

THE PERSPECTIVES OF EL PARENTS ON THE FAMILY-SCHOOL
PARTNERSHIP DURING REMOTE LEARNING

by

AHMED ALJOHANI

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Oakland University
Rochester, Michigan

Doctoral Advisory Committee:

Suzanne Klein, Ph.D., Chair

Julia Smith, Ed.D.

Elaine Middlekauff, Ph.D.

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To all people who taught and supported me

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Ahmed Aljohani

ABSTRACT

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Adviser: Suzanne Klein, Ph.D.

COVID-19 impacted the entire world, including the partnership between English learners' (EL) families and schools. The purpose of the study was to analyze and evaluate the impact of remote learning on EL families and how family-school partnerships were enabled or disabled in the remote learning environment. In this study a questionnaire was distributed to EL parents via social-media, 80 of which met the criteria and completed the survey. An embedded, mixed method, research design was used. SPSS was used to evaluate the quantitative data using descriptive statistics, one-way ANOVAs, and t-tests. Blending, including deductive and inductive coding, was used to evaluate the qualitative data. Findings indicated communication and helping students learn at home had the highest average of means, followed by Parenting, Volunteering, and Decision-Making. The findings also indicated that there was no significant statistical difference in the survey responses for parent's education, employment status, years living in the United States, English language level, and EL parent meeting attendance in relation to family-school partnerships during remote learning. Additional findings revealed technology assistance, non-technical supports,

the role of parents, and teaching children responsibility helped EL parents feel supported in their efforts to be engaged. Furthermore, technology issues, instructional issues, culture and language barriers, socioemotional issues, and parental challenges were identified as perceived challenges reported by EL families in supporting their children to learn at home while engaged in remote learning. Finally, findings indicated schools' provision of basic needs, technical and instructional support, communication, and planning assistance were ways parents felt most supported in their partnership with their children's school amidst COVID-19. These findings provide valuable insight to policy-makers, administrators, Department of Education and educators, as they can use the information to understand the resources EL families need to effectively partner with their children's school during times of remote learning. This information can provide additional insight so that curriculum developers in higher education and continuing education can review and refine curriculum to address any areas in which additional support may be needed to ensure that home school partnerships with EL families maximize learning opportunities for EL students.

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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

The COVID-19 pandemic has created an ongoing health crisis since the declaration of a Public Health Emergency of International Concern on January 30, 2020, and subsequently, the declaration of a pandemic on March 11, 2020 (Jee, 2020). Consequently, the COVID-19 pandemic has changed the relationships between families, schools, and learners. More concern has been placed on how families engage with their children's school and how schools utilize resources within their scope to improve family engagement during school closures and beyond. Because of the pandemic, schools, libraries, community centers, and childcare facilities might remain closed for an indeterminate amount of time. Thus, families might be left to care for their children's physical, emotional, and educational requirements in new ways (Kekelis & Ottinger, 2020).

Due to school closures and learners' participation in distance learning worldwide, parents have been tasked with helping their children receive an education. However, this solution does not affect English learners (ELs) in the same way as traditional students. For schools to serve ELs effectively, it is imperative to understand some of the effects of COVID-19 on diverse communities and how parental engagement influences learning for children in elementary school (Sugarman & Lazarin, 2020).

According to Richards (2020), ELs were primarily from low-income families, and the COVID-19 pandemic and its protocols had a significant impact on them.

During an interview with Ariana Tabaku, an EL teacher, she made observations that demonstrated how the COVID-19 protocols, in conjunction with online learning, significantly impacted these students. Tabaku recalled how difficult it is for parents of these students to log into online learning sites, which affected the children's learning (Richards, 2020). As a result, this discontinuity presents a problem that should be addressed using various models.

Dearing et al. (2015) and Griffin and Steen (2010) proposed initiatives, such as parental involvement, family engagement, and family-school partnerships to address these issues. Griffin and Steen (2010) explained how Epstein's framework for six types of parental involvement could be used to inform this initiative. Hartshorn and McMurry (2020) presented models of how these collaborations worked during the pandemic. With this knowledge, this research aims to further inform by exploring the barriers to involvement, collaboration, and relationships involving EL parents of students at the elementary level, schools, and communities during the remote learning experience.

Background

Definition of English Learners

Various labels, it can be argued, have been used in reference to learners whose first spoken language is not English. English learners (EL), English as a second language (ESL) learners, and English language learners (ELL) are some of the terminologies that have been used extensively in reference to these students. These terminologies have even been adopted in federal and state policies, and this has therefore normalized their usage. For example, according to Umansky (2016), in the

Every Student Succeeds Act ratified by President Barack Obama in 2015, these students have been referred to by the terminology EL. Earlier, in the No Child Left Behind Act ratified by President George W. Bush in 2001, these students were labeled ELL. Prior to this, in the Bilingual Education Act of 1968, these learners were referred to by the term limited English speaking ability (LESA). In the reauthorization of this act in 1978, the terminology that was adopted was limited English proficient (LEP).

While it can be argued that there is no one specific definition of ‘English learner’ within the federal law, a review of existing and past policies brings forth common features, which together, provide an explicit definition. As noted by the Legal Information Institute (2022), there are certain parameters that have to be met for one to be described as an English learner. They include the following descriptions. One has to be between 3 and 21 years and already enrolled or about to be enrolled in an elementary or secondary school. One also has to have been born outside the US with a native language other than English. One can also be a native American or a native of Alaska or a native resident in outlying areas. They also have to come from an area where a language, besides English, has had a major impact on them, thus affecting their degree of English proficiency. One can also be a migrant that has a language that is not English, and that language is dominant in their place of origin. These individuals must also have difficulties in speaking, reading, understanding, and writing in the English language, thus denying them an opportunity to be conversant with demanding state academic standards, be successful in classrooms where English is the language of instruction, and to be able to fully participate in society.

Parental Involvement, Family Engagement, and Family-School Partnerships

To enhance the success of learners as well as that of their schools, it has often been argued that there is a need for increased interactions with stakeholders beyond the school. This therefore highlights the need for initiatives, such as family involvement, family engagement and family-school partnership. However, it is essential to understand that in reference to school-stakeholder relationships, these terminologies have different meanings, and this will be the focus of this section.

While family involvement and family engagement might sound similar, the two are actually different. Family involvement, in simpler terms, lets the school take the lead, which gives the school an opportunity to inform parents or families of what is expected of them or what they should do. As noted by Koralek et al. (2019), family or parent involvement refers to various efforts that teachers take in informing and encouraging families or parents to participate and thus be involved in their children's learning. Here, since teachers have taken the lead, parents are thus expected to follow their lead and be actively involved in their children's learning.

In describing family involvement, Perry and Geller (2021) are of the view that this refers to families' access to tools, resources and even learning, but does not include engagement in a two-way communication with the school or their children. This seems to echo Koralek et al.'s (2019) observation that family involvement is merely informing families of what is expected of them pertaining to their children's learning. According to Koralek et al. (2019), family involvement makes parents feel that they are merely acting as teachers' helpers in their children's learning. This

therefore implies that in family involvement, families are not given importance in their children's learning since they are not perceived as equal partners in the process.

On the other hand, based on available literature, family engagement, as compared to family involvement, is more thorough and involves a deeper level of connectedness. Koralek et al. (2019), for instance, are of the view that family engagement refers to the building of deeper relationships between teachers and families, with the former seeking to learn more on how the latter is interested in participating in children's learning. Through engagement, teachers also gain insight on how families would like to be involved and the various avenues that can be explored in sharing and exchanging information concerning their children's learning. In this regard, families can be more committed to participating in their children's learning as they are viewed as partners.

Family engagement enables teachers and families to work collaboratively, as partners, in the development of practices, programs and policies that play an essential role in empowering learners (Perry & Gellar, 2021; Zimmerman & Brown, 2021). This therefore contributes to the development of trust, as well as authentic relationship between families and schools since the roles and experiences that families bring to their children's learning are recognizable. Lavadenz et al. (2021) substantiated this and added that family engagement views families as leaders and thus worthy of being extensively involved in children's learning. Morita-Mullaney (2021) stated family engagement refers to meaningful consultations between teachers and families for the benefit of enhancing children's learning.

This aside, family-school-community partnerships have been found to be essential in children's education, as these institutions play an important role in children's growth and development. However, for these partnerships to be effective and thus contribute positively to children's wellbeing, they need to be founded on mutual respect. Based on this partnership, every stakeholder has an essential role to play in children's education. While the partnership between school and family has already been discussed, the community also plays an essential role in providing a healthy and safe environment that is favorable for children's learning.

According to Epstein et al. (2018), the family-school partnership is representative of spheres of influence that communicate the responsibility that each stakeholder has in children's learning. As a stakeholder, the community ensures that families and schools have access to services and resources that are necessary for children's learning and wellbeing. For Stefanski, Valli, and Jacobson (2016), family-school partnerships are necessary, as they ensure that families, learners and neighborhoods have access to various resources that are required for excellence. For these researchers, it is essential that school partnerships ensure that families feel included so as to offer meaningful contributions. It is worth noting family-school partnerships are more comprehensive, as compared to family involvement and engagement as they not only help improve families but also learners and schools. This implies that family-school partnerships are comprehensive, as they ensure that benefits flow to learners, schools and neighborhoods. This, therefore, ensures that families, schools and communities are able to reinforce each other, thus creating an

environment where children thrive. This partnership aids in breaking barriers that could impinge on children's learning and families' contribution to this.

Federal Initiatives Supporting Family-School Partnership

To address and support family-school partnerships, policies, initiatives, laws, and regulations have been implemented at the federal, state, district, and building levels (Epstein et al., 2018). For example, the 2015 Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) law replaced the No Child Left Behind law, and its purpose is to offer all children, regardless of their background, an opportunity to acquire equitable, fair, and high-quality education (Henderson, 2016). This law addresses family engagement, schools reaching out to parents and families, and the creation of a family-school policy of engagement. The law also provides an outline of expectations for successful parental involvement. According to Henderson (2016), ESSA explains and expounds on the creation of family engagements that are meaningful by having agencies “build school capacity; link to family engagement in other programs; jointly evaluate; improve the programs based on evaluation findings; use the evaluation findings to design evidence and involve parents in the activities of Title I schools” (p. 1). Although it does not explicitly address ELs in remote learning, this law was designed to ensure that all learners, including ELs, succeed.

Epstein's Framework of Family-School-Community Partnerships

Epstein (1987) proposed a theory to connect families and schools. Specifically, the researcher proposed that based on the roles and responsibilities of each, a framework could be yielded that would support the interaction between them. These roles were separated as those shared by the schools and families, separate roles,

and sequential responsibilities that arise. These perspectives are separate in their realization, hence the need to build coalesced platforms that would allow them to communicate with each other.

In (2018), Epstein and colleagues presented that in practice, school communities that partner with the parent and families are cognizant of the individual identities that each child has and how the family shapes them, pointing to shared roles (Epstein et al., 2018). The Epstein model further presented six parental involvement realms and the roles that each entity ought to play to ensure the success of the framework. These include Parenting, Communicating, Volunteering, Learning at Home, Decision Making, and Collaborating with the Community (Epstein et al., 2018). In this type of involvement, although each party has a role to play, their roles overlap and can be instituted at the community and organizational level (Griffin & Steen, 2010).

Parenting involves the creation of an environment where children can thrive. Communicating is the direct installation of a two-way communication channel between the partnership in question (the school, families, and other stakeholders both at home and in the school). Volunteering necessitates communal participation in activities organized by schools and communities for those interested in aiding and facilitating the learning process. Decision-making involves the roles of each party (families, schools, and communities in decisions on the pedagogical approaches and other policies). Learning at home caters to the information provided for the family on how to augment academic activities in the home environment, and collaborating with the community involves identification and integration of resources at the community

level that allows learners to thrive (Epstein et al., 2018; Griffin & Steen, 2010). With this structural appendage where each partner has a specific role to play in the partnership, and each of the roles augments each other, an integrative organization system can be instituted that allows for the thriving of the learner and the community at large (Griffin & Steen, 2010).

Education and Partnership during COVID-19

The transition to online learning during the pandemic was observed to be consequential to both learners and students. Gillis and Krull (2020) observed that the transition had a significant impact on the pedagogical approaches that traditional face-to-face learning techniques had instituted in educators and learners alike. Specifically, there was an observed shift in the modes that teachers assigned tasks in the classroom. Additionally, fewer tasks were offered by teachers, and courses were designed so that the learner would easily and effectively navigate the course content. However, despite all enablement to reduce the impact of COVID-19-instituted remote learning on the students, there were still some ramifications. For instance, Kelley (2020) observed that with varied access to the internet and infrastructure that enable remote learning, students often face challenges accessing these simulations and video conferencing tools. Moreover, the lack of familiarity with using these tools by both teachers and learners led to a gap in adjustment time.

Conversely, Callaghan et al. (2020) observed that the institution of inquiry-based pedagogical approaches in enabling remote learning led to an effective mode of teaching STEM courses. Using the University of Toronto's Discovery, an inquiry-based tool, they found that in giving students autonomy in their task management,

and even content delivery modes, creativity was advanced. Open-ended learning, as they asserted, allowed for both individualistic and group-based learning models to develop. As such, online and remote learning allowed students to come up with more innovative ways to manage their tasks and find solutions to the problems they faced. Therefore, the diversity of solutions provided evidence that learning was effective with these means. However, this dissection highlighted that although remote learning had its benefits, some consequences arose due to the diversity of the student's background, as will be discussed in the following section.

The impact of remote learning is not an isolated obstacle facing ELs, but has been elevated in these platforms. Sharif et al. (2021) discussed the blended learning environment and focused on its suitability and capability for ELs. The authors observed that although pedagogical technologies and virtual learning environments have existed for some time, there are inconsistencies in their accessibility for ELs. Most of the expected users (i.e., learners and educators) had inadequate knowledge of the operability of the platform. Moreover, Sharif et al. argued that although blended environments allowed for continual access to education for different students, other obstacles existed in its structural inadequacies. They ascertained pedagogical perspectives and methodologies are ingrained in educators and have been perfected over time, unlike the remote learning and blended learning environment. Practically, teachers have to ensure that students learn most appropriately and are not undermined by the physical barrier between the learner and the student.

The importance of education and a sense of community cannot be understated in any culturally diverse environment, especially in ongoing hurdles, such as the

pandemic. Muñoz-Najar et al. (2021) observed, using empirical information from areas such as Sierra Leone, that community partnership in education is essential. They argued that with the inadequacy of resources, especially technological, countries such as Sierra Leone and Peru were forced to partner with various broadcasters, such as TV and radio broadcasters, to ensure that children continued to be taught even during the pandemic. The former, through a partnership with over 12 radio and TV stations and the latter partnering with over 1000 broadcasters, enabled access to lessons and education platforms for children from diverse families, especially those with low incomes (Muñoz-Najar et al., 2021). This discussion is critical, considering that most ELs come from immigrant families with a limited footing in the country, especially financially. Therefore, a community partnership to ensure that learning is affected is critical.

Breiseth (2020) observed that education, like any other social-economic activity, was not detached from the community and, therefore, suffered consequences of COVID-19. Using Colorado as a template, this author contrasted the different partnership-based media that school communities, alongside governments, had established to ensure that ELs families were not excluded from the educational spectrum. The use of media was high among these, particularly social media, to offer communal support to ELs families and children, as they were the most affected during the COVID-19 pandemic. Further, media was also used to relay messages and lessons to students through peer-to-peer forums set in the community and other established channels, such as library services. This highlighted the need and the significant help that such services provide for families.

Granados (2020) justified the need for these partnerships by citing Emily Francis, an EL teacher who observed that language was a social construct that needed the support of the community to advance. The researcher argued that with the COVID-19 protocols, peer-to-peer interactions, showcased to impact language learning and mastery, were significantly affected. Hartshorn and McMurry (2020) assessed 158 students and teachers and found it was imperative for compassion and consideration ought to be exercised for ELs and families. In addition, Michener et al. (2020) presented several communities that were taking communal collaborations to tackle the pandemic. These diverse communities had taken several steps, especially health-related, to ensure that education was not disrupted.

Rural Eagle County in Colorado was cited for having instituted a mobile intercultural Resource Alliance that provided not only health services but also education (Michener et al., 2020). Those involved offered several pedagogical-related services, such as Early Child Education (ECE) coordination services, and school lunches to those who were in need. These partnerships showed that school communities could work together to ensure that those in need of services were provided for, a consideration that this research would undertake in its survey design. However, this would not be sufficient without discussing remote learning partnerships for EL families during the pandemic (Hartshorn & McMurry, 2020).

Statement of the Problem

With the diversity of learners in the United States, especially among immigrant families, and the cultural diversity that comes with it (Hartshorn & McMurry, 2018), there is a need to explore the impact of remote learning on family-school partnerships based on EL parents' perspectives. Therefore, the purpose of the study is to analyze and evaluate the impact of remote learning on EL families of children in elementary school and how family-school partnerships were enabled or disabled in the remote learning environment. In essence, the study will focus on how the school and the community benefited the EL parents and how EL parents' demographic factors impact this partnership. Furthermore, the challenges and barriers to the family-school partnership will be dissected.

Research Questions

The research questions have been developed to support the overall results of the study. The study will attempt to answer the following questions:

- How do EL families of children in elementary school experience family-school partnerships while engaged in remote learning?
 - What factors of EL parents (parent's education, employment status, years living in the United States, English language level, and EL parent meeting attendance) are related to the family-school partnership?
 - How supported do EL parents of children in elementary schools feel in their efforts to be engaged in the school?

- What are families' perceived challenges and barriers in supporting their children to learn at home while engaged in remote learning?
 - What are the perceived barriers of EL families with children in elementary school in the wake of COVID-19? And how are the barriers addressed?
 - What strategies, activities, or collaborations are being enacted to support EL parents as partners to improve educational outcomes for children, particularly in the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic?

Significance of the Study

A research gap exists in understanding the place of family-school partnerships for EL families. For example, Dearing et al. (2015) observed that these families were critically excluded from various activities in the school community, due to the cultural and language barrier. Epstein et al. (2021) substantiated these findings, suggesting there was less communication for parents of students who were EL learners. Furthermore, Hartshorn and McMurry (2020) highlighted the issues these families faced during the pandemic and how solutions instituted to help learners cope with the pandemic were biased in their execution and mandate. Their research showcased that COVID-19, though a critically disabling force for different learners, had a stronger force in for these families. Therefore, this research study is designed to incorporate an elaborate understanding of this impact and how family-school partnerships can be used as a mode of alleviation. Moreover, research done in this

space is critically inadequate and does not inform how EL families can be integrated into the Epstein six types of parental involvement framework (Dearing et al., 2015). Although this framework has been shown to practically solve many of the diversity-based problems in the community, a gap exists in how its techniques could be instituted for a specific demographic.

Therefore, this research study seeks to culminate in a survey that would study EL families, school community members, educators, among other stakeholders, on the impact of COVID-19 on EL families and how family-school partnerships can be used to mitigate the impact on them. Ultimately, these will be encapsulated in policy-based and practical guidelines that the school community, alongside policymakers, can undertake to increase inclusivity and reduce the education gap that these families face as a factor of being culturally different.

Summary

Various arguments and perspectives on the impact of remote learning on ELs demonstrate a deepening of the critical issues that influenced these learners before the pandemic. Scholars have identified the pandemic as a force that has widened the schism that family-school partnerships have attempted to bridge (Epstein et al., 2018; Hartshorn & McMurry, 2020). The virtual environment, as it currently exists, has hampered communication and collaboration, as well as other forms of engagement identified by Epstein's framework of parental involvement as critical to these partnerships (Al-khresheh, 2021; Epstein, 2018). Using a snowball sampling of stakeholders, particularly parents of ELs, this research study aims to understand the underlying factors that have hampered this relationship during the pandemic and how

a shift has been resolved. Epstein's framework of parental involvement serves as the foundation for the research questions and data to be collected.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

This chapter includes the theoretical framework and the literature review for the study. First, three theories are discussed related to the topic. Next, the review contains literature that discussed the impact of the Epstein framework and family-school partnerships. Finally, the barriers to family-school partnership for EL families, the perspective of EL families on family-school partnership and remote learning, and the research gap are included.

Related Theories

This section contains a description of various theories that have been used to critique and analyze the benefits and barriers of parental involvement and partnership in elementary school learners. The theories include Bronfenbrenner's ecological system theory, Grunig's situational theory of publics, and transformational leadership theory. In the following sections, I provide an overview of the related theories, their application to family-school partnerships, and the implications of each theory during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Ecological Systems Theory

Bronfenbrenner (1977) developed the ecological systems theory, and researchers have widely accepted it to explain the effects of social surroundings on human development. According to the theory, all aspects of individuals' lives are influenced by their environment. Bronfenbrenner argued that significant traits and behaviors of individuals, such as preferences, feelings and emotions, and thoughts are

shaped by the social aspects of life. According to the ecological systems theory, the environment or surroundings of children comprise five systems. In the suggested order of importance for children's development, these systems are: microsystem, mesosystem, exosystem, macrosystem, and chronosystem (Guy-Evans, 2020). The five structures are closely linked, and no one system can impact children's development alone; all other systems must be involved.

According to the theory, microsystems are the foundation of children's development. Elements in this level include factors that directly impact children's development: parents, teachers, peers, and siblings (Guy-Evans, 2020). At the microsystem level, the type of relationship maintained at this stage is bi-directional, meaning that people sharing a child's environment can influence the child's beliefs and traits. In a school-community-family setup, the role of microsystems is critical in understanding the perspective that parents and teachers hold of the children's welfare and education. Interactions in the microsystem are primarily personal and are vital in the development and support of a child (Guy-Evans, 2020). For example, a strong and nurturing relationship between parents and their children positively impacts children's development.

Mesosystem refers to the social relationships within the environment of a child (Guy-Evans, 2020). For example, the interactions between the parents and teachers of a child take place in the mesosystem. The microsystem environment of an individual does not exist in isolation but requires the support of other microsystems to function optimally, suggesting the mesosystem encompasses the microsystems (Guy-Evans, 2020). For example, positive interactions and communications between

parents and teachers in the mesosystem could affect children's development. The exosystem component encompasses the formal and informal social structures that do not necessarily involve children but indirectly affect their development as they affect other microsystems (Tudge et al., 2021). For example, society, the neighborhood, or the media are all a part of the exosystem. The macrosystem component involves the cultural aspects affecting the development of children, and it encompasses elements such as wealth, ethnicity, socio-economic class, and poverty (Guy-Evans, 2020). The macrosystem element examines how the culture and traditions of an individual affect their way of living and learning. The last component, the chronosystem, comprises changes in the environment over time and how these affect individuals' life stages and decisions (Guy-Evans, 2020). The components at this level can include life transitions, such as starting school or parental divorce.

According to the ecological systems theory, partnerships and collaboration at every stage of an individual's life are essential. Understanding a child's environment supports such partnerships and collaborations by allowing for parental involvement practices that forge solutions, as is the case with EL families. The environmental system, components, and structures directly or indirectly affect the development and growth of a child. The elements supporting and influencing a child's growth are specified in the theory; thus, the role of every stakeholder in a child's growth is included in the theory. Ecological systems theory is consistent with the family partnership model, which concludes that a family's involvement with their children improves their development. As a part of the ecological systems theory, family partnership models conclude that the first step in creating a lasting and robust

partnership is creating an understanding of the role played by each member for enriching learners. According to Guy-Evans (2020), family members are the primary influencers on children's learning and development. Therefore, a child's learning process depends on an effective partnership between the family and professionals, such as teachers and the community.

Since the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic, some sectors of the world economy have been adversely affected, and people have experienced a paradigm shift in teaching and learning methods. One critical teaching and learning method employed during the pandemic is virtual and online learning (Global Campaign for Education, 2020). The call for partnership in education sectors by United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) directly agrees with the ecological systems theory, which demands cooperation among the environmental systems of a child's environment. This response is essential, especially given the theory's description of the social environments' effect on children's learning processes and cognitive development (Guy-Evans, 2020).

Transformational Leadership for Parental Involvement

According to Burns (1978) as cited in Leithwood (1992), transformational leadership refers to the process of leaders and followers working together to reach a higher morale and motivation level, and as they work together, the lives of the people and the organization are greatly changed. In transformational leadership, the leaders make use of their personality, abilities and traits to bring forth change by articulating a clear vision and challenging goals. The result is the redesigning of values and

perceptions of employees which consequently leads to changed aspirations and expectations (Leithwood, 1992).

Kenneth Leithwood later progressed the research on transformational leadership and looked into transformational leadership from a school's context. Expounding on the similarities between transformational leadership in the contexts of schools and in political organizations, Leithwood (1992) noted that transformational leadership's aim is to ensure there is successful collaboration to define the organization's purpose and then empower the organization to be highly focused and energized. Leithwood's (1992) research, addressing transformational leadership in schools, provided the transformational leadership model, which was opportune for school contexts and consisted of specific dimensions and behaviors associated with transformational leaderships for schools (Leithwood, 1992). The model consisted of four components, namely inspirational motivation (vision, optimism, productivity, inclusion), individual consideration (empathy, purpose, mentorship and skills & strengths), idealized influence (role model, embody values, optimism and enthusiasm) and intellectual stimulation (challenge, innovation, goals, creativity). The most recent transformational leadership model in an education context has four categories, including setting directions, developing people, organization redesigning and improvement of programs for instruction (Yulianti et al., 2021).

Yulianti et al. (2021) noted that teachers are key to the process of improving parental involvement in home-school partnerships and the education of their children, since the opportunities they offer parents in these invitations demand for the parents' participation in various forms. Transformational leadership in schools, as noted by

Yulianti et al. (2021), inspires and offers teachers guidance on ways to increase invitations to parents to be involved in their children's learning and school-home partnerships. This involves leaders inspiring motivation, idealizing influence, setting directions and sharing a clear parental involvement vision, as denoted by Leithwood's transformational leadership model in education contexts (Leithwood, 1992). At the same time, transformational leaders are in full support of the teachers' efforts of involving parents in the home-school partnerships and in their children's education (Leithwood, 2012).

The success of family-school partnerships relies on various factors. One of these factors is school leadership, which affects the teacher, students and parents in their involvement (Jung & Sheldon, 2020). Transformational leadership is implemented into family-school partnerships through the school's leadership. As Leithwood (2012) noted, a school's leadership that practices transformational leadership aids in building structures that foster collaboration with parents; offers teachers with individualized support; models expected behavior; stimulates teachers intellectually, fosters consensus in goals and visions and nurtures school culture. All these practices are key in motivating parental involvement in home-school partnerships and children's education. Transformational leadership is also implemented in school-home partnerships by nurturing and inspiring traits, abilities and personalities in teachers that enhance the formation of these partnerships (Yulianti et al., 2021). In transformational leadership implementation in partnerships, relationship building is valued, differences are addressed via dialogue, community organizations and families are viewed as full partners, and the relational approach to

power sharing, which embodies respect, compassion, inclusiveness, honesty, and cooperation, is used (Yulianti et al., 2021).

Due to the transition to online and virtual learning, the need for parental involvement may be more crucial than ever, especially considering the barriers that parents in this space faced during this time. These disproportionate impacts on EL families demand a better solution that involves parental participation in the post-COVID-19 era. During this time, parental involvement for EL families has been critical but is solely the result of the contact-based transmission of the disease (Hartshorn & McMurry 2020). Therefore, it will be necessary to advance these gains in the educational space once in-person learning has returned. Thorough parental involvement as an emblem of involvement in the child's development process would be better advanced in a transformational leadership forum that advances positive change. Such an approach would support educational gains, either in the existing framework or a newer one.

The pandemic as a force of inequality in an already unequal society drives the need for a revised model of transformational leadership. This model ought to be aimed at parents and other school stakeholders to garner the benefits of parental involvement and to be part of the solution to learning difficulties suffered by ELs (Hartshorn & McMurry, 2020). Furthermore, as Friedman (2004) described, transformational leadership remains unclear about the level of responsibility of educators or parents to initiate change. Therefore, the position in this current research argument depends on developing a framework inclusive of a role for EL parents' involvement in the remote learning process of their elementary school students.

Grunig's Situational Theory of Publics

Grunig's situational theory of publics provides that we can categorize large groups of individuals into smaller groups based on the degree to which they are aware of a problem and how they do something about it (Hamilton, 1992). Grunig introduced "problem recognition" as the first variable to explain why individuals sometimes engage in genuine decision-making and habitual behavior. He used "constraint recognition" as the second variable to explain when and why people seek information. Further, he introduced the "level of involvement" as the third variable to explain the difference between active and passive communication behaviors.

The above analysis is important in devising the research questions dependent on each party's position and analyzing the different sides of the arguments (Kim & Grunig, 2011). A public has an active communication behavior if they look for information and try to understand it. In contrast, a public has a passive communicating behavior if they do not look for information but process information they encounter randomly (Hamilton, 1992). The said variables determine whether a person can be categorized as non-public, latent public, aware public, and active public.

Any diverse school community is a melting pot of different cultures with varying beliefs and support systems. Panning out from an ethnocentric perspective, Illia et al. (2013) advanced the idea that situational theory examines the impact of an individual or society using a dominant culture to establish the rhetoric and ideologies of others. As a result, all groups and stakeholders must get involved in school matters. Grunig's situational theory of publics provides an insight into the parental attitude

and participation in their child's education. When parents recognize the challenges affecting their children and are actively involved in their child's education, they will positively impact them. However, EL parents experience challenges that limit their problem recognition, constraint recognition, and level of involvement.

For EL families, especially during the pandemic, inadequate language proficiency creates an obstacle to understanding virtual and online learning information (Ying, et al., 2021). Coupled with other factors, such as access to the platforms, perhaps due to economic factors, this inability to fully understand information leads to even more disadvantages for these families. Therefore, EL parents may have limited problem recognition, greater constraint recognition, and a low level of involvement. The above independent variables may lead to EL parents exhibiting passive communication behavior (information processing) rather than active communication behavior (information seeking).

During the COVID-19 pandemic, most student learning has transitioned to online and virtual spaces. Virtual learning has increased significantly during the global pandemic (Baber 2020). Kroger-Ross and Waters (2013) used the situational theory to dissect the levels of success that can be reached in a virtual environment. Long before COVID-19, these researchers found isolation and disconnection in a virtual learning environment were critical determinants of the success of virtual learning. Various challenges are associated with virtual learning, and different levels of family, school, and parental involvement are necessary for solving each problem. Kroger-Ross and Waters posited that success in online learning depends on active and passive communication, which are key connectors in the different levels of publics.

Collaboratively finding tentative solutions allows for higher achievement levels (Kroger-Ross & Waters 2013). Therefore, EL stakeholders in the education system must embrace information seeking or active communication behavior to improve student achievement.

Empirical Research

This literature review will identify and discuss EL families' various perspectives on the family-school partnership, especially now that students are engaged in remote learning. This review will address the impacts of the family-school partnership while incorporating the Epstein framework of parental involvement. It will also detail the perspective of EL families on the family-school partnership on remote learning and the family-school partnership and distant learning. In addition, this literature review will examine literature barriers to family-school partnerships for EL families and the federal initiatives that support family-school partnerships. Specifically, this study aims to explore past literature on this area of research and fill the gap in current literature regarding the perspective of EL parents of family-school-partnership during remote learning.

Criteria for Selection

Several considerations were made for the literature and articles included in these studies regarding validity and relevance. The included articles were from 2015 to the present. Although literature reviews were considered in the selection process, empirical studies were prioritized. Furthermore, materials directly related to the issues at hand, such as EL families and other related matters, were sought. The majority of

the materials chosen, mainly empirical studies, were based on research conducted in the United States.

I used different search keywords, such as EL/ESL family, emergent bilingual family, family-school-community, school partnership, parental involvement, communication, Parenting, Communicating, Volunteering, Learning at Home, and Decision Making. Lastly, I used comparative and analytical approaches to gather evidence about EL parents' views on family-school partnerships during the remote learning experience, which helped develop vital conclusions about what was already established, as well as the gap that this research will try to fill.

Epstein Framework of Family-School Partnerships

Parenting. Barnett et al. (2020) conducted a dimensional survey of 10,700 children born in 2001 at their time of birth, at nine months, at two years, and at the start of preschool and kindergarten. Several measures of parental engagements were progressively measured, and the results cumulatively compared a cohort of results from a control group consisting of 2500 learners. Elements, such as language and numeracy skills, among others, were dissected alongside subsects, including poverty. Divulging from a bio-ecological theoretical perspective presented by Bronfenbrenner, their research pointed to the importance of microsystems and mesosystems in the early childhood education setup (Barnett et al., 2020). Parents, staff, and others were observed to inform the proximal incidences that influenced their behavior. Their dissection concluded that significant evidence connected parental engagement to the learners' outcome (Barnett et al., 2020).

Conversely, Nyemba and Chitiyo (2018) ascertained this dimension among minorities in the United States, specifically Zimbabwean mothers. They observed that parents in this cohort were highly involved in their children's education. In addition, they observed that these mothers socially and emotionally supported their children in different ways. Most were shown to send their children to Catholic schools that generally offered maximum protection to their children, instead of the public schools. The transfer of knowledge among these parents was significant, such that others often emulated decisions with positive outcomes. For instance, the author observed that "another mother also transferred her daughter to a Catholic school after noticing that her previous school, despite being highly academically ranked, was not a good fit for her child's social and moral development" (Nyemba & Chitiyo, 2018, p. 7). This suggests that parents of students are likely to take the initiative through positive and participative parenting.

Communication. Laho (2019) observed that bidirectional communication between parents enhanced student achievement and met parents' expectations of their children. The author posited that communication between these two stakeholders had pointed to increased parent involvement in their children's education. Laho (2019) also asserted that homework, for instance, communicated to the parents was often finished on time, increasing students' chances for better outcomes. In addition, Laho (2019) observed that modern technologies, primarily due to the proliferation of smartphones, meant that modes of communication were shifting. As such, Laho (2019) argued that the advent of social media provided alternative and better channels of acquiring instant information about learners from schools, which was always the

case in realistic school communities. Most schools opted for traditional emails for this kind of communication, albeit with a shift due to the aforementioned dynamics. For instance, learning management systems (LMSs) were continually being adapted to allow the parents access to their children's outcomes remotely, breaking the communication barrier.

Although scholarly evidence points to the importance of these platforms on communication, minimal research has been directed towards understanding their impacts on communication in rural areas. Laho (2019) developed a multi-participant survey of a school in rural Michigan to partake in this task. The K12 school transitioned from using its own LMSs to Schoology. However, its own data center for student metrics had been maintained. Laho (2019) presented 901 questionnaires to parents and 83 to the teachers, each with varied questions per the cohort, all from the school. The response rate for the parents' questionnaire was 25.2%. However, the Internet was observed as a minimal causative, with only four families having access to the Internet. A reported 69.2% of the parents and 89.3% of teachers agreed that bidirectional communication was adequate. There was a consensus that some underlying issues, especially economy-enabled, such as reduced Internet access and lack of infrastructure and economic disparity, meant that an overall communication could not be ascertained. However, as with Epstein's framework type of involvement, the connection between parents and learners was observed to be significantly improved under the LMS. Furthermore, Schoology as a nationwide platform allowed for an effective comparative study tool.

Volunteering. Epstein (2018) ascertained that creating an environment where parents, teachers, learners, and the community provide services to promote school partnerships is fundamental. The researcher observed that partaking in tasks in different areas of the school community enables parents to feel connected to the local community. Integration to the community for immigrants and EL families was also observed to directly impact this (Shiffman, 2019). Blair and Haneda's (2021) exploration of this topic in their understanding of collaboration between parents and learners from EL families showcased several significant issues. In their dissection of two families that had experienced racism, among other challenges, they presented that inadequate collaboration opportunities for parents and school were the causative agents. Also, they observed that exclusion of these parents from activities in school due to the language barrier was even more detrimental, not only to the children's outcomes in schools but also to their integration into the local community. Testaments from the students pointed to continued exploration of their plight, with minimal effort to understand them and their families through collaboration. Some of the students exhibited behavioral changes such as bullying, perhaps as retaliation for this treatment. Laho's (2019) dissection of parental engagement showcased this. Families that had continually transferred their communal efforts to school environments had their children's outcomes partially increased by establishing a home-like environment with staff and other parents.

As one of the six categories of parental participation, Epstein (2018) examined the importance of parenting. In addition, Snell (2018) sampled 16 parents from 11 families of children at Cactus Grove Magnet Elementary School who spoke more

than one language and had EL in their engagement with the school. Snell used a knowledge framework based on qualitative analysis. Through direct engagement and volunteering, the author discovered that parents of students from EL homes desired to be included in their child's education, although they reported a language barrier in their communication with teachers. The study's findings revealed a considerable shift in both parents' and learners' attitudes, as well as a rethinking of their responsibilities. Volunteer parents recognized the significance of maintaining contact with their children, particularly in the educational setting (Snell, 2018). Furthermore, parent engagement was observed to continually provide a position for parents from EL families and other cultural or economic minorities to be understood. Essentially, volunteering allows parents to understand each other through relationships rather than competition.

Further, scholars have highlighted the critical importance of parental volunteers in their children's lives, particularly in ELs homes. For example, Gonzales and Gabel (2018) conducted a critical cross-sectional study of EL families to relate the school ecology, student results, and parental involvement. Their claim established that parental volunteerism is critical in allowing schools to receive adequate money to address the challenges that ELs face. They discovered that retooling as an essential pedagogical approach not only allowed for the purchase and institutionalization of the necessary instruments, but also the determination of their fit. Volunteering teaches parents that their roles in the school community are more than transactional symbols; parents are also an important part of the learning process, with responsibilities to co-learn and co-educate their children.

Learning from Home. Firmanto and Sumarsono (2020) affirmed the importance of learning from home for children in kindergarten. Through a survey of 16 students aged 4-5 years, they ascertained that the COVID-19 pandemic disrupted the pedagogical environment for these learners. They asserted that although the importance of learning from home techniques had been established even before the pandemic, its onset had exacerbated this situation. For instance, parents who were not used to the learning processes found it significantly challenging to initiate the same assertions as those who educate. In these instances, mothers who were the primary educators were observed only to conduct these sessions during their free time. The lack of expertise in the areas of study propagated an environment that does not enable learning. As a result, the play-based pedagogical approaches to improve fine and gross motor skills were disabled. Furthermore, facilitators in this environment are faced with difficulties due to the inadequate internet penetration among these families.

Extending similar assertions, Laho's (2019) study of the importance of LMS as an enabling communication tool showcased similar results. The researcher's theoretical extensions pointed to the need to establish a home-based pedagogical environment for the LMS to be effective. They observed that although less than four families of the 901 had pointed to internet connectivity as a cause of reduced communication with the school, the lack of prior learning from the home environment had made the situation more difficult. To produce effective school family partnerships, they recommended that school communities establish effective learning practices from the home environment. This is even more important for EL families,

considering that most learners and their parents face difficulty accessing learning platforms and exercising learning procedures as advanced by teachers (Hartshorn & McMurry, 2020). Furthermore, quarantine and other safe distance separation protocols made it more challenging to establish a play-based pedagogical environment with most learning centers.

Sayer and Braun's (2020) dissection of the current pandemic showcased that learning from home is a critical aspect of parental involvement. They observed that the disparity in economic spending for rural and urban students (\$2100 and \$1321, respectively) illustrated the problems different communities face in their quest for learning. They argued that although LMS provided a mode of equalizing this phase, the economic inequality pointed to a case of criticized physical learning platforms transferred to the online platforms. The very inadequacy of resources and infrastructure meant that students and parents from EL families had a lower encounter with LMS, hence reduced knowledge on their institution in homes. Furthermore, the financial burden yielded by the pandemic unearthed a critically underlying issue, which was exacerbated by inadequate funding from institutions and governments. Educators took on the difficult duty of contacting students and families to verify that they were connected to their teachers and had all the essential information and equipment for remote learning (Sayer & Braun, 2020). Making phone calls and keeping track of who was contacted fell largely on multilingual instructional assistants and teachers. Teachers in the district where they conducted the research were required to keep track of student contacts on the school's student spreadsheet, the campus teacher portal, and a district-created EL-specific spreadsheet to track ELs.

These assertions showcase the problems that arise when instituting learning from the home environment and how the pandemic escalated the situation. Therefore, the primary importance of these frameworks among EL families, as asserted by Epstein (2018), can be presented.

Morita-Mullaney (2021) focused on emergent bilingual families and how they interacted with their children in the creation of unique literacy activities. Teachers were encouraged to observe such interactions, so as to transfer involved engagements into the classroom setting. Through such engagements, and informed by Epstein's framework, this could enhance communication and learning from home between school and home, as educators would understand family values and language dynamics, and thus develop strategies of helping involved learners within the classroom setting.

Decision Making. Home-school partnerships are essential for the children's success. However, Koralek et al. (2019) highlighted the gap that exists between educators and families from focusing on involvement, as opposed to engagement. Even though parents are supposed to be involved in decision making, as highlighted in Epstein's framework, promoting parental involvement fails in reaping desired outcomes, because parents feel as if they are educators' helpers. While exploring who should make policy decisions in an EL classroom, Harklau and Yang (2019) observed a clash for ESOL educators as they exercised both duties of teachers and content creators. With the diversity in their classroom, decisions on pedagogical approaches and practices should be made at a moment's notice. The researchers observed that teachers were being turned into policymakers for their different programs in such

instances. During their study based on a rural K12 school in Georgia, where immigrant penetration remains low, at 56%, compared to the national average of 83%, they observed that this conflict of interest created a more intricate workspace. As such, they concluded that an entity that involves more than the teacher, parents, and the other school community partners should be involved to ensure effective learning.

Citing the No Children Left Behind Act of 2001 and every Student Succeeds Act of 2015, Ratliffe and Ponte (2018) reiterated the importance of parental involvement in their learner's education decision-making. They observed that just like any society, school communities were a reflection of the diversity of local communities. Therefore, they were needed to ensure the coherence of culture and other social factors is reinvigorated in school communities. A focused study of 12 parents of Hawaiian learners with heritage in different generations observed that multiculturalism on the island necessitated that education is multicultural. Those involved in the decision-making processes, such as principals, were observed to significantly skew this relationship towards the parents or policymakers. Thus, the authors ascertained that these cohorts should be equally involved in the decisions involving their learners. They opined that as it is with the multicultural environment of the island, observation of the different diversity-based criteria in the decision making for learners was significant and had been observed to influence student outcome among other metrics for learners (Ratliffe & Ponte, 2018).

Porras (2019) conducted a study on stakeholders' involvement in governance and consequences of this on participatory policies. The focus of this study was on

California's education law, Local Control and Accountability Plan (LCAP), as it required participation of bilingual families in determining how \$48 billion dollars of education funds were spent. Attention was thus on 10 Latina immigrant mothers that were a part of the District English Learner Advisory Committee (DELAC). Findings indicated that even though these women were happy with the role that they played on this committee, they experienced a challenging environment; one characterized by tension and suppression. While this study did not directly touch on the family-school partnership, it is still important as it highlights the essence of including families in policy decision making, especially on policies that directly affect their children's educational wellbeing.

In another study, leveraging the case of Kentucky Statewide Family Engagement Center (KY), Perry and Geller (2021) sought to assess how transformational family engagement could be attained. In this study, KY's collaborative partners were interviewed with the intention of reporting on how family-school partnerships could be enhanced. While there existed historical barriers, this study reported that focusing on strengths played an important role in promoting transformational family engagement. Based on this, educators, working closely with family, could promote transformational engagement by leveraging two-way communication, promoting decision making and collaboration with the community.

Collaborating with the Community. Park et al. (2017) discussed the Early Childhood Longitudinal Study–Kindergarten Cohort (ECLS-K) of 918 schools that involved community collaboration. Using the social capital theory in three models, they ascertained that parental involvement (PI) was critical to student achievement,

especially in its timely manner. Their research presented an argument in three sections consistent with this notion. The three distinct dimensions of school-based PI investigated whether these three types of school-based PI were related separately to school-level achievement and learning environment. Furthermore, their assertions also proved that collective parental involvement, done through a collaboration of communities, pointed to the progression of students' achievements (Park et al., 2017).

To further this assertion, Li and Fischer (2017) conducted a study to establish how parental networks influenced parental involvement in advantaged and disadvantaged school neighborhoods. Using data from the Early Childhood Longitudinal Study–Kindergarten Cohort relevant per the 2001 education census, they observed that parental networks in the advantaged communities were more enduring in promoting a sense of community in advantaged communities. Moreover, they posited that the difference in funding for the school in different neighborhoods based on the local community economic stature and student outcomes presented a framework in which collaboration in the community was ineffective. Parents of students in the less advantaged communities often faced difficulties finding funding for school infrastructure, among others, which is an issue that deteriorates the already disconnected communities. However, in some instances, these monetary challenges paired with parental network presents an opportunity to connect at a more advanced level to find solutions to their issues. Fundamentally, collaboration in the community offers a platform in which learners are positively affected (Epstein, 2018).

Impacts of Family-School Partnership

In a bid to evaluate how parental involvement acts as a factor for enhancing the achievement of learners in the learning environment of a school, Park et al. (2017) carried out a study that made use of social capital theory and data from a longitudinal study for Early Childhood (ECLS-K) with a sample of 914 public schools, derived using a sampling strategy, namely multi-stage cluster. The study examined how the school environment impacted the achievement of the students in regard to parental involvement. The researchers examined the three levels of parental involvement, which consisted of public-good parental involvement, private-good parental involvement, and networking. Public-good parental involvement focused on benefitting the school, while private-good parental involvement was more focused on parents' children's success, and networking was focused on parents connecting with one another.

From the study, Park et al. (2017) found that schools with high public-good parental involvement had more students with better performance outcomes. They also noted that the socioeconomic status of the school played an important role in moderating the effects of the parental involvement levels with schools with high socioeconomic status schools experiencing better public-good parental involvement, while private-good involvement and networking parents were more relatable and had better effects in schools with lower socioeconomic status. The researchers claimed that parental involvement in schools had been beneficial, with enhanced school functioning being one of the benefits. This assertion supports Barnett et al. (2020), whose study elaborated on the impact of teachers engaging parents and the parents'

involvement enhancing the children's academic readiness. The research data were derived from a birth cohort, and the sample population comprised 2,250 four-year-old children who had been enrolled in an early childhood setting (Barnett et al., 2020). This research study's findings are impactful to this research as they provide more information to inform the research question on the strategies, activities, or collaborations being enacted to support EL parents as partners to improve educational outcomes for children. Specifically, Barnett et al.'s findings align with current research as they expound on the increased parent engagement at home and in school, due to parental engagement practices. They also show that an increase in the quantity of parent engagement in home activities for learning enhances kindergarten readiness.

Although Rodrigues et al. (2020) reported a weak correlation between the performance of individual students and parental involvement, this study details that parental involvement enhances the outcomes of schools. Park et al.'s (2017) study is of paramount importance to this research, as it details levels of parental involvement based on social capital theory and expounds on how they overlap to broaden the impact of parental involvement and, consequently, school-family partnerships. Notably, Park et al.'s emphasis on the benefits of parental involvement were based on all students and did not specify its impact on EL students. However, the study emphasized that the benefits experienced are more in schools with low socioeconomic status, which, as Rodrigues et al. noted, is where most ELs attend. In addition, the findings are keen on pointing out the benefits of a communication and cooperation culture in schools among parents and staff members, especially for schools in underserved communities where most ELs attend (Rodrigues et al., 2020).

This aligns with the research question addressing factors that most influence EL families' perspectives on the family-school partnership.

McWayne et al.'s (2016) findings on the need for actions to enhance learning, such as cooperation and communication, were derived from parental involvement. McWayne et al. (2016) highlighted the need for the identification of protective factors whose role is to reinforce foundational social and academic skills and offer mitigation against poverty-associated risk factors that hinder students' successful transition to formal learning. The study was based on two goals: the identification of patterns that are distinct to practices of family engagement among low-income Latino families, speaking both Spanish and English, and the examination of the correlation between the said patterns, the demographic factors of the families, and the social and language skills of children in these families. The study involved providing the 65-item Parent Engagement of Families from Latino Backgrounds (PEFL) questionnaire to teachers and caregivers of 650 children from the Head Start Program. The questionnaires were provided in the language of their choice (English/Spanish). The PEFL was used to measure family engagement among the low-income Latino family in the study sample. The sample population was also provided with questionnaires to gather demographic characteristics of the family of the sample population (children, teachers, and caregivers), Preschool Language Scale (PLS-4) to assess language skills, and the Penn Interactive Peer Play Scale (PIPPS)—a 32-point scale of behavior rating for measuring social competence.

Although the findings of this study were based on the investigation of the specific Latino community that speaks both Latino and English, hence the generalization of these results to other settings would be a problem, this study provided viable information regarding patterns of family engagement in EL families, specifically those from low socioeconomic status (McWayne et al., 2016). From the study, McWayne et al. (2016) demonstrated that demographic factors, such as the structure of families, the gender of the children, and the education level of the parents and their employment were predictors of variations in patterns of family engagement across and within language groups. Specifically, parents who were unemployed were in the low-engagement group with their children's school, suggesting employed parents are more likely to be more engaged than unemployed parents. The research also found parents with an average level of school engagement were more likely to be recent immigrants, so they had not been in the U.S. for long. McWayne et al. expounded that the said patterns have meaningful impacts on children's language and social skills. Specifically, more educated parents were more engaged with their children's schools than less educated parents. As a result, this study will be highly informative in the current research study, as it probes deeply on family engagement in a general population and, more specifically, among Latino children who are EL. Unlike Park et al. (2017), who expounded on how the engagement of parents and families benefit learners and increases their school/learning outcomes, McWayne et al.'s study failed to explicitly expound on the role that family engagement plays in enhancing school/learning outcomes. However, it mentioned the beneficial nature of the engagement in nurturing social and language skills, which are critical in

improving learners' schools' outcomes (McWayne et al., 2016). The current study will offer information on activities, strategies, and collaborations being enacted to support EL parents as partners to improve educational outcomes for children.

Meng (2020) agreed with Park et al. (2017) on the positive impact parental involvement has on children's outcomes in schools. Similar to Park et al., this study used the Early Childhood Longitudinal Study [ECLS] (2011) for the kindergarten cohort with a sample population of 18,170 ethnically diverse students, utilizing a 3-stage sampling design, where the first stage was the selection of counties as the principal units of sampling. The second stage was the selection of private and public schools serving differing regions and locales, and the third stage was the random selection of children from the students selected in the second stage. Self-report questionnaires were given to families with one parent (mostly 89.9% mothers) filling in the details. The research measures ranged from the parents' involvement in the school to academic achievements, math assessment, internalizing and externalizing behavior, covariates, and interpersonal skills.

Regarding parents' involvement in schools, the parents responded to eleven yes/no (binary) questions based on their years of involvement in the school. They responded to the type of involvement with examples of behavior intervention, problems with school work, PTO/PTA meetings, advisory groups, among others (Meng, 2020). The impact of the family-school partnership was evident in this research, as it highlighted how the involvement of parents in the school enhanced the children's academic competency, behavior, social skills (Meng, 2020). With the findings based on parental involvement in three levels: school contact, school

involvement, and low involvement, it was evident that parents' involvement in school boosted the outcome of students based on these levels. Unlike prior research, such as Hafner et al. (2018), who expounded on the need for parental involvement and consequently the family-school partnership to enhance students' ability to adjust in school, and McWayne et al. (2016), who expounded on the use of parental involvement to enhance transition into formal learning, Meng (2020) failed to highlight how parental involvement could be impactful in school readiness and adjustment.

To evaluate the relationship between parental involvement and parental network in elementary schools in advantaged and disadvantaged neighborhoods, Li and Fischer (2017) used data that is large and nationally representative from the 1998-1999 ECLS (kindergarten cohort) and the 2000 U.S. census. The selected children were in kindergarten in the fall of 1998 with a follow-up up to 8th grade. Data were from spring in 2000 (1st grade) and spring 2000 (3rd grade), allowing the data to be examined longitudinally throughout the years in early elementary. In their research, parental involvement in schools (dependent variable), parental networks, and school neighborhood disadvantage (independent variables) measures were considered, with control variables of gender, behavioral outcomes, family/parental traits, and race. The researchers highlighted the importance of having parental networks and its positive role in leading to increased parental involvement.

With increased parental involvement, it is evident that students' achievement increased, behavior and attendance improved, and there was an increased understanding between families and school. From the research, it is clear that the

level of parental involvement varies, as parental networks are more impactful in some areas (facilitation of organizational participation) than others (Li & Fischer, 2017). It is also apparent that in neighborhoods that are disadvantaged, parental networks are more impactful, and consequently, parental involvement is enhanced. As this research aimed to look into family-school partnerships among ELs, it will be opportune to provide information regarding the effects of parental networks in disadvantaged neighborhoods where most ELs attend school. It will thus address the research question: “How do EL families of children in elementary school experience family-school partnerships while engaged in remote learning?” addressing factors that most influence EL families’ perspectives on the family-school partnership.

Barriers, as noted by Zimmerman and Brown (2021), characterize the relationship between families (homes) and school. Family-school partnership is one of the avenues that can be leveraged in breaking these barriers. Schools and communities, by supporting families, create spaces and opportunities that empower families thus enabling them to contribute more to the academic excellence of their children. This partnership also ensures that there is continuous open communication between families, schools and stakeholders within the community on how best to enhance students’ learning. For Morita-Mullaney (2021), this partnership ensures that there is an understanding between families, schools and communities on how best they can engage each other for the benefit of students. This researcher added that this partnership enhances stakeholders’ responsiveness towards each other and this generates an understanding of the relationship around the school, community and families. For Porras (2019), such partnerships enhance parents’ engagement as they

not only participate in policy making within the community but are open to participating in open dialogue concerning their children's needs.

Barriers to Family-School Partnership for EL Families

As has been indicated in this study, partnerships continue to play a leading role in students' education. Even though schools, families, and communities can play a leading role in students' learning as well as development, especially for ELs, for this to be achieved, there is a need for these resources to be appropriately leveraged. For instance, Epstein (2018) claimed that when family and community resources are appropriately utilized, it enhances students' achievement, class preparation, attendance, and even course taking. Paik et al. (2019), observed that collaboration between schools, families, and communities has the potential to enhance students' communication because, through such partnerships, these learners' social and cultural backgrounds are leveraged in support of learning. While all this has been supported by Epstein's overlapping spheres of influence since schools, communities, and families educate and socialize learners, there are barriers to this partnership, particularly for EL families. These barriers often limit cooperation between the three institutions, limiting action and support for improved outcomes.

ELs' family involvement is important in this partnership because these families are a vital source of support for involved learners. Wassell et al. (2015) argued that the involvement of these families could have a positive impact on learners' future careers, especially in the field of science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM). However, with the importance that families are expected to play in this partnership, McKenna and Millen (2013) reported that schools have

been complaining about the limited role that families play in their children's education, which ultimately impacts educational outcomes and the relationship between schools and communities. Criticisms from educators regarding the limited role of EL families could thus be taken as an indicator of existing barriers that have limited effective participation in the family-school partnership.

Communication as a Barrier. For immigrant families in the United States, it can be argued that language is one of the barriers that they often experience as they attempt to settle in the country (Baker et al., 2016; Lavadenz, et al., 2021; Parsons & Shim, 2019; Porras, 2019). This issue often affects EL families' effective contribution to the school-family partnership. According to Parsons and Shim (2019), while there are numerous barriers that EL families experience and which hinder their ability to be involved in school, language plays a significant role in hindering their effective participation. As a barrier, language, therefore, makes it challenging for educators and parents from EL families to communicate effectively. Furthermore, as a result of existing language barriers, parents from EL families are often not comfortable communicating with educators, as they feel deficient. Baker et al. (2016) asserted that this creates a scenario where parents end up perceiving a school as not being family-friendly, which could have a negative implication on school-family partnership.

Porras (2019) is of the view that while these families play an important role in policy making within their communities, communication is one of the factors that hinders their active engagement and participation. Latina women that participated in the study by Porras (2019) were of the view that their understanding and fluency in English made them be noticed but if they did not, they were disregarded.

Communication thus hinders them from providing insightful contributions or input. Since families were to continuously engage with schools after Covid-19 outbreak as part of facilitating remote learning, Lavadenz et al. (2021) noted that communication was a major barrier since multilingual communication was required.

Scheduling Flexibility. Time is a major barrier to parents' involvement in school, and scheduling flexibility is another barrier. For Cho and Christ (2021), scheduling conflicts are one of the issues that affect students' learning. Schools, for instance, fail to consider families schedules when organizing events. Zimmerman and Brown (2021) noted that when scheduling events, it is essential that schools check in with families to identify best times for them.

Wassell et al. (2017) stated that this is a barrier being promoted by schools as they fail to consider parents' schedules. As highlighted, this is an identified barrier because, for schools, their needs are given more preference than those of EL parents. Baker et al. (2016) shared a similar view, as they claimed that time plays a central role in some of the conflicts that parents have with schools, which affects their involvement and engagement. For EL parents, scheduling flexibility is a major barrier, as schools' meeting times often conflict with work schedules, which is usually a major source of conflict. Therefore, this dilemma hinders their involvement and engagement in school, affecting the existing partnership.

Community Resources. Lack of community resources is another barrier that contributes to EL families' limited involvement and engagement in school-family partnerships (Gonzales & Gabel, 2017; Lavadenz et al., 2021; Perry & Geller, 2021). Lack of child care programs within the community, for instance, plays a significant

role in EL parents' involvement and engagement in schools (Gonzales & Gabel, 2017). For parents with younger children, lack of child care programs hinders their participation, involvement, and engagement in school activities. The absence of such programs forces them to stay at home to care for younger children, which sometimes prompts them to miss school meetings. As a structural barrier, the lack of social programs reduces EL families' involvement in schools, which has negative implications for school-family partnerships.

In most cases, this often leads to a scenario where they are blamed for their children's underachievement in school. Usually, it is assumed that they do not care about their children's education since they fail to turn up for important meetings. This is particularly an issue in schools that fail to understand that parental involvement in school activities is complex (Gonzales & Gabel, 2017).

Porras (2019) noted that resources are essential in supporting student learning, and thus their unavailability is a major barrier to their success. For Lavadenz et al. (2021) inadequate resources is a major barrier, as it is one of the reasons for a culture of inequality that EL families experience in the US. Perry and Geller (2021) are of the opinion that resource limitations make it hard for schools to acknowledge families' contribution to their children's learning. For Morita-Mullaney (2021), resources make it easier for families to support their children's learning.

The Perspective of EL Families on Family-School Partnership and Remote Learning

To successfully engage EL families in family-school partnerships, there is need for trust and respect. This, as noted by Zimmerman and Brown (2021), is necessary for relationship building. Even though family-school partnership gives voice to EL families, as they can be seen and heard, this can make these families feel vulnerable (Zimmerman & Brown, 2021). For these families, remote learning enabled them to engage educators in promoting their children's learning from home. Since some parents work long hours, this could have been stressful as they not only had to support their children at home but also engage teachers in bettering their learning. In supporting remote learning, as noted by Lavadenz et al. (2021), parents experienced numerous challenges, one of which being insufficient resources to support remote learning. This could therefore have affected their perspective of remote learning and the support that they were gaining from family-school partnership.

Parsons and Shim (2019) carried out a study on ways to increase EL parental engagement and involvement. The study used quantitative and qualitative data acquired from an online survey and in-person interviews, respectively. The quantitative was derived from Survey Monkey, an online survey platform that enabled the researchers to come up with parameters for creating Likert-scale and open-ended questions. The interviewees were asked 12 interview questions. From both the qualitative and quantitative data, two themes emerged: barriers that are not culture and language-based and the improvement of parental involvement and engagement among EL families. The findings are of paramount importance to this

study as they provide limitless information on the perspectives EL families have on family-school partnerships. The researchers denoted that the issues faced by EL families in family-school partnerships go beyond culture and language barriers and differences. A student's ability to learn well is also dependent on a positive learning environment where security, capacity to concentrate, and relationships are trustful. As a result, EL families are motivated to be involved and engaged.

The study also highlighted the need for increased engagement and involvement of EL families to generate positive experiences for the students and their families; this is achieved by ensuring that schools communicate all about the schools' systems (Parsons & Shim, 2019). From the study, it is evident that EL families understand that the success of their learners in the classroom is dependent on (a) meaningful family-school partnerships, which involve engagement of EL families, (b) the creation of strong partnerships and taking of time to know EL families and their students, (c) the consideration of updates from families and provision of detailed and timely feedback, and (d) communication in languages that they understand and in communication channels that are preferred (Parson & Shim, 2019).

Epstein et al. (2021) substantiated this in the National Network of Partnership Schools (NNPS) Annual Report, which is carried out at John Hopkins University. Over 300 schools were included in this analysis, and students from families who spoke 3-150 languages and various dialects were included in the study. On average, families across districts spoke an average of 45 different languages, and 15% of students were ELs, varying from 1-55% of students in the sample districts. The findings suggest teachers do not communicate as effectively with EL families.

Epstein et al. (2021) found the reason for this may be the teachers do not speak a language other than English. Therefore, there may be a communication barrier. The findings from the NNPS report led to the conclusion district leaders and school staff need to study and generate a plan around communicative challenges experienced by teachers and families of ELs to ensure more effective communication takes place in the future. This is even more true amidst the additional challenges presented by COVID.

Since COVID-19 led to school closure and presented remote learning, family-school partnerships had to be realigned to meet the diverse needs of the learners in a dynamic environment (Epstein et al., 2021). As Epstein et al. (2021) noted, family-school partnerships are affected by the pervasive technological divide, enhanced by mutual appreciation and heightened by the hard work of all parties involved in the partnership.

It is worth noting there were variances in the data by Epstein et al. (2021) based on the grade level of the students in the research, as there were different results for elementary schools, as opposed to secondary schools. The findings suggested there was more communication with all families, including EL families, for students in elementary schools than in secondary schools. There seemed to be more collaboration between parents and teachers in all areas for students in elementary schools, including meetings and fun home activities provided by teachers. The reasons for this are unknown, however, it could be related to goals at different grade levels. For instance, Epstein et al. (2021) found the only area where there was more effort put into school responses to COVID-19 was in the area of teachers collecting

and grading students' work. This could be because of the importance of students' grade point averages (GPA) in secondary school and beyond, where grades are less of a focus in elementary school. This could be why practices, such as fun home activities, were more of a focus in elementary school. Regardless of the grade level, the findings by Epstein et al. (2021) indicate more effort needs to be put into communication between parents and students, particularly post COVID-19.

The Research Gap

Considering the available literature, it would be prudent to conclude that literature specifically expounding on EL parents' perspective on remote learning, precisely the post-COVID-19 era, is limited. Most data gathering techniques involve some form of physical movement, which was halted by the imposed curfews. Therefore, gathering data in the middle of the crisis was an uphill task, as most people were adjusting to the new way of life (Epstein et al., 2021). The problem is partially due to the newness of the predicament that necessitated the transition towards the adoption of large-scale virtual learning. The novelty of the phenomenon created the opportunity for the research to fill the research gap existing in understanding the topic sentence. As such, volunteers in the research of understanding the perception of EL families to family-school-community on elementary students' virtual learning can only be commended. Such genuine initiative shows their dedication to making education a basic need with universal coverage across the United States.

Researchers, such as the Epstein team from John Hopkins University (2021), had limited data and limited qualitative and quantitative data gathering techniques options that could be applied without breaking the Health Act initiated in response to

the pandemic. Research and formulation of hypotheses around this topic are informative and unique and sum up existing literature, while providing clues for additional research and filling the research gap present in current literature. This paper offers an opportunity to understand the inner workings of the family-school partnership and how it could be improved to enhance nationwide educational quality. It also provides insight as well as furthering research, particularly regarding EL parents' perspectives on virtual learning outcomes. Finally, it offers learners an opportunity to understand best how they could enhance the learning process by better implementing Epstein's framework in the quest for ELs' experience.

Summary

The purpose of this paper is to explore the involvement, collaboration, and barriers of involving EL parents in the wake of COVID-19 during the remote learning experience. Summarizing the empirical evidence, it is evident that the perspective of the EL parents' involvement in school affects their child's academic achievements. There is limited evidence in the literature on EL parents' perspectives on remote learning in times of crisis, such as epidemics and pandemics. The EL parents' perspectives during COVID-19 concerning school-family partnership are essential because ELs are a vulnerable and highly affected population by the pandemic, because they already are immigrants and have their challenges. This research will contribute to understanding the present pandemic-related perceptions, challenges, needs, and barriers that EL families experience and allow educators to determine implications for the education sector to opt-in crisis for such populations.

CHAPTER THREE

RESEARCH METHODS

This study aimed to identify activities, possibilities, and challenges to EL parent engagement for elementary school students in the aftermath of COVID-19 in the United States, using a mixed research approach. The data collection process began with survey distribution followed by an in-depth analysis based on five open-ended questions included in the survey. **Appendix A** shows overview of the research questions, sub-questions, methodology, and analysis. Using a mixed methods approach for the study resulting in a more thorough investigation (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). A combination of methodologies made it feasible to improve the rigor and depth of any EL parents review's analysis and findings. There were two research questions addressed in this research study: How do EL families of children in elementary school experience family-school partnerships while engaged in remote learning? And what are families' perceived challenges and barriers in supporting their children to learn at home while engaged in remote learning? This chapter discussed the methodology followed in this research study. The chapter explained the research design, sampling procedures and sampling size, instruments, validity and reliability, and ethical concerns. Furthermore, methods for quantitative and qualitative data analysis were presented. Finally, the chapter concludes with a summary.

Research Design

Research designs are measures for collecting, analyzing, interpreting, and reporting the data in a research study (Creswell, 2006). Research design presents diverse ways of conducting a study (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). Diligent research designs, such as a mixed methods approach, are significant because they guide researchers' methods and set the facts by which they make interpretations at the end of the study (Creswell, 2006).

After a researcher selects a mixed method approach, the next step is to investigate the specific design that best fits the research problem (Creswell, 2006). For the current study, I determined that the best-fitted research design is an embedded design, which is a mixed-method design in which one type of data set supports and plays a secondary role based primarily on the other type of data (Creswell, 2006). The logic behind this design is that one data set is inadequate, different questions need to be answered, and each question requires a different type of data set (Creswell, 2006). Researchers generally use the mixed methods design when they need to include both qualitative and quantitative data to answer a research question within the spectrum of the study (Creswell, 2006). In the current study, an embedded research design was used to address the nature of the problem as the qualitative data alone could not help suggest implacable findings. For example, EL parent perspectives could not be quantitatively measured and need to be addressed qualitatively. In addition, some of the survey questions required quantitative and qualitative answers; thus, interpretation must be made both ways to suggest generalizable and comprehensive study findings (Creswell & Creswell, 2018).

Institutional Review Board Approval

Oakland University Institutional Review Board (IRB) approval was obtained for the study (project ID number IRB-FY2022-246) on April, 25, 2022. The questionnaire was opened for data collection from April, 27, 2022 –May, 31, 2022. The IRB approval letter is included in **Appendix B**. This approval is a surety of protection for family engagement surveys due to its authenticity. I assured the respondents of the confidentiality of their information, and their data was de-identified. Informed consent was obtained before data collection. The participants were informed that they could stop their participation at any time, and they could choose to omit any questions they did not want to answer.

Population and Participants

This study was conducted in the United States. The choice of the location was heavily influenced by the high number and the percentage of households with students in public schools that tend to use less English at home. According to the NCEA (2021), in the fall of 2018, there were about 5 million children in the United States with English as their second language. Therefore, the target location matched the research objective of analyzing the impact of EL family-school-community partnerships in the US.

Most schools worldwide chose remote learning at the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic (NCEA, 2021). In the 2021-2022 school year, parents had the choice of their children attending school face-to-face or enrolling in the virtual school with remote learning. Moreover, for the 2021-2022 school year, many school districts supported remote learning, and made provisions for parents to follow and assist the

learners in completing assignments and other assigned tasks (Hoofman & Secord, 2021).

Sampling Procedures and Sampling Size

The study included a snowball sample of EL parents who requested to respond to the questionnaire. Sampling is defined as taking a particular size of a population or universe as representative of that universe or population (Oribhabor & Anyanwu, 2019). A good portion of the population should be sampled for research to be practical and applicable; which allows for a reliable generalization of the study findings population (Oribhabor & Anyanwu, 2019). According to Oribhabor and Anyanwu (2019), a sample consists of subjects or individuals chosen from a more significant population for the survey purpose. A sample can be further defined as a group of a considerably small number of individuals selected from a population to study. A considerable sample is significant for decreasing the issue of sampling error, thus directing the need to select an appropriate sample size (Oribhabor & Anyanwu, 2019).

The study population included parents who have elementary-level ELs. Due to the large population, it was impossible to survey all of these parents. Therefore, I used a snowball sampling technique. Etikan et al. (2016) described the snowball sampling technique as one by which the subjects themselves offer referrals to recruit other samples required for the study. Dusek et al. (2015) preferred this technique for samples with rare traits. Therefore, this sampling technique aligned positively with the current research study, allowing me to identify parents of elementary-level ELs positively, as per the targeted sample size.

The anticipated sample was to be at least 50 parents of elementary-level ELs. To find and recruit participants, I shared the invitation to the survey through social media with his friends who were EL parents and asked them to invite other EL families they know to respond to the questionnaire. To achieve the targeted sample size, all the participants were encouraged to share the same survey link with other parents of elementary-level ELs. The link was shared through social media and sent via email. After posting the survey for a month, 180 responded to the survey. However, only 80 met the criteria and completed the survey.

According to Dworkin (2012), the recommended sampling size for qualitative research design to achieve saturation and redundancy points is 25-30 participants. However, after receiving the data, 32 of the survey participants responded to one or more open-ended questions, and they did not answer all five of them. Therefore, I decided to use all of the qualitative data received to achieve saturation. **Appendix C** includes a copy of the invention post that was shared with the EL parents. A criterion for participants is that the parent has a child enrolled in the remote learning in 2020-2021 or 2021-2022 school year and are EL parents.

Participant Characteristics

Ninety parents participated in the study. However, ten participants withdrew and did not complete the survey. All the participants were required to be a parent of a child in elementary school and have/had experienced virtual school in the United States. From the demographic information, the characteristics of the participants were divided into two categories. The first category included the parents' characteristics, which discussed the participants' gender, the number of years living in the United

States, living region, ages, education level, and employment status. The second category included the family characteristics, which discussed the participants' children and their language use.

Parents Characteristics

The characteristics of the parents are shown in Table 3.1. The highest percentage of the respondents lived in the United States for six years or more (43.8%), and 52.5% of the respondents were living in the Midwest states. Regarding gender, most of the respondents were female (61.3%). The largest group of respondents are aged 31-35 (37.5%). The majority of the respondents held a master's degree (57.5%). Forty-seven percent of the respondents were employed. Interestingly, most of those who selected the "other" option described their employment status as graduate students (93%), and only one participant had not explained their answer.

Family Characteristics

The family characteristics are shown in Table 3.2. Most of the respondents took care of one child in elementary school (61.3%). The largest group of the respondents indicated they have children in third grade (31.3%) and in first grade (30.0%). In the study, there were seven languages identified by the EL parents, and the majority of the respondents spoke Arabic at home besides English (80.0%). In addition, the largest percentage of respondents ranked their English as an advanced level (50.0%). Fifty-seven percent of the respondents indicated their children are receiving English language support, and mostly their children have had the support for less than a year (50.0%).

Table 3.1
Parents Characteristics

	Number	Percentage
Have been in the United States for:		
Less than a year	6	7.5
1 year	4	5.0
2 years	8	10.0
3 years	9	11.3
4 years	9	11.3
5 years	9	11.3
6 years and more	35	43.8
Gender		
Male	28	35.0
Female	49	61.3
Prefer not to say	3	3.8
Parents' age		
20 or younger	3	3.8
21 - 25	1	1.3
26 - 30	7	8.8
31 - 35	30	37.5
36 - 40	20	25.0
41 - 45	12	15.0
46+	7	8.8
Living region		
Midwest	42	52.5
Northeast	13	16.3
Southeast	9	11.3
Southwest	7	8.8
West	9	11.3
Highest education level		
High school	4	5.0
Associates	1	1.3
Bachelor's degree	15	18.8
Master's degree	46	57.5
Doctorate degree	14	17.5
Employment status		
Employed	43	53.8
Not employed, looking for work	9	11.3
Not employed, not looking for work	9	11.3
Self-employed/Freelance	3	3.8
Retired	2	2.5
Other: please explain	14	17.5

Table 3.2
Family Characteristics

	Number	Percentage
The number of children in elementary school		
1	49	61.3
2	27	33.8
3 or more	4	5.0
Their children grade		
Kindergarten	9	11.3
First grade	24	30.0
Second grade	19	23.8
Third grade	25	31.3
Fourth grade	18	22.5
Fifth grade	12	15.0
Language spoken at home		
Arabic	64	80.0
Bahasa Indonesia	2	2.5
French	1	1.3
Malayalam	1	1.3
Spanish	3	3.8
Tamil	1	1.3
Telugu	7	8.8
English level		
Beginner	2	2.5
Intermediate	38	47.5
Advanced	40	50.0
Attending ESL parent meetings		
No	34	42.5
Yes	46	57.5
Child receiving English language support		
No	28	35.0
Yes	52	65.0
Child English language support		
Less than one year	40	50.0
One to three years	34	42.5
Three to five years	6	7.5

Data Collection Instruments

I used Qualtrics to create the questionnaire that was shared with the EL parents. *The School and Family Partnerships Survey* is an existing measure based on the six types of involvement (Epstein et al., 2018). This tool helps in understanding family engagement using the Epstein model scale of parental involvement. *The Measure of School-Family Partnerships* modified to reflect learning environments due to stay-at-home learning. The survey questionnaire has 41 statements that will be rated using the Epstein scale. The distribution of scores on the Epstein scale ranges from 1(*never*) to 5(*frequently*). The model contains five essential elements representing five types of family-school partnerships: Parenting (12), Communicating (33), Volunteering (7), Learning at Home (7), and Decision Making (13). Five open-ended questions added to the survey for a clear understanding of respondents' perceptions of family engagement with children. **Appendix D** includes a copy of the survey that was shared with the EL parents.

Validity and Reliability

There are several types of validity, such as content validity, predictive validity, construct validity, and criterion validity (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). The survey that was used in the research has been pre-assessed, therefore passing the validity test. In addition, I used Cronbach's alpha to measure the internal consistency across each category of the five types of family-school partnerships to determine the survey's reliability with the sample within this research study. Cronbach's alpha must be greater than (.70) in order to be accepted. As shown in Table 3.3, the Cronbach alpha of all items on the scales were consistent and stable in this sample.

Table 3.3
Cronbach Alpha Reliability Score

Scale	Number of items	Cronbach's alpha (this study)
Parenting	12	.92
Communicating	33	.95
Volunteering	7	.85
Learning at Home	7	.91
Decision Making	13	.94

Researcher Positionality

I am an EL parent of three children of the ages 8,10, and 14. Therefore, I am familiar with the topic and have personal experience with EL students learning remotely from home. I also have extensive volunteer experience within my children's school. Therefore, I was able to explore the educational system in the United States, get to know other parents, and learn about available community services, such as the public library. My experiences in the schools, however, did enlighten me to weaknesses in school/parent collaborations for EL learners. I witnessed the language barrier with some of my friends, and I know they had difficulties communicating with some of their children's teachers. Conversely, my children's teachers were very communitive and did a great job collaborating, but this might have been because of my involvement in the classroom prior to COVID-19. It was important for me to better understand variables, such as this, as well as other variables, impacting the school-EL family partnership, as well as challenges to virtual learning, and ways to

overcome these challenges. However, I did not want my personal experience and potential bias to affect the results. To address potential bias, a colleague looked over all the codes I generated to ensure they agreed. Additionally, an audit trail of all coding decisions was retained to help reduce bias and be able to explain the results to colleagues who were reviewing the codes.

Data Analysis

Quantitative Analysis

Apuke (2017) stated that a quantitative research analysis deals with quantification and analyzing the variables with quantitative techniques to get the research findings. Quantitative data analysis includes the utilization and analysis of numbered data with the help of statistical methods to answer the specific research question or problems. Thus, quantitative research methods involved exploring an issue or event by gathering data in numerical forms and analyzing it with the help of statistical methods (Apuke, 2017). I did both descriptive statistics, including frequencies and means. The study used One-way ANOVA with independent variables: parent education, parent employment status, parent number of years living in the United States, and parent English language level, and dependent variable the means of each category of the *Measure of School, and Family Partnerships*. In addition, I ran independent samples t-test with independent variables EL parent meeting attendance, and the dependent variable was the means of each category of the *Measure of School, and Family Partnerships*. The analysis was done through SPSS software.

This study aimed to identify opportunities and barriers of engaging EL parents in improving family and school partnership in elementary school in the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic. I analyzed whether family and school partnerships were associated with gender using ANOVA analysis. To examine the differences between family and school partnerships and (factors), a one-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) analysis was used. This analysis examines the contrast between the differences observed among means between groups (the mean square distance between groups) with the difference of each observation from the group mean observed within each group (the mean square distance within groups). As such, this analysis determined whether at least one group differed significantly from any of the others. If significant differences existed, the individual contrasts between groups in post-hoc comparison were further examined by using the Fisher Least Square Distance (LSD) test. For both stages of analysis, the standard alpha level of ($p < .10$) to test for significance was used. Moreover, to examine the differences of family and school partnerships as whether or not impacted by attending the ESL meeting, an independent t-test analysis was used. This analysis examined the differences observed between the means of the two groups compared to the combined variability across these groups (the standard error of the mean). In this analysis, the argument for significance was set at ($p < .10$). According to Labovitz (1968), (.10) should be used for small sample sizes as this study has eighty participants.

Qualitative Analysis

There are many qualitative research analysis approaches to analyze qualitative data, including various types of coding (Akinyode & Khan, 2018). This research used a combination of deductive and inductive coding, or blending (Graebner, Martin, and Roundy, 2012). Deductive coding was initially conducted for the first two questions, and then inductive coding was implemented for the remaining qualitative survey questions.

Deductive coding involves the creation of codes based on potential answers to the research question being proposed to participants (Linneberg & Korsgaard, 2019; Gibbs, 2007). These codes are established before the coding process begins. This coding approach generates a theoretically stable foundation (Linneberg & Korsgaard, 2019). The codes can then be re-evaluated inductively later on in the coding process to ensure all necessary codes were included.

Inductive coding, conversely, involves the creation of codes from the data itself, rather than starting with codes and conforming the data to those codes. The inductive coding followed Tesch's Eight Steps for qualitative data coding (Tesch, 1990). This process involved initially reading the transcripts, while recording thoughts, asking yourself questions about the responses, making a list of topics, clustering similar topics, generating columns, and abbreviating the topics as codes. Descriptive words were then designated for the topics, final decisions were made, and a preliminary analysis was conducted. Existing data was then recoded when necessary (Tesch, 1990).

Both deductive and inductive coding were used in this study. For questions that had a limited number of overarching responses (e.g. yes or no), followed by more information, deductive coding was used. Overarching categories were determined based on the possible overall answers to the question, and then the follow up information provided by participants was used to formulate more specific categories, codes, and/or themes. When the question was more open-ended, inductive coding was used. To follow the recommendations from Tesch (1990), codes were created from the participants' responses. Specific words mentioned by participants were the first level of coding. Next, similar codes were clustered together to generate topics and descriptive words to go with those topics. Some topics could then be revised to additional codes. Similar codes were grouped and described, resulting in categories. The same process was used to move from categories to larger themes.

Summary

This study aimed to identify the challenges, possibilities, and activities for EL parent engagement with elementary school students during the ongoing pandemic of COVID-19 and the remote learning experience. An embedded mixed methods approach was used for this study. The quantitative measurement tool that was used is a modified version of *the Measure of School-Family Partnership*. A snowball sampling of 80 EL parents of elementary school children in the United States completed the survey. The sample size of the qualitative data was gathered from 33 participants.

CHAPTER FOUR

RESULTS

This chapter discusses the survey results from 80 EL parents. The chapter begins with quantitative data results, which include descriptive statistics for the survey questions, and parametric tests of the differences between parent groups on the outcomes of Parenting, Communicating, Volunteering, Learning at Home, and Decision Making. The quantitative results are followed by qualitative data analysis, in which qualitative survey responses were analyzed through inductive coding techniques.

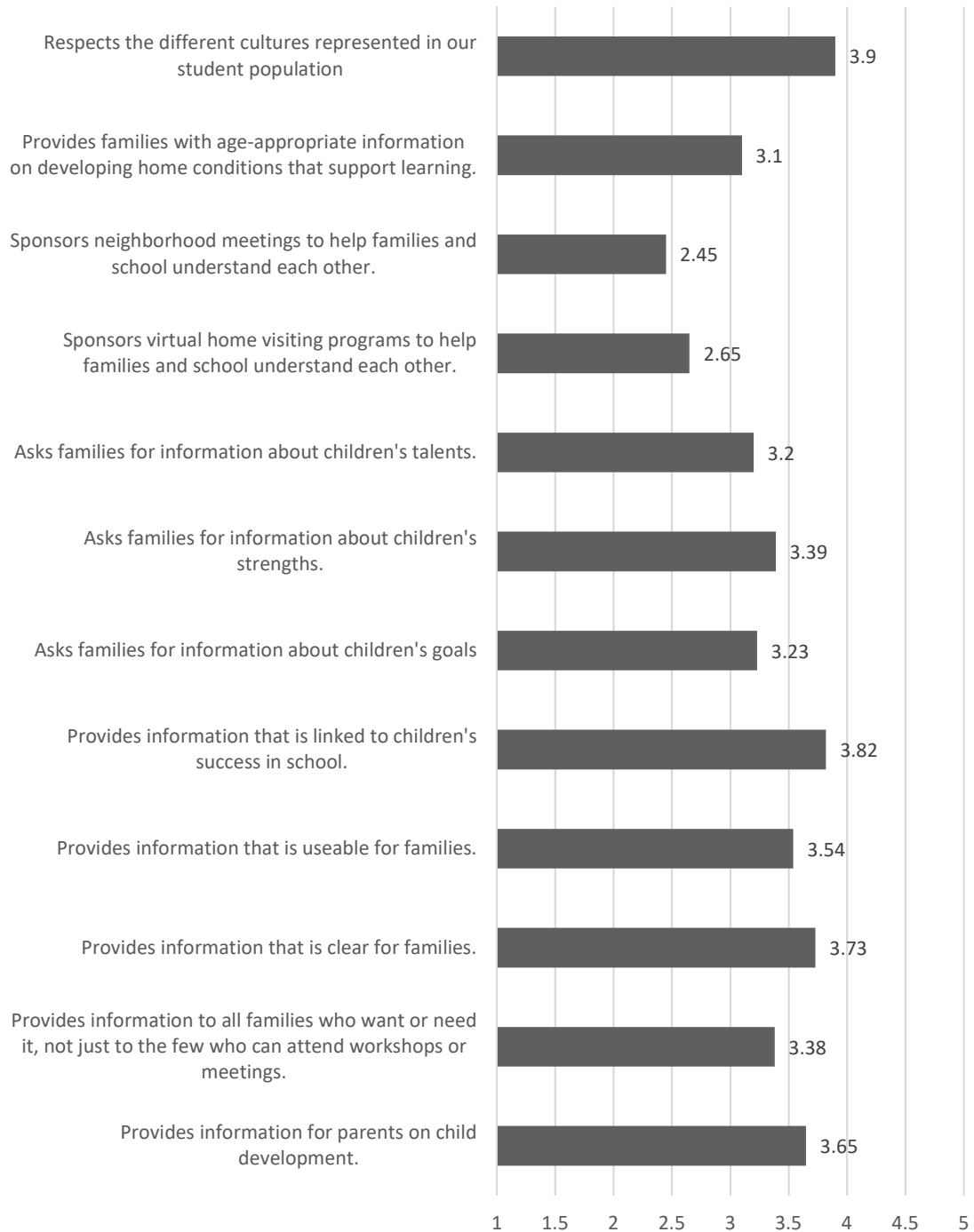
Overview of Survey Quantitative Results

Descriptive Information about the Scale Scores

Each of the survey scales was comprised of several survey items. To better understand the scales used to derive means used in the ANOVAs, a synopsis of each scale is provided in this section, along with each survey item and its corresponding mean score.

Parenting. The Parenting category evaluated the degree level of the help provided by the schools to all families in creating home environments that support children as learners. The overall average of the means was 3.33 in the Parenting scale. Figure 1. shows the Parenting items with their means. From Figure 4.1, we see that the highest mean among the Parenting items was in respect the different cultures among the students ($M=3.90$). The lowest mean was in sponsors neighborhood meeting to help families and school to understand each other ($M=2.45$).

Figure 4.1
The Means of Parenting Category



Communicating. The Communicating category explored the effective ways of school-to-home and home-to-school communication that support children as learners. The overall average of the means was 3.44 in the Communication category. The item with the highest average score from the communicating category was “use e-mail to communicate with parents.” While the category of Communication included 33 items, The items in Figure 4.2 are organized as the top seven items from the highest to the lowest of the top seven. Table 4.1 shows all the items of Communicating category with their means.

Figure 4.2
The Top seven Items of Communicating Category

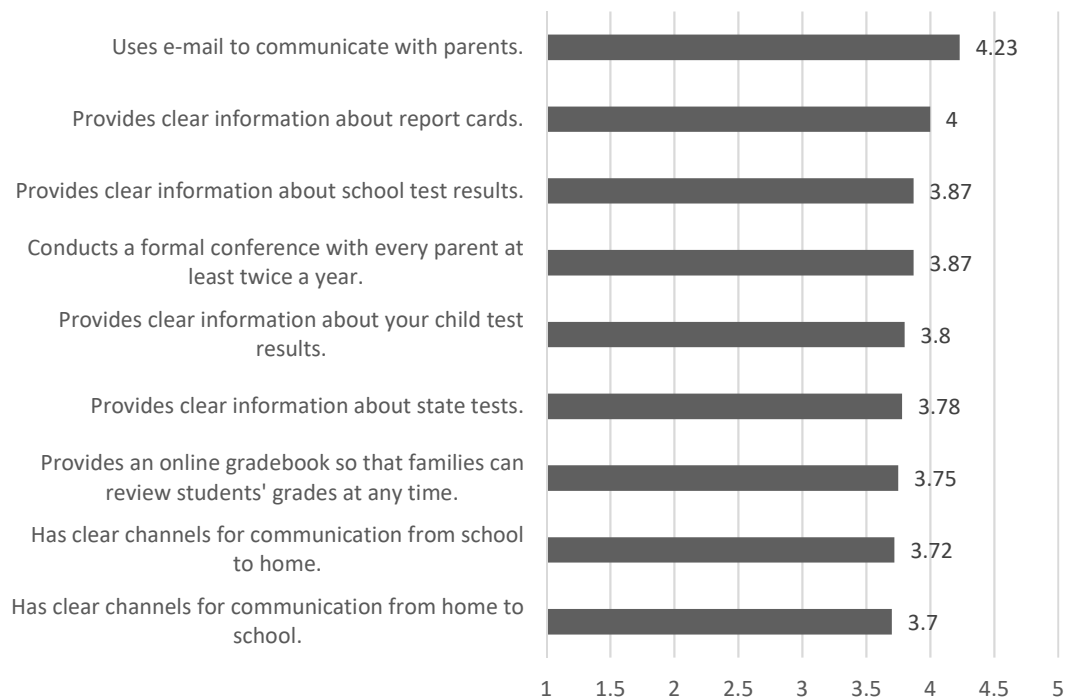
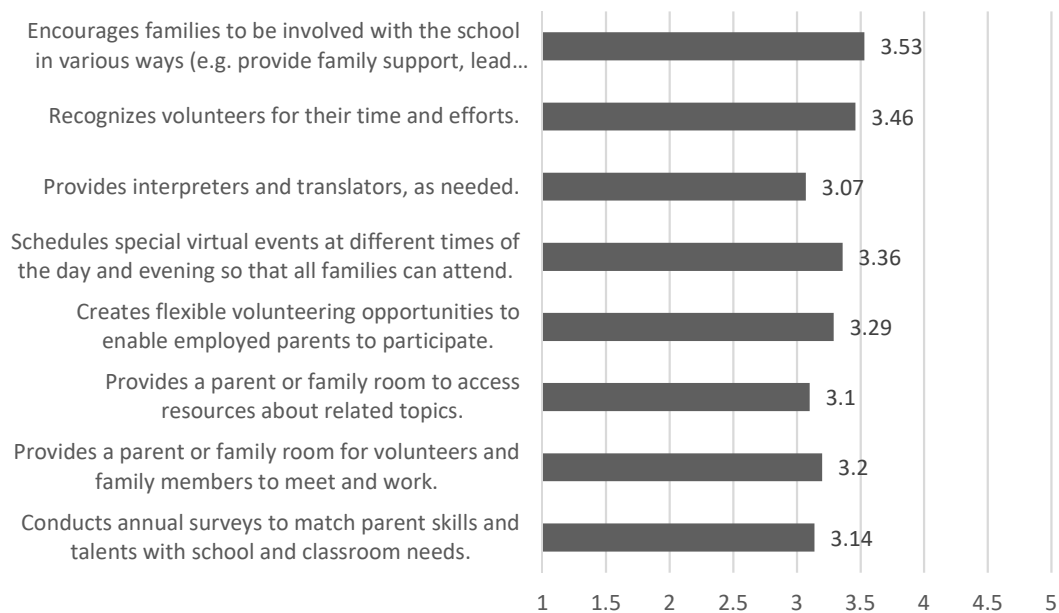


Table 4.1
Communicating Category Means

Communicating Category Items	Means
Provides communications in the parents' language.	2.98
Provides interpreters and translators as needed.	2.77
Has clear channels for communication from home to school.	3.70
Has clear channels for communication from school to home.	3.72
Conducts a formal conference with every parent at least twice a year.	3.87
Conducts a periodic survey for families to use during distance learning.	3.25
Conducts a periodic survey for families to shares information about student needs.	3.17
Conducts a periodic survey for families to shares concerns about student needs.	3.25
Conducts a periodic survey for families to shares reactions to school programs.	3.15
Conducts a periodic survey for families to shares satisfaction with parent involvement in their child's education.	3.03
Conducts an orientation for parents who are new to the school.	3.47
Provides clear information about the curriculum.	3.57
Provides clear information about state tests.	3.78
Provides clear information about school test results.	3.87
Provides clear information about your child test results.	3.80
Provides clear information about report cards.	4.00
Contacts families of students having academic problems.	3.38
Contacts families of students having behavior problems.	3.57
Provides an online gradebook so that families can review students' grades at any time.	3.75
Uses e-mail to communicate with parents.	4.23
Uses the school website to communicate with parents.	3.58
Provides information on internet safety.	3.35
Provides information on children's use of social media.	3.03
Implements policies that encourage all teachers to communicate with parents about the curriculum.	3.18
Implements policies that encourage all teachers to communicate with parents about expectations for homework.	3.38
Implements policies that encourage all teachers to communicate with parents about how parents can help at home.	3.25
Produces regularly scheduled information (blog, newsletter, etc) with up-to-date information about the school.	3.42
Produces regularly scheduled information (blog, newsletter, etc) with up-to-date information about special events.	3.65
Produces regularly scheduled information (blog, newsletter, etc) with up-to-date information about organizations.	3.27
Produces regularly scheduled information (blog, newsletter, etc) with up-to-date information about meetings.	3.42
Produces regularly scheduled information (blog, newsletter, etc) with up-to-date information about parenting tips.	3.12
Provides paper copies of e-communications for families who do not have internet access.	3.43

Volunteering. The Volunteering category examined whether the school was recruiting and organizing parents to support the school and students. This category consisted of 8 items. The overall average of the means was 3.26 in the Volunteering category. Figure 4.3 displays the items of the Volunteering category with their means.

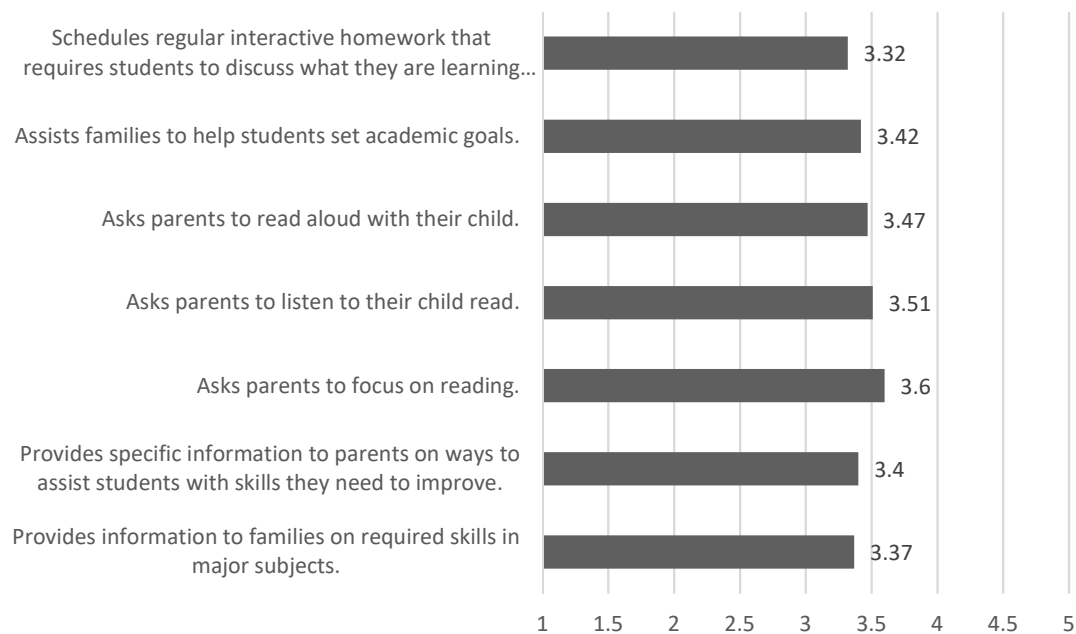
Figure 4.3
The Means of Volunteering Category



From Figure 4.3, the most predominant item in the Volunteering was about encouraging families to be involved with the school in various ways (e.g. provide family support, lead virtual activities, and mail packets) ($M=3.53$). The lowest ranked item was about providing a parent or family interpreters and translators as needed ($M= 3.07$).

Learning at Home. The Learning at Home category explored how schools provide information to families to support learning at home. This category consisted of seven items. The overall average of the means was 3.44 in the Learning at Home category. Figure 4.4 displays the items of the Learning at Home category with their means. From Figure 4.4, the most predominant item in the Learning at Home scale was about asking “parents to focus on reading” ($M=3.6$). The lowest ranked item was “schedules regular interactive homework that requires students to discuss what they are learning with a family member” ($M= 3.32$).

Figure 4.4
The Means of Learning at Home Category



Decision-Making. The Decision-Making category examined how schools included EL parents in school decisions and developed parent leaders and representatives. This category consisted of 13 items. The overall average of the means was 2.97 in the Decision-Making category. Figure 4.5 displayed the items of the Decision-Making category with their means. From Figure 4.5, the most predominant item in the Decision-Making scale is about “addresses parents’ questions, concerns, and conflicts openly and respectfully” ($M=3.27$). The lowest ranked item is “has parents represented on other district-level committees” ($M= 2.60$).

The Relationship Between Parent Characteristics and Involvement

In this section, the parametric results are provided, which compare various groupings of parents in terms of their means on the scales for Parenting, Communicating, Volunteering, Learning at Home, and Decision Making. Parent means are compared by years living in the United States, education level, employment status, and English language level.

For the dependent variable number of years living in the United States, five separate one-way ANOVAs were run to determine if means of dependent variables Parenting, Communicating, Volunteering, Learning at Home, and Decision Making varied statistically by EL parents’ years living in the United States. The results are shown in Table 4.2. Overall, these data showed there were no significant differences with the number of years living in the United States in any of the five scales. In other words, scores on the parenting, communicating, volunteering, learning at home, and decision-making scales were relatively similar across parents who had lived in the United States for different amounts of time.

Figure 4.5
The Means of Decision Making Category

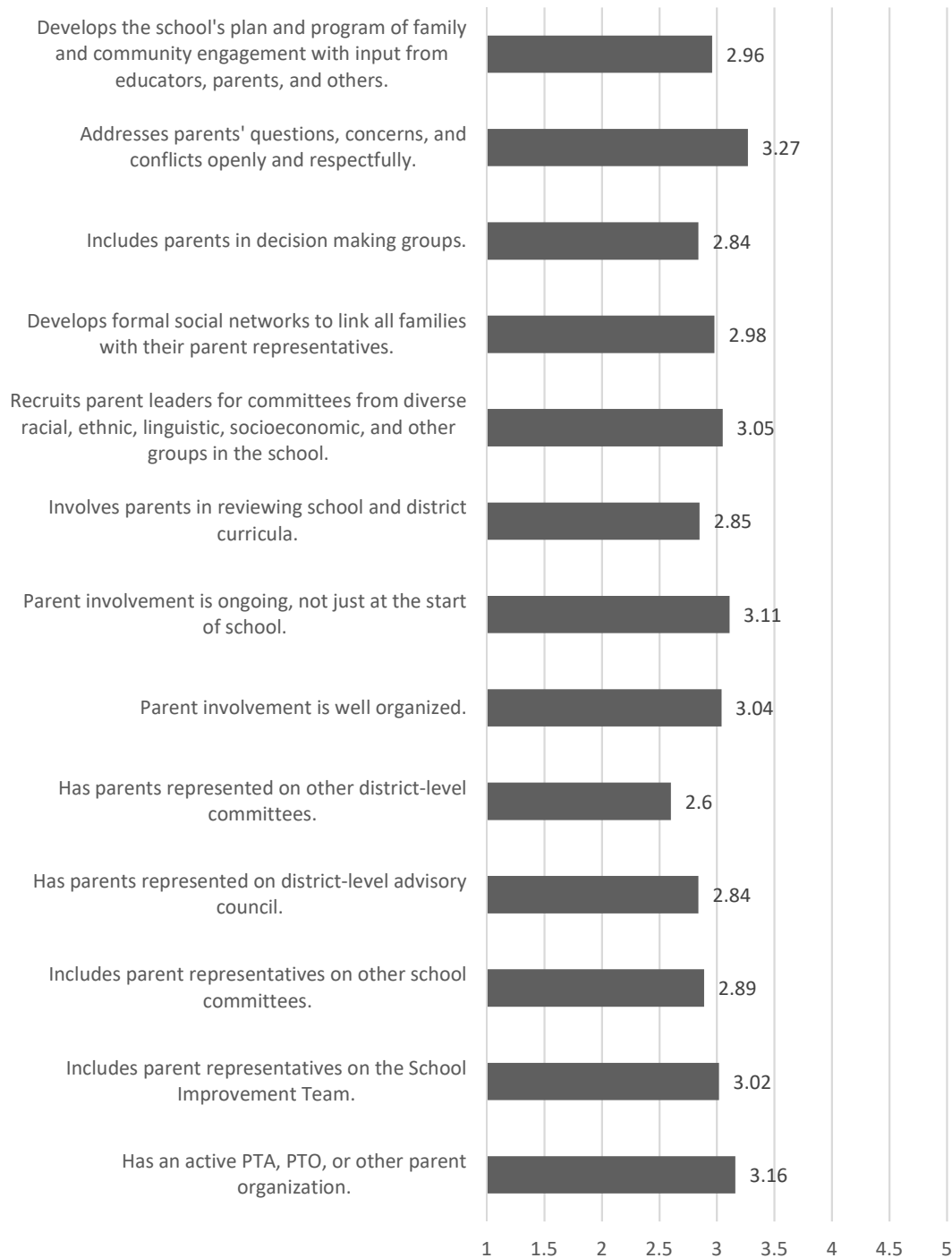


Table 4.2*ANOVA Results for Years Living in the United States and Scales*

Scale	F (df1, df2)	p
Parenting	.66 (6, 64)	.677
Communicating	.94 (6, 53)	.473
Volunteering	1.76 (6, 52)	.124
Learning at Home	.79 (6, 50)	.579
Decision Making	1.22 (6, 48)	.312

For dependent variable education level, five separate one-way ANOVAs were used to determine if means of dependent variables Parenting, Communicating, Volunteering, Learning at Home, and Decision Making varied statistically by parents' education level. Results of the ANOVAs are shown in table 4.3. Overall, these data showed there were no significant differences with the education level of the parents for any of the five scales. In other words, parenting, communicating, volunteering, learning at home, and decision-making scores were relatively similar across all education levels of parents.

For dependent variable employment status, five separate one-way ANOVAs were run to determine if means of dependent variables Parenting, Communicating, Volunteering, Learning at Home, and Decision Making varied statistically by employment status. Results of these analyses are provided in Table 4.4. Overall, these data showed there were no significant differences with the employment status of the parents in any of the five scales. This shows that parenting, communicating,

volunteering, learning at home, and decision-making scores were relatively similar across all employment status groups.

Table 4.3
ANOVA Results for Parent Education Level and Scales

Scale	F (df1, df2)	p
Parenting	.95 (4, 66)	.437
Communicating	.65 (4, 55)	.629
Volunteering	.65 (4, 54)	.629
Learning at Home	.42 (4, 52)	.793
Decision Making	1.71 (4, 50)	.162

Table 4.4
ANOVA Results for Parent Employment Status and Scales

Scale	F (df1, df2)	p
Parenting	.21 (5, 65)	.956
Communicating	1.09 (5, 54)	.374
Volunteering	.92 (5, 53)	.472
Learning at Home	.73 (5, 51)	.600
Decision Making	.34 (5, 49)	.886

For dependent variable English language level, five separate one-way ANOVAs were run to determine if means of Parenting, Communicating, Volunteering, Learning at Home, and Decision Making varied statistically by English language level. Table 4.5 shows the results of these analyses. Overall, these data showed there were no significant differences with the English language level of the parents in any of the five scales. In other words, parenting, communicating, volunteering, learning at home, and decision-making scores were relatively similar across parents of different English language levels.

Table 4.5
ANOVA Results for English Language Level and Scales

Scale	F (df1, df2)	p
Parenting	10.47 (2, 350)	.698
Communicating	.36 (2, 68)	.415
Volunteering	.89 (2, 57)	.662
Learning at Home	.41 (2, 56)	.413
Decision Making	.89 (2, 52)	.480

Comparisons based on ESL Meeting Attendance

In this section, parents were compared based on whether they did or did not attend ESL meetings, to see if these two groups differed in terms of their means on any of the scales. Five independent sample t-tests were run to examine the differences

between EL parents who attended ESL meeting compared to those who did not with the means of the Parenting, Communicating, Volunteering, Learning at Home, and Decision Making. Table 4.6 shows the results of the five independent samples t-tests. Overall, there were no significant differences in the EL parents who attended ESL meeting versus those who did not in any of the five scales. In other words, scores on parenting, communicating, volunteering, learning at home, and decision making were relatively similar, regardless of whether or not the parents attended ESL meetings.

Table 4.6
T-Test Results for ESL Meeting Attendance and Scales

Scale	t(df)	p
Parenting	-1.81(69)	.917
Communicating	-.44(58)	.584
Volunteering	-1.68(57)	.915
Learning at Home	-.97(55)	.618
Decision Making	-1.72(53)	.267

Summary of Survey Quantitative Results

From the descriptive statistics on each of the scales, we can see that the scales with the highest average of means were communication and learning at home, and the lowest was decision making. Parents seemed to most value respecting different

cultures among students, using email for parent communication, providing family support and involvement, providing a parent focus on reading, and addressing parents' questions, concerns, and conflicts openly and respectfully.

Using the ANOVAs, means on each of these scales were compared across parent groupings based on years living in the United States, education level, employment status, and English language level. None of these groupings produced significantly significant differences in means across groups. This suggests that parents who have been living in the United States for different amounts of time, have different employment statuses, educational levels, and English language levels follow similar patterns in terms of their beliefs about Parenting, Communicating, Volunteering, Learning at Home, and Decision Making.

With independent samples t-tests, parents were compared based on whether they did or did not attend ESL meetings, to see if these two groups differ in terms of their means on any of the scales. Though the means on each scale were higher for those who attended ESL meetings than for those who did not across all of the scales, none of these differences were significant.

Overview of Qualitative Results

Six qualitative questions were included in the survey. These responses provided further explanations for the respondents' quantitative responses. Various types of coding, including deductive and inductive, were conducted to analyze the data. The responses are discussed below.

Impact of Covid-19 on Communication with School

Question 1 asked how COVID-19 has impacted the parent's communication with their child's school. Most participants answered this question with brief (one or two word) responses. When coding qualitative data, deductive coding can be used to sort data into organizational categories to maintain alignment with research questions (Bingham & Witkowsky, 2021). For this reason, deductive coding was used to code the responses, with the range of possible responses used as the categories. For this question, the possible answers were that there was a positive impact, a negative impact, a mixture of positive and negative, or no impact. A fifth category was also created for other, or did not directly respond to the question, since several participants give responses that did not directly answer the question and did not give complete information, such as "yes."

To provide a clear picture of the responses, frequencies and percentages were also reported for each category. Categories, frequencies/percentages, and example responses are provided in Table 4.7. Based on the coded responses, more participants felt that COVID-19 did not impact communication with their child's school than any other response. These respondents indicated that they were already able to communicate with teachers via email or websites, so this was not impacted by the pandemic. For example, in the words of one participant, "The communication was not affected by COVID. The teachers often shared details about homework or any necessary activity for the kids." It was only about a third of respondents who felt this way. However, 12.5% of respondents, actually felt that COVID-19 positively impact communication with the school. One respondent stated, "I think the pandemic

improve the communication between the home and school to discuss the home online schooling.” This indicates some respondents felt COVID-19 positively affected the communication they had with their child’s school. Conversely, 18.8%, of respondents felt COVID-19 negatively impacted communication with the school. One respondent stated, “Teachers are susceptible to a lot of emails from parents, so it is difficult to have them respond in timely manner.” This suggests parents felt teachers were not timely in their attempted communication. Still other respondents expressed a mixture of positive and negative feelings regarding communication during the pandemic. One respondent stated, makes it easier to talk to the teacher, but anyone higher has been more difficult to talk to.” Another stated, “we were able to contact the teacher through email. But, since I have 3 children: 2 in elementary level, and 1 in middle school, it was so hard to check the emails and go over the instructions with them.” Therefore, the reasons for difficulties with communication varied, as some parents indicated it was the teachers’ fault, due to their business, while others had difficulty with communication due to their own busyness. It is important to note a large percentage of participants (28% of those who gave an answer to this question) gave a response that did not directly address the question. So, there might have been a translation issue or a problem understanding what was being asked of them in this question.

Major Factors that Contributed to Family Engagement During the Virtual Learning due to COVID-19

Question 2 inquired about the major factors which contributed to the success of family's efforts to be engaged with their child's education during the virtual learning due to COVID-19 and whether or not respondents engaged in community

discussions to learn about virtual learning. Since two questions were asked in this question, two tables were created. For the first part of the question, inductive coding was conducted. I read the transcripts, recorded thoughts, and generated a list of topics, based on the responses. The participants' words created the first level of coding. I then created columns, abbreviated the codes, chose descriptive words encapsulating the codes as topics, made final decisions, and completed the preliminary analysis, followed by several rounds of coding to establish final categories.

The findings revealed four categories, which included technology assistance, non-technical supports, the role of parents, and children's responsibility. It seems that respondents appreciated the schools' technology assistance. One participant stated, "support from school for the gadget, internet connection." Another stated, "district school provides us Chromebooks and supplies." This indicates participants appreciated the technical supports provided by the schools.

Participants also seemed thankful for non-technical supports, such as nutrition and learning materials. One respondent stated, "free lunch." This is indicative of parents' appreciation for resources provided by the school.

The role of parents seemed to be another factor which contributed to the success of family's efforts to be engaged with their child's education during the virtual learning from COVID-19. One participant stated, "availability all the time at home around the kids and listening to their teachers during sessions, so this makes parents more oriented and engaged on school education process."

Table 4.7
Categories, Frequencies, and Examples for Question 1

Category	Example Responses	Frequency (Percentage) of total Responses
Positive impact	-improved -I think the pandemic improve the communication between the home and school to discuss the home online schooling -My child's school always improved the communication in pandemic's time	4 (12.5%)
Negative impact	-Teachers are susceptible to a lot of emails from parents, so it is difficult to have them respond in timely manner -Was difficult -It has challenged the communication English ksng3and academic level were going bad	6 (18.8%)
Mixture of positive/negative	-Makes it easier to talk to the teacher, but anyone higher has been more difficult to talk to. -We were able to contact the teacher through email. But, since I have 3 children: 2 in elementary level, and 1 in middle school, it was so hard to check the emails and go over the instructions with them.	2 (6.3%)
No impact	-There is no major impact -No huge change. Before covid I contact the teachers via email or using Apps such as Reminder. -No change -The communication was not affected by COVID. The teachers often shared details about homework or any necessary activity for the kids.	11 (34.4%)
Other/did not directly address question	-Yes -Social work -Be online -Couple days off since the exposure of Covid every other week -I think there was a less impact -Virtual learning is difficult -The communication was easy	9 (28.1%)

Another responded, “communication with the teacher.” This indicates parents liked being involved, being engaged and communicating with their children’s teachers.

Finally, children’s responsibility was the final category generated. One respondent stated, “yes, student been dependable and more responsible.” Another stated, “teach them to be independent helped them with regular checking.” These responses indicate parents felt their children’s acquisition of skills fostering their independence contributed to their family’s engagement during virtual learning due to COVID-19. The categories, codes, and example responses can be found in Table 4.8. Finally, Table 4.9 displayed whether or not parents learned about virtual learning.

Factors Limiting Family's Efforts to be Engaged During the Virtual Learning due to COVID-19

Question 3 inquired about major factors limiting family’s efforts to be engaged with children while they were learning virtually. The coding for this question also involved inductive coding. Specific words mentioned by the participants were the first level of coding. The coding also followed Tesch's Eight Steps for qualitative data coding (Tesch, 1990). After I read the transcripts, thoughts were recorded, a list of topics were then generated, with similar topics being grouped together. Columns were established and the codes were abbreviated as codes. I then designated descriptive words for the topics, made final decisions, and conducted a preliminary analysis.

The categories that emerged included technology issues, instructional issues, culture and language barriers, and socioemotional issues. The codes that emerged for technology issues included internet and technology.

Table 4.8

Factors that Contributed to Success of Family's Efforts to be Engaged during Virtual Learning

Category	Codes	Example Responses
Technology Assistance	Technical Supplies and Support	Support from school for the gadget, internet connection Providing many options to internet and it's availability District school provides us chromebooks and supplies.
Non-technical supports	Nutrition Learning Materials	Free lunch Learning materials
Role of Parents	Parent Involvement Communication	Availability all the time at home around the kids and listening to their teachers during sessions, so this makes parents more oriented and engaged on school education process Regular communication with school made the learning experience more flexible. Also, everything were online during that time and not obligated with anything outside the home. So I was there to help. Communication with the teacher Clear instructions. Watching the teachers helped me understand how I can help my kids.
Children's Responsibility	Independence Responsibility	Yes, student been dependable and more responsible. Teach them to be independent helped them with regular checking.

Table 4.9*Whether or not Engaged in Discussions to Learn about Virtual Learning Context*

Category	Example Responses	Frequency (Percentage) of Responses
Have not engaged	No, have not engaged No	10 (37.0%)
Have engaged	Yes	6 (16.0%)
Other (did not address question)	None The programs	11 (41%)

One respondent stated, “not having SSN.” Another mentioned the internet, and someone else responded “technical issues.” This indicates parents felt technology was a limiting factor to engaging with their children while they were learning virtually.

Challenges regarding instructional issues were also mentioned. One participant stated, “the online learning for KG and first graders is totally not effective.” Another stated, “physical writing and communication to comprehend what teacher explains.” It seems parents felt virtual learning affected their engagement with their children during COVID-19.

Culture and language barriers presented another challenge. One respondent stated, “the language barriers. The different educational system that I used to in my home country.” Another merely mentioned, “language.” Understanding the language seemed to be a factor making engaging with their children difficult while they were learning virtually.

Socioemotional issues presented another challenge. One respondent stated, “kids missed the school environment.” Another stated, “sometimes my kids missed their partners and teacher.” The responses indicate isolation, due to the remote learning environment, limited parents’ efforts to engage with their children while they were learning virtually.

Parental challenges was the final reported barrier. One respondent replied, “the first two weeks were so stressful for us as parents. We had to be with them during zoom help.” Another stated, “I was busy myself as a grad student; it was hard to keep mentor them all the time from morning to evening.” Another participant responded, “interacting with them.” These responses indicate personal challenges parents were experiencing was another limiting factor, making it difficult for parents to engage with their children during COVID-19. Table 4.10 includes all the categories, codes, and example responses.

Challenges During Child's Virtual Learning

Question 4 inquired about challenges faced by parents, or caregivers, during children’s virtual learning. Inductive coding following Tesch's Eight Steps for qualitative data coding was conducted (Tesch, 1990). Participant responses generated the first level of coding, after which thoughts were documented, and topics were created and categorized. Descriptive categories and codes were ultimately established.

Five categories were generated, including student engagement, technical issues, parent limitations, time, and isolation. Parents, or caregivers, reported student engagement as a challenge. One parent stated, “to keep her engaged in the learning. I

was quite busy to help her all the times.” Another reported, “playing during the class time.” One simply stated, “attention.” These responses indicate it was difficult for parents to keep their children engaged during COVID-19.

Technical issues were another reported problem. One respondent stated, “the Internet. Another reported, “child skills using computer and practical classes is not doable.” The findings indicate technical problems presented a challenge for parents, as previously noted.

The third category included parent limitations. One parent, or caregiver, stated, “my very bad English.” Another replied, “I always encourage my kids to be responsible and independent. To teach them this during the virtual learning was stressful, but they achieved it.” It seems language was a barrier presenting a challenge for parents, or caregivers.

Time was another reported challenge. One respondent stated, “time to follow.” Another stated, “being on time.” These responses indicate it was challenging for parents to monitor their children’s schooling to ensure they were on time for their scheduled classes.

Finally, isolation was the final category. Parents, or caregivers, seemed to have concerns over their children’s social interactions. One respondent stated, “reinforcing social skills.” Another mentioned, “relations.” Isolation, as previously noted, seemed to present a challenge, as parents were concerned about their children’s acquisition of social skills while learning virtually. The all-inclusive list of categories, codes, and example responses can be found in Table 4.11.

Table 4.10

Factors Limiting the Success of Efforts with Child's Education During Virtual Learning

Category	Codes	Example Responses
Technology Issues	Internet Technology	Not having SSN Internet Technical Issues Also, teaching them how to post their homeworks in Google classroom was another obstacle.
Instructional Issues	Teaching Comprehend Effective	The online learning for KG and first graders is totally not effective Physical writing and communication to comprehend what teacher explains.
Culture and Language Barriers	Language	Learning online The language barriers. The different educational system that I used to in my home country.
Socioemotional Issues	Miss/missed Boredom Stress	Language Communication Kids missed the school environment Child boredom Sometimes my kids missed their partners and teacher
Parental Challenges	Parents Stressful Busy	The first two weeks were so stressful for us as parents. We had to be with them during zoom help. I was busy myself as a grad student; it was hard to keep mentor them all the time from morning to evening. Interacting with them.

Table 4.11*Challenges Parents Face During Child's Virtual Learning*

Category	Codes	Example Responses
Student engagement	Engaged Focus	To keep her engaged in the learning. I was quite busy to help her all the times. Playing during the class time Not behaving and settling down Attention Physical activities The children were not used to set and learn from laptop. It was so boring for them and hard to convince them to stay and learn.
Technical issues	Internet	The Internet Child skills using computer and practical classes is not doable
Parent limitations	Language Stress How to help	My very bad English I always encourage my kids to be responsible and independent. To teach them this during the virtual learning was stressful, but they achieved it. Language Controlling the child to attend lessons
Time	Time	Time to follow Being on time
Isolation	Social Interactions	Practical Experience, Relations Reinforcing social skills

School Efforts to Engage Parents

The final qualitative question inquired about ways the school supported children's education and how those activities supported the parent, or caregiver, in supporting their child's education. Inductive coding, following Tesch's Eight Steps for qualitative data coding (Tesch, 1990) was again conducted. Columns were established and codes emerged as abbreviations. Final descriptive words were then established for the category headings and the data was categorized multiple times.

The categories that emerged included supporting basic needs, technical support, instructional support, communication, and planning. Supporting basic needs included the codes of food and mental health. One parent, or caregiver, stated, "free meal." Another stated, "provide different kind of support not only the gadgets but also access to food and mental health." The responses indicate the provision of resources was appreciated by parents and helped them to feel supported during the pandemic.

Technical support was another way the school engaged parents and provided support. One respondent stated, "providing laptop for every child." Another replied, "when they provided laptops for each child." It seems parents also appreciated the technical resources provided by the schools. According to the responses, this also helped them to feel supported.

Instructional support was the next category established. One participant stated, "providing worksheets to be picked up from the school each month." Another stated, "ESL classes." Yet another replied, "the teachers were so reliable and so patient with the kids. When I watched how the teacher teaches the children, it taught me how to

help kids later if they need help.” The responses indicate the teachers’ patience and support helped parents support their children as they were learning virtually.

Communication was another way parents felt supported. This was the next category created. Example statements included, “sending emails and surveys for parents input.” Another parent, or caregiver replied, “frequent emails from the teachers that inform parents with everything related to classroom activities.” It seems likely teachers’ communication, specifically via emails, was helpful as parents assisted their children in learning online during COVID-19.

Planning was the final category generated. One parent, or caregiver, stated, “by providing a weekly schedule that shows time, activities, and homework in advance.” Another merely stated, “planning.” Yet another replied, “talking with him a lot and try to include and agree the plan of his progress in school.” The responses indicate parents appreciated a clear and well thought out schedule for their children, as this seemed to make it easier to support their children as they were learning virtually. Parents seemed to like being informed and having a plan. All the categories, codes, and sample responses for this qualitative question can be found in Table 4.12.

Summary of Survey Qualitative Results

Deductive coding was conducted for the first question and the second half of the second question, which revealed the majority of respondents indicated there was no real change regarding how COVID-19 impacted their communication with their child’s school and they had not engaged in community discussions to learn about virtual learning.

Table 4.12
Ways School Supports Children's Education

Category	Codes	Example Responses
Supporting basic needs	Food Mental health	Free meal Provide different kind of support not only the gadgets but also access to food and mental health.
Technical support	Laptop	Giving them things Providing laptop for every child When they provided laptops for each child
Instructional support	Worksheets	Providing worksheets to be picked up from the school each month. ESL classes The teachers were so reliable and so patient with the kids. When I watched how the teacher teaches the children, it taught me how to help kids later if they need help.
Communication	Emails Speaking Talking	Sending emails and surveys for parents input Frequent emails from the teachers that inform parents with everything related to classroom activities They talk about it and have fun Emailed
Planning	Plan Schedule	By providing a weekly schedule that shows time, activities, and homework in advance Planning Talking with him a lot and try to include and agree the plan of his progress in school

Inductive coding was completed for the other questions, and the findings revealed technology assistance, non-technical supports, the role of parents, and children's responsibility contributed to the success of family's efforts to be engaged during virtual learning due to COVID-19. Regarding factors limiting the success of efforts for parents to be engaged with their children's education during virtual learning, findings suggested technology issues, instructional issues, culture and language barriers, socioemotional issues, and parental challenges all played a role. Other findings indicated student engagement, technical issues, parent limitations, time and isolation were challenges parents faced during their children's virtual learning. Finally, supporting basic needs, technical support, instructional support, and communication were named as challenges parents faced during their child's virtual learning.

CHAPTER FIVE

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

The purpose of this study was to analyze and evaluate the impact of remote learning on EL families and how family-school partnerships were enabled or disabled in the remote learning environment. The study focused on how the school and the community benefited the EL parents and how EL parents' demographic factors impacted this partnership. Furthermore, the challenges and barriers to the family-school partnership were assessed. The results of this research may inform policy-makers, administrators, Department of Education, and parents regarding the relationship between EL families and schools, particularly when students are learning remotely. However, this information can also provide insight into the relationship between EL families and schools when students are in school learning, as some of the findings are applicable in both settings. For example, parents can learn how to overcome barriers inhibiting their partnership with their child's school. Policy makers, administrators, and the Department of Education can learn strategies being implemented to support EL parents and enhance the partnership between parents and their child's school to ensure children receive the best educational outcomes. The partnership between EL families and their child's school were studied with these specific research questions and sub-questions:

- How do EL families of children in elementary school experience family-school partnerships while engaged in remote learning?

- What factors of EL parents (parent's education, employment status, years living in the United States, English language level, and EL parent meeting attendance) are related to the family-school partnership?
- How supported do EL parents of children in elementary schools feel in their efforts to be engaged in the school?
- What are families' perceived challenges and barriers in supporting their children to learn at home while engaged in remote learning?
 - What are the perceived barriers of EL families with children in elementary school in the wake of COVID-19? And how are the barriers addressed?
 - What strategies, activities, or collaborations are being enacted to support EL parents as partners to improve educational outcomes for children, particularly in the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic?

To answer these questions, a digital survey was generated via Qualtrics and distributed via social media to EL families in the United States, of which 80 met the criteria and completed the survey. The purpose of this chapter is to provide a summary of the findings for each question and sub-question, assess the results as they compare with previous research, and discuss potential implications. Limitations and directions for future research are included, as well.

Experience of EL Parents on Family-School Partnerships During the Remote Learning

The descriptive statistics of each of the scales indicated communication and helping students learn at home had the highest average of means, followed by Parenting, Volunteering, and Decision-making. Families of EL students reported valuing respect of the different cultures represented in the student population, communication through email, family support and involvement, a family focus on reading, and questions addressed openly and respectfully. These results suggest communication, specifically emails, was a primary-way families were able to establish partnership with their child's school during COVID-19. A qualitative question inquiring about factors that contributed to success of family's efforts to be engaged during virtual learning due to COVID-19 affirmed these findings. Communication was one of the established codes based on participants' responses. One participant stated, "regular communication with school made the learning experience more flexible." Another merely listed, "communication with the teacher" as a factor that contributed to their family's efforts to be engaged with the school. This aligns with previous research, as findings by Laho (2019) asserted communication increased parental involvement in children's education and led to better academic outcomes for students. Additionally, Laho's (2019) findings suggested emails were primarily used for communication, although social media was also an effective way for parents to obtain up to date information from their child's school.

Learning at home, consisting of ways schools provided information to families to support learning at home, was the other descriptive statistic with the highest mean. This indicates faculty providing information to parents, or caregivers, was another way family-school partnerships were established. Laho (2019) affirmed these findings suggesting schools establish effective learning practices from the home environment. Hartshorn and McMurry (2020) expressed that this is even more critical for EL families, as these parents have even more difficulty accessing materials and helping their children learn from home.

Factors that are Related to the EL Family-School Partnership

A sub-question to question 1 inquired about contributing factors related to the family school partnership, such as parents' education, employment status, years living in the United States, English language level, and EL parent meeting attendance.

Parents education. Regarding the first variable, parents' education, the findings suggested Parenting, Communicating, Volunteering, Learning at Home, and Decision Making did not statistically significantly vary by parents' education level. This aligns with findings by McWayne et al. (2006) who found similar results for Latino parents living in the United States. However, this finding was only true for the English-speaking parents in the trial. Parents education level did make a statistically significant difference in parents' level of engagement for Spanish speaking parents, where the higher the education level, the higher the parents' level of engagement. This may be because English is the dominant language in the United States, so when English was the participants' spoken language, their education did not make a difference. Conversely, when another language was the participants' primary

language, their education did make a difference, because it may have made a difference in their knowledge and ability to speak the English language. This research did not inquire about the participants first and second language. More research is needed to affirm these findings.

It is also important to note the group of respondents in this study reflected higher levels of graduate education, with greater mastery of English. Only 2 respondents reported not being at the intermediate or advanced level. This is not typically reflective of families of EL learners, as Baker et al. (2016) and Lavadenz et al. (2021) reported English being a challenge. For this reason, it is important that the results of this study are replicated with a more heterogenous group in order to draw generalized conclusions.

Employment status. The results also suggested Parenting, Communicating, Volunteering, Learning at Home, and Decision Making did not statistically significantly vary by parents' employment status. This finding contradicts previous research, which suggests unemployed parents were in the low-engagement group with their child's school, where employed parents are more likely to be highly engaged with their child's school than unemployed parents (McWayne et al., 2006). Employed parents may feel more confident and equipped to partner with their child's school than unemployed parents, although parents without employment may have more time to spend assisting their child with their education. Conversely, the qualitative results in the current research suggest education could be a hindrance, as one student stated "I was busy myself as a grad student; it was hard to keep mentor them all the time from morning to evening." This aligns with previous findings. Zimmerman and

Brown (2021) found working long hours, while also supporting children at home created a stressful environment. The quantitative findings of this research, however, found Parenting, Communicating, Volunteering, Learning at Home, and Decision Making did not vary based upon parents' employment status.

Years living in the United States. The findings revealed Parenting, Communicating, Volunteering, Learning at Home, and Decision Making also did not statistically significantly vary by parents' number of years living in the United States. There was not much research assessing this variable, which made the current research valuable. However, research by McWayne et al. (2006) found parents with an average level of engagement in their children's school were more likely to be recent immigrants, implying they had not been in the United States for very long. More research is needed to better understand if there is a relationship between years living in the United States and school/parental partnerships for EL learners. It is possible that the years do not make a difference, like the current research suggests, however, as new parents to the United States may want to become involved, since they are new, and more tenured parents may feel confident, as they have been in the United States for some time, and may also want to establish a partnership with their child's school.

English language level. Regarding the English language level variable, the quantitative findings suggested Parenting, Communicating, Volunteering, Learning at Home, and Decision Making did not statistically significantly vary by parents' English language level. It is also important to note the group of respondents in this research reflected higher greater mastery of English. Only 2 respondents reported not being at the intermediate or advanced level. Thus these findings do not align with

previous findings. Ying et al. (2021) found EL families may have limited language proficiency, leading to low levels of involvement. Blair and Haneda (2021) similarly found parents' exclusion from school and community activities due to the language barrier presented a challenge for EL families. Parson and Shim (2019) similarly found parents from EL families feel deficient with their language skills and therefore do not feel comfortable communicating with educators. Most research on EL families substantiates the finding that language is a barrier for EL families (Baker et al., 2016; Lavadenz, et al., 2021; Parsons & Shim, 2019; Porras, 2019). However, Snell (2018) found parents were still involved in their child's school events, although a language barrier did exist. This could explain the findings in this research, which suggests there is not a relationship between parents' language level and their Parenting, Communicating, Volunteering, Learning at Home, and Decision Making with regards to the school partnership. The qualitative findings in this research could further explain the finding. Despite parents reporting communication as a challenge, listing "language barriers, language, and communication" as difficult, communication was also listed as a factor that contributed to the success of family's efforts to be engaged during COVID-19. One parent stated, "regular communication with school made the learning experience more flexible." Another stated, "communication with the teacher," and yet another merely "communication." Therefore, it is possible that there was not a variance with Parenting, Communicating, Volunteering, Learning at Home, and Decision Making related to school/family partnership, based on parents' English language level, because parents realized it was an important factor contributing to the success of their efforts to be engaged with their child's school, despite the difficulties.

EL parent meeting attendance. The findings revealed Parenting, Communicating, Volunteering, Learning at Home, and Decision Making also did not statistically significantly vary by parents' meeting attendance. Gonzales and Gabel (2017), conversely, found lack of meetings, which is often prompted by a lack of resources, such as available childcare for younger children, does impact the partnership between schools and EL families, as school faculty often assume missed meetings imply EL families do not care about their child's education. Wassell et al. (2017) substantiated the challenges involved with EL families trying to attend meetings, as educators often schedule meetings which conflict with parents' work schedules. Furthermore, Epstein (2021) found there were more meetings and home activities provided by educators for families of elementary students than older children. Based on the current research findings and previous literature, it is possible that Parenting, Communicating, Volunteering, Learning at Home, and Decision Making related to family/school partnership were not affected by parents' meeting attendance, as parents often could not attend the scheduled meetings anyway, due to child-care and work schedules. Qualitative findings help to explain this further. One parent stated, "I was quite busy to help her all the times." Another expressed, "I was busy myself as a grad student; it was hard to keep mentor them all the time from morning to evening." Therefore, it seems possible that meetings need to be scheduled conveniently, when EL families are able to attend and have child-care for younger children. This is important for educators, administrators, and the Department of Education to note to ensure meetings are scheduled accordingly.

Engaging EL Parents

Qualitative responses indicated EL parents of children in elementary schools feel supported in several ways, including technology assistance, non-technical supports, the role of parents, and children's responsibility. To explain further, parents reported receiving resources, such as technical supplies and support, from their child's school. One parent stated, "district school provides us Chromebooks and supplies." Parents also reported feeling supported with non-technical supports, such as free lunch and learning materials. Morita-Mullaney (2021) similarly found resources make it easier for families to support their children's learning. This research specifically mentioned technical support, such as Chromebooks, as well as non-technical supports, such as lunch and learning materials. This is important for policy-makers, administrators, and the Department of Education to note, as these resources seemed to be helpful with virtual learning.

Parents' role also made them feel supported, as they reported being able to communicate with teachers. One parent stated, "clear instructions. Watching the teachers helped me understand how I can help my kids" contributed to their family's efforts to be engaged. The importance of communication was also substantiated by previous research, as Laho (2019) found bidirectional communication benefited student achievement and parental involvement in their child's education. Regarding children's responsibilities and independence,

Finally, children's learned responsibilities also contributed to family's efforts to be engaged, according to the parents' responses, as one parent stated, "Yes, student been dependable and more responsible." Another expressed, "Teach them to be

independent helped them with regular checking.” These findings suggest children’s learned independence contributed to family’s efforts to be engaged. Firmanto and Sumarsono (2020) similarly reported children’s pedagogical environment was changed during COVID-19. Children in elementary school are often taught, with teachers and classmates very involved in their learning. COVID-19 created pedagogical changes with more independent work, so the findings of this research, suggesting children were taught how to learn independently, make sense in the midst of the pandemic.

Challenges and Barriers to EL Family-School Partnership

This qualitative research question inquired about EL family’s perceived barriers in supporting their children amidst COVID-19. The sub-question provides further insight, and also queries regarding ways to overcome the barriers. The findings are below.

Barriers that Prevent EL Families from Family-School Partnership

The qualitative question inquiring about factors limiting the success of efforts to be engaged with child’s education during virtual learning due to COVID 19 helped to answer this question. Factors identified as barriers included technology issues, instructional issues, culture and language barriers, socioemotional issues, and parental challenges. Another question, which asked parents about additional challenges parents faced revealed similar findings.

Technology issues, such as “internet” and “teaching them how to post their homeworks in Google classroom” was a reported challenge.” Instructional issues were another challenge, which also included technology, as parents stated “learning

online” was a challenge. Epstein et al. (2021) affirmed the technological divide is a factor hindering family/school partnerships. It seems more training is needed, not at a time of a global pandemic, but continual training to help families be prepared to help their children technologically. This will only benefit children. Policy makers, administrators, and the Department of Education should make note of this to ensure all students have access to internet, and to ensure children know how to access their schoolwork remotely.

Culture and language barriers were another reported challenge reported by parents in the wake of COVID-19. This aligns with findings by Epstein (2021) suggesting more efforts need to be put into communication for EL families post COVID-19. Lavadenz et al. (2021) affirmed these findings as well, noting that communication was a major barrier post COVID-19 since multilingual communication was required.

Socio-emotional issues was the next reported factor limiting the success of family’s efforts to be engaged. One parent stated, “kids missed the school environment.” Another stated, “child boredom.” Similarly, isolation emerged as a category when parents were asked about other challenges parents faced during the pandemic. This aligns with the ecological systems theory, which was one of the theories shedding light on this research, which demands cooperation

Since the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic, some sectors of the world economy have been adversely affected, and people have experienced a paradigm shift in teaching and learning methods. One critical teaching and learning method employed during the pandemic is virtual and online learning (Global Campaign for

Education, 2020). Grunig's situational theory of publics, which is one of the theories guiding this research, helps to explain this finding. Kroger-Ross and Waters (2013) found isolation and disconnection in a virtual environment were detrimental to the success of online learning. Therefore, they posited that success in the online environment is dependent upon active and passive communication, which are key elements in Grunig's situational theory of publics (Kroger-Ross & Waters, 2013). In order to overcome this challenge of isolation, parents need to recognize the problem and do their best to collaborate with their child's teacher and school, aligning with Grunig's situational theory of publics which allows us to categorize large groups of individuals into smaller groups based on their awareness of a problem and willingness to overcome it (Hamilton, 1992).

The final reported factor limiting the success of parents' efforts to be engaged with their child's education during COVID-19 was parental challenges. One parent stated, "The first two weeks were so stressful for us as parents. We had to be with them during zoom help." Another parent expressed, "I was busy myself as a grad student; it was hard to keep mentor them all the time from morning to evening." Time was another reported challenge parents reported facing during COVID. This aligns with previous findings suggesting trying to accomplish personal responsibilities, such as work, while also simultaneously teaching their children was a challenge (Zimmerman & Brown, 2021).

Several participants mentioned ways the aforementioned barriers were addressed. One parent stated, "I always encourage my kids to be responsible and independent." Another parent stated, "interacting with them." It seems these parents

understood transformational leadership and the importance of working together with their children to accomplish their goals and increase their children's motivation, which is how Burns (1978) as cited in Leithwood (1992) defined transformational leadership. It is imperative teachers take the initiative to be transformational leaders, as well. Yulianti et al. (2021) expressed how teachers' role in establishing partnerships is critical, as they should take the initiative and invite parents to be active participants in their children's education.

School Supporting and Enhancing EL Family-School Partnership

The last question inquired about strategies, activities, or collaborations being employed to support EL parents as partners in their children's education, specifically post COVID-19. Findings indicated schools supported basic needs, provided technical support, and provided instructional support. Parents also reported schools provided communication and planning assistance.

Parents reported feeling supported by the provision of "free meals." One parent stated, "provide different kind of support not only the gadgets but also access to food and mental health." This is important for policy makers to note, because this was a helpful provision. This was not stated in previous findings included in this research, as studies post COVID-19 are limited, as it was a challenge to conduct research in the middle of a pandemic (Epstein et al., 2021) so this finding is important to note.

Technical support was another way parents reported feeling supported, although it was also reported to be a challenge with parental/school partnerships. This, therefore, suggests technological support is helpful and even more support is

needed, which was affirmed by Epstein (2021). This is critical for policy-makers, administrators, educators, and the Department of Education, as their efforts in this area are needed. They need to ensure parents have the resources and support they need from their child's school.

Instructional support was another way parents reported feeling supported as partners in their child's educational journey. One parent stated, "the teachers were so reliable and so patient with the kids." Another expressed, "when I watched how the teacher teaches the children, it taught me how to help kids later if they need help." Another parent stated, "Providing worksheets to be picked up from the school each month." It seems the teachers served as mentors and cooperating partners to the parents, and they appreciated the guidance. This aligns with the ecological systems theory, which was a guiding light in this research, as the theory asserts there must be cooperation among environmental systems of a child's environment, since social environments affect children's learning and development (Guy-Evans, 2020).

Communication and planning assistance were also ways parents felt supported in their partnership with their children's schools. One parent stated, "Frequent emails from the teachers that inform parents with everything related to classroom activities." Another stated, "By providing a weekly schedule that shows time, activities, and homework in advance." Yet another expressed, "Talking with him a lot and try to include and agree the plan of his progress in school." Parents liked being informed and knowledgeable regarding their child's assignments, plans, and progress. The ecological systems theory helps to explain these findings, as Guy-Evans (2020) explained how interactions between parents and teachers takes place in the

mesosystem, and this collaboration and positive interactions are imperative to children's development.

Implications

The low scores for each scale of Parenting, Communicating, Volunteering, Learning at Home, and Decision Making during remote learning may reflect the difficulty of gathering, translating, and volunteering. This findings sheds light on the need to provide an online guideline for the parents that they can access whenever they need it. The online guideline should include the vital information the school needs the parents to be aware of in order to active the family-school partnership. Also, it could consist of a sheet of parents' information who are willing to help as an interpreter with a specific language.

Moreover, it is important that educators take the time to support parents in helping their children learn at home, even when learning is not exclusively conducted online. This way, parents are prepared and knowledgeable to teach their children this way if circumstances require it by using the online guideline.

Regarding the factors related to the EL family-school partnership during the remote learning and the qualitative findings, the parents seem to feel supported in several ways and appreciate the efforts and the assistance they got from their children's teachers and schools. However, although these findings emphasize how parents recognize all the support, the EL parents reported the lowest score in Decision-Making. Therefore, it would be great if the educators, administrators, and the Department of Education included EL parents more and determined how to encourage them to participate in these matters.

It is important that teachers are properly trained on how to effectively communicate and collaborate with parents. This is important for curriculum developers in higher education, as well as administrators and the Department of Education, so they are aware and ensure this training is included in higher education and continued education for teachers. For example, parents need to be trained on how to communicate and include parents of EL learners in their communication, despite language and cultural barriers.

Limitations of the Study

There are several limitations worth noting in the current research. Some of the participants did not answer the qualitative questions as intended. Therefore, it was difficult to interpret what they meant by their response. For example, if there were two questions, they did not always answer both or indicate which question they were answering. This made it difficult to interpret some of the qualitative results. I had to do their best to interpret the findings as they were intended. The quantitative results presented a limited understanding of the parents' responses. While the qualitative responses helped to understand them, the inclusion of triangulation with an interview would have provided additional clarity to understanding why parents' education, the findings suggested Parenting, Communicating, Volunteering, Learning at Home, and Decision Making did not vary based upon parents' education, employment status, years living in the United States, English language level, and meeting attendance. Although the study has value for educators or administrators who will be working with students from EL families more similar to the sample group, the narrow range of

characteristics of the majority of the respondents needs to be a more heterogeneous population. Small sample size may make it harder to generalize the findings.

Directions for Future Research

Future research could assess the relationship between EL parents and schools amidst the return to the school environment to see if there has been any change, since COVID-19. This could determine if new methods of communication were established, as a result of virtual learning. This could also shed light on any new teaching strategies and collaborative efforts that have been established. It is also important to understand if educators are now more prepared to educate virtually, should a situation like COVID-19 occur again.

Future research should also include educators' and students' perspectives on family/school partnerships. Understanding additional perspectives will shed light on the existing partnership to ensure the environment is collaborative, as Bronfenbrenner's (1977) Ecological Systems Theory postulates that individuals' lives are influenced by their environment, and communication within the mesosystem affects children's development (Guy-Evans, 2020). Therefore, it is important to ensure there is congruency and effective communication occurring between educators and families of EL learners.

Future research should also include interviews, so there is triangulation to further explain some of the quantitative findings. This way, the interviewer can ask participants "why" they gave some of their responses. This could further substantiate the open-ended questions, as well.

Future research should also focus on home visits, EL parents serving on district level committees, as well as the availability of translators and interpreters to support families to determine if those experiences were unique to the COVID online learning period.

Additionally, Future research should replicate the study with a larger and more heterogeneous sample, for those interested in serving the EL population in the United States. This is because Spanish is the primary language for most EL learners, representing 75% of all EL learners. While Arabic is the second most prevalent native language for EL learners, spoken by 131,600 students (NCES, 2021), there is a large variance in these two groups, which warrants replication with a more heterogeneous population.

Conclusions

This research provides valuable insights to policy-makers, administrators, educators, parents, and the Department of Education. Light was shed on how EL families experienced school partnerships, while their children were engaged in virtual learning. It is important to note this survey specifically addressed remote learning, not in-school or hybrid settings. The findings revealed factors parents value in their partnership with their children's school, such as communication and the ability to help their children learn at home. Furthermore, the findings indicated parent's education, employment status, years living in the United States, English language level, and EL parent meeting attendance are not related to the family-school partnership. Ways EL parents feel supported in their efforts to be engaged with their child's school were also revealed, including technology assistance, non-technical

supports, the role of parents, and children's responsibility. Perceived barriers, such as technology issues, instructional issues, culture and language barriers, socioemotional issues, and parental challenges were also discussed. Ways to overcome the challenges were finally unveiled, which included support of basic needs, technical support, instructional support, effective communication, and planning assistance. These findings could be used by policy-makers, administrators, and the Department of Education to ensure educators and schools have adequate resources, to establish new training programs, and to update higher-education curriculums. It is important training includes virtual teaching, as well as effective parental communication techniques. Communication with EL parents also needs to be taught, so educators are able to communicate effectively to overcome language and cultural barriers. These findings can also inform educators of ways they can exhibit leadership and collaborate with EL parents to ensure there is an effective partnership, which helps EL students learn in the most effective way.

APPENDIX A

RESEARCH QUESTIONS, METHODOLOGIES, AND ANALYSIS

Table A.1*Research Question, Related Questions in the Survey, and Used Analysis*

Major question	Sub-question	Related question in the survey	Data Analysis
How do EL families of children in elementary school experience family-school partnerships while engaged in remote learning?	What factors of EL parents (parent's education, employment status, years living in the United States, English language level, and EL parent meeting attendance) are related to the family-school partnership?	Qs (6,7,8,10, &11) + (Parenting, Communicating, Learning at home, Decision Making, and Volunteering)	1. One way ANOVA <i>Independent variables:</i> Parent education, parent employment status , parent # yrs in USA, and parent English language level <i>Dependent variable:</i> Means of the Measure of School and Family Partnerships. 2. Simple t-test One way ANOVA <i>Independent variables:</i> ESL meeting attendance <i>Dependent variable:</i> Means of the Measure of School and Family Partnerships.
	How supported do EL parents of children in elementary schools feel in their efforts to be engaged in the school?	Open-ended Q (2)	Qualitative coding
What are families' perceived challenges and barriers in supporting their children to learn at home while engaged in remote learning?	What are the perceived barriers of EL families with children in elementary school in the wake of COVID-19? How are the barriers addressed?	Open-ended Qs (1, 3, & 4)	Qualitative coding

Table A.1 — Continued

	What strategies, activities, or collaborations are being enacted to support EL parents as partners to improve educational outcomes for children, particularly in the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic?	Open-ended Q (5)	Qualitative coding

APPENDIX B
INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD APPROVAL



Institutional Review Board

Date: April 27, 2022

Study #: IRB-FY2022-334

Study Title: Perspectives of EL Parents on the Family-School Partnership During Remote Learning

Submission Type: Initial

IRB Decision: Exempt

Research Team:

Ahmed Aljohani

Julia Smith

Based on applicable federal regulations, the above referenced study has been determined to be Exempt, with the following categories:

Category 2.(i). Research that only includes interactions involving educational tests (cognitive, diagnostic, aptitude, achievement), survey procedures, interview procedures, or observation of public behavior (including visual or auditory recording).

The information obtained is recorded by the investigator in such a manner that the identity of the human subjects cannot readily be ascertained, directly or through identifiers linked to the subjects.

Letter and Consent Document:

This letter along with the IRB approved (date-stamped) consent document can be found in Cayuse in the Submission Details page under Letters and Attachments, respectively.

The IRB date stamped consent document must be downloaded and used in consenting participants.

Permission from Research Sites:

Please note the following:

- This IRB exemption determination letter means that this research has met one or more of the federal criteria for exemption per 45 CFR 46.104- Exempt Research.
- Before the research is initiated, permission to conduct research at a given site must be obtained from all research locations listed in the IRB submission. You must keep copies of all such permission letters for your files.
- It is the responsibility of each researcher to follow all applicable policies and procedures of any outside institution where the research will be conducted.

Modifications:

Any changes to this exempt project must be reviewed by the IRB prior to initiation by submitting a MODIFICATION request. Do not collect data while the changes are being reviewed. Data collected during this time cannot be used in research.

Record Retention:

Exempt projects will be retained by the IRB office for three years after the last action on the project.

You are approved to start the research. Please retain a copy of this notification for your records.

If you have any questions, please contact the IRB office.

Thank you.

The Oakland University IRB

APPENDIX C

THE INVITATION

RESEARCH RECRUITMENT ADVERTISEMENT

I am Ahmed Aljohani under the direction of Dr. Julia Smith, Professor in the Department of Organizational Leadership at Oakland University in the United States. I am conducting a research study to examine English learner parents' perspective on the role of mechanisms and effective family structures, communication strategies employed by the school to inform English learner parents on the progress of their children, inclusivity of English learner families in the school decision-making process, and coordination of schools and English learner families through the virtual learning experience.

I am recruiting individuals who are English learner parents of elementary school children who were/are enrolled in remote learning during the school year of 2020-2021 or 2021-2022. Open-ended questions will be added to the survey for a clear understanding of your perceptions of a family school partnership. The survey will take approximately 10-15 minutes.

Your participation in this study is voluntary. Please forward the invitation to other English learner families you know to respond to the questionnaire.

You can access the survey and answer it at your convenience:https://oakland.az1.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_bEs2etJvtKGWKHQ

If you have any questions concerning the research study, please contact me at email: aljohani@oakland.edu or phone number: 001 3302459727.

APPENDIX D

EL PARENTS PERSPECTIVE ON FAMILY-SCHOOL PARTNERSHIP DURING
THE REMOTE LEARNING SURVEY

The Survey Questions:

Demographic information

1. Do you have a child in Elementary school?

o yes (1)

o no (2)

Skip To: End of Survey If the answer = No

2. Has your child experienced remote learning during the school year of 2020-2021 or 2021-2022?

o yes (1)

o no (2)

Skip To: End of Survey If the answer? = No

3. Gender:

Male (1)

Female (2)

Prefer not to say (3)

4. Age:

20 or younger (1)

21 - 25 (2)

26 - 30 (3)

31 - 35 (4)

36 - 40 (5)

41 - 45

46+ (6)

5. Which region of the country do you live in?

Midwest - IA, IL, IN, KS, MI, MN, MO, ND, NE, OH, SD, WI

Northeast - CT, DC, DE, MA, MD, ME, NH, NJ, NY, PA, RI, VT

Southeast - AL, AR, FL, GA, KY, LA, MS, NC, SC, TN, VA, WV

Southwest - AZ, NM, OK, TX

West - AK, CA, CO, HI, ID, MT, NV, OR, UT, WA, WY

6. What is the highest degree or level of school you have completed?

No schooling completed (1)

High school (2)

Associates (3)

Bachelor's degree (4)

Master's degree (5)

Doctorate degree (6)

7. Which of the following categories best describes your employment status?

Employed (1)

Not employed, looking for work (2)
Not employed, not looking for work (3)
Self-employed/Freelance (4)
Retired (5)
Other (6) please explain _____

8. How long have you been in the USA?
not applicable: you are not an EL parent
Less than a year
1 year
2 years
3 years
4 years
5 years
6 years and more

Skip To: End of Survey If the answer? = Not applicable

9. The language other than English used at home: _____

10. Rank your English language level:
o Beginner
o Intermediate
o Advanced

11. Have you attended EL parent meetings?
o yes (1)
o no (2)

12. Does your child receive English language support?
o yes (1)
o no (2)

13. How many years has your child received EL services?
o Less than one year (1)
o One to three years (2)
o Three to five years (3)

Directions: Use the scoring rubric below to rate your child's school on the six types of involvement. As you review each item, select the response that comes closest to describing how the activity is implemented at your child's school.

Scoring Rubric:

1- Never: Not used at my child's school or I have never observed this activity.

2- Rarely: Conducted in one or two classes or with some families. Not emphasized in this school's partnership program.

3- Sometimes: Conducted in a few classes or with some families. Receives minimal emphasis in our school. Quality of implementation needs to improve.

4- Often: Conducted in many but not all classes, or with many but: not all families. Only minor changes are needed.

5- Frequently: Occurs in most or all classes, with most or all families. This is an important part of this school's program. Quality of implementation is excellent.

PARENTING: Help all families understand child development and establish home Environments to support children as students. Help schools understand families' backgrounds, cultures, and goals for students. Our child's school:

1. Conducts virtual workshops or provides information for parents on child development
 - o Never or not observed (1)
 - o Rarely (2)
 - o Sometimes (3)
 - o Often (4)
 - o Frequently (5)
2. Provides information to all families who want or need it, not just to the few who can attend workshops or meetings.
 - o Never or not observed (1)
 - o Rarely (2)
 - o Sometimes (3)
 - o Often (4)
 - o Frequently (5)
3. Produces information for families that is clear, usable, and linked to children's success in school.
 - o Never or not observed (1)
 - o Rarely (2)
 - o Sometimes (3)
 - o Often (4)
 - o Frequently (5)
4. Asks families for information about children's goals, strengths, and talents
 - o Never or not observed (1)
 - o Rarely (2)
 - o Sometimes (3)
 - o Often (4)
 - o Frequently (5)
5. Sponsors virtual home visiting programs or neighborhood meetings to help families understand school and to help schools understand families.
 - o Never or not observed (1)
 - o Rarely (2)
 - o Sometimes (3)
 - o Often (4)

- o Frequently (5)
- 6. Provides families with age-appropriate information on developing home conditions or environments that support learning.
 - o Never or not observed (1)
 - o Rarely (2)
 - o Sometime (3)
 - o Often (4)
 - o Frequently (5)
- 7. Respects the different cultures represented in our student population.
 - o Never or not observed (1)
 - o Rarely (2)
 - o Sometimes (3)
 - o Often (4)
 - o Frequently (5)

COMMUNICATING: Use effective forms of school-to-home and home-to-school communication about school programs and children's programs. Our child's school:

- 1. Provides communications in the language of the parents and provides interpreters and translators as needed.
 - o Never or not observed (1)
 - o Rarely (2)
 - o Sometimes (3)
 - o Often (4)
 - o Frequently (5)
- 2. Has clear two-way channels for communication from home to school and from school to home.
 - o Never or not observed (1)
 - o Rarely (2)
 - o Sometimes (3)
 - o Often (4)
 - o Frequently (5)
- 3. Conducts a formal conference with every parent at least twice a year.
 - o Never or not observed (1)
 - o Rarely (2)
 - o Sometimes (3)
 - o Often (4)
 - o Frequently (5)
- 4. Conducts a periodic survey for families to use during distance learning to share information and concerns about student needs, reactions to school programs, and satisfaction with their involvement in their child's education at school and at home.
 - o Never or not observed (1)
 - o Rarely (2)
 - o Sometimes (3)
 - o Often (4)

- o Frequently (5)
- 5. Conducts an orientation for parents who are new to the school.
 - o Never or not observed (1)
 - o Rarely (2)
 - o Sometimes (3)
 - o Often (4)
 - o Frequently (5)
- 6. Provides clear information about the curriculum, state tests, school and student results, and report cards.
 - o Never or not observed (1)
 - o Rarely (2)
 - o Sometimes (3)
 - o Often (4)
 - o Frequently (5)
- 7. Contacts families of students having academic or behavior problems.
 - o Never or not observed (1)
 - o Rarely (2)
 - o Sometimes (3)
 - o Often (4)
 - o Frequently (5)
- 8. Provides an online gradebook so that families can review students' grades at any time.
 - o Never or not observed (1)
 - o Rarely (2)
 - o Sometimes (3)
 - o Often (4)
 - o Frequently (5)
- 9. Uses e-mail and the school website to communicate with parents, including information on internet safety and children's use of social media.
 - o Never or not observed (1)
 - o Rarely (2)
 - o Sometimes (3)
 - o Often (4)
 - o Frequently (5)
- 10. Implements policies that encourage all teachers to communicate with parents about the curriculum, expectations for homework, and how parents can help at home.
 - o Never or not observed (1)
 - o Rarely (2)
 - o Sometimes (3)
 - o Often (4)
 - o Frequently (5)
- 11. Produces a regularly scheduled school blog or newsletter with up-to-date information about the school, special events, organizations, and meetings as well as parenting tips.

- o Never or not observed (1)
 - o Rarely (2)
 - o Sometimes (3)
 - o Often (4)
 - o Frequently (5)
12. Provides paper copies of e-communications for families who do not have computers, internet access, e-mail, or connections on social media platforms.
- o Never or not observed (1)
 - o Rarely (2)
 - o Sometimes (3)
 - o Often (4)
 - o Frequently (5)
13. Other Communicating activities: _____

VOLUNTEERING: Recruit and organize parents to support the school and students. Parents can help in virtual classroom activities— assisting at home (preparing instructional materials, cutting, collating, organizing materials), helping another parent with technology, financial literacy, helping the teacher with monitoring meet or zoom during the class, guest speakers, and host or attend virtual family nights, etc. Our child's school:

1. Conducts annual surveys to identify interests, talents, and availability of parent volunteers to match their skills and talents with school and classroom needs.
 - o Never or not observed (1)
 - o Rarely (2)
 - o Sometimes (3)
 - o Often (4)
 - o Frequently (5)
2. Provides a parent or family room for volunteers and family members to meet and work, and to access resources about parenting, tutoring, and related topics.
 - o Never or not observed (1)
 - o Rarely (2)
 - o Sometimes (3)
 - o Often (4)
 - o Frequently (5)
3. Creates flexible volunteering opportunities and schedules to enable employed parents to participate.
 - o Never or not observed (1)
 - o Rarely (2)
 - o Sometimes (3)
 - o Often (4)
 - o Frequently (5)
4. Schedules special virtual events at different times of the day and evening so that all

- families can attend.
 - o Never or not observed (1)
 - o Rarely (2)
 - o Sometimes (3)
 - o Often (4)
 - o Frequently (5)
- 5. Increases opportunities for parent volunteers by providing interpreters and translators, as needed.
 - o Never or not observed (1)
 - o Rarely (2)
 - o Sometimes (3)
 - o Often (4)
 - o Frequently (5)
- 6. Recognizes volunteers for their time and efforts.
 - o Never or not observed (1)
 - o Rarely (2)
 - o Sometimes (3)
 - o Often (4)
 - o Frequently (5)
- 7. Encourages families and the community to be involved with the school in various ways (e.g. provide family support, lead virtual activities, and mail packets)
 - o Never or not observed (1)
 - o Rarely (2)
 - o Sometimes (3)
 - o Often (4)
 - o Frequently (5)
- 8. Other Volunteering activities: _____

LEARNING AT HOME: Provide information to families on how to support learning at home, other curriculum-related activities, course decisions, and future plans.

Our child's school:

1. Provides information to families on required skills in major subjects.
 - o Never or not observed (1)
 - o Rarely (2)
 - o Sometimes (3)
 - o Often (4)
 - o Frequently (5)
2. Provides specific information to parents on ways to assist students with skills they need to improve.
 - o Never or not observed (1)
 - o Rarely (2)
 - o Sometimes (3)
 - o Often (4)

- o Frequently (5)
- 3. Asks parents to focus on reading, listen to children read, or read aloud with their child.
 - o Never or not observed (1)
 - o Rarely (2)
 - o Sometimes (3)
 - o Often (4)
 - o Frequently (5)
- 4. Assists families to help students set academic goals and select courses and programs.
 - o Never or not observed (1)
 - o Rarely (2)
 - o Sometimes (3)
 - o Often (4)
 - o Frequently (5)
- 5. Schedules regular interactive homework that requires students to demonstrate and discuss what they are learning with a family member.
 - o Never or not observed (1)
 - o Rarely (2)
 - o Sometimes (3)
 - o Often (4)
 - o Frequently (5)
- 6. Other Learning at Home activities: _____

DECISION MAKING: Include parents in school decisions and develop parent leaders and representatives. Our child's school:

- 1. Has an active PTA, PTO, or other parent organization.
 - o Never or not observed (1)
 - o Rarely (2)
 - o Sometimes (3)
 - o Often (4)
 - o Frequently (5)
- 2. Includes parent representatives on the School Improvement Team and other committees.
 - o Never or not observe (1)
 - o Rarely (2)
 - o Sometimes (3)
 - o Often (4)
 - o Frequently (5)
- 3. Has parents represented on district-level advisory council and committees.
 - o Never or not observed (1)
 - o Rarely (2)
 - o Sometimes (3)
 - o Often (4)
 - o Frequently (5)

4. Involves parents in organized, ongoing, and timely ways in planning and improving school programs.
 - o Never or not observed (1)
 - o Rarely (2)
 - o Sometimes (3)
 - o Often (4)
 - o Frequently (5)
5. Involves parents in reviewing school and district curricula.
 - o Never or not observed (1)
 - o Rarely (2)
 - o Sometimes (3)
 - o Often (4)
 - o Frequently (5)
6. Recruits diverse parent leaders for committees from racial, ethnic, linguistic, socioeconomic, and other groups in the school.
 - o Never or not observed (1)
 - o Rarely (2)
 - o Sometimes (3)
 - o Often (4)
 - o Frequently (5)
7. Develops formal social networks to link all families with their parent representatives.
 - o Never or not observed (1)
 - o Rarely (2)
 - o Sometimes (3)
 - o Often (4)
 - o Frequently (5)
8. Includes students (with parents) in decision making groups.
 - o Never or not observed (1)
 - o Rarely (2)
 - o Sometimes (3)
 - o Often (4)
 - o Frequently (5)
9. Addresses parents' questions, concerns, and conflicts openly and respectfully.
 - o Never or not observed (1)
 - o Rarely (2)
 - o Sometimes (3)
 - o Often (4)
 - o Frequently (5)
10. Develops the school's plan and program of family and community engagement with input from educators, parents, and others.
 - o Never or not observed (1)
 - o Rarely (2)
 - o Sometimes (3)
 - o Often (4)

- o Frequently (5)
11. Other Decision-Making activities: _____

REFLECTIONS

1. How has the COVID-19 crisis impacted your family? How has this impact been shared or communicated with your child's school?
2. What major factors contributed to the success of your family's efforts to be engaged with your child's education during the virtual learning due to COVID-19? Have you engaged in community discussions to learn about virtual learning context?
3. What major factors limited the success of your family's efforts to be engaged with your child's education during the virtual learning due to COVID-19?
4. What challenges do you face during your child's virtual learning?
5. In what ways does your child's school engage you to support your child's education? How have those activities best supported you in supporting your child's education?
6. Do you have any additional thoughts or questions?

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