survey, 100% of Latinx families believe family engagement must continue to improve. One school personnel participant mentioned a mother's group that allows Latinx mothers to meet and discuss their concerns. By forming this mother's group, the school has Latinx family input and allows them to have a voice. I would recommend all elementary schools form a similar family group to allow Latinx families' voices to be heard. Epstein et al., (2019) suggested schools have a parent leader, a representative who will support and communicate with other families. Including Latinx families in the decision-making

process would allow them to share experiences with other families, feel ownership, and feel capable to take on leadership roles in committees (Epstein et al., 2019).

The findings of this study indicate schools need to continue to use a variety of methods to communicate with Latinx families in a positive manner. Wiseman et al. (2020) stated partnerships require strong communication to be effective, and families should establish a communication plan with their child's teacher. Creating a clear channel, or set of channels, of communication between school personnel and Latinx families is crucial. These channels can include apps (i.e., Class Dojo, Talking Points), phone calls, and emails. Epstein et al. (2019) suggested obtaining ideas from families to improve the design and content of communication (i.e., method and frequency of communication).

The results of this study indicate schools need to find ways to reduce the language barrier between Latinx families and school personnel. Epstein et al. (2019) suggested making all communications clear and understandable, including communicating in languages families understand. This can be done by using effective digital applications that have a translation feature, using Google translate, and/or using translators to help with translating print and electronic documents.

Implementation of these recommendations and adapting them to each particular school should assist schools in improving the engagement of Latinx families, which could potentially be the first step in building an equitable family engagement framework. Research is resounding: Creating a meaningful partnership with families will help students succeed academically and socially (Mapp et al., 2017). Latinx families have high levels of expectations for their children, care deeply about their child's education, and

want to be involved; barriers (i.e., language, technology) can be mitigated in order to allow Latinx families to be engaged in their child's school (Sibley & Brabeck, 2017). The goal for all schools should be effective family engagement across the diverse background of families.

Future Studies

This study sought to examine Latinx family perceptions on family engagement during the global pandemic as well as how they adapted to the change. The findings of this study indicate there are a multitude of opportunities for future research on the topic of Latinx family engagement. This study was conducted in five elementary schools in one district in one state. Additional studies using all elementary schools in one or more districts and across states would allow the research to be compared to different geographical areas. Alternatively, conducting research at all elementary schools in a single district and having follow-up interviews and/or focus groups would yield more in-depth information on Latinx family perceptions.

Including Latinx students' perceptions of their families' engagement in the analysis would allow for a more complete view of family engagement. Students are at the center part of the three spheres of influence; when students feel cared for and are encouraged to work hard as a student, they are more likely to perform at their highest level in all aspects (Epstein et al., 2019). Including Latinx students' voices would allow students to be actively invited into important conversations about their education and allow them to take ownership and think intentionally about their learning (Mapp et al., 2017).

While Latinx families completed the family survey, many open-ended questions

were answered with one-word or short-phrase answers in writing. Conducting a follow-up interview or focus group for participants to elaborate clearly on their answers and clarify any confusion in the question itself could yield stronger themes among their answers.

Schools and school personnel must be willing to be more culturally aware and have an open conversation with Latinx families about the needs and expectations of each other to build a strong partnership. Future studies that focus on understanding Latinx families' and students' perceptions of what they consider to be engagement and how they envision it in the current school setting would assist educators in understanding their perspectives and create an engagement plan around those perceptions.

Conclusion

This study was grounded in Epstein et al. (2019) and Hoover-Dempsey and Sandler's (1995) model of parental involvement. The research highlighted the similarities and differences that occurred between school personnel and Latinx families' perceptions of family engagement during the switch to virtual/hybrid learning during the global pandemic. The results magnified the obstacles that created the gap between the perceptions of Latinx families and school personnel. The research also increases awareness of the crucial role of family engagement in elementary school in virtual learning and in general. The findings showed significant difficulties in communication, due to lack of technology access and knowledge as well as language barriers, all of which decreased Latinx family engagement during the switch to virtual learning. It also showed commonalities between perceptions and showed a desire for continuous improvement from both school personnel and Latinx families.

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Appendix A

Latinx Family Qualtrics Survey (English)

Latinx Family Survey (English)

Start of Block: Intro Block

Introduction

Hello, I am a doctoral candidate from Gardner-Webb University. As a Latinx educator who grew up with an Ecuadorian father and a Mexican mother, I am familiar with the struggles of Latinx families and schools. There were many obstacles between my family and the school. My parents had been in the country for a while but still didn't know how to navigate through public school system. This experience encouraged me to become an educator and an advocate for more support between families and schools. I am conducting a study on how school personnel and Latinx families perceived involvement efforts in virtual learning during the COVID-19 global pandemic. I would like to know your experiences with your child's school. This survey will contain questions (multiple-choice and open-ended) that relate to how Latinx families perceived involvement efforts in virtual learning during the COVID-19 global pandemic.

In this survey you will provide your basic demographic data such as your role, school affiliation, education level, etc. In this survey you will provide your contact information through an external link at the end of the survey ONLY if you decide to participate in the focus group. Additionally, there will be open-ended questions (i.e., what role you play in your child's education, describe how your school helps support Latinx students) that require short answers. The survey should take approximately 15-20 minutes.

I appreciate you taking the time to complete this survey so that I may explore the perceptions of the district's stakeholders. As you complete each survey item, select the response that comes closest to describing you. Your responses are anonymous and you can skip any questions you are not comfortable with. Thank you for your participation.

End of Block: Intro Block

Start of Block: Block 1

Q1 What is your relationship to your student?

☐ Mother (1)

☐ Father (2)

☐ Aunt/Uncle (3)

☐ Grandparent (4)

☐ Other (6) _____

Q2 With which school are you affiliated?

☐ School A (4)

☐ School B (5)

☐ School C (6)

☐ School D (7)

☐ School E (8)

Q3 Which of the following best describes you?

- ☐ Asian or Pacific Islander (1)
- ☐ Black or African American (2)
- ☐ Hispanic or Latino (3)
- ☐ Native American or Alaskan Native (4)
- ☐ White or Caucasian (5)
- ☐ Multiracial or Biracial (6)
- ☐ A race/ethnicity not listed here (7)

Page Break

End of Block: Block 1

Start of Block: Block 2

Q4 What is your age range?

- ☐ 18-25 (4)
 - ☐ 26-34 (5)
 - ☐ 35-44 (6)
 - ☐ 45-54 (7)
 - ☐ 55-64 (8)
 - ☐ 65 or older (9)
-

Q5 What is your yearly household income?

- ☐ Less than \$10,000 (1)
- ☐ \$10,000 - \$19,999 (2)
- ☐ \$20,000 - \$29,999 (3)
- ☐ \$30,000 - \$39,999 (4)
- ☐ \$40,000 - \$49,999 (5)
- ☐ \$50,000 - \$59,999 (6)
- ☐ \$60,000 - \$69,999 (7)
- ☐ \$70,000 - \$79,999 (8)
- ☐ \$80,000 or more (9)

Q6 What is your country of origin?

- ☐ Mexico (1)
 - ☐ Puerto Rico (2)
 - ☐ Dominican Republic (3)
 - ☐ Colombia (4)
 - ☐ Venezuela (5)
 - ☐ Brazil (6)
 - ☐ Peru (7)
 - ☐ Honduras (8)
 - ☐ El Salvador (9)
 - ☐ Other (10) _____
-

Q7 How many school-aged children do you have?

- ☐ 1 (4)
 - ☐ 2 (5)
 - ☐ 3 (6)
 - ☐ 4 (7)
 - ☐ 5 or more (8)
-

Q8 Where were your children born? If you have multiple children, please check all that apply.

- ☐ Mexico (1)
- ☐ Puerto Rico (2)
- ☐ Dominican Republic (3)
- ☐ Colombia (4)
- ☐ Venezuela (5)
- ☐ Brazil (6)
- ☐ Peru (7)
- ☐ Honduras (8)
- ☐ El Salvador (9)
- ☐ United States (11)
- ☐ Other (10) _____

Page Break

End of Block: Block 2

Start of Block: Block 3

Q9 Which of the following best describes you?

- ☐ New to the country (less than a year) (1)
 - ☐ First Generation Parent (First generation refers to people born outside of the U.S. to parents neither of whom were U.S. citizens). (2)
 - ☐ Second Generation Parent (Second generation refers to U.S. born people born to foreign-born parents) (3)
-

Q10 Select the highest level of education completed

- ☐ Did not complete schooling (1)
 - ☐ Elementary School (2)
 - ☐ Middle School (3)
 - ☐ High School (4)
 - ☐ Some high school, no diploma (5)
 - ☐ Trade/Technical/Vocational School (6)
 - ☐ Some college credit, no degree (7)
 - ☐ Associate's Degree (8)
 - ☐ Bachelor's Degree (9)
 - ☐ Master's Degree (10)
 - ☐ Professional Degree (11)
 - ☐ Doctorate Degree (12)
-

Q11 Do you have internet connection at home?

- ☐ Yes (1)
 - ☐ No (2)
-

Q12 What is your primary language?

- ☐ English (1)
- ☐ Spanish (2)
- ☐ Other (4) _____
-

Q13 What is your child's/children's primary language?

- ☐ English (1)
- ☐ Spanish (2)
- ☐ Other (4) _____
-

Q14 How long have you lived in the city where you currently reside in?

- ☐ Less than 6 months (1)
- ☐ 6 - 12 months (2)
- ☐ 1 - 3 years (3)
- ☐ 4 - 6 years (4)
- ☐ 7 years or more (5)
-

Q15 Is your family new to your child's/children's school?

- ☐ Yes (1)
- ☐ No (2)

Q16 In your opinion, are you familiar with how the U.S school system works?

- ☐ Yes (4)
- ☐ No (5)
- ☐ A little (6)

Page Break

End of Block: Block 3

Start of Block: Block 4

Q17 How do you define family engagement?

Q18 What role do you play in your child's education? Select ALL that apply.

☐

Volunteer (4)

☐

Role model (5)

☐

Communicator (6)

☐

Decision maker (7)

☐

Collaborator (8)

☐

Teacher at home (9)

☐

Other (10) _____

Q19 Describe the communication type between you and your child's school. Select ALL that apply.

- ☐ District and school websites (4)
 - ☐ E-mail (5)
 - ☐ Phone calls (6)
 - ☐ Social Media (7)
 - ☐ In-person (8)
 - ☐ Communication Apps (i.e. SeeSaw, ClassDojo) (9)
 - ☐ Other (10) _____
-

Q19.b Describe the communication level between you and your child's school.

- ☐ High-level of communication (daily or weekly) (4)
 - ☐ Medium level of communication (every two weeks or monthly) (5)
 - ☐ Low level of communication (once a semester) (6)
-

Q20 Describe how your child's school helps support your child's success. Select ALL that apply.

- ☐ Provides various opportunities for me to be involved in school events. (4)
 - ☐ Includes me in the decision-making process for school decisions. (5)
 - ☐ Provides rigorous curriculum and instruction for my child. (6)
 - ☐ Effectively communicates with me about my child's success. (7)
 - ☐ Provides opportunities for me to learn and grow as a parent to help my child succeed. (8)
 - ☐ Informs me of community programs that will help in my child's success (i.e., tutoring, summer programs, camps, etc.) (9)
 - ☐ Other (10) _____
-

Q21 Describe how your child's school helps parents understand the curriculum. Select ALL that apply.

- ☐ Provides clear homework expectations and information on how to help my child. (4)
 - ☐ Provides "parent-friendly" guides (i.e., newsletters, websites, videos, workshops) to understand what my child is learning in school. (5)
 - ☐ Provides me the opportunity to be involved in curriculum-based decisions (i.e., choosing courses, programs). (6)
 - ☐ Other (7) _____
-

Q22 Describe how your school engages parents. Select ALL that apply.

☐

Provides me a variety of volunteer opportunities throughout the school year. (5)

☐

Provides translators to make me feel included in school events. (6)

☐

Creates a friendly atmosphere so I feel comfortable at my child's school. (7)

☐

Provides me information I need in a timely manner so I stay informed. (8)

☐

Provides opportunities for families to learn more about parenting, child and adolescent development, and home conditions for learning. (10)

☐

Respects the cultural differences among families. (11)

☐

Provides opportunities to be involved in curriculum-related decisions (choosing school programs). (4)

☐

Other (9) _____

Page Break

End of Block: Block 4

Start of Block: Block 5

Q23 How did the switch to virtual learning impact your interaction with your child's school during the COVID-19 global pandemic in March 2020?

Q24 How did you adjust to the change?

Q25 Now that we're back to in-person learning, how are your interactions with your child's school?

Q26 How do you envision your interactions with your child's school in a post-pandemic time?

Q27 Is there anything else you would like to share regarding family engagement at your child's school?

Page Break

End of Block: Block 5

Start of Block: Block 6

Q28 Would you be willing to participate in a group interview to discuss your experiences about family engagement in virtual learning during the COVID-19 global pandemic?

- ☐ Yes (1)
- ☐ No (2)
- ☐ Maybe (3)

End of Block: Block 6

Start of Block: Block 7

Q29 Please click the following link to submit your contact information:

[insert link to Focus Group Contact Information Form]

End of Block: Block 7

Appendix B

Latinx Family Qualtrics Survey (Spanish Version)

Latinx Family Survey (Spanish)

Start of Block: Intro Block

Introduction

Saludos, soy una candidata a doctorado de la Universidad Gardner-Webb. Como educadora latina que creció con un padre ecuatoriano y una madre mexicana, estoy familiarizada con las luchas entre las familias latinas y las escuelas americanas. Había muchos obstáculos entre mi familia y la escuela. Mis padres habían estado en el país por un tiempo, pero aún no sabían cómo navegar por el sistema de escuelas públicas en los Estados Unidos de Norte América. Esta experiencia me animó a convertirme en educadora y luchadora por conseguir más apoyo entre las familias latinas y las escuelas norteamericanas. Estoy realizando un estudio que permita establecer la percepción del personal escolar y las familias latinas sobre su participación en el aprendizaje virtual durante la pandemia mundial de COVID-19. Me gustaría saber sus vivencias y experiencias con la escuela de su hijo/a.

Esta encuesta contendrá preguntas (opción múltiple y abiertas) que se relacionan con la percepción de las familias latinas respecto a los esfuerzos de participación en el aprendizaje virtual durante la pandemia mundial de COVID-19. En esta encuesta, proporcionará sus datos demográficos básicos; como su rol, afiliación escolar, nivel de educación, etc. Además, proporcionará su información de contacto en un enlace externo al final de la encuesta familiar SOLAMENTE si decide participar en el grupo focal. Habrá preguntas abiertas (es decir, qué rol tiene la familia en la educación de su hijo/a, describa cómo su escuela ayuda a apoyar a los estudiantes latinos) que requieren respuestas breves. Responder la encuesta le tomará aproximadamente 15-20 minutos.

Agradezco que se haya tomado el tiempo para completar esta encuesta para que yo pueda explorar las percepciones de las partes interesadas del distrito en la educación de sus hijos. A medida que complete cada elemento de la encuesta, seleccione la respuesta que más se acerque a su criterio u opinión. Sus respuestas son anónimas y puede omitir cualquier pregunta con la que no se sienta cómodo. Gracias por su participación.

End of Block: Intro Block

Start of Block: Block 1

Q1 ¿Cuál es su relación con su estudiante?

- ☐ Madre (1)
 - ☐ Padre (2)
 - ☐ Tía/tío (3)
 - ☐ Abuelo (4)
 - ☐ Otro (6) _____
-

Q2 ¿A qué escuela está afiliado?

- ☐ Escuela A (4)
 - ☐ Escuela B (5)
 - ☐ Escuela C (6)
 - ☐ Escuela D (7)
 - ☐ Escuela E (8)
-

Q3 ¿Cuál de las siguientes te describe mejor?

- ☐ Asiático o isleño del Pacífico (1)
- ☐ negro o afroamericano (2)
- ☐ hispano o latino (3)
- ☐ Nativo americano o nativo de Alaska (4)
- ☐ Blanco o caucásico (5)
- ☐ multirracial o birracial (6)
- ☐ Una raza/etnicidad no listada aquí (7)

Page Break

End of Block: Block 1

Start of Block: Block 2

Q4 A qué rango de edad pertenece?

- ☐ 18-25 (4)
 - ☐ 26-34 (5)
 - ☐ 35-44 (6)
 - ☐ 45-54 (7)
 - ☐ 55-64 (8)
 - ☐ 65 años o más (9)
-

Q5 ¿Cuál es su ingreso familiar anual?

- ☐ Menos de \$10,000 (1)
 - ☐ \$10,000 - \$19,999 (2)
 - ☐ \$20,000 - \$29,999 (3)
 - ☐ \$30,000 - \$39,999 (4)
 - ☐ \$40,000 - \$49,999 (5)
 - ☐ \$50,000 - \$59,999 (6)
 - ☐ \$60,000 - \$69,999 (7)
 - ☐ \$70,000 - \$79,999 (8)
 - ☐ \$80,000 o más (9)
-

Q6 ¿Cual es tu país de origen?

- ☐ México (1)
 - ☐ Puerto Rico (2)
 - ☐ República Dominicana (3)
 - ☐ Colombia (4)
 - ☐ Venezuela (5)
 - ☐ Brasil (6)
 - ☐ Perú (7)
 - ☐ Honduras (8)
 - ☐ El Salvador (9)
 - ☐ Otro (10) _____
-

Q7 ¿Cuántos hijos tiene en la escuela?

- ☐ 1 (4)
 - ☐ 2 (5)
 - ☐ 3 (6)
 - ☐ 4 (7)
 - ☐ 5 o más (8)
-

Q8 ¿Dónde nacieron sus hijos? Si tiene varios hijos, marque todas las que correspondan.

- ☐ México (1)
- ☐ Puerto Rico (2)
- ☐ República Dominicana (3)
- ☐ Colombia (4)
- ☐ Venezuela (5)
- ☐ Brasil (6)
- ☐ Perú (7)
- ☐ Honduras (8)
- ☐ El Salvador (9)
- ☐ Estados Unidos (11)
- ☐ Otro (10) _____

Page Break

End of Block: Block 2

Start of Block: Block 3

Q9 ¿Cuál de los siguientes le describe mejor?

- ☐ Padres recién llegados al país (menos de un año) (1)
 - ☐ Padres de primera generación (primera generación se refiere a personas nacidas fuera de los EE. UU. cuyos padres no eran ciudadanos estadounidenses). (2)
 - ☐ Padres de segunda generación (segunda generación se refiere a personas nacidas en los EE. UU. de padres nacidos en el extranjero) (3)
-

Q10 Seleccione el nivel más alto de educación completado

- ☐ no completó la escolaridad (1)
 - ☐ Escuela primaria (2)
 - ☐ Escuela intermedia (3)
 - ☐ Escuela secundaria (4)
 - ☐ Algo de secundaria, sin diploma (5)
 - ☐ Escuela de Comercio/Técnica/Vocacional (6)
 - ☐ Algún crédito universitario, sin título (7)
 - ☐ Grado Asociado (8)
 - ☐ Licenciatura (9)
 - ☐ Maestría (10)
 - ☐ Título profesional (11)
 - ☐ Doctorado (12)
-

Q11 ¿Tiene conexión a internet en su casa?

☐ sí (1)

☐ No (2)

Q12 ¿Cual es el idioma principal de la familia?

☐ inglés (1)

☐ español (2)

☐ Otro (4) _____

Q13 ¿Cuál es el idioma principal de su hijo/hijos?

☐ inglés (1)

☐ español (2)

☐ Otro (4) _____

Q14 ¿Cuánto tiempo hace que vive en la ciudad donde reside actualmente?

☐ Menos de 6 meses (1)

☐ 6 - 12 meses (2)

☐ 13 años (3)

☐ 4 - 6 años (4)

☐ 7 años o más (5)

Q15 ¿Su familia es nueva en la escuela de su hijo/hija?

☐ sí (1)

☐ No (2)

Q16 En su opinión, ¿está familiarizado con el funcionamiento del sistema escolar de los Estados Unidos?

☐ sí (4)

☐ No (5)

☐ Un poquito (6)

Page Break

End of Block: Block 3

Start of Block: Block 4

Q17 ¿Cómo define la participación familiar?

Q18 ¿Qué rol tiene usted en la educación de su hijo? Seleccione todas las que correspondan.

- ☐ Voluntario (4)
 - ☐ Modelo a seguir (5)
 - ☐ Comunicador (6)
 - ☐ Tomador de decisiones (7)
 - ☐ Colaborador (8)
 - ☐ profesora en casa (9)
 - ☐ Otro (10) _____
-

Q19 Describa el tipo de comunicación entre usted y la escuela de su hijo/a. Seleccione todas las que correspondan.

- ☐ Sitios web del distrito y la escuela (4)
 - ☐ Correo electrónico (5)
 - ☐ Llamadas telefónicas (6)
 - ☐ Medios de comunicación social (7)
 - ☐ En persona (8)
 - ☐ Aplicaciones de comunicación (es decir, SeeSaw, ClassDojo) (9)
 - ☐ Otro (10) _____
-

Q19.b Describa el nivel de comunicación entre usted y la escuela de su hijo.

- ☐ Alto nivel de comunicación (diaria o semanal) (4)
- ☐ Nivel medio de comunicación (cada dos semanas o mensualmente) (5)
- ☐ Bajo nivel de comunicación (una vez por semestre) (6)

Q20 Describa la manera en que la escuela de su hijo apoyar el éxito de su hijo/a.
Seleccione todas las que correspondan.

☐

Me brinda varias oportunidades para participar en eventos escolares. (4)

☐

Me incluye en el proceso de tomar de decisiones para las decisiones escolares. (5)

☐

Proporciona un plan de estudios e instrucción rigurosos para mi hijo. (6)

☐

Se comunica efectivamente conmigo sobre el éxito de mi hijo. (7)

☐

Me brinda oportunidades para aprender y crecer como padre para ayudar a mi hijo a tener éxito. (8)

☐

Me informa sobre programas comunitarios que ayudarán en el éxito de mi hijo (es decir, tutoría, programas de verano, campamentos, etc.) (9)

☐

Otro (10) _____

Q21 Describa la manera en que la escuela de su hijo ayuda a los padres a comprender el plan de estudios. Seleccione todas las que correspondan.

☐

Proporciona expectativas claras sobre la tarea e información sobre cómo ayudar a mi hijo. (4)

☐

Proporciona guías "amigables para los padres" (es decir, boletines, sitios web, videos, talleres) para comprender lo que mi hijo está aprendiendo en la escuela. (5)

☐

Me brinda la oportunidad de participar en decisiones basadas en el plan de estudios (es decir, elegir cursos, programas). (6)

☐

Otro (7) _____

Q22 Describa la manera en que la escuela involucra a los padres. Seleccione todas las que correspondan.

- ☐ Me proporciona una variedad de oportunidades de voluntariado a lo largo del año escolar. (5)
- ☐ Proporciona traductores para hacerme sentir incluido en los eventos escolares. (6)
- ☐ Crea un ambiente agradable para que me sienta cómodo en la escuela de mi hijo. (7)
- ☐ Me proporciona la información que necesito de manera oportuna para que me mantenga informado. (8)
- ☐ Brinda oportunidades para que las familias aprendan más sobre la crianza de los hijos, el desarrollo de niños y adolescentes y las condiciones del hogar para el aprendizaje. (10)
- ☐ Respeta las diferencias culturales entre las familias. (11)
- ☐ Brinda oportunidades para participar en decisiones relacionadas con el plan de estudios (elección de programas escolares). (4)
- ☐ Otro (9) _____

Page Break

End of Block: Block 4

Start of Block: Block 5

Q23 ¿Cómo afectó el cambio al aprendizaje virtual su interacción con la escuela de su hijo durante la pandemia mundial de COVID-19 en marzo de 2020?

Q24 ¿Cómo se adaptaron al cambio?

Q25 Ahora que volvimos al aprendizaje presencial, ¿cómo son sus interacciones con la escuela de su hijo/a?

Q26 ¿Cómo espera que sean sus interacciones con la escuela de su hijo/a en una época posterior a la pandemia?

Q27 ¿Hay algo más sobre la participación familiar en la escuela de su hijo/a que le gustaría compartir ?

Page Break

End of Block: Block 5

Start of Block: Block 6

Q28 ¿Estaría dispuesto a participar en una entrevista grupal para analizar sus experiencias y vivencias sobre la participación familiar en el aprendizaje virtual durante la pandemia mundial de COVID-19?

- ☐ sí (1)
- ☐ No (2)
- ☐ Quizás (3)

Page Break

End of Block: Block 6

Start of Block: Block 7

Q29 Haga clic en el siguiente enlace para enviar su información de contacto:

[insertar enlace al formulario de información de contacto del grupo focal]

Page Break

End of Block: Block 7

Appendix C

School Personnel Qualtrics Survey

School Personnel Survey

Start of Block: Intro Block

Introduction

Hello, I am a doctoral candidate from Gardner-Webb University. I am conducting a study on how school personnel and Latinx families perceived involvement efforts in virtual learning during the COVID-19 global pandemic. I would like to know your experiences with Latinx families. This survey will contain questions (multiple-choice and open-ended) that relate to how school personnel perceived involvement efforts in virtual learning during the COVID-19 global pandemic.

In this survey you will provide your basic demographic data such as your role, school affiliation, experience. Additionally, there will be open-ended questions (i.e., what role do you think families play in a child's education, describe how your school helps support Latinx students) that require short answers. All survey responses will be anonymous. The survey should take approximately 15-20 minutes.

I appreciate you taking the time to complete this survey so that I may explore the perceptions of the district's stakeholders. As you complete each survey item, select the response that comes closest to describing you. Your responses are anonymous and you can skip any questions you are not comfortable with. Thank you for your participation.

End of Block: Intro Block

Start of Block: Block 1

Q1 What is your role?

- ☐ Classroom Teacher (1)
 - ☐ Teacher Assistant (2)
 - ☐ Special Area Teacher (3)
 - ☐ Administration (4)
 - ☐ Instructional Coach (5)
 - ☐ Other (6) _____
-

Q2 With which school are you affiliated?

- ☐ School A (4)
 - ☐ School B (5)
 - ☐ School C (6)
 - ☐ School D (7)
 - ☐ School E (8)
-

Q3 Which of the following best describes you?

- ☐ Asian or Pacific Islander (1)
 - ☐ Black or African American (2)
 - ☐ Hispanic or Latino (3)
 - ☐ Native American or Alaskan Native (4)
 - ☐ White or Caucasian (5)
 - ☐ Multiracial or Biracial (6)
 - ☐ A race/ethnicity not listed here (7)
-

Q4 What is your age range?

- ☐ 18-25 (4)
 - ☐ 26-34 (5)
 - ☐ 35-44 (6)
 - ☐ 45-54 (7)
 - ☐ 55-64 (8)
 - ☐ 65 or older (9)
-

Q5 How many years have you been in education?

- ☐ 1 year or less (1)
 - ☐ 1-2 years (2)
 - ☐ 3-5 years (3)
 - ☐ 6-10 years (4)
 - ☐ 11-15 years (5)
 - ☐ 16-20 years (6)
 - ☐ 20+ years (7)
-

Q6 How many years have you been at your current school?

- ☐ 1 year or less (1)
 - ☐ 1-2 years (2)
 - ☐ 3-5 years (3)
 - ☐ 6-10 years (4)
 - ☐ 11-15 years (5)
 - ☐ 16-20 years (6)
 - ☐ 20+ years (7)
-

End of Block: Block 1

Start of Block: Block 2

Q7 In your opinion, what role do you think Latinx families play in their child's education? Select ALL that apply.

- ☐ Volunteer (4)
 - ☐ Role model (5)
 - ☐ Communicator (6)
 - ☐ Decision maker (7)
 - ☐ Collaborator (8)
 - ☐ Teacher at home (9)
 - ☐ Other (10) _____
-

Q8 In your opinion, does your school provide enough support for Latinx families?

- ☐ Yes (4)
 - ☐ No (5)
-

Q9 Based on your response in the previous question, why do you feel this way?

Q10 Describe the communication type between your school and Latinx students' families. Select ALL that apply.

- ☐ District and school websites (4)
- ☐ E-mail (5)
- ☐ Phone calls (6)
- ☐ Social Media (7)
- ☐ In-person (8)
- ☐ Communication Apps (i.e. SeeSaw, ClassDojo) (9)
- ☐ Other (10) _____

Q10.b Describe the communication level between your school and Latinx students' families. Select ALL that apply.

- ☐ High-level of communication (daily or weekly) (4)
- ☐ Medium level of communication (every two weeks or monthly) (5)
- ☐ Low level of communication (once a semester) (6)

End of Block: Block 2

Start of Block: Block 3

Q11 Describe how your school helps support Latinx students and their families. Select ALL that apply.

☐

The school provides various opportunities for Latinx families to be involved in school events. (4)

☐

The school Includes Latinx families in the decision-making process for school decisions. (5)

☐

The school provides rigorous curriculum and instruction for Latinx students. (6)

☐

The school effectively communicates with Latinx families about their child's success. (7)

☐

The school provides opportunities for Latinx families to learn and grow as parents to help their child succeed. (8)

☐

The school informs Latinx families of community programs that will help their child's success (i.e., tutoring, summer programs, camps, etc.) (9)

☐

Other (10) _____

Q12 Describe how your school helps Latinx parents understand the curriculum. Select ALL that apply.

☐

The school provides clear homework expectations and information on how to help students. (4)

☐

The school provides "parent-friendly" guides (i.e., newsletters, websites, videos, workshops) to understand what students are learning in school. (5)

☐

The school provides Latinx families the opportunity to be involved in curriculum-based decisions (i.e., choosing courses, programs). (6)

☐

Other (7) _____

Q13 Describe how your school engages Latinx families. Select ALL that apply.

☐

The school provides Latinx families a variety of volunteer opportunities throughout the school year. (5)

☐

The school provides translators to make Latinx families feel included in school events. (6)

☐

The school creates a friendly atmosphere so Latinx families feel comfortable at school. (7)

☐

The school provides Latinx information they need in a timely manner so they stay informed. (8)

☐

The school provides opportunities for Latinx families to learn more about parenting, child and adolescent development, and home conditions for learning. (10)

☐

The school respects the cultural differences among families. (11)

☐

The school provides opportunities for Latinx families to be involved in curriculum-related decisions (choosing school programs). (4)

☐

The school makes an effort to translate information (i.e., websites, newsletters, phone calls, etc.) into their native language. (12)

☐

Other (9) _____

End of Block: Block 3

Start of Block: Block 4

Q14 How did the switch to virtual learning impact your interaction with Latinx families during the COVID-19 global pandemic in March 2020?

Q15 How did you adjust to the change?

Q16 Now that we're back to in-person learning, how are your interactions with Latinx families?

Q17 How do you envision your interactions with Latinx families in a post-pandemic time?

Q18 Is there anything else you would like to share regarding Latinx family engagement at your school?

Page Break

End of Block: Block 4

Appendix D

Focus Group Questions

Focus Group Questions*

- How did the switch to virtual learning impact your interaction with your child's school during the COVID-19 global pandemic in March 2020?
- How did the switch to virtual learning impact your interaction with your child's school during the start of the 2020-2021 school year?
- Now that we're back to in-person learning, how is your interaction with your child's school different? How has it changed? How is it now?
- How did your level of engagement change during virtual/hybrid learning? Describe the change.

*Follow-up questions may be asked for clarity and/or details

Appendix E

Focus Group Questions (Spanish Version)

Preguntas de grupos focales

- ¿Cómo afectó el cambio al aprendizaje virtual su interacción con la escuela de su hijo/s durante la pandemia global de COVID-19 en marzo de 2020?
- ¿Cómo afectó el cambio al aprendizaje virtual su interacción con la escuela de su hijo/s durante el inicio del año escolar 2020-2021?
- Ahora que hemos vuelto al aprendizaje en persona, ¿cómo se diferencia su interacción con la escuela de su hijo/s? ¿Cómo ha cambiado? ¿Cómo está ahora?
- ¿Cómo cambió su nivel de participación familiar durante el aprendizaje virtual / híbrido? Describe el cambio.
-

*Se pueden hacer preguntas adicionales para mayor claridad y / o detalles.

Appendix F**Email to Family Participants (to be forwarded by school principal)**

Dear Families,

I am a doctoral candidate in the College of Education at Gardner-Webb University in Boiling Springs, North Carolina. I am pursuing my dissertation topic on how school personnel and Latinx families perceived involvement efforts in virtual learning during the COVID-19 global pandemic as well as subsequent school years. The purpose of the study is to seek information on Latinx families' and school personnel's perceptions of family engagement during virtual learning as well as during the following school years affected by the pandemic. The study will yield specific recommendations for schools regarding how to increase family engagement in the general school environment and virtual learning environments in current school environments in addition to post-pandemic eras. Your participation is requested because you are either school personnel or identify as a family with a student in the selected elementary schools.

Participating in the study will require the completion of a survey. It is anticipated that the survey will require about 15-20 minutes of your time. You will be asked if you are interested in participating in a focus group at the end of the survey. A focus group is a group interview involving a small number of participants who have a common experience. It will be face-to-face or virtual. I will be asking questions to the participants in the focus group. Participants will have the opportunity to respond to my questions and others' responses in the group as well. The focus groups will, with your permission, be recorded and transcribed. To maintain confidentiality, you will not be identified by name on the recording. I will be transcribing the recordings with the help of transcription software. An outside reader will read the transcriptions of the recording; however, they will be kept in a password protected file. Each participant will be offered a copy of the transcription for clarity. I will be the only one with access to the recordings after transcription. Recordings will remain in my possession and will be destroyed three years after publication of the dissertation.

Participation in this study, which includes this survey and potentially a focus group, is voluntary. You have the right to withdraw from the research study at any time without penalty. The information that you give in the study will be handled confidentially. Your data will be anonymous which means that your name will not be collected or linked to the data. There are no anticipated risks in this study. You will receive no payment for participating in the study. You have the right to withdraw from the study at any time without penalty by exiting the survey. Data from this study may be used or distributed for future research studies. I appreciate your thoughtful consideration of my request. I look forward to your participation in the study.

If you have questions about the study, contact the following individuals.

Elizabeth Schrecengost
 Doctoral Candidate
 Gardner-Webb University

Boiling Springs, NC 28017
704-681-1511
eschrecengost@gardner-webb.edu

Dr. Michelle Bennett
Gardner-Webb University
Boiling Springs, NC 28017
910-619-1588
mbennett1@gardner-webb.edu

Dr. Sydney Brown
IRB Administrator
Gardner-Webb University
Boiling Springs, NC 28017
Telephone: 704-406-3019
Email: skbrown@gardner-webb.edu

Clicking the link below to continue on to the survey indicates your consent to participate in the study:

[insert survey link]

Once you click on the survey link, select your language preference by clicking on the drop-down menu on the top right-hand corner.

If you are not 18 years of age or older or you do not consent to participate, please close this window.

Appendix G**Email to Family Participants (to be forwarded by school principal)-Spanish Version**

Estimadas familias,

Soy candidata a doctorada en la escuela de educación de la Universidad Gardner-Webb en Boiling Springs, Carolina del Norte. Estoy desarrollando como tema de mi disertación la investigación que permita establecer las percepciones del personal de la escuela y las familias latinas al respecto de los esfuerzos de su participación en el aprendizaje virtual durante la pandemia mundial de COVID-19, así como en los años escolares posteriores. El estudio generará recomendaciones específicas para las escuelas sobre cómo incrementar la participación familiar en el ambiente escolar general y los ambientes de aprendizaje virtual, para los actuales momentos y los posteriores a la pandemia. Se solicita su participación porque usted se identifica como una familia latina con un estudiante en las escuelas primarias seleccionadas para este estudio.

Participar en el estudio requerirá completar una encuesta. Se informa que la encuesta requerirá entre 15 y 20 minutos de su tiempo. Se le preguntará si está interesado en participar en un grupo de enfoque al final de la encuesta. Un grupo de enfoque es una entrevista grupal que involucra a un pequeño número de participantes que tienen una experiencia común. Sería presencial o virtual. Haré preguntas a los participantes del grupo. Tendrá la oportunidad de responder a mis preguntas y también a las respuestas de otros miembros del grupo. Las entrevistas serán, con su permiso, grabadas, y transcritas. Para mantener la confidencialidad, no se le identificará por sus nombres en la grabación. Voy a transcribir las grabaciones con la ayuda de un software especializada de transcripción. Un lector externo leerá las transcripciones de la grabación; sin embargo, se mantendrán en un archivo protegido con contraseña. A cada participante se le ofrecerá una copia de la transcripción para su conformidad o la modificación respectiva. Seré la única con acceso a las grabaciones después de la transcripción. Las grabaciones permanecerán en mi posesión y serán destruidas tres años después de la publicación de la disertación.

La participación en este estudio, que incluye esta encuesta y probablemente el grupo de enfoque, es voluntaria. Tiene derecho a retirarse del estudio de investigación en cualquier momento sin penalización. La información que usted proporcione en el estudio será tratada de forma confidencial. Sus datos serán anónimos, lo que significa que su nombre no se recopilará ni vinculará a los datos. No hay riesgos previstos en este estudio. No recibirá ningún pago por participar en el estudio. Los datos de este estudio podrán ser utilizados para futuros estudios de investigación. Agradezco su cuidadosa consideración de mi solicitud. Espero su participación en el estudio.

Si tiene preguntas sobre el estudio, comuníquese con las siguientes personas.

Elizabeth Schrecengost
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Boiling Springs, NC 28017
Teléfono: 704-406-3019
Correo electrónico: skbrown@gardner-webb.edu

Al hacer clic en el enlace (link) que se presenta a continuación accederá a la encuesta, dando su consentimiento para participar en el estudio:

[insertar enlace de la encuesta]

Una vez que haga clic en el enlace de la encuesta, seleccione su idioma de preferencia haciendo clic en el menú en la esquina superior derecha.

Si tiene menos de 18 años o no desea participar en el estudio, no utilice el enlace (link).

Appendix H

Email to School Personnel Participants (to be forwarded by school principal)

Dear School Personnel,

I am a doctoral candidate in the College of Education at Gardner-Webb University in Boiling Springs, North Carolina. I am pursuing my dissertation topic on how school personnel and Latinx families perceived involvement efforts in virtual learning during the COVID-19 global pandemic as well as subsequent school years. The purpose of the study is to seek information on Latinx families' and school personnel's perceptions of family engagement during virtual learning as well as during the following school years affected by the pandemic. The study will yield specific recommendations for schools regarding how to increase family engagement in the general school environment and virtual learning environments in current school environments in addition to post-pandemic eras. Your participation is requested because you are either school personnel or identify as a family with a student in the selected elementary schools.

Participation in this study will require the completion of a survey and is voluntary. It is anticipated that the survey will require about 15-20 minutes of your time. You have the right to withdraw from the research study at any time without penalty. The information that you give in the study will be handled confidentially. Your data will be anonymous which means that your name will not be collected or linked to the data. There are no anticipated risks in this study. You will receive no payment for participating in the study. You have the right to withdraw from the study at any time without penalty by exiting the survey. Data from this study may be used or distributed for future research studies. I appreciate your thoughtful consideration of my request. I look forward to your participation in the study.

If you have questions about the study, contact the following individuals.

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Email: skbrown@gardner-webb.edu

Clicking the link below to continue on to the survey indicates your consent to participate in the study:

[insert survey link]

If you are not 18 years of age or older or you do not consent to participate, please close this window.

Appendix I
County Permission to Conduct Research

2021-2022
Permission to Conduct Graduate School Research
 March 16, 2022

To whom it might concern,

Elizabeth Schrecengost (researcher), a *graduate student* at **Gardner Webb University (GWU)** has been approved to conduct Graduate School Research in [REDACTED]
 [REDACTED]

The following conditions apply:

1. Permission to conduct research is limited to the 2021-2022 school year. The details of this approval are outlined below.
 - a. Effective dates are March 16, 2022 - June 30, 2022
 - b. All research work and/or activities have met final approval for [REDACTED]. The *graduate student's* full application is on file in [REDACTED] office.
 - c. **Access is limited to:**
 - i. Participants associated with the following schools: [REDACTED]
 [REDACTED]
 [REDACTED].
 - ii. School administrator, teacher and parent participants
 - iii. Aggregate staff and student data access that does not allow for individual identifiable information

Topic as described by researcher: *The purpose of this study is to collect and examine Latinx families' perceptions of family engagement after the shift to virtual learning through surveys and focus groups. The study seeks to provide information to Latinx families' and school personnel perceptions of family engagement during virtual learning as well as the level of family engagement during virtual learning.*

Activities as described by researcher: *Surveys / Data Analysis /Interviews and Focus Groups*

Thank you,

[REDACTED],
 Superintendent
 [REDACTED]