

PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT
A GENERATIONAL CASE STUDY
WITH
FAMILIES OF DIVERSE BACKGROUNDS

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FAMILIES OF DIVERSE BACKGROUNDS

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PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT: A GENERATIONAL CASE STUDY WITH
FAMILIES OF DIVERSE BACKGROUNDS

Gustava Cooper-Baker
Dr. Barbara N. Martin, Dissertation Advisor

ABSTRACT

“No topic about school improvement has created more rhetoric than “parent involvement.”

Joyce Epstein, Center on School, Family, and Community Partnerships

The purpose of this study was to continue investigating the findings on parental involvement by looking at generational differences and diversity of families from the voice of grandparents, children and grandchildren over the age of 18. The researcher viewed the study through the lens of the Overlapping Spheres of Influence for school-family-community partnerships. The overarching questions guiding this investigation centered on what parental involvement is and whether parental involvement really matters in the success of children.

The study population consisted of one African American family, one Hispanic family and one Caucasian family. Each family was represented by grandparent(s), children, and grandchildren over the age of 18. Data collection methods included face to face interviews with grandparents, children, and grandchildren over the age of 18. These data methods assisted the researcher in the triangulation of the data. Findings from the research indicate that parental involvement is still as important today as it was for parents ten to twenty year ago. Another finding is the concept of partnership with the home, school, and community gives all families more equal opportunities to become involve in their children’s education. These findings support the theory of overlapping spheres of influence and are linked to the success of children.

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION OF THE STUDY

Background

For years, educational research has demonstrated the importance of parental involvement, but most contacts of parents with school have been superficial (Epstein, 2001; Henderson, Mapp, Johnson, & Davies, 2007; Peterson, 1989). Societies, in general, and educators, in particular, have been interested in the positive effects that parental involvement may have on students. It is no wonder that parental involvement is a major issue in education. Parental involvement in schools has become one of the dominant paradigms of family-school relations in the United States. This movement toward the call for more parental involvement in school acknowledges a distance between family and school and often an effort has to be made to bring the relationship closer (De Carvalho, 2001).

The federal government, the United States Department of Education, the *Quality Counts 2002*, and recently, the *No Child Left Behind Act of 2001* (2002) (NCLB) have all recognized parental involvement as an important aspect of the child's education (US Department of Educational Office of Educational Research and Improvement, 2005). School districts everywhere have been requested to reexamine parent involvement programs and approaches to parental involvement in order to continue receiving federal funds (Baker & Soden, 1998).

NCLB (2002) affects each state department of education; it impacts school districts, state services, and all teachers who are in a building that receives federal funding. The legislation supports research-based programs that are intended to have all

students reading on grade level by the end of third grade and all students at proficient or above in reading/communication arts and math by 2014 (NCLB, 2002). In reference to parental involvement, each school must develop a “compact” in which principals, teachers, families, and students agree to provide mutual support in teaching, responsibility, and learning. Failures to meet standards of NCLB will possibly cause financial ramifications for some districts (U.S. Department of Education year, 2002; Beck, 2003).

The National Campaign for Public School Improvement, (2007) conducted a study of 18 schools districts in 6 states, examining parental involvement and NCLB and found that these data reports were confusing and too complicated for parents. The report also revealed that parents had to wait for months for test results, and teachers and administrators often lacked training in how to interact with parents. Consequently parental involvement had fallen to the bottom of the list of NCLB, outcomes: instead it should have been an integral part to the success of the law for schools and students (The National Campaign for Public School Improvement, 2007).

According to the *National Parent Teacher Association* (2000) (NPTA), over 30 years of research has shown beyond the connection between parental involvement and student success. When parents are involved in their children’s education, children earn better grades, attend school regularly, complete homework, demonstrate a more positive attitude about school, graduate from high school, and are more likely to enroll in higher education than students with less parental involvement (Funkhouse & Gonzales, 1997). In fact improving parental involvement with schools can improve schools (Machen, Wilson, & Notar, 2005).

Parental involvement is important because of the need for higher standards, accountability, and the testing movement in schools (NCLB, 2002). There is a need to engage parents and the community as partners. This collaboration between parents and schools is important because of the demands of society and the difficult times in educating children (Machen et al., 2005). Positively engaging parents and other family members in the education of their children has the effect of being more transformational than any other type of educational reform (Kyle, McIntyre, Miller, & Moore, 2002). Thus in 1997 the National Parent Teachers Association created and adopted the national standards for parent/family involvement programs to be used along with other educational performance standards and reform initiatives in support of establishing quality parental involvement that influences children's learning and success (National Parent Teacher Association, 2000).

Parents have many reasons why they are not totally involved in their children's education. Some of the factors that cause lack of parental involvement in their children's education are the role parents play in the school, social and economic barriers to parental involvement, differing types of parental involvement, cultural differences, and the connection of home, school and community as partners (National Parent Teacher Association).

Researchers (Epstein, 2001; Hale, 2001; Moles, 2003) have explored the strengths of parental involvement with various racial, ethnic, and cultural characteristics. Parents from culturally diverse backgrounds are at risk for becoming the least involved in their children's education (Moles, 2003). This lack of involvement may be due to cultural differences between home and school, poverty concentration, and minority enrollment in

the school (Boethel, 2003). Hale (2001) agrees that there is a disparity in parental involvement in children of diverse families. Hale further states that the reality is the energy that is needed to become involved in their children's education is often lacking because of the demand of work, pressure within the family, and low levels of education that often keep minority families from conforming to traditional models of parental involvement (Hale, 2001).

Baker and Soden (1998) suggested that the amount of involvement to affect a positive impact on children is yet to be determined, but even small amounts of parental involvement are needed to ensure all children have academic success. Therefore, in this inquiry the data on parental involvement were examined through the lens of Epstein's theory of "overlapping spheres of influence" (Epstein, 2001). The model of overlapping spheres of influence includes external and internal structures. The external structure is based on looking at the background and practices of families, school and time. The internal structure is based on institutional and interpersonal communications lines and locates social interactions that connect the school, home, and community as one, with the child as the center focus of parental involvement (Booth & Dunn, 1995).

Despite the many studies (Auerback, 2006; Epstein, 2001; Kunjufu, 2002; Lightfoot, 2004) on parental involvement that state the opposite, parents indicated that they are involved in some ways in their children's education (Batey, 1996; *Bissinger, 2001*). Parents see their involvement as helping with homework, attending school events, going on field trips, volunteering when they can, advocating for needs in school change, and participating in various governance councils for school improvement (Constantino, 2003). Understanding the importance of parental involvement begs the following

question: What is true parental involvement and how does it impact children of all cultures?

From the review of literature surrounding the involvement of parents and the many challenges with which parents are constantly faced, three major constructs emerged: diversity in parental involvement, barriers to involvement, and the importance of family structure. This study examined generations of parental involvement in relationship to how parents participated in their children's education, to what degree parental involvement was expected or needed 10 to 20 years ago, and how it has changed over the years, resulting in effects on the success of their children.

Theoretical Conceptual Underpinnings of the Study

Overlapping spheres of influence (Epstein, 2001) (OSI) was the conceptual framework guiding this investigation. This theoretical framework suggested multiple contexts, internal and external that confront the family, school, and community (Garcia, 2004). Designed in the 1980s by Joyce Epstein, (1995, 2001, & 2002) the OSI recognized that three major areas in which students learn and grow include the family, the school, and the community (Epstein et al., 2002). From the OSI framework this study investigated the following themes: 1) OSI recognizes the complexity of the home, school, and community in diverse cultures; 2) OSI challenges the social relationship of communication in partnerships with educators; 3) OSI expresses the need of having patterns to influence parents to become involved in the school; 4) OSI works to place the child at the center of the home, school, and community; 5) OSI works towards the development of balancing parental involvement with potentially important results for

improvement in involving parents (Epstein, 2001, p.44; Epstein, Sanders, Simon, Salinas, Jansorn, & Voorhis, 2002, pp.8-9).

Overlapping Sphere of Influence Theory in Practice

The theory of overlapping spheres of influence in elementary schools was developed in the 1980s, under the leadership of the researcher Joyce Epstein. This led to the establishment of the National Network of Partnership Schools at John Hopkins University (Epstein, 2002). The overall focus of the early research was on families across the country, their trials and tribulations somewhat connecting with educators. Today's research is much the same regarding some clear expressions of parental involvement and some confusions and disagreements on practices and participation of parental involvement (Epstein, 2002). In some schools educators still say, "If only parents would do their job of raising the child at home, we could do our job at school" (Epstein, 2002, p.405). Parents are expressing feelings of dissatisfaction with educators, school boards, the community, and the entire educational system, because no one seems to care or can help them with their children or problems that they are having (Epstein, 2002; Flaugh, 2006; Kunjufu, 2002).

Parental Involvement

Consequently, this case study addressed the question: What is parental involvement, and how does the ethnicity of the parents affect how they are involved in their children's education? Researchers (Brandt, 1989; Constantino, 2003; Epstein, 2002; Noguera, 2003, & Henderson et al., 2007) have focused on models and components of parental involvement by defining or conceptualizing the idea that parental involvement is not a luxury, but a necessity (Henderson et al.). In passing the NCLB law, congress made

a promise to the parents and to children that an equal opportunity for a high quality education will be provided.

The practice of parental involvement is still viewed with doubt and confusion (Carlisle, Stanley, & Kemple, 2005). Two components most often associated with parental involvement are volunteering and helping children with their homework. Other possibilities included are attending school functions, going on field trips, bringing snacks to school, serving in leadership and decision making roles, service projects, and being supportive of the school (Batey, 1996; Carlisle, et al., 2005; Henderson et al., 2007). From early childhood through high school, parents contribute to their children learning. When parents are involved in the school, programs are more effective, community leaders are more apt to support schools, and partnerships are formed to provide resources for students and parents (Henderson et al., 2007; Kunjufu, 2002). Moreover, Epstein (2001) stated that goals, as well as the roles that the school, community, and family play in being involved in the lives of the children, helps to determine the future and success of children.

Epstein's (2001) six types of involvement, are parenting, communicating, volunteering, learning at home, decision making, and collaborating with the community. Each includes different practices for parental involvement, position challenges for parental involvement and presents different results for parents, schools, and communities (Brandt, 1989). Thus Epstein's theory of the overlapping spheres of influence was selected to guide this study with the understanding that the partnership of the parents, home, and community increases parental involvement.

Statement of the Problem

According to Epstein, (2002), “There is no topic in education on which there is greater agreement than the need for parental involvement. Everyone wants it, but most do not know how to develop productive partnerships” (Family Literacy Center, 2006, p.1). Conversations on how to improve the quality of education in American schools have focused on the family and the role of parents participating in their children’s education. With new research and educational reforms, schools are finding that they can best serve the needs of children by becoming family-centered. This concern was reflected in 1990 by policymakers (Patrikakou, Wessiberg, Manning, Redding, & Walberg, 2003) who formulated the national educational goal that recognized the inescapable fact that made family involvement in children’s educational lives a leading priority area for program development. Today the concern is still reflected in the federal policies such as the Goals 2000 Educate America Act, 1994 (EAA). In fact as far back as 1998, the EAA stated that, “By the year 2000, every school will promote partnerships that will increase parental involvement and participation in promoting the social, emotional and academic growth of children” (National Parent Teachers Association, 2000; National Education Goal Panel, 1998. p.6). This panel further stated that schools should have programs that support academic work of children, promote shared decision making, and hold teachers and educational institutions accountable for increasing student achievement (National Parent Teacher Association, 2000, p.16). In light of the disintegration of the family structure, rising school violence, increases in the drop-out rate, larger numbers of homeless children, and the high rate of children living in poverty, parental involvement is still, 10

years after the initial study, a necessary factor in the lives of students (Epstein, 2001, p.26; Title 1 Policy Guidance, p.1,1996).

Thus it is no wonder that parental involvement is still a major issue in education today. Furthermore, the call for parental involvement in schools acknowledges the fact that there is a detachment between what happens at home and what happens at school. Therefore, societies, in general, and educators, in particular, have had an interest in whether parental involvement affects the learning of students.

Purpose of the Study

Parental involvement is a hot topic in education today because educators feel that parents are not doing their part in helping to educate children (Epstein, 2001; Henderson et al., 2007). School districts, as well the federal government, are putting more emphasis on parental involvement and connecting the involvement to funds that districts are receiving (NCLB, 2002). Thus the purpose of this study was to examine what impact, if any, parental involvement has on the learning of children. This study focused on grandparents, children and grandchildren from different cultural backgrounds and how involved they have been in the educational arena of their children's lives. The researcher sought data from various parent groups, organizations, grandparents, and parents themselves.

The investigator of this study explored parental involvement by using three generations of family members. The methods used in this study included focus groups, observations, and questionnaires seeking for an understanding and identification of parental involvement, and an analysis of how involved parents were in the children's education. Additionally, the study examined if the forms of parental involvement have

changed over the last 10 to 20 years, seeking to answer the question, “Does parental involvement really matter?”

Research Questions

The following questions were addressed within the context of the study:

1. What is parental involvement, as viewed through the lens of overlapping spheres of influence?
2. How does the ethnicity of parents affect how parents are involved in their children’s education?
3. How have the forms of parental involvement changed from one generation to another?
4. How is parental involvement perceived to impact student success?

Limitations and Assumptions

According to Heppner and Heppner (2004), “all research methods have limitations” (p. 341). The researcher in this case study was interested in the process of the context and the population of the study. It is essential that a well designed research study clearly describes limitations of the study so readers are aware of the impending findings to other studies. This study was limited by the geographical area studied and the design used by the researcher:

1. This study was limited to three families, including grandparents, children, and grandchildren, in an urban metropolitan setting.
2. This study was limited in design to grandparents, children, and grandchildren who were open and willing to respond to surveys, observations, and interviews used in the study.

3. This study was limited in design to the format of the study and what the research accomplished during the study.
4. The study was further limited to the experience the researcher had in analyzing and gathering data.

Design Controls

The design of the study involved a method of descriptive research. When conducting descriptive research it is common to use focus groups and interviews to assess the point of view of individuals. The use of focus groups allows the researcher to draw generalizations regarding data from the sample population (Fraenkel & Wallen, 2003). Fraenkel and Wallen described descriptive research a valuable for summarizing information about the abilities, preferences, and behaviors of individuals or groups.

To triangulate the data (Merriam, 1998), the researcher developed rich information from multiple sources including interviews with grandparents, children, and grandchildren over the age of 18; observations of grandparents, parents, and grandchildren over the age of 18 during interviews; and focus groups of grandparents, children, and grandchildren over the age of 18 in a central location.

To verify the transcription, the research received feedback from the research subjects through a process called “member checks” (Merriam, 1998, p. 204). The researcher’s assumptions and information about the selection of the research subjects were discussed; to enhance the chances of transferability.

Definition of Key Terms

The following terms were identified by the researcher as important to the understanding of the study:

Community- A community is one that encompasses all individuals and institutions in and out of school-that have a stake in the success of children in school and in the well-being of children and families (Epstein, 2001).

Diversity- A term that commonly refers to families who are different from the mainstream of U.S. society, i.e., students who are not White middle-class, native-born, and or native English speaking (Boethel, 2003).

Epstein's six types of involvement (Epstein, et al., 2002)

Parenting: Epstein defines parenting as assisting families with parenting and child-rearing skills, understanding child and adolescent development, and setting home conditions that support children as students at each age and grade level.

Communicating: Epstein defines how educators communicating with families about school programs, student progress, and effective school-to-home and home-to-school communications methods.

Volunteering: Epstein defines volunteering as a mean to improve recruitment, training, work, and schedules to involve families as volunteers and audiences at the school or in other locations to support students and school programs.

Learning at Home: Epstein defines learning at home as the involvement of families with their children in learning activities at home, including homework and other curriculum-related activities and decisions.

Decision Making: Epstein defines decision making as including families as participants in school decisions, governance, and advocacy through PTA/PTO, school councils, committees, action teams, and other parent organizations.

Collaborating with the Community: Epstein defines collaborating with the community as coordinating community resources and services for students, families, and the school with businesses agencies, and other groups that provided services to the community.

*Family-like school-*A family like school is one that recognizes each child's individuality and makes all children and families feel special and included (Epstein, et al., 2002).

Family Structure – Family is the change that has occurred in the past decades. More children are now living with grandparents, nearly half are now living with only one parent, and nearly half move each year (Epstein, 2001; Henderson, et al., 2007).

Generational family- Defined as “Two or more persons related by blood, marriage or legal definition, across at least two generations.” It acknowledges people have ties across time and across generations (Olson, 2008, pp.1-2).

National Parent Teacher Association- An organization that provide standards and guidelines for the governing of parent teacher associations in schools (National Parent Teacher Association, 2000)

No Child Left Behind- The No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 (2002), (NCLB) reauthorized the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (1965) the main federal law affecting education from kindergarten through high school. Proposed by President Bush shortly after his inauguration, NCLB was signed into law on January 8, 2002. NCLB is built on four principles: accountability for results,

more choices for parents, greater local control and flexibility, and an emphasis on doing what works based on scientific research (U.S. Dept. of Education, 2002).

Overlapping Sphere of Influence- A theoretical framework created to show changes in the relationship of the family, school, and community (Epstein, 2001).

Parental involvement –The National Parent Teacher Association defines parental involvement as the participation of parents in every facet of children’s education and development from birth to adulthood, recognizing that parents are the primary influence in children’s lives.

Summary

Research shows that the family, school, and community partnerships are important to improve parental involvement in schools today. In support of NCLB, educators are talking more about parental involvement, becoming more creative in school programs and making a commitment to involve parents in all facets of school policies (Epstein, 2001). This study, developed through the lens of Overlapping Spheres of Influence (OSI), addressed the role of the school, parent, and community.

Chapter One presents an overview of the importance of parental involvement and the effect it has on the family, school, and community. Chapter Two is a review of the current literature related to the study. The participants and research design implemented in the study will be addressed in Chapter Three. Discussed in Chapter Four are the results of the study. Finally, included in Chapter Five is a section that addresses the findings along with the conclusions and further recommendations for future research.

CHAPTER TWO

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

Introduction

Much research has been devoted to the subject of parental involvement and how it affects the lives of children. According to the National Parent Teacher Association (2000) research has shown that effectively engaging parents and families in the education of their children has the potential to be far more transformational than any other type of educational reform. Major legislation such as the *Goals 2000, the Educate American Act* and the reauthorization of the Elementary and Secondary Act (ESEA) have made parental involvement a national priority (Kyle, McIntyre, Miller, & Moore 2002). Leading researchers (Epstein, Coats, Salinas, Simon, & Sanders, 1997; Hornby, 2000) have explored the impacts of parental involvement, and connecting the schools, community, and home as one. Clearly both families and schools have changed. Families have become busier, and the structure of the family does not generally reflect the traditional two-parent and two children prototype of the past. Still when parents are involved, students achieve more, regardless of the number of parents involved, the parent's income, or their ethnic racial background (National Parent Teacher Association, 2000).

Most recently the *No Child Left Behind Act of 2002* (NCLB) focused on understanding the roles parents assume and acknowledges that parents are integral to their children's learning. Three major factors that have had an impact on parental involvement are (1) parents' beliefs about what is significant, required, and acceptable for them to do on behalf of their children; (2) the extent to which parents believe that they can be optimistic about their children's educations; and (3) parents understanding that

their children and the school want them to be involved (Michigan Department of Education 2001, p.1; Bissinger, 2001). Since the beginning of time parents have been concerned about their children; that is a foregone conclusion and not really arguable, but due to rifts in the contemporary social fabric and the accompanying stress on students to survive in transitory and otherwise socially stressful conditions, today's parents are even more concerned with the quality and the preparation for life-long success that their children are receiving (Constantino, 2003). Parents want to know that their children are doing well and will be successful in life. It is no wonder that parental involvement remains a major educational issue (Constantino, 2003; Partikakou, et al., 2003)

Parental involvement may take many forms besides participating in common bake sales or other fund raising activities. Parental involvement requires parents to be the first educators in the home, to participate as partners with the school and to function as advocates for all children and youth in society (Epstein, 1995; Moore, 1991; National Parent Teacher Board of Directors, 1993). According to Batey (1996), parents are involved in shared-leadership training in which they learn how to plan and make decisions, help develop classroom-type assessments, and help to revise many programs in schools. Parental involvement has been publicized for years as an important factor for student success; yet, effective parental participation to support the learning of students is not easily accomplished and has many obstacles and barriers (Muldrow, Cano, & Kimmel, 1999).

This review of literature was conducted primarily to demonstrate the need for parental involvement and to show how parental involvement differs from generations to generations, as well as to illuminate the diverse aspects of parent family involvement.

First, the perceived images of parental involvement were discussed through the frame of understanding the relationship between parental involvement and the school. Next, the theoretical explanations of Epstein's theory of spheres of influence of parental involvement were explored (Epstein, et al., 2002). The federal legislation of the *No Child Left Behind Act of 2001(2002)* was also examined as a support for the need for parental involvement. Further review focused on cultural differences of parental involvement, family structure, and the role that family members play in parental involvement.

Governmental Standards

National PTA Standards

The National Parent Teacher Association, 2000 (NPTA) standards guide for school personnel in parental involvement emphasized that (a) all regular communication is two-way between home and the school; secondly, (b) parents are supported through the implementation of parenting skills, (c) student learning is improved by providing additional resources to help parents, (d) schools should provide a welcoming environment for parents at all times, and (e) parents should be encouraged to be a part of the decision making process that affects the learning of their children (p. 22). These standards articulated that since decisions affect children and their parents, and sharing information about community resources strengthens parental involvement and help students to improve in their learning. Therefore, the National Parent Teacher Association stated that standards should be implemented in every school (Constantino, 2003; National Parent Teacher Association, 2000).

Another national association, Parent Leadership Associates (2002) highlighted the need to further support parental involvement in schools through written parental

involvement policies. These associations (NPTA, 2000; Parent Leadership Associates, 2002) reported that first, schools should be actively involved in developing these plans, and parents should evaluate the content and activities for improving student achievement. Secondly, families, and school partnerships have to be established. Schools have to provide training to parents so that they have an understanding of state standards, state tests, and district curriculum. Third, schools have to communicate the message that parent involvement is a joint effort, and the goal is to improve their children's achievement. Finally, schools must serve as a resource for parents. Schools can provide these services through technical assistance, resource centers, and community-based organizations (Parent Leadership Associates; National Parent Teacher Association, 2000). In fact, school personnel that make an extra effort to communicate effectively with parents will have a much greater influence on children than the family size, marital status, and even the students' grade level (National Parent Teacher Association, p.12-13).

No Child Left Behind and Parental Involvement

In January 2002, President George W. Bush signed the most significant educational initiative to have been enacted in decades, the *No Child Left Behind Act of 2001* (NCLB). The provisions of the NCLB are to improve student achievement by requiring that all children attain proficient level of achievement on state academic assessment tests by the year 2014; that all teachers will be highly qualified by the end of the 2005-2006; and that parents are given the opportunities to become involved in making decisions concerning their children's education (Simpson, LaCava, & Graner, 2004).

As parents become more involved in their children's education, they are better able to understand academic, measures standards, school data, and district's performance information. The optimal goal of the NCLB is that parents are thought of as an integral educational resource, and alternative under NCLB (Simpson, et al., 2004 p. 3). The U.S. Department of Education (2006) suggests that parents assist in preparing their children for the 21st century by (a) making sure children understand the importance of math in elementary school, and parents need to encourage children to take more math, science, and language courses in high school; (b) encouraging children to take more advanced placement courses in high school; (c) working closely with their children's teachers to understand the need for teachers to be highly qualified; (d) helping the school to improve and being a part of an initiative for school improvement; and (e) keeping abreast of opportunities provided by NCLB for their children, by taking advantage of these opportunities as they become available (pp.1-2).

In addition to other legislative issues, Missouri Senate Bill 480 recognizes the need for parental involved in that (a) there is a need for regular, two-way, meaningful communication between home, and school; (b) it supports the promotion of parents being responsible; (c) parents, and families play an integral role in helping their children learn; (d) it promotes a safe, and open atmosphere for parents to visit and be actively involved and of assistance to the school program and, (e) parents are aware of community resources to promote school programs and the overall student achievement of students (Family Literacy Center, Inc., 2006, p.1).

Parental Involvement

Parental involvement is a combination of commitment and active participation on the part of parents to the school and to their children (LaBahn, 1995). Evidence has been noted that when parents are involved, student achievement increases, attendance; attendance and attitude toward school are boosted; classroom behavior improves; and levels of aspiration increase (Bisinger, 2001)

According to (Booth & Dunn, 1995; Cooper, 1999) parental involvement is driven by more compound family and community conditions. The problems are well known: more two-parent homes in which both parents are employed; an increased number of young, single parents, and more of them are working outside the home; more children now live in poverty; more migrant and homeless parents and children; and more parents move with and without their families during the school year. These known factors have a major effect on and increased need for parental involvement in their children's education (Booth & Dunn, 1995; Cooper, 1999). In fact, as the family structures change and become more diverse, children's lives become more centered on the varied cultural backgrounds of the adults in the parental roles for those children Constantino (2003). Research asserted that parental involvement had to change and increase. Therefore, parent involvement in schooling has become the dominant paradigm of family school relations in the nation (De Carvalho, 2001).

Issues that lie in bridging the relationship of parental involvement are the various generational concerns of ethnic and cultural differences in parents. Nearly 40% of children in the country are members of a racial ethnic minority or of multiple racial minorities (Lopez, Kreider, & Coffman, 2005). The challenges of educators are to

understand diverse generational ways families support schools and also to assess the depth of involvement of parents in their children's learning. For years all children were looked at as a monolith (belonging to a large organization that acts as a powerful unit) and very little was done by school personnel to understand or develop relationships with diverse families (Lopez, et al., 2005).

To support the research on parent involvement, Kakli, Kreider, Little, Buck, and Coffey, (2006) and the Combined Elementary Task Force of the Metropolitan Omaha Educational Consortium (1999) agreed that when parents are involved in their children's education, children have higher grades, better attendance, complete homework, and have a more positive attitude and behavior. According to the Title 1 policy guide (1996), children do best when parents play four key roles in their children's learning: teaching (helping children learn at home), supporting (by contributing their skills to the school), being an advocate (helping to make sure all children receive fair treatment) and acting as decision makers (assisting in problem solving with the school and district levels (p.2).

Researchers such as Singleton and Linton (2006) asserted that the relationship that was vaguely attempted by educators often left families of various ethnicities struggling in school simply because of socio-economic challenges, and unknown barriers that were placed in their way to keep them from being successful and from being involved in the education of their children.

Families today are struggling with many new issues as generations become less and less involved with each other (Lancaster & Stillman, 2002). The problem is that many family trees are split apart or friendship bonds are broken because the mind set of being stuck with the phrase in my day mean "it's the only way" (Lancaster & Stillman,

2002). Geographic dispersion has segregated families as well. Young people move to the urban areas, families with children move to the suburbs, child-free households move to more trendy places, and older generations are migrating to retirement communities in warmer climates (Lancaster & Stillman).

The faces of grandparents are now changing. The average age for grandparents to have their first grandchild is now 48 (Brown, 2006 p.132). Ten to twenty years ago, the average age for the first grandchild was about 40. Many grandparents live far from their children and in 2005 5.1 million people age 65 and older were still employed, according to statistics from the U.S. Department of Labor (Brown, p. 132). In most locations and settings, families have lost access to the diversity of perspective and wisdom derived from other generations.

Perceived Images of Parental Involvement

Many parents have become uncertain about education. These uncertainties may be the result of their own unenthusiastic experiences, or a sense of unfulfilled assurances and low expectations for themselves; however, they reduce the role of parents being involved in the school (Epstein, 2001). If parents consistently avoid the teachers, they will not be knowledgeable of or understand the school's expectations for their children (Epstein, 2001; Hampton, Mumford, & Bond, 1997).

Educators are aware of various problems within the home-school relationship. Research indicates that on average parents spend less than a half hour a day talking, explaining, or reading with their children (Kuykendall, 2004). A key difference in educational outcomes depends on the activities of parental declaration. Educators should accept the realities: that the energies of many middle class parents are greatly divided

between demanding jobs, and pressures to sustain their families. Since many African American children come from households of single-parent families with the one parent working long hours, involvement in school activities is often not a priority (Epstein, 2001; Hale, 2001). In fact Epstein explains that many parents have internalized the belief that it is up to the school to provide the academic skills and motivation in their children.

Educators are often frustrated when parents are not as involved as teachers think they should be in the educational process. Hoover-Dempsey, Walker, and Sandler (2003) postulated several factors that influence parents' decisions about involvement in the child's education. The first factor identified is the role construction for involvement-- parents are either actively or passively involved in their children's education. Hoover-Dempsey et al. (2003) argued that active parents take on the responsibility for educating their children and understand expected outcome whereas passive parents have a tendency to believe that the school bears responsibility for the educational outcomes of their children and only become involved if the school contacts the parents.

Another factor identified by Hoover-Dempsey et al. (2003) indicates the need for parents to have a sense of efficacy for assisting their children to learn. This parental self-efficacy comes from observing others helping their children and from encouragement by other family members and teachers. Parents who are strong in self-efficacy tend to be active in their children's educations and learn how to work through difficult situations. Parents with less self-efficacy may give up when difficulties arrive in the learning of their children.

A third factor postulated by Hoover-Dempsey et al. (2003), is the perception of how parents are welcomed to the school. A warm, welcoming invitation to parents by

educators conveys that their involvement is valued and their support is needed. Hoover-Dempsey et al. further argued that the invitation to parents should be a request of what the parents can do to help create a strong connection between the home and school.

Finally, there is a perception of the effect that parents have on children if they are involved in their learning. Hoover-Dempsey et al. (2003) reported that children's attendance improved, a belief in self was encouraged, and behavior improved when parents were involved. Those interpersonal components related to school success are enhanced when parents are actively involved and the parental motivation and support is there for the children to view (Hoover-Dempsey et al., 2003; Kuykendall, 2004).

This idea that parents need to be a part of the learning community is not new. Earlier Selznick (1992) argued that what matters most to parents is a sense of belonging and a sense of being taken seriously as a person and as a member of the school community. When parents feel that they belong to a school community, a level of trust and connection is developed for the school (Larson & Ovando, 2001). With this sense of belonging comes an increase in trust of the educators. But as schools become more diverse, the trust levels of parents for school personnel and those who are in charge of their children change (Kuykendall, 2004). When parents feel that their requests and the well-being of their children are not being met by the school system, they become less polite in their relationships with those in authority, and they are more likely to interpret teachers' and administrators' claims as absolute authority (Epstein, 1995; Larson & Ovando, 2001).

Kyle, McIntyre, Miller, and Moore (2002) asserted that no amount of effort toward improving home-school relationships will be effective without trust. Students' families must trust that educators want for their children what they want for all children.

The way school personnel think about children is replicated in the way schools care about the children's family (Epstein, 1995; Larson & Ovando, 2001). According to Ambrosetti-

De Castro and Cho (2005) many factors constrain parental participation in schools: narrow vision of parental involvement, school personnel's negative proclivity, lack of teacher training, employment issues, and cultural differences.

Role of Parents in School

The expression, "parents are their children's first teacher" has been used for years and years, and has become almost clichéd, but it is true according to Henderson, et al. (2007, p. 32). In fact, parents should be treated as the experts they are with knowledge of their children and their school behaviors and activities.

Hoover-Dempsey et al. (2003) stating that there are three key concepts influencing the choices parents made about being involved in their children's education: The first choice is how parents develop their job descriptions as parents. The researchers call this "role construction" what parents think they are supposed to do to help their children and what their family and friends say about their role is very important to parents. Their cultural backgrounds and social surroundings strongly influence their decisions about school and the extent of their being involved. The second choice is how confident parents feel about their ability to help their children. The researchers call this "efficacy" parents are more likely to become involved if they feel that they have the skills

and knowledge to help their children; their children can learn what they have to share and teach them; and a sense of what they do will make a positive difference in their children's learning. The final choice is for parents to feel invited, both by their children and by the school, to participate in the process. This "sense of invitation" is strongly influenced by signals that parents receive from their children and school staff. This "sense of invitation" is very strong and important and determines the depth of support that parents are willing to give (Hoover-Dempsey et al. 2003, pp.33-34).

According to Ambrosetti-De Castro and Cho (2005), parents are their children's only and best advocates and, therefore, communication is the key to successful parental involvement. When parents make an effort to contact teachers regularly about their children's progress, they are taking the first step to becoming involved (Measuring up, 1999). Parents can become directly involved by setting a time for the homework to be done and checking the child's homework, limiting time spent with friends and watching television, providing support for educators, and by taking advantage of becoming involved in policy and decision making at the school and district level. The role that parents take in the school is essential to the academic success of students and has a significant impact on the success of children, especially when parents become a familiar presence in the school environment (National Education Association, 1997; Nye, 2006; Quigley, 2000).

However, the perception today is that parents are too busy with dual income families, single-parent homes, and other problems in their own adult lives, causing them not to have the time or energy necessary to be as involved with their children as parents were in the past (Hicks & Hicks, 1999). Hicks and Hicks also argued, "That this isn't

necessarily the case” (p. 274). Mothers today, he argued are more likely to attend their children’s school events and spend more time with their children because parents now have fewer children, and each child is getting more parental attention. Wadsworth and Remsley (2007) asserted that “Although Americans of all backgrounds believe education is the key to the good life, the Public Agenda research suggests that many do not think schools are delivering on the promise for African American and Hispanic students” (p. 24).

African American Parents

Reglin (1995) asserted that there are perceptions that some African American parents do not want to get involved in schools today, but other researchers (Cooper, 1999; Desimone, 1999; Epstein, 1995; Williams, 2005; Epstein, 2001) revealed that the majority of parents care about the education of their children and have a vested interest in their children. Reglin (1995) further argued that too often African American parents are not involved because they are not asked to participate; therefore, their involvement is limited. Transportation and many other problems that they confronted on a day-to-day basis play a significant factor in limiting parental involvement. In fact, African American parents to a large extent do not believe that the school is sincere about wanting to educate their children or involve them as partners (Reglin, 1995). Reglin suggested that African American parents see school as supporting the children of middle-income and high-income families and not of lower-income families. This causes some African American families to become unenthusiastic about being involved in their child’s school, and subsequently, they develop a sense of powerlessness.

According to Kuykendall (2004) and Hale (2001), African American parents are more likely to be involved with their children in school activities in the primary grades rather than later grades. Kuykendall (2004) agrees that African American children enroll in school earlier than Caucasian or Hispanic children as a benefit from programs such as Head Start, nursery school, or pre-Kindergarten programs. Hale (2001) also noted that many African American children come from single-parent households, and sometimes the parents work longer hours with less pay leaving less time for parent involvement. Hale further stated that African American parents respond in an inconsistent fashion to school activities but generally come to meetings and parent conferences, sign progress reports, check home work, and provide school supplies for their children. Conversely, according to Kuykendall (2004), some African American parents are still unaware that they should teach their children how to read or write before they start kindergarten. They still have this belief that it is the school's responsibility to teach their child.

Yet according to Caspe, Lopez, and Wolos (2006/2007) parents of African American children benefit from parental management strategies. They further stated that African American parents with higher achieving children tutor their children at home, initiate contact with teachers and counselors, and use any contacts necessary to ensure their children's progress is successful.

Furthermore, African American parents have a distinct way of becoming involved with their children's education: they use their faith and stories of struggle and hope to help children understand the "hidden rules" of survival and success (Henderson, et al., 2007). Also, additional research (Diller, 1999; Larson & Ovando, 2001) further suggested that public schools have lost a wonderful asset by not making the most of

engaging African American parents as partners to address the needs of their children.

There still appears to be a high degree of alienation with African American parents feeling that teachers relate to them in hostile ways (Hale, 2001; Kuykendall, 2004).

Schools will have to develop a major focus on parental involvement for African American parental partnerships with churches, businesses and schools as well as develop a means of empowering parents to be active voices in the education of their children (Tucker, 1999).

Hispanic Parents

Hispanic children now make up to 18.6% of the nation's public and private school children in America (Berger, 2006) and have a significant drop-out rate. This drop-out rate could be the cause of Hispanic parents' insecurity with the educational system, the lack of monitoring their children's progress in school, and for recent migrants, with limited English language skills. Parental involvement is a buzzword in education, but for many Hispanic parents, helping their children absorb lessons in an inscrutable language in a strange country has always been a challenge (Berger, 2006; Volk, 1994).

Berger (2006) further noted that school personnel over the years have encouraged Hispanic parents as well as parents of other ethnicities to become involved in their children's education, but many Hispanic parents have a fear that their limited English skills put them in the position of being misunderstood. Furthermore, many Hispanic parents work long hours, which limits their ability to be involved; therefore, they do not express their concerns to school administrators and teachers (Berger 2006; Vang, 2006). Vang further argued that many Hispanic parents do not understand the academic standards, and thus, do not become aware of their children's deficiencies until the

problems have become nearly impossible to correct. They also have limited knowledge of how to advocate for proper education for their children.

In some cases Hispanic parents come from cultures outside of the United States in which teachers receive the same respect as civic leaders, and Hispanic parents trust their child's teacher and feel that they do not have to be involved in the education system or that it would be a sign of disrespect (Vang, 2006).

Lee, Zambrana, Zoppi, Lorenzo, and Tosado, (2005) postulated that parental involvement has been shown to be an important factor in the general psychological and social development of Hispanic parents, and their children. They found that programs that involve the entire family significantly improve the involvement of Hispanic parents. Lee et al. (2005) further listed some forms of Hispanic parental involvement which included school function attendance, school obligations response, school work assistance, study time, space arrangement, and encouraging and modeling desired behaviors (p.1). Lee et al. asserted there is a need to challenge the stereotype that Hispanic parents do not value education. Despite very little contact with the school, Hispanic parents tend to manage their children's education by stressing how important it is, by asking their children about school projects and events, and by showing nonverbal support (Casper et al.2006/2007).

Caucasian Parents

The research on Caucasian parents revealed a different type of parental involvement. Noguera (2003) found that Caucasian parents out-number African American or Hispanic parents in most school activities. He noted that Caucasian parents are more involved in the decision making process, the understanding of allocation of funds, and involvement in the operation of the school. Hale (2001) argued that most

Caucasian parents understand that education is the key to gaining the skills for getting ahead in society and, therefore, Caucasian parents make the time and have the flexibility to come to school during the day and assure that their children are receiving the best education possible. Noguera further noted that many middle-class Caucasian parents can e-mail the teacher frequently to check up on the progress of their child, whereas other minority parents may or may not have access to a computer in the home or on the job. Also many Caucasian parents are involved in school functions because they generally have an understanding of the process of how the district and school operates (Noguera, 2003).

Singleton and Linton (2006) characterized some Caucasian parents as being more verbal, impersonal, intellectual, task oriented, and knowing what is best for the school as well as for their children. Middle-class Caucasian parents, especially mothers, are more likely to participate in their child's school because they do not work and because of their educational backgrounds.

According to Henderson et al.(2007) Caucasian middle-class parents seem to fit right in. They share the same background and use the same vocabulary as the teachers, they understand the hidden rules of school, they invest in their children's education to help them do well in all areas, and they are more likely to have child care and transportation to get to the school than other families.

In addition to the research on parent involvement, McGrath and Kuriloff (1996) agreed that schools tend to serve families differently by their race and social class. Upper-middle class parents, especially white upper-middle class parents, tend to have more success making their voices heard in school in comparison to inner city parents,

who often are the focus of parent involvement plans and are likely to be at a disadvantage in dealing with educators (McGrath & Kuriloff, 1996).

Cultural Differences of Parental Involvement

Diverse Differences in Parental Involvement

The biggest challenge educators' face today is stepping outside of their own cultural spheres and developing a greater appreciation for and understanding that families and children are different (Christenson & Sherdian, 2001). Parents from culturally diverse backgrounds are at risk of becoming the least involved in their child's education. These parents are most likely to be excluded and treated differently if they are poor, uneducated, and of diverse backgrounds (Noguera, 2003). This lack of involvement may be due to cultural differences between the schools and home that build walls between families and educators (Christenson & Sherdian, 2001). Families who do not speak English well or who were reared in another country may have a difficult time understanding the curriculum and requirements of the school. They might not be able to help foster the learning of their children at home. Educators must make sure that the forms of communication are written so that all parents understand. Educators must provide workshops in languages that parents understand and provide a support system for parents with children who are culturally different (National Parent Teacher Association, 2002).

Ambrosetti-DeCastro and Cho (2005) suggested that culture and language issues offer a view into understanding family dynamics which serves as a link to the school-home partnership. In addition to culture and language issues, there is a need for a

“meaning centered model” which uses students’ first language skills and involves the family as a resource for learning (Ambrosetti-DeCastro & Cho, 2005, p.44).

According to Hale (2001) the majority of African American children in urban schools or low socioeconomic status come from single-parent households. Parental involvement programs that work for white middle-class families might not be useful to these parents. Even though the programs are good, parents have another agenda. Some parents feel that programs have a higher level of sophistication than theirs, and single parents have the responsibility of keeping the family together and are under tremendous emotional, time, and economic pressures (Kuykendall, 2004).

Before educators can ever hope to connect parents and their children, educators must understand what the parents and children consider most important to their lives. Kottler and Kottler (2002) suggested that educators who work with children from diverse backgrounds take pictures of what is going on in school. Pictures are an excellent way of communicating to parents. Through the use of pictures, parents are able to visualize that the school is a warm and inviting place to be. The teacher might create a portfolio of the students’ work for the parents to see. Children can explain to parents what is in the portfolio and show progress of what the child is doing in school (Kottler & Kottler, 2002). To learn more about the student, educators can study the family background and culture.

Planning diverse activities at the school allows the opportunity for parents to become acquainted with the teachers, students, and other parents of diverse cultures. Epstein (1995) and De Carvalho (2001) posited that “Schools must inform and involve all

families, including those with different cultural backgrounds, to gain their ideas, and assistance in helping all children succeed in school” (p. 24).

Diller (1999) asserted that educators must realize that culture is a valuable teaching tool. When educators learn about the culture of the child, they get to know the parent and their feelings on being involved in the child’s education as well.

The Family Structure

Structure of the Family

Changes in the family structure and the way children are being reared today have links to the well being of the child (Kyle, McIntyre, Miller, & Moore, 2002). Factors that have been identified as contributing to placing children at risk include growing up in poverty, exposure to drugs and/or violence at home or school, dysfunctional families, run down schools, poor nutrition and neighborhood distress (Condly, 2006; Hale, 2001; Kuykendall, 2004; Noguera, 2003).

In 1999 the percentage of homes operating below the poverty level was 11.9% for families from all races (U.S. Census Bureau, 2001). This variable of poverty has caused families to have difficulties in promoting the social and psychological development that their children need in order to function successfully in school (Constantino. 2003). A review of the literature (De Carvalho, 2001; Constantino, 2003; Epstein, 2001; National Parent Teacher Association, 2000) identified the following patterns of parental involvement which relates to student achievement and improvement of parent and school partnerships: changes in the family structure, educational barriers, cultural differences, socioeconomic status, and family-school relationship. Regardless of the many obstacles and configurations that families are faced with today, families try to create a home

environment that encourages learning, to have high expectations for their children, and to become involved in their children's education (Constantino, 2003; Elementary Task Forces Metropolitan Omaha Educational Consortium, 1999; Epstein, 2001).

Families have dissimilar life circumstances, plans, and various views about life and educational responsibilities. Families respond differently to school expectations and what involvement means to them (Sheldon, 2003, p.150). When researchers look back at this generation of parents, it is very likely that the researchers will agree with Cordry and Wilson's (2004) prediction that this generation of parents are demanding and represent a difference in the challenges that educators faced years ago. Years ago, when children got in to trouble at school, they were more than likely in trouble at home. Today's parents often blame the school and not the child. The teacher or the principal is often the one in trouble. Schools have to show parents how to become true partners with the school and develop meaningful relationships for the families and schools to work together as one (Garcia, 2004; The Master Teacher, 2005).

Most of the current research describes the differences that exist in how schools and families work together. The relationship is built on the terms of "parental involvement or school and community partnerships" (Constantino, 2003, p.33). Leaders today should have an interest in projects or activities that involve both the home and school working together. Henderson and Mapp (2002) found that regardless of the parental earnings or social environment, students whose families were involved with school and their children's education were more likely to earn higher grades and continue to pursue higher degrees in education.

Educational changes

Several factors have affected changes in the family. The educational level of parents has drastically increased over the past 40 years (Epstein, 2001) as has the increase of single parent families (U.S. Census Bureau, 2001). Since more parents are graduating from college, especially women, their expectations are to interact with educators and become more involved with the learning of their children (Epstein, 2001). While single parents might not volunteer or visit the school as much as other parents, research indicated that they are just as interested as other parents in their children's education (Michigan Department of Education, 2001).

In fact, federal regulations and funding for parental involvement as far back as Head Start and other federally sponsored programs have recognized that parents and schools have to develop a partnership for working together to support the success of all children. School district leadership and teachers' practices are the strongest indicators of parental involvement at school (Epstein, 2001). Processes and procedures must be established to increase parental involvement so that all parents are encouraged and guided through the process of being involved in the learning environment of the school setting (Epstein, 2001; Michigan Department of Education, 2001).

In addition to the changes in family structure, changes are happening within the family unit which created challenges for families and educators (Baird-Wilkerson, 2003). The 2000 Census indicated that over 4 million children are now staying with grandparents, and that one-fourth of these grandparents have the single responsibility for these children (Henderson, et al., 2007). Henderson et al, cited census data that show almost half of low-income children live with only one parent and most of them move

each year due to changes like financial crises and divorce. Regardless of the change or situation, families are still responsible for their children's education; thus educators, in order to meet these changing challenges, must replace traditional images of family life with new traditions of communication, patterns, and adjustments in order to accommodate the different types of families (Epstein, 2001).

Socioeconomic status

Socioeconomic status is more likely to affect school-based parental involvement. Low-income parents are less likely to become involved in their children's education than middle and upper-class parents (Lareau & Shumar, 1996). Ron Edmonds and the effective school research (Kuyendall, 2004) indicated that schools can improve student achievement regardless of the home influence or socioeconomic status. Yet, many educators still view the family status as evidence of students learning in school. Lareau and Shumar (1996) encouraged educators to look past the labels attached to children and break the cycle of poverty by providing equal opportunities for all children to encourage the learning of which the child is capable.

Jurras and Lepage (2006) reported it is known that parents from different socioeconomic backgrounds have different behaviors, beliefs, and expectations about parental involvement, and the families' socioeconomic level influences the social and physical environment in which they live. Jurras and Lepage further stated that many disadvantaged children attend schools that are unsafe and poor in material resources. Families are often exposed to environmental hazards which sometimes threaten their physical and mental health.

Hale (2001) argued that there are a larger number of African Americans who are considered to be middle class. In this ranking, typically the husband and wife have a combined income of \$60,000 compared to that of a white middle class husband, who alone makes approximately \$75,000. Taking this into consideration, the stress placed on an African American family in trying to play the role of an involved parent is huge. Many families of color do not meet the assumptions of the parent involvement models even though they try to keep up and be involved as much as they can (Hale, 2001). Middle class families try to take advantage of educational opportunities by being actively involved in the school and by showing their children the value of education.

Henderson et al (2002), found that regardless of the earnings or environment, students whose families were involved with school and their children's educations were more likely to earn higher grades and continue to pursue higher degrees in education (Constantino, 2003). Educators must join together with parents regardless of their income, and provide the best resources toward ensuring positive outcome and all children and their families (Machen, Wilson, & Notar,2005).

Educators and Parental Involvement

School personnel have not kept up with changes in society according to Kyle, McIntyre, Miller, and Moore (2002). In the past years, schools have become larger and more diverse. In addition, violence is on the rise, and fewer qualified teachers are staying in the profession, (Kyle et al. 2002). Millions of parents take their children each day to schools described as "desperate hell holes" and "unfit for learning," with the attitude that something good will happen and a better future with some kind of education will be possible (Noguera, 2003, p.5).

According to Constantino (2003), the involvement of families in the lives of their children remains a strong segment to educators because when parents have strong feelings about school, they positively affect the attitudes of their children. Therefore when children feel good about their school, as well as those who serve them, they will learn more from the interactions that occur in the school environment (Comer, Haynes, Joyner, & Ben-Avie, 1996).

In addition to parents being involved, it is vital to address the misunderstanding and fears that both parents and teachers have in communicating with one another (Measuring Up, 1999). Furthermore, parents are often hesitant about helping out in school because they fear judgment and criticism from the school staff and administration (Measuring Up, 1999).

The partnership between home and school is so important that educators instantaneously must strengthen the relationship (Epstein, 2001; Kuykendall 2004). Educators must develop ways to keep parents excited, empowered, encouraged, and informed about school and the developmental learning of their children. Once educators and parents are involved at every level possible in the education of children, results usually improved in student achievement (National Center for Education Statistics, 2006).

Wherry (2004) pointed out several ways in which schools can build parental involvement. First they are helping parents model the behavior they want for their children in school and why these behaviors are so important to their children's school success. Secondly, they provide ideas to parents such as reading to children daily or showing parents how to question children about schoolwork. Third, they empower

parents with information they need about school services and programs to improve their children's education. And finally, they provide training and support on topics of interest to parents to help them overcome fears of educators and school. Getting parents involved in their children's education is not just a "nice idea." Educators can't do their job without parental help (p. 1).

Schools play an important role in parental involvement, but educators are clearly the main force behind the school sphere for the learning of children (Epstein, 2001). Teachers, who take the time and effort to help students with their school work and are friendly, caring, and help students make decisions seem to motivate learning in children (National Parent Teacher Association, 2000). A sense of pride and ownership is developed within the students because the educators at the school have made a difference in their lives (Epstein, 2001).

The involvement of families in the lives of children is very important in school-related activities. No matter what, most children have a strong feeling for family and for wanting to belong to a family. According to Henderson et al. (2007), when families have strong and positive attitudes about school, children develop those same attitudes about school and learning.

When families share their goals, dreams, and desires with their children, it reaffirms that education is important and that parents are there to develop that positive relationship with the school (Henderson et al., 2007). When schools, families, and communities work together in collaborative engagements, children get the message that school is important and, hence, they have a better chance of being successful in life (Epstein, 2001; National Parent Teacher Association, 2000).

De Carvalho (2001) argued that progress has been made to connect the school, and family as one and to make the child the center of the school, but strong bonds are still needed in order for the community to support the school. The involvement of families is not necessarily the cure all for all children, but it is a beginning to shape a connection to the school and the family (Constantino, 2003; National Parent Teacher Association, 2000). In some areas progress has been made to connect the school, families, and communities as one. The connection has been one of making the child the center of the school, but a strong bond is still needed for the community to support the school (De Carvalho, 2001). When parents become more involved at school, (Henderson et al. 2007) parents become more active in the community, so an increase in self-confidence is shown and parents tend to pursue additional training and higher education themselves.

Many parents work outside of the home and often depend on the community for additional resources for family activities and to support them and their children. Families have realized that they need community resources to make a connection to the school, and by being connected to the school, they are connected to an institutional organization (DeCarvalho, 2001). Constantino (2003) agreed with the research work of Decker and Decker (2000) in that “parents realize that educational problems reflect the community and family problems in all of their complexity, diversity, and intractability” (p. 31). The community is important because resources are needed beyond the scope of the school and the family.

In the partnership of the school, family, and community, educators must work together to create family-like schools and family-like community settings. Family-like schools recognize that each child is special and that families are welcome, even the hard

to reach ones (Constantino, 2003). Families recognize that school is important, homework is important and working together increases a feeling of success for children (Epstein, 2001). Communities that have family-like settings work together to support parents, improve the neighborhood, support the school, and provide a service to the community, all of which blend to benefit the children in the community. A sense of pride is developed in the community as well as the school (Epstein, 2001; Henderson et al., 2007).

It is very clear that parental involvement is beneficial. It can definitely benefit the students in question, but it can also benefit the teachers, the school, the parents themselves, and the community, as well as other children in the family. Epstein (1995) pointed out that when schools and families connect, the outcome is a caring community that helps all children within it to be successful in life and in school.

Differences exist between parents and educators because there are still uncertainties about how parents should be involved in their children's education (Measuring up, 1999). Some educators prefer the traditional methods of parental involvement such as volunteering and chaperoning school events; whereas, some parents are moving toward true parental involvement by looking at the academics of their children, the school policies, and the quality of education their children are receiving. The challenges are to find ways for parents and educators to each realize their own goals while they work together for the benefit of the children (Batey, 1996).

Barriers to Parental Involvement

Many barriers to parental involvement have been identified which affect parents' abilities to be involved in the education of their children (Constantino, 2003; Jesse,

1986; National Parent Teacher, 2000; Patrikakou, et al, 2003). The most common barriers included time, lack of cultural understanding by educators, not understanding the educational system, childcare difficulties, transportation, changes in the family structure, and lack of teacher training, race and class barriers, the curriculum, educational jargon, snobbery, boring meetings, the school staff and the public's perception of the school.

Beginning with the constraint of time, many families have found that it is more and more difficult to meet the obligations of managing a family and a career. These many responsibilities coupled with time restraints and economical limitations often find families having to make choices between working and attending school events (National Parent Teacher Association, 2000; New Skills for New Schools, 1997; Patrikakou et al., 2003). Another significant barrier that decreases parental involvement is culture (Kottler & Kottler, 2002; Noguera, 2003; Singleton & Linton, 2006). Researchers have revealed that some minority parents might not understand the grading system or the requirements of the school and feel disrespected when talking to the teacher (Constantino, 2003; Kottler & Kottler,). This causes parents to become less involved and to feel that school personnel have not made an effort to understand their culture. Often, non-English speaking parents are frightened or unsure of the school surroundings and unclear on how to find out information about the school (Kottler & Kottler, 2002; Muldrow, Cano, Kimmel, 1999; Noguera, 2003).

Other characteristics that prevent involvement include parents' psychological resources and the beliefs about their role in their children's education (Patrikakou et al. 2003). Parents might not have confidence in themselves that their participation can influence or help their children's education.

Barriers have also been created by parents because of their feelings of inadequacy, their failure in school, their low self-esteem, their lack of parenting skills, and anger at the school, (Hale 2001, *Measuring Up*, 1999). These barriers can lead to parents being intimidated when speaking to school staff, and since their school experiences were negative they might impose those same feelings on their children, which causes issues with their becoming involved in their children's education.

Barriers for African American Parents

According to Hale (2001), and Koonce and Harper (2005), some educators feel that African American parents have a tendency to be uninvolved in their children's education. Hale further stated that many African American children come from homes of single-parent households and feel it is the responsibility of the school to educate the child. Another factor that faces many African American parents is the lack of attendance at parent conferences, other important meetings, the checking of homework, or the notion that parent involvement programs are mainly for White-middle class families (Koonce & Harper, 2005),

Negative events, problems or concerns that cause conflicts between teachers, parents, and students often increase barriers (Koonce & Harper, 2005). Parents who are angry are less likely to be involved in their children's education and often leave the school with a non-caring and a "leave it to the school" attitude. Koonce and Harper (2005) further suggested that schools have not made the most of the assets of engaging African American parents in developing partnerships to address the needs of African American children.

Barriers for Hispanic Parents

Lee, Zambrana, Zoppi, Lorenzo and Tosado (2005) and Golan and Petersen (2002) postulated several barriers with Hispanic parents: structural racism, school funding, disciplinary actions, language attitudes, and the lack of resources. Golan and Petersen stated that Hispanic parents find the school system to be unfriendly, insensitive to their needs and situations, and often impolite. Educators often view parents, especially immigrants, as liabilities rather than assets. Many barriers, as hectic schedules, difficult living conditions, and lack of English skills, surface when Hispanic parents are new to this country and try to become involved in their children's education. In order to increase Hispanic parental involvement, schools need to change how they look at the educational system through the structuring of programs, eliminating racism, and transforming attitudes (Lee et al., 2005). Taking into consideration the scheduling of parents to better engage them in school is needed for Hispanic parents as well as other parents. The literature recommends that school design model programs for parental involvement, where learning occurs primarily in school between children and parents. This is done by (a) adding more content of family involvement with diverse families across subject areas, (b) bring diverse families into the classroom to talk about their experiences with schools and (c) provide programs that build connections between parents and educators (Chavkin, 2005).

Barriers for Caucasian Parents

Even though barriers for parental involvement have been aimed at minority and low-income families, low income Caucasian parents have the same or similar barriers that affect the depth of their involvement in their children's education (Batey, 1996).

Other barriers for Caucasian parents might surface when they worry about having or losing power and control of their input into the school's day-to-day operations, when there is fear of being misunderstood, or being called "racist or insensitive to other parents," according to Henderson et al., (2007). Still other barriers that affect parental involvement for Caucasian parents are teachers who are not always receptive to parents volunteering; sometimes parents sense negative attitudes and feelings from the school staff because of labels such as "those parents" (Batey, 1996). Batey further stated that teachers feel that Caucasian parents want to control the curriculum, to decide what is taught in the classroom, and to determine when and how much homework or school work is given to their children.

Even though barriers exist for parents, school leaders must have plans and support systems in place in order to have a meaningful parent partnership. The proper tools and instructions to help remove barriers for all parents to become involved have to be utilized for the benefit and improvement of all children's education (Batey, 1996; Henderson et al., 2007). In order to decrease barriers in parental involvement, parents have to be included in school practices that accommodate the diversity of families that it serves. An array of activities should be planned to bring parents and teachers together for the primary goal of involving parents in the education of their children.

Theoretical Explanations of Parental Involvement

Types of Parental Involvement

Based on prior research, the Michigan Department of Education inquiry (2001) indicated that many parents do not know how to help their children with their education, but with guidance and support from their schools parents are becoming increasingly

involved in home learning activities teaching their children. This report further suggested that parental

educational involvement in the home takes place when the following characteristics are in place:(1) When parents establish a daily routine by providing a quiet place to study for their children; (2) When parents monitor the activities in which their children are involved; (3) when parents model the value of learning, through communication with their children and emphasizing that achievement comes from working hard; (4) when parents set goals, recognize and express high expectations for their children by being supportive when goals are met; (5) when parents continually show an interest in their children's progress at school, helping with homework, and discussing the value of a good education; and (6) when parents are involved as they set an example by reading and listening to their children read and by talking about what is being read (p.2).

Epstein (2001) avowed, "There is no topic in education on which there is greater agreement than the need for parental involvement. Everyone wants it, but most do not know how to develop productive partnerships" (p.1). Most parents do not know how to help their children with their learning, but with guidance, support, and plans, parents raise their involvement levels. Parents are involved when they listen to their children read at home, assist with homework, and when they take trips and guide discussion while watching television programs (Epstein, 2001). When schools encourage children to practice what they learn at home, parents have to be involved in the process.

Epstein (2002) presented six typologies of parent involvement, which were the basis of the National Parent Teacher Association's (2000) (NPTA) standards for family

involvement. These typologies illustrated a major construct of connecting the schools and parents:

Type 1 Parenting refers to how the school is helping to improve parenting skills and the conditions of the home environment for all children. The school seeks to improve the understanding it has for the families of the students. Home visits, special services, referrals, and information are provided for all families.

Type 2 Communicating refers to the understanding that communication is effective if understood as a two way process. Schools should communicate as much as possible to parents through the use of letters, memos, report cards, newsletters, conferences, and other mechanisms. Parents, as well, might suggest some type of feedback to the school for the benefit of improving the school environment.

Type 3 Volunteering refers to the involvement in school of parents, community volunteers, businesses, and the involvement of parents who come to the school to support the school and children. Volunteers want to be a part of the school setting if the program is organized and has a purpose for the children.

Type 4 Learning at Home refers to improving family involvement in learning activities at home, including homework, class work, and resources for parents to help at home.

Type 5 Decision Making refers to parents and other community stakeholders as members of a decision making team. Parents are the decision makers when it comes to making educational decisions concerning the learning of their children.

Type 6 Collaborating with the Community, refers to involvement of any of the

community organizations or institutions that share the responsibility for children's development and success. School activities and community resources working together offer families hope and a form of support for the services available to families in the community (Epstein, 2002, p.14).

The Epstein typologies have become the organizing method of continuous research on parental involvement. The typologies have helped educators to design a balance in developing programs, partnerships, and opportunities for family involvement with results relating to improving parental involvement for students (Epstein, 1995, 2000, 2001; Family Literacy Center, Inc. 2006; Michigan Department of Education, 2001).

Frameworks of Parent Theories

Hoover-Dempsey et al., (1995) introduced a comprehensive theoretical framework about parental involvement. The framework focused on three main areas: (1) why parents become involved in their children's education, (2) how parents choose specific types of involvement and (3) why parental involvement has positive influence on students' educational outcomes (p.1). This framework is more than a typology for parental involvement because it deals with specific types of parental involvement and attempts to explain why parents choose to become involved.

One of the most recognized theories that help to explain parent involvement is Bourdieu's theory of cultural capital (Feuerstein, 2000). This theory of cultural capital refers to schools having a set of middle- to upper-class values and forms of communication. Teachers are able to communicate with middle and upper class parents who share similar backgrounds, but have a difficult time relating to parents of working class students (Feuerstein, 2000). Feuerstein (2000) further indicated that cultural capital

includes also (a) the amount of interaction a parent has with other parents, (b) parents' understanding the school processes, (c) amount of contact parents have with school personnel, and (d) parents' communication skills (p.3).

Another theory that appeared in the literature of parental involvement is the theory of social capital (Feuerstein, 2000). Social capital refers to the networking systems that are available to parents to enhance their children's ability to be successful in school. All schools have social structures that influence parental involvement. The more knowledgeable parents are of these resources, the more parental involvement for their children.

Still another theory that helps to clarify the levels of parental involvement was research by Bowies and Gintis as defined by Feuerstein (2000). These researchers advocated that there are major structural differences among schools in relationship to the social classes they serve. Schools in certain neighborhoods tend to be controlled by administration, whereas in wealthy area schools are governed by different standards. This theory is based on the theory that parents from poor communities, on an average, are less involved in their schools than parents from more affluent areas (Feuerstein,2000).

Contrasting Theories of Family School Relations

Epstein (2001) asserted that the most useful theories that involve family and school relations are the symbolic "interactionist" and reference group theories. Symbolic "interactionism", assumed that self-concept, personality, and values and beliefs are products of how people interact with others (Epstein 2001, p.23). This theory suggests that educators change their behaviors to satisfy the expectations of others and to receive recognition. If teachers do not interact with parents, teachers will not be informed of the

expectations that parents have for their children. If parents avoid teachers, they will not be informed or understand the schools' expectation for their children.

Epstein (2001, p. 23) stated that Merton's (1968) group theory is having the ability to influence individuals or groups in their attitudes and behaviors. In planning educational activities, teachers might consider the roles parents can play because teachers consider the parents as a reference group (Epstein, 2001). Parents inform this theory in planning family activities as well as by taking into account the teachers' or school goals because parents consider teachers an important reference group.

Researchers such as Lee et al.,(2005) included other parent involvement theories such as (a) the exchange framework theory which explains the continuation and endurance of families as a social group, parents are able to meet and exchange ideas and support each other as a unit; (b) the symbolic interaction framework emphasizes the meaning of parents as social groups, as a place where parents can define the meaning of context and circumstances of the family experience; (c) the family development framework relates to orderly and patterned changes experienced by families as a group of interacting individuals organized by shared norms. The emphasis is on the family cycle;(d) the systems framework theory is centered on the behaviors of the children, as well as communication patterns and family processes; (e) the conflict family theory framework addresses ways in which parents deal with power dynamics and conflict; and finally, the ecological framework utilizes both the social and biological nature of families. This theory emphasizes common dependence of family members and the construction of role (Lee et al., 2005, p. 2).

Epstein's Theory of Spheres of Influence

Constantino (2003) and Epstein (1995) recognized that “in order for parental involvement to take place and for children to learn and grow, certain influences must be present in the students’ life” (p. 701). Epstein’s sole support for this theory is that within frequent interactions among families the three spheres of influence in the child’s life are the school, family, and the community. Epstein, Sanders, Simon, Salinas, Jansorn, and Voorhis (2002) agreed that various practices in the spheres of influence external model may draw the school, family, and community together or push them further apart in their influence on children’s learning and development. These spheres overlap by putting the child at the center of the relationship. When the spheres of the school, family, and the community overlap, a true meaning to “learning communities or caring communities” is born (Epstein, 2001 p.24).

With issues about parent involvement, educators are saying “I cannot do my job without the help of parents and the community, and parents are saying “I need to know what is going on in school to help my child” (Epstein et al., 2002 p. 405). These phrases embody the theory of overlapping spheres of influence. Within this model the partnership of family-like schools is developed. Family-like schools understand and recognize each child’s ability and make each child’s family feel special.

Epstein’s (2001) theory of the overlapping spheres of influence is represented by three forces: (a) time, (b) experiences in families, and (c) experiences in schools. Time refers to the child’s historical time; the age, grade level, and social conditions during the time span the children are in school (p.27). Experience in the family represents the impact the family has on its children to prepare them for school. These forces are pulled together

to produce more of an overlapping when parents maintain an increased interest and involvement in their children's education (p.29). Experiences in the school occur when teachers make parents a part of regular teaching practices. By involving parents the overlapping is greater and parent involvement is much stronger (Epstein, p.29). Since this inquiry examined generational parental involvement the use of Epstein's (2001) theory of the overlapping spheres of influence was deemed most appropriate.

Summary

Many years of research have shown that parental involvement contributes to children's academics and social learning. The literature review revealed the importance of parental involvement, the perceived images of parental involvement and the barriers and challenges that parents and educators face. In designing strong partnership with schools parental involvement, Epstein's overlapping sphere of influence, is the key that centers the home, school, and family on the child.

Researchers have also revealed that some minority parents might not understand the grading system or the requirements of the school and feel disrespected when talking to the teacher (Constantino, 2003; Kottler & Kottler, 2002). This causes parents to become less involved and to feel that school personnel have not made an effort to understand their culture. Often, non-English speaking parents are frightened or unsure of the school surroundings and unclear on how to find out information about the school (Kottler & Kottler; Noguera, 2003; Muldrow et al., 1999).

Therefore African American parents are at a disadvantage when it comes to parental involvement. Noguera (2003) further claimed that a low level of parental participation in the public schools is still viewed as an indication of disinterest in

education. The reasons that are quite common are still a lack of time and information to parents, feelings of powerlessness, and little sense of self worth. Parents of children who have the greatest complications in school also seem to be the least involved.

Henderson et al., (2002) found that regardless of the earnings or environment, students whose families were involved with school and their children's educations were more likely to earn higher grades and continue to pursue higher degrees in education (Constantino,2003). Educators must join together with parents regardless of their income, with communities and provide the best resources toward ensuring positive outcome and all children and their families (Machen et al., 2005).

Included in Chapter Three are descriptions of the research design and methodology. The discussion includes focal points and questions of the study, the population, the sample, and the methods of data collection, the data analysis, and a summary. The rational for selecting the research approach and support for the design, which is a case study, are addressed. The data collected from the study are presented and analyzed in Chapter Four. In Chapter Five the discussion of the findings, conclusions, and recommendations for future research will be discussed.

CHAPTER THREE

Research and Methodology

The No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 (2002) has made parental involvement the most significant educational initiative to have been enacted in decades according to Simpson et al., (2004). School districts nationwide are being encouraged to document reports daily, review policies and programs, and show accountability for the involvement of parents to receive federal education dollars (Baker & Soden, 1998). In study after study, parents and educators say that parental involvement benefits students, improves schools, and strength families (Epstein, 2001). It is no wonder that parental involvement is a national priority. However the most common barriers to parental involvement include (a) language barriers, (b) limited family resources, (c) parent's lack of comfort at the school, (d) mobility, and (e) families uncertainties about how far they could go in making suggestions or asking questions (National Campaign for Public School Improvement, 2007, p.6). Using a qualitative case study approach, this study was intended to give voice to generations of diverse families on what parental involvement is as viewed through the lens of the Overlapping Spheres of Influence, in an urban metropolitan area in Missouri.

Parental involvement was defined as the participation of parents in every facet of children's education and development from birth to adulthood, recognizing that parents are the primary influence in children's lives (National Parent Teacher Association, 2000).The study was viewed through the lens of the Overlapping Spheres of Influence (OSI). The core element of OSI is the relationship of the school, home, and community as one while placing the student in the center of the relationship. This qualitative case study

approach focuses on the sociological aspects, on the roles people play, the community, and social institutions, such as the family, church, and government (Merriam, 1998). Given the focus on the overlapping spheres of influence, it was an appropriate method to use. Included in Chapter Three is a statement of the research questions, the rationale for the use of a case study approach, and a description of the population and sample, in addition, a discussion of the data collection and instruments and methods of data analysis is included. The significance of ensuring credibility and consistency are discussed and an explanation of the researcher's biases and assumptions are provided.

Research Questions

Within the perspective of this study, the following questions were addressed:

1. What is parental involvement, as viewed through the lens of overlapping spheres of influence?
2. How does the ethnicity of parents affect how parents are involved in their children's education?
3. How have the forms of parental involvement changed from one generation to another?
4. How is parental involvement perceived to impact student success?

Rationale for Use of a Case Study

Case study research is designed to conduct an empirical investigation of a contemporary phenomenon within its natural context using multiple sources of evidence (Hancock & Algozzine, 2006, p. 15). "Qualitative researchers are interested in understanding the meaning people have constructed, that is, how they make sense of their world and the experiences they have in the world" (Merriam, 1998, p.6). Other characteristics of

qualitative case study research are (a) the researcher is the primary instrument for data collection and analysis; (b) qualitative research usually involves the researcher meeting and visit with participants in the study; (c) qualitative research builds on hypotheses or theories rather than existing theory; (d) qualitative research focus on process, meaning, and understanding to produce a rich descriptive study, and (e) qualitative research is fundamentally interpret by the researcher (Merriam, 1998, pp.6-8; Creswell, 2003, p.182). According to Yin (2003), case study research tends to (a) define research topics broadly and not narrowly, (b) is intended to cover contextual or complex multivariate conditions and isolated ones, and (c) and tends to rely on multiple and not singular sources for evidence (p. xi). Another benefit for case study research (Merriam, 1998) is that it allows the researcher to examine specific issues, to present judgment about the worth of a program, to investigate problems of practice, to build theory and investigates basic information about areas of education.

According to Creswell (2003), an additional benefit of case study research is that it gives the researcher the chance to listen to the voice of the participants. The emphasis given to the “voice “of the participants is important because it provides actual experiences, beliefs, and values, and it becomes a united voice for reform and change (p.10). Since the ultimate goal in qualitative research is to effect change, the voice of the participants raises their consciousness about parental involvement and prepares an agenda for change to improve their lives concerning their children.

This inquiry into parental involvement and families from diverse cultures was viewed through the lens of the Overlapping Spheres of Influence, which key elements of judgment from the participants’ point of view, real-life situations and plays an important

role in the knowledge base on parental involvement. The degree of overlapping is controlled by three forces: time, experience in families, and experience in schools. This model aims to (a) to extend studies of families by intensifying attention to the interplay of family and school environment during that part of the parents' and children's lives when the children are in school or preparing for school and (b) extend studies of school organization and effect by intensifying attention to the total educational environment of children including the home and community (Epstein 2001 p.36).

There is no standard format for reporting qualitative research. Researchers use methods of observations, interviews, or focus groups. The goal for this in-depth approach is for the researcher to be able to describe, explain, compare, and understand the meaning of social phenomena (Merriam, 1998). The qualitative case study, therefore, seeks to answer "how" and "why" questions (Yin, 1993). The researcher chose a case study approach to answer the questions why parental involvement is a national concern for educators and how parental involvement differs in diverse families. A secondary question focused on how the forms of parental involvement have changed over the last 10 to 20 years. As expected with such a topic as parental involvement new theories, studies, and policies had emerged and policy leaders and educators are taking a different path toward viewing parental involvement. In other words, the field of school, family, and community partnerships is growing and improving (Epstein, 2001).

Using a case study approach was necessary since defined research goals included the involvement of parents in the lives of their children and the overlapping partnership of the home, school, and community centers around the child. Although emphasis is placed on rich, thick description, data collection, and analysis, time is of the essence to

the researcher; therefore, this case study has the potential for a time-related limitation (Merriam, 1998; Yin, 1993). Another limitation for case studies is that the research might over emphasize a situation, leading the researcher to come to conclusions about the data collection. The researcher was able to address this limitation by reviewing the literature that is available on parental involvement.

Since the research occurred in a natural setting, another limitation is that researcher may be perceived as being intrusive. Additionally, participants being interviewed or observed may behave differently than normally. Researcher bias may also impact the study. Therefore, the researcher's biases and assumptions of personal concerns must not interfere with the processes involved in qualitative research (Merriam; Bogdan & Biklen, 1998). Because of the use of participants in a qualitative case study, all research is filtered through the participants' worldviews, their values, and perspectives; in other words, the researcher will gather data from multiple interpretations of reality from participants. In this study the primary task of the researcher was to seek the insights and perceptions of others in the understanding of parental involvement and how it affects the lives of children. Biases and assumptions, therefore, remained at bay for accurate information to emerge. Furthermore, the identified protocol, data management procedures, and triangulation of the data collection assisted in curtailing any existing biases and assumptions of the researcher.

To address limitations, the researcher used multiple methods of data collection such as focus groups, interviews and short questionnaire in order to assure validity and reliability of the data (Creswell, 2003) and to triangulate the data. In addition member-checking, was used to review data and information provided by the participants to assure

validity of the qualitative findings (Merriam, 1998). Therefore, this qualitative case study remained sufficiently open and flexible to permit the study on parental involvement to continue to emerge as data were gathered for further research (Patton, 2004).

Population

The population for this case study was comprised of (a) grandparents, children, and grandchildren from various ethnicities. An African American family consisted of a grandparent, daughter, and grandson; a Hispanic family consisted of grandparent, daughter, and granddaughter, and a Caucasian family consisted of grandparent, daughter and granddaughter (n=9). The researcher purposefully selected (Creswell, 2003) three generations of family members who attended college, completed 2 years of college, earned a degree, and are well established in the neighborhood.

In order for the researcher to gain insight and knowledge about parental involvement, families of various ethnicities were selected to participate in the case study. The ethnicities of the families were African American, Caucasian and Hispanic origins. Merriam (1998) based purposeful sampling on the premise of wanting to “discover, understanding, and gain insight, therefore must select a sample from which the most can be learned” (p.61). Snowball sampling was noted by Merriam (1998) as the most common form of purposeful sampling and was the selected form utilized by this researcher. Snowball sampling strategies involved identifying participants from people and those that might be good subjects for participating in a case study. Within the families selected for the case study, focus groups were designed as follows: all grandparents in one focus group, children in focus groups, and the grandchildren as a

focus group. The goal of each focus group was to develop a sample rich in insight, perception, and information in order to guide the study.

Invitations for interviews and focus group audio recorded interviews were sent to nine family members. All nine of the family members agreed to be interviewed (N=9) sometime during the study. Therefore, in order to accommodate different schedules, six different interview sessions and three focus group sessions were conducted. One session was conducted to interview one grandparent and child, another session for another grandparent and child, and a third session to interview another grandparent and child. Three individual sessions were conducted to interview grandchildren because of their work schedules. The focus group sessions were planned at a different time to accommodate all participants.

Data Collection and Instruments

The most important concerns with producing this case study is the validity and ethical manner used to gather and use time information provided by the informants. Each participant signed a consent form (Merriam, 1998). The consent form included the following elements: rights to participate voluntarily, purpose of the research study, procedures of the study, length, risk, rights, including withdrawal from the study, possible benefit, confidentiality, dissemination, researcher's contact information, and signatures of participants and researcher (Seidman, 1998).

During the preparation for gathering data, each family member was contacted personally by the researcher to find out if they would be interested in participating in the study. Each family was provided a basic description of the research project which included purpose of the study and description of how each family member would be

involved. After each family member expressed an interest, the researcher submitted research materials to the Institutional Review Board, including informed consent forms, questions, and interview protocols.

After permission was granted, the researcher first conducted three audio recorded focus group interviews with the grandparents, children, and grandchildren at a central location. All the participants were given a pseudonym. Their actual names were kept confidential, with only the researcher and dissertation supervisor knowing their true identity. All the participants were given informed consent forms (see Appendix A) which explained the purpose of the study and that their role was voluntary. The participants were not compensated for their participation in the study. Focus groups were designed to share knowledge on parental involvement, give voice to the importance of parental involvement in the home, school, and community. The goal for each focus group was to develop a sample rich in insight and perception on parental involvement information in order to guide this study. In addition, a short-answer survey was administered to the participants. The short-answer questionnaire asked the participants questions about parental involvement and the partnership of the home, school, and community and in the types of their involvement in their children's life.

In this case study, measures were also taken to protect the rights of the participants, including privacy. Approval from the Institutional Review Board of the University of Missouri was acquired for the study. The emphasis on giving "voice" to families of diverse culture, values, and to raise consciousness were the overarching purposes of the study of parental involvement; interview questions were developed to generate discussions during the focus groups about parental involvement.

Interview protocol

Semi-structured interviews were conducted to gain deeper knowledge, insight, and to triangulate the data gathered and document analysis. The first interview protocol was developed in regards to the Overlapping Sphere of Influence (OSI) theory concepts (see Appendix B). The second interview protocol was developed from the results of analyzing the focus group interviews (see Appendix E). The interview guide for all participants followed a protocol of questions (see Appendixes B-G) related to the characteristics of giving voice as seen through the lens of OSI theory. These semi-structured interviews consisted of open-ended questions that invites stories about experiences and opinion (Fraenkel & Wallen, 2003) relating to the Overlapping Spheres of Influence (OSI) theory as a partnership in parental involvement.

Each interview was audio recorded and later transcribed by the researcher. Member checking was conducted to verify the accuracy of the transcripts and confirmed for each participant that the story was told as intended (Fraenkel & Wallen, 2003). Participants were instructed to contact the researcher to make necessary corrections or changes. The triangulation of the data occurred through the use of rich, thick descriptions provided from the interviews, focus groups, short questionnaire and observations during interviews (Creswell, 2003; Fraenkel & Wallen, 2003; Merriam, 1998).

Focus Group Protocol

The researcher facilitated three focus groups for each set of participants to gather data from the grandparents, parents, and grandchildren on parental involvement. The focus group protocol (see Appendix E) was selected, because as noted by Krueger and Casey (2000) “a range of ideas or feelings that people have about something” (p.24) was

needed. One focus group consisted of grandparents, another one for children, and another one for grandchildren who were involved in the generational study on parental involvement. The focus groups conversations were audio recorded and transcribed by the researcher. Each focus group took place at a central location lasting less than one hour. The researcher used modified questions based on the same focus of questions used in the questionnaire protocol and focus group interview protocol.

Data Analysis

The right approach to analysis of data for a qualitative study according to Merriam (1998) is to do it simultaneously with data collection. The researcher gathered and analyzed data concurrently, breaking often to fill in gaps, in order to get the most holistic picture possible. The researcher ended the official data collection process when the results of over-extension of information have been removed from the study. The constant comparative method was utilized for further data analysis (Merriam, 1998).

In order to triangulate the data, semi-structured interviews were conducted with all participants, as well as focus groups and observations. The semi-structured interviews provided the comparable data from other participants of the study. This information was used in conjunction with the field observation notes, the focus group data, and the short questionnaire compiled in order to gain a greater understanding of the phenomena being studied. In order to maintain consistency of direction, the researcher was the only interviewer in this study. Each of the participants was audio recorded, then transcribed accurately. The transcriptions were then coded for themes among the participants' responses. The themes from the coding were based on the Overlapping Spheres of Influences (Epstein, 2001) concept found in the review of related literature. The OSI

concepts used to guide the development of themes focused on giving voice to grandparents, parents, and children to share issues that developed from the partnership of the home, school and community.

The review of the transcripts, field observations, logs, notes, questionnaire, and patterns of responses emerged by coding categories that allowed the researcher to look for consistency and triangulation (Creswell, 2003). Saturation was determined by the level of redundancy in participants' responses.

Observation Analysis

Observation of participants during interviews (see Appendices B, C, and D) were also used in order to develop, thick, rich descriptions of the phenomenon of the parental involvement with diverse families. Observations of participation during the interviews and focus groups of grandparents, parents, and grandchildren were utilized to obtain detailed evidence as to how social situations appeared to participants, and the importance of the subject for each participant. The observation categories included setting, interaction, language, nonverbal communication, and body language. The observations were then analyzed in conjunction with the themes developed from the coding of the transcripts of all participants.

Credibility and Consistency

As in any research, validity, reliability, and ethics are major concerns in any research. Merriam (1998) supports the enhancement of consistency by thorough use of multiple sources of evidence in order to enhance reliability. The researcher must (a) explain theory and assumptions underling the study, (b) triangulation of data, and (c) creates an audit trail (Merriam, 1998, pp.206-207).

The researcher maintained a log of the qualitative process and established a data base separate from the study report. Credibility was supported through the use of multiple data sources which permitted the process of triangulation. Participants reviewed data [member check] for congruency of the intended statement made by the participants and what was reported by the researcher (Merriam, 1998). Interviews were conducted solely by this researcher in order to show consistency. Interviews were semi-structured, open-ended, and transcribed verbatim. Data were coded clearly and aligned into themes and were further analyzed through the constant comparative method. Analysis was ongoing throughout each stage of the data collection process.

Summary

The need for more effective parental involvement is necessary for building a culture that gives voice to grandparents, children and grandchildren in developing partnerships with schools and community. The literature review examined the concern for innovative approaches to parental involvement, especially to give voice to parents. The voice given to the grandparents, children, and grandchildren will share stories about the relationship of the home, school, and community in the partnership as guided by the Overlapping Spheres of Influence Theory, which was used as a framework for this study. This review of research provided a framework in which to examine this phenomenon of the effects of parental involvement in diverse families. Provided in this chapter was the rationale for a case study and the use of the Overlapping Spheres of Influence theory as a means of connecting parents, home, school, and community in partnership in the success of children. The next sections in this study were the research questions, followed by the

rationale for the use of a case study. The researcher then discussed research and methodology of the study.

In summary, this was a qualitative descriptive case study utilizing interviews, focus groups, observations and short surveys to examine the effects of parental involvement in diverse families. Grandparents, parents, and grandchildren from a metropolitan area in Missouri served as the population sample. The qualitative data were examined through the lens of the Overlapping Spheres of Influences theory to establish patterns and themes with emphasis on giving voice to grandparents, children, and grandchildren over the age of 18. The presentation and analysis of the data will be included chapter four of this study. A summary of the study, discussion of the findings, conclusions, implications and recommendations for further research will be presented in chapter five.

CHAPTER FOUR

PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS OF DATA

Introduction

In a day and time when parents are for the most part simply trying to survive, involvement in their children's school is sometimes neglected, but when schools, families, and communities work together to support learning for children, an increase of parental involvement is shown (The Public School Parent's Network, 2007). Parental involvement in schooling has become the most dominant paradigm of this decade for families in improving school relations in the United States and schools across the nation are tackling the issue of parental involvement (De Carvalho, 2001). The purpose of this investigation was to add to the knowledge base an understanding of the differences of parental involvement for three generations of three families of diverse backgrounds and the effects of the family, school, and community partnership supporting their involvement with their children. Epstein (2001) declared, "No topic about school improvement has created more rhetoric than "parent involvement" (p.3). Presented in this chapter is a review of the study design, data collection methods, conceptual underpinnings, research questions, and process of data analysis. In addition, a description of each participant will also be discussed along with the data analysis.

This study was viewed through the lens of the Overlapping Spheres of Influence, which uses storytelling to give voice and interactions with families and communities. Therefore, keeping the spheres of influence that directly affect the family, school, and community as key elements in which the student is the center and the family, school, and community may be drawn together or pushed apart (Epstein, 2001). Epstein further

stated that the Overlapping Spheres of Influence addresses “issues of concern for parents such as family-like schools, families remember positive examples of schools, teachers, and places in the community that were “like a family” to them (p.10). Therefore, in keeping with that concept, the researcher will present the data, when possible, using the participants’ own words.

Study Design

The single case qualitative study was conducted in a metropolitan city, and included participants from various churches, schools, and communities. The participants were purposefully selected (Creswell, 2003) based on different factors. One of the factors was diversity (African American, Caucasian, and Hispanic). Another factor was their interest in the topic of parental involvement and their willingness and availability to participate. Other important factors taken into consideration for the selection were the various generations that guided the study (grandparents, children, and grandchildren) and the willingness of the participants’ to share how they were actively involved in their children’s lives or how their parents were involved in the lives when they were in school.

Data Collection Methods

Before beginning onsite interviews, the researcher secured permission from the district’s gatekeeper, community leader, and church pastor to conduct research and to meet with members of the school, congregation and community. The researcher then completed the formal University of Missouri Institutional Review Board application, which included providing information about the purpose and extent of the study.

Following approval, the researcher began collecting data. The grandparent participants (Appendix B), children of the grandparents (Appendix C) and grandchildren

of the grandparents (Appendix D), signed consent forms prior to observations and interviews. Following the interviews, participants received a verbatim transcript of their interview and were provided the opportunity to modify and/or clarify their recorded responses following member check protocol (Merriam, 2002).

The data were triangulated through questionnaires, individual interviews, and focus groups. The questionnaire data were collected from grandparents and children rating their involvement of learning and application of parental involvement. The individual interviews and focus group participants were audio recorded and member checked; an audio recorded interview of grandparents, children, and grandchildren, and field observation of interaction between focus groups. The observations were recorded in a research journal and examined using an observation analysis form designed to allow themes to emerge.

Conceptual Underpinnings

During the investigation, themes emerged through the conceptual framework of Overlapping Spheres of Influence (OSI) in parental involvement. According to Epstein (2001, 2002), the three forces of OSI are represented by time, experiences in families, and experiences in school (p. 28). These forces are guided by six types of involvement: 1) Parenting, 2) Communicating, 3) Volunteering, 4) Learning at Home, 5) Decision Making, and 6) Collaborating with the Community (p. 14).

Epstein (2001) postulated

The Overlapping Spheres model emphasized the importance of this integration of school and of family. Epstein suggested that relationships of partnership between families and schools enhanced student achievement and encouraged families' participation in their children's education. The three "spheres of influence" in the child's life: the school, family, and community

should according to Epstein, overlap, putting the child at the center of the relationship. The Overlapping Spheres of Influence can be used to develop a more complete understanding of how schools, families and communities must work with students increase their chances for success. (p. 9)

After the participant questionnaire, interviews, focus group, and field observations, the data were analyzed to determine themes and categories.

Research Questions

Based on the OSI conceptual underpinning, the following research questions were formulated and utilized to guide the data analysis:

1. What is parental involvement, as viewed through the lens of Overlapping Spheres of Influence?
2. How does the ethnicity of parents affect how parents are involved in their children's education?
3. How have the forms of parental involvement changed from one generation to another?
4. How is parental involvement perceived to impact student success?

Process of Data Analysis

All data were examined and assigned the following codes (Appendix I): Grandmother 1 - (GP1)- Grandmother Martha Howard, Grandmother, (GP2) Grandmother Nadine McNair, Grandmother, (GP3) Grandmother Lula Rico, Child 1- Child of grandmother 1 - Lois Lane, Child 2- Child of grandmother 2- Nadine McNair, Child 3- Child of grandmother 3-Janet Marie Harriet, Grandchild-1, Grandchild of grandmother 1 and child of child 1- Nat Lane-2, Grandchild-2-Grandchild of grandmother 2 and child of child 2, Grandchild 3 Grandchild or grandmother 3 and child

of child 3. For the focus groups the following codes were used: (Appendix E), Grandparents Focus Group,(Appendix F), Parents Focus Group (Appendix G) and Grandchildren Focus Group. The code Q was used for the questionnaire given to grandparents and parents.

Setting

This case study was conducted at various homes and a school in a large metropolitan city. Kansas City is geographically the largest city in the state of Missouri. It encompasses 318 square miles in parts of four counties for the purposes of this study. As of February 6, 2009, it was revealed that United State census had underestimated Kansas City's population, and released it to be 475,830 with a metro area of over two million (U.C. Census Bureau). The city is well known for its multi-ethnic neighborhoods, the musical styles of jazz and blues as well as to cuisine (barbecue).

The homes for the interviews were located in the center section of the city and the South side of the city. The first interview was held in the home of one participant that lived in a senior citizen complex. The complex was neatly built, had a security entrance, and was well decorated. In order to live in the complex, residents must be over the age of 55. The second interview was held in the home of a one of the children. The child of one of the grandparents lived in a first tier suburban area connected to Kansas City. The house was a single family dwelling that had been built in 1970. The neighborhood appeared to be well established with young and middle-age families. The child of the grandparent had lived in the neighborhood for more than 30 years alone with her two children who are now grown. Another interview was held in the home where the family lived in the South part of Kansas City in a community of diverse families. Many of the

houses had been built in the 1950s and many of the homeowners were elderly, and now houses owned by several generations of families that had never left the neighborhood. There were several churches, a community center, and several individual businesses in the community. The house had been added on several times to meet the needs of the family.

The school is set in the heart of a section of low-economic housing. It is a neighborhood of mainly African American families. Several businesses (grocery store, fast food restaurants, post office, cultural center, churches) surround the neighborhood allowing families to shop within the neighborhood, and allowing for partnerships with the school. The school building is the newest building that was erected in the district (1995) and was once a Latin Grammar Magnet School. The school has many features of a caring learning environment. The conference room and parent involvement room were the rooms used to conduct interviews at the school site.

Participants

Grandparent one: Grandmother Martha Howard

For the purpose of this study, grandparent one will be referred to as grandparent Martha Howard (pseudonym). Grandparent Martha is 79 years old. She is retired from working previous jobs such as teacher assistant in the Kansas City School District, and Home Health Care Nurse. Her favorite part-time job now is sewing. She hems and sews for people at her church and her children. She spends a lot of time altering clothes for people. Grandparent Martha is African American. She has five children, seven grandchildren, and eight great grandchildren. Grandparent Howard said she enjoys

helping people. Grandparent Margaret Howard has lived in Kansas City and Oklahoma City most of her life.

Grandparent two: Grandmother Nadine McNair

For the purpose of this study, grandparent two will be referred to as grandparent Nadine McNair (pseudonym). Grandparent Nadine is 85 years old. She is retired from previously working as a sales clerk and a nurse in a local hospital. Grandparent Nadine is Caucasian. She has been married for more than 60 years. She has lived in the same area in Kansas City for 50 years. She has four sons and one daughter. She has 30 grandchildren, 10 great grandchildren and five great-great grandchildren. She enjoys family gatherings and cooking for her children each week. Grandparent Nadine has lived in Kansas City all of her life.

Grandparent three: Grandmother Lula Rico

For the purpose of this study, grandparent three will be referred to as grandparent Lula Rico (pseudonym). Grandparent Lula is 80 years old. She is retired from working several jobs. She was a sales clerk for a department store, a seamstress and a baker for a well known company in Kansas City. Grandparent Lula is Hispanic. She has been married over 60 years, and had seven children, (two are deceased). She has 20 grandchildren and eight great grandchildren. Grandparent Lula prides herself in speaking Spanish and English well. Grandparent Lula was born in Mexico and has lived in Kansas City for more than 70 years.

Child one: Child of Grandparent one-Lois Lane

For the purpose of this study, child one will be referred to as Lois Lane, (pseudonym) daughter of grandparent one. Lois is 60 years old. She has two children, one

adoptive grandchild and two expected grandchildren later this year. Lois has spent 35 years in education. She retired from one district after 30 years and has worked in another district for five years as a Language Arts teacher. Lois has a B.S. degree in Elementary Education and a Master's Degree in Education. Lois is African American. Her work experiences have included 20 years as an Elementary Teacher, 10 years as Instructional Assistants and five years as a Language Arts Coordinator.

Child two: Child of Grandparent two- Janet Marie Harriet

For the purpose of this study, Janet Marsha Harriet (pseudonym) will be referred to as daughter of grandparent two. Janet Marsha Harriet is 45 years old. She has two daughters, one granddaughter, and a step-son from her second marriage. Janet Marsha has spent over 25 years in the medical field at a local hospital in Kansas City. Janet Marsha is Caucasian.

Child three: Child of Grandparent three-Carmen Barker

For the purpose of this study, Carmen Barker (pseudonym) will be referred to as Carmen the daughter of grandparent three. Carmen is 59 years old. She has two daughters and two grandchildren. Carmen has been married for 25 years. Carman has a B.S. Degree in Elementary Education and a Master's Degree in Education. Carmen Barker is Hispanic. Her work experience has included teaching for 15 years in the Kansas City School District.

Grandchild one: Nat Lane

For the purpose of this study, Nat (pseudonym) will be referred to as Nat the son of child one and grandchild of grandparent one. Nat is 30 years old. He is happily married and he and his wife are expecting their first child. He has one sister. Nat attended a well-

known Historical Black University in the state of Monroe. Nat works at a local sport facility. He plans to start working on his Master's degree soon.

Grandchild two: Melanie Parrott

For the purpose of this study, Melanie Parrott (pseudonym) will be referred to as Melanie the daughter of child two and grandchild of grandparent two. Melanie is 19 years. She has one daughter, one sister, and a half-brother. Melanie is continuing her education by taking on line classes. She plans to graduate in May. Melanie works at a local department store. Melanie and her sister enjoy shopping and taking care of her daughter.

Grandchild three: Joy Granzel

For the purpose of this study, Joy Granzel (pseudonym) will be referred to as Joy the daughter of child three and grandchild of grandparent three. Joy is 27 years old. She has two sons and one sister. Joy has a B. A. degree in English and is working on her Master's Degree in Education. Joy is a teacher in a suburban school district, a suburb in South Kansas City. Joy is in her third year of teaching. She is also director of the dance troupe for her school and has won several championships for her dance troupe. Joy enjoys teaching and dancing, an art she learned when was living with her parents.

Interview Data

The researcher conducted individual interviews with each grandparent, child and grandchild. All focus group interviews were conducted in three different settings, one each with grandparents, children, and grandchildren. Each participant received information about the research and an informed consent with a description of his or her rights, for them to sign. Audiotapes, made during each interview were transcribed

verbatim. The researcher shared copies of the transcription with interviewees, asking them to verify the accuracy of their words and intent. Analysis of each interview began following the verification from the participants. The emerging themes from this data source will be discussed later.

Questionnaire Data

The researcher also distributed a Likert style questionnaire (Appendix H) with the grandparents and children. The questionnaire asked each participant to select the response that best indicated the degree to which they learned about parental involvement and the application of the learning when they were involved in their children's lives in school, at home, and in the community. Participant completed the questionnaire by circling their answer (no learning, very little learning, some learning, and much learning) regarding how they helped their children at home, school or community. A summary of conclusions of the questionnaire follows.

Summary of Interview and Questionnaires data

The data from the questionnaire (Appendix H) indicated that in reference to Sphere One, the "home" grandparents needed "some learning" in helping their children with homework and had the perception that they needed "no learning" for encouraging their children to do well in school. The grandparents applied "some learning" to preparing for their children for school in their degree of parental involvement. The children indicated that "very little" (Appendix H) learning was needed as a result of their involvement with their children. The data from the children indicated that they knew how to help their children with homework and to prepare their children for school. This finding was also reflected in their interviews and focus group, when they gave examples

of how they helped their children to be ready for school. One of the children mentioned that being a teacher helped her prepare her children; she knew her children needed to know their name, address, and names of colors. The interview and questionnaire data from the grandparents and children indicated that they exhibited the intended behavior for their children while they were in school because of the established expectations for their children while in school

In reference to Sphere Two, the school, (Appendix H) the interview, focus groups, and questionnaire data revealed that the grandparents thought very “little learning” took place in relationship to leadership roles at the school, and how to work with staff to support their parental involvement. The children applied “some learning” to learning about leadership roles and how to become a more effective parent while their children were in school. Neither grandparent nor their children took on many leadership roles, mainly because grandparents volunteered other places and their children were working full time jobs. However both grandparents and children understood and selected “much learning” to the importance of parental involvement for a good school.

The interview focus groups and questionnaire data analyzed through the lens of Sphere Three, the community, (Appendix H) revealed both grandparents and children indicated that “very little learning” was needed as the home, school, and community interacted. The grandchildren and the children knew that the home, school, and community must be a partnership to support parental involvement and to provide learning opportunities for their children.

As the data were further analyzed from the interviews, focus groups, and questionnaire, the themes of *Consciously Raising to Self-Assurance* and *Rallying the Village* emerged to support the theory of the overlapping Spheres of Influence. These themes build on bridging the connection of the home, school, and community with child in the center.

Themes

Thus using the data sets from the interviews, focus groups and questionnaires and the predetermined codes, the following themes emerged: 1) *Consciously Raising of Self Assurance* with the subthemes of a) Parental Involvement, b) Giving Voice, and) Culture Differences; 2) *Rallying the Community* (or Whole Village) with the subthemes of a) Building Successful Partnerships, and b) Collaborating with the Community. The two main themes evolved from the actions of grandparents, children and grandchildren and are depicted in Figure 1:

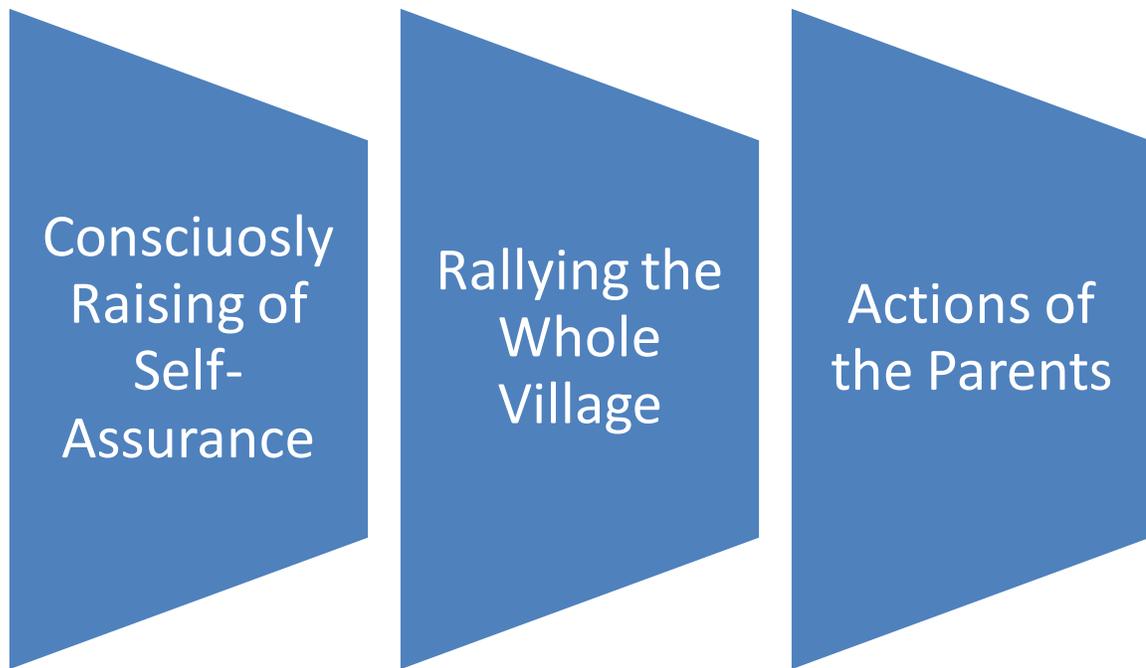


Figure 1: *Emergence of Two Main Themes: Impact of parent involvement for generations of diverse backgrounds*

These two themes are related to the actions of parents that were involved in the education of their children. Each generation viewed parental involvement as building a strong relationship between the home, school, and community. Each generation had something to share that afforded the opportunities to learn about each other, a respect of culture, demonstrated interest and experiences in parental involvement?

Consciously Rising to Self-Assurance

The evidence of consistently being positive and self confident had an influence on the families in this study. They believe that because of their involvement in the school their children were successful in life. They worked together to support the schools, by volunteering, encouraging their children, and joining forces with the schools to build partnerships.

Building Successful Partnerships

The term partnership assigns responsibility to the school, families, and communities to share information, ideas, activities, and services with each other. In developing a partnership, parents, teachers, and community will have to create more family-like schools, and more schools that serve the needs of all families (Epstein, 2001). These partnerships should have the children as the key member of the partnership, because the children are influenced by all three contexts: the home, school, and community. Within the theme of partnership, all generations shared that the partnership is important. It is very important for the home, school, and community to work together in the education of children. After school children need places to go for family-friendly programs. In speaking on partnerships of the church and school,

GP 3, Lula Rico said:

Because my children attended Catholic Schools, the families had to have a partnership with the church and the school. My family had a very close bond with church and school. We supported the church through fund raisers, being a cub scout's mother and, cooking for the children at times. The family was involved in all aspects of the church. My husband and sons cleaned the church and the school on many occasions. Therefore they were known around the church as well as the school. By attending a Catholic School, my children attended Mass every day also. It was without a doubt, because we choose this educational system for our children, we knew we would have a close and committed partnership with the school and church. I am sure by us having an interest in the school it helped my children to do better in school.

GP1 Margaret Howard: recalled:

There was some partnership with the home and school, but very little within the community. As a parent, I attended all of he PTA meetings at school and other events. The school knew if they needed me for anything, all they had to do was call. The church was the largest community service that we used when my children were in school. If my children were not in school they were in church. The church was the place where they got the second dose of parenting from. The church members provided other activities that involved reading, writing, speaking, leadership skills, and helping people in the community.

Collaborating with the Community

In Kansas City, this consciously rising to self-assurance has developed over the many years that the parents have lived in the City. One grandparent had spent a life time in the city and had seen many changes in her local community. The neighborhoods have more stores, schools and churches. Certain people lived in a neighborhood and were not allowed to live in other neighborhoods until changes were made in Kansas City.

GP 3 Lula Rico said:

My parents lived in the neighborhood she lives in now. The neighborhood was doing the riots in Kansas City, we were never afraid, because the rioters would come and knock on our door before anything happen and let us know what was going on in the neighborhood. Today, things are a little different; my children often worry about us. The neighborhood has changed, but I don't plan on moving anywhere. My husband and I try to be very careful in the way we live. We are not as friendly and concern about children and people in the neighborhood as when our children were in school.

The grandparents, children, and grandchildren exhibited having a voice in sharing how different parental involvement was during their years in school and what effect, if any parents had on their lives. The grandparents interviewed during the focus group discussed how important it was for the community to help in providing services to parents for the benefit of raised their children. The grandparents alluded to what the Kansas City community should be doing. The community should be working and planning with community businesses, cultural, civic, and religious organizations, senior citizen groups, colleges, and universities in order to strengthen schools and to keep the grandchildren off of the streets.

GP 2 Nadine McNair, said

That community resource should be for the benefit of all children. In my community the mayor and the city council members are trying to close the one community center because of budget cuts. It is the only place where adults and children can go to have fun. There is a town meeting soon and I plan to attend to voice my opinion. The people in the community need a place for relaxing and to

have fun. Just last week they had the neighborhood lit up for some big game, it was nice to see the lights and stop signs to welcome the basketball teams and people into the neighborhood and to show them where the games were played. I believe that the community belongs to the children and the adults that live in the community.

The grandparents, children, and grandchildren alluded to that during the focus group when:

C1 Lois Lane said,

There was someone in the neighborhood that knew all of the children and kept the families informed of any wrong doing by any child in the neighborhood. All parents in the neighborhood were considered to be the parents of all of the children.

C 3 Carmen Barker said,

The families in the neighborhood always looked out for all of the children in the neighborhood". GC 1 Nat Lane said; all my mother's friends were teachers and they took care of each other's children, you could not get away with anything, if you did anything wrong, my mother's friends would take care of the problem and then call my mother, and of course I had to suffer the consequences from my mother too.

GC 3 Joy Granzel said,

We felt comfortable visiting each other's houses and getting together for neighborhood gatherings, we knew our parents would get a report on how well we behaved. The extended family played a major part in all communities and in the involvement of all children.

GP1 Margaret Howard said,

Within her community she had to draw upon the resources of her community and in other parts of the city. I had to learn what resources would help my children while they were in school. My children spent a lot of time at church, going to Sunday school and other youth activities. Back then things were a little safer. I also recall taking car loads of children to school functions with my children. I would pick the children up from their house and then drop them off when the game was over, many times their own parents would be at home, and two or three cars would be sitting in their driveways. Why they were not involved in their children's education, I did not understand.

Rallying the Whole Village

Next to the family, the school has the most significant impact on children's growth and development (Comer, Hayes, Joyner, & Ben-Avie, 1996). The concept of the African Proverb, "It takes a whole village or Community to raise a child" allows parents, school staff and individuals within the community to work together and understand the role of parental involvement. Creating a nurturing environment at the school level and tapping the energy of the community resources will help involve parents more and raise their consciousness of parental involvement. The village that was once small, simple, and nurturing is now very large, complex, and sometimes insensitive to the needs of the families. Agencies that support parents and served families have changed and are often fragmented and unable to address the needs of how children learn and perform in school:

GP 2, Grandmother Nadine McNair said

It was very difficult dealing with a child with eye sight problem in the school. They did not have the resources to help with the problem. The community resources were limited to income and whether or not you were receiving welfare. I did not think it was fair, but what could you do. That is when we had to make the decision to take my oldest son out of Catholic school, and put him into a public school because of resources and we needed the help.

Schools or parents cannot provide all sustenance, services, and support that children need to thrive and develop well in this increasingly complex society. The entire community of significant others and services must work together to strengthen and prepare children for the present and future.

C1, Lois Lane said,

We have many outstanding resources in the community and people to help families, but sometimes families don't know all the places to look for the resources. If community groups would help the schools they too would benefit. When my son was old enough to work in our community, he sacked groceries at the neighborhood store. The grocery store manager would often check to see how well he was doing in school. This type of networking provided a service and a support of his learning and to help me as a parent.

Parental Involvement

A critical dimension of effective schooling is parental involvement. Parents are for the most part, simply trying to survive, but many have neglected the most valuable asset that contributes to the future, “The children” (The Public School Parent’s Network, 2009). Epstein (2001) noted that “when parents are involved in their children’s education, children go farther in school, and they go to better schools” (p. 314). Teachers learn to teach reading, math, science, or other specialties, and administrators learn to manage the building, but many educators are unprepared to work positively and productively with one of the constants of life in school: their students’ families (Epstein). Within the subtheme of parental involvement, the grandparents, children, and grandchildren recalled what parental involvement is and how it is different now:

GP1- Grandmother Martha Howard said;

Parental involvement is when parents support their children in school by helping them to make the right decisions in life. It is having an understanding that schools are different now than when my children were in school. I didn’t go to work until my last child was in 5th grade, and I worked at the school they attended, so I was able to attend all of the meetings and be involved in all events at their school. I hear stories of parents today taking the side of their children instead of believing the teachers. I hear of parents not having time to go to the school to see about their children. I think a lot of this is because parents today are not as involved as I was. I took care of my children and other people’s children in the neighborhood as well. I recall when I would walk my children to school I would end up with all the girls walking with us to school. Many parents today are raising their children by themselves today and do not have the communities we had when my children were in school. Many of them have to work, and some work just to have stuff. (I have a niece with three children, who should be attending PTA and helping at school but instead I think she works just to buy stuff). I worry about the parent involved my great- grandchild will received, will their parents have to work two or three jobs just to survive? I worry about the education system. Will my great grandchildren be able to compete in this global world? I wonder how involved their parents will be.

GP 2, Grandmother Nadine McNair said, parental involvement is not just involvement in school work, but in everything that your children do. I didn’t work

for a period of time while my children were in school, but as they got older, I went to work to help make ends meet. Parental involvement is going and doing when you don't feel like it. I had to make sure my children were getting the best education possible. When the children were in school I often had to make adjustments to get the services that they needed to learn. I often watch my sons and how they are raising their children. They take up time with them with sports, but not so much with school work. They buy stuff to satisfy their children; they don't need and then wonder why their grades are not better. On their daily visits, I often talk to them about being involved at school and giving back to the community. Often I remind them to monitor their children closely and make sure they are learning in school. There are no more easy jobs out there, things have changed since their grandfather was working and could find work in his field.

GP 3, Grandmother Lula Rico said,

Parental involvement is when parents support their children in school, community and at home. I was involved as much as I could be in their education. I really didn't worry about them, because the Nuns kept in touch and often visit our home. When my children were growing up, I had to work to help make ends meet. My husband was only making a dollar an hour and we had nine mouths to feed. Even though my children are grown, I am still involved in their lives. My daughter takes us on a trip every year. I visit their schools and often attend many dance competitions with my daughter and granddaughter. I offer advice; whether they listen or not, I don't know. I am glad that they are successful in life and have not caused us any problems. My grandchildren are so busy with all the new things, that they don't have as much time to visit their grandparents.

Giving Voice

The children and grandchildren extended their voices on parental involvement:

C1, Lois Lane said,

Parental involvement is when you show your children you care about what they do at school as well as when they are away from school. It is letting your children know that no matter what the problem or situation is parents are there for you. I trusted my children to make the right decisions in life. Of course they stumbled along the way, but they had to make do with whatever decisions they made in life.

C2 Janet Marie Harriett said,

Parental involvement is the caring, love, freedom you give your children. Since I was the baby of the family, I couldn't go anywhere by myself. Things have certainly changed now for children.

C 3 Carmen Barker said,

Parental involvement is being supportive of your children in every aspect of their lives. Parents are the first teachers and should be the ones to make a difference in their children's lives. I recall a lot of my friends would get involved in their

children's life to the point of picking out their classes in school and telling them what classes they had to take, I trusted my girls to make the right decisions and I stayed out of the way.

GC1 Nat Lane said,

parent involvement is when you know that your parents really care about you. It is the support and trust parents give their children in talking to them about everyday life situations. I know my mother is here for me, she is my hero and I am there for her. I am a mother's boy. When parents are involved in the lives of their children, there is a partnership that is shared between the home, school, and opportunity for each family to explore and connect.

Culture Differences

All generations, no matter what their culture or ethnicity, thought parental involvement was very important. All grandparents felt that their children were in the best of hands when they were in school. The grandparents did not have to worry about their children getting in trouble or not attending school. Within the theme of Cultural Differences,

GP 1 Martha Howard said,

my children went to their neighborhood schools, and the majority of the children were "Black" and there were no problems or differences at school; the school Tadd, (pseudonym) was once only for Caucasian children. When more Blacks moved further South in Kansas City, the school became a school for the Black children.

GP 2 Nadine McNair said,

My children started off in Catholic Schools, but the Catholic Schools did not provided the services that they needed so, we had to change their school. The school catered more to Caucasian parents that had money and supported the school. After having problems with the eye sight of one son and the Catholic School could not provide the services we needed. We started sending them all to the Public Schools. The public schools were able to provide the services needed for our children and they were happy.

GP 3 Lula Rico said,

My children went to Catholic Schools and the Nuns were so strict, that differences were not shown within the school. There were more Caucasian children that attended the Catholic School than Hispanic children or African Americans. The same requirements were made for all families. I didn't see families doing any more than we did. Even though we didn't have much we

wanted the best for our children. I didn't notice any cultural differences for my children.

The parents of the children felt very little cultural differences as they were involved in the education of their children.

C 3 Carmen Barkers said,

If I hadn't had high self-esteem about myself and had paid a lot attention to the stares from teachers when I entered my children, school I would have notice more of a difference being made.

Lois Lane recalled being in the field of education offered some support to understanding the school and the environment of the school recalled Lois Lane. Because of school practices in trying to encourage parent involvement I felt that the parents and home must work together as partners.

However for the grandchildren, it was very different; because all schools were integrated by the time they entered school.

G C 3 Joy said,

I saw some cultural differences in that the Caucasian parents attended more school events than the African American or Hispanic parents. I had friends of both races at the Catholic School so I was able to learn about various people. I enjoyed learning about all cultures and differences in my friends.

Conclusion

The study design, data collection methods, conceptual underpinning, research questions, and process of data analysis were discussed in Chapter Four. In addition, a description of the community setting and an introduction of the participants were also discussed. In Chapter Four the use of the OSI element of storytelling and the use of the participant's voice were presented as well as themes that emerged from analysis of the data. Discussed in Chapter Five are the findings and conclusions based on the data analysis. In addition, presented in Chapter Five are the implications for practice and recommendations for future study.

CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY, RECOMMENDATIONS, AND CONCLUSIONS

Introduction

This single case study examined the impact of parental involvement of three generations of families of diverse backgrounds. The data were triangulated by comparing questionnaires, individual interviews of grandparents, children and grandchildren, three focus group interview of all grandparents, all children and all grandchildren and observations.

From the data, two themes emerged which showed a conscious awareness to issues associated with how generations of diverse families were involved in the education of their children's lives: *Consciously Raising of Self-Assurance* and *Rallying Around the Village* and. The theme *Consciously Raising of Self-Assurance* included two subthemes: Building Successful Partnerships with the School setting the tone that it takes the home, school, and community to work together as one. The theme of *Rallying Around the Village* includes three subthemes: Parental Involvement, Giving Voice, and Cultural Differences. The findings were found to be consistent from all participants in the study: The grandparents, the children, and the grandchildren were very consistent in their responses. A key element of this was study was the use of storytelling and voice as the researcher allowed the participants to share their stories of family and school relations which account for history, development, and changing experiences for families.

Henderson et al. (2007) affirmed that in order to meet the federal expectations of all groups must be given a voice. The *Overlapping Spheres of Influence Theory*, which was used in this study as the underpinning framework, advocates the use of storytelling

as an effective resource for giving voice to the generations of yesterday and those of today. An essential component of OSI is the use of reflections or storytelling to capture and understand people's experiences in life (Epstein 2001, Henderson et al.). Moreover, OSI theory uses life learning experiences and everyday situations to explore perspective through the power of reflections and stories, therefore, giving voice to the families in order to gain better perspectives (Creswell, 2003).

The use of storytelling and reflections provides the much needed conversation that is constructed by the storytellers' own reality. Therefore, this researcher determined that using a case study approach would allow the researcher to obtain the language, or voice, of the participants (Creswell, 2003). A summary of the findings and conclusions based on the data analysis were discussed; additionally the implications for practice and recommendations for future study are presented. Since the goal was to understand the experiences, beliefs, and relationships of the participants, the researcher placed emphasis on the participants' personal voice to present the data.

Summary of Findings

The overarching questions guiding this study were: What is parental involvement and whether parental involvement really matters in the success of children?

The study was viewed through the lens of the *Overlapping Spheres of Influence* (OSI).

As established previously there are three basic forces of OSI:

1. Time refers to the child's historical time; the age, grade level, and social conditions during the time span the children are in school.
2. Experience in the family represents the impact the family has on its children to prepare them for school.

3. Experience in the school occurs when teachers make parents a part of regular teaching practices (Epstein, 2001 p. 321).

The following two themes related generational differences on parental involvement and empowering parents emerged as data were analyzed: the role of *consciously raising to self-assurance* and the role of the *rallying of the village*. Within the context of the study, the following research questions were addressed.

Research Questions:

1. What is parental involvement, as viewed through the lens of Overlapping Spheres of Influence?

2. How does the ethnicity of parents affect how parents are involved in their children's education?

3. How have the forms of parental involvement changed from one generation to another?

4. How is parental involvement perceived to impact student success?

1. What is parental involvement, as viewed through the lens of Overlapping Spheres of Influence?

Through the analysis of interviews and focus groups, strong evidence emerged to support the notion that parental involvement was influenced by the actions of grandparents, children, and grandchildren in Kansas City, Monroe. Grandparents reported that they were all involved in the education of their children. The grandparents did not work until their children were all school age and therefore; they were able to volunteer at the school and in the community. Grandparents participated in school organizations such as Parent Teacher Association, Cub Scout mothers, room mothers, driving children to

school outings, baking treats, and helping in any way they could. One grandmother worked at the school for awhile, and this enabled her to know what her children were doing in school and to be a mother to other children. The connection made the grandparents have confidence in themselves, while they were able to help in their children's education.

The grandparents believed that they were good role models for their children by setting standards for their children to follow. The grandparents recalled helping children with their homework by providing a place in the home for children to do homework and sitting down with them at the table to do the homework. The grandparents mentioned making sure the homework was done as soon as they would get home and before they did chores. During this period of time, grandparents believed that the connection had been made between the home, school, and community. The grandparents believed that in Kansas City, the home, school and community worked together for the benefit of the children. The school would inform the parents if there was a problem at school, and the parents would straighten the problem out right away and get the children back on track. In the community all neighbors knew each other and all the children, so the families in the community would look out for each other. The grandparents mentioned that they had no major problems when their children were growing up.

According to the children, they believed that they were involved in their children's education but in a different way. All of the parents worked while their children were in school and are still working now. They were involved as much as they could. They visited the school when they could, attended parent teacher conferences, attended as many sport events and school events that they could, baked treats, and made sure their

children did their homework as well. The parents enrolled their children in community activities such as dance, computer classes, and sport activities. The children were not able to volunteer or go on field trips because of the jobs they had. The children said they did not put as much pressure on their children as their parents did, but allowed them to be children and to make some choices for themselves. One parent even said, “I knew my children would be successful in life and I didn’t pressure or force them into making choices or doing things I want them to do.”

For the grandchildren, times were quite different for them than their parents and grandparents. The grandchildren believed that their parents were always involved in their education in some way. The grandchildren knew their parents had to work, because of being reared in a single family home, and it took both parents working in order to live in the area they wanted to live in. They recall their parents contacting the teachers, visiting the school, talking to the principal and teachers, and attending their sports and choir events. They also mentioned that they had been given expectations about education and the choices that they make in life. One child recalled, “My mother’s friends were all teachers and they watch out for each other’s children, so we could not get into trouble or do anything wrong.” The children believed that the home, school and community functioned as a support system for the parents. Evidence has shown that the home, school, and community should not be isolated from one another. In fact successful parental involvement programs share several fundamental beliefs about parents:

Parents want what is best for their children.

Parents, regardless of their background or circumstances, can be a key resource in their children’s education.

All children can learn, and the focus on educators' efforts needs to be on children's success.

Together, educators, families, and communities can succeed in educating children and preparing them to lead healthy, happy, and productive lives.(National Parent Teacher Association 2000, pp. 2-3).

2. How does the ethnicity of parents affect how parents are involved in their children's education?

In spite of long-term preoccupation with educational equality, there is still widespread unequal and unjust treatment of some different and diverse students in many of our educational institutions (Kuykendall, 2004). For the grandparents the time period that their children were in school brought some differences.

Grandparent Howard said,

Most of the children that attended her children's school were Black but there were some Vietnamese, and Cambodian children at the school. Many of these children could not speak English well and had to be tutored which I did while I worked at the school. Many of the parents did not volunteer, because they had to work, or there were language problems. At some functions the same parents would be in attendance all of the time. It became apparent which parents could be contacted for volunteering and support for the school.

Grandparent Howard further said that she thought the attitude of the teachers made a difference with the parents. The African American grandparent spoke of the differences in her childhood, and it made her more involved in the education of her children. She wanted the best and would do whatever it took for her children to get a good education.

For the Caucasian grandparent, there were no differences known. Her children started off in Catholic Schools but had to transfer to public schools because of the needs of the children. The Catholic School was well run, parents were welcome at all times to volunteer, the parents provided resources for the classrooms and helped out in any way they could. Because of the eye problem with one of the children, I had to send them to the

public school, because they had the services that my children needed in school. In the public school, I saw some parents volunteering, but not a whole lot.

As for the Hispanic grandparent, there were no differences noted. Her children attended Catholic School and in order to attend the Catholic school, parents had to participate in various school events and activities. This grandparent recalled that all children had to attend Mass every day even if they were not Catholic. Parents of various cultures volunteered at the school whenever they could, "I didn't notice a difference."

The children of the grandparents grew up in a different era and saw differences in the ethnicity of parents. During the times that their children were in school, they lived in various sections of the City. One parent lived north of Kansas City, and her children attended school in a different county. When asked about differences in parental involvement, she stated that she had gained confidence in herself, and the comments or looks she often got did not matter to her, she was there for her children, she or her husband would be there to support and do for their children. There might have been only two or three students of color in some of her children's classes. Child 3, Carmen Barker, said that she felt the schools were good schools and enhanced her children's learning, and cultural differences were not an issue.

For the grandchildren, the time and experiences were quite different from those of their grandparents and parents. All the grandchildren attended schools that were integrated. The grandchildren saw parents of all races attending functions and activities at their schools. Grandchild 2 said she remembers her best friend being Hispanic and learning about her culture and life style. Grandchild 1 said he did not face any diversity issues while in school; he thought maybe the sports helped him to make friends and gain

the confidence he needed to achieve in school, and of course I had my mother. According to the findings on culture and age from the (National Parent Teacher Association, 2000) children from diverse cultural backgrounds tend to do better when parents and professionals collaborated to close the gap between the culture at home and the culture in the learning institution.

3. How have the forms of parental involvement changed from one generation to another?

Families, schools, and communities have changed and grown in diversity and complexity, and so have the forms of parental involvement. Traditionally, schools and teachers have depended on and requested family or parental collaboration. However, what has not been so evident is that family- school affinities and partnerships have had a middle-class character and a social mobility accent (De Carvalho, 2001). Moreover, they appeared as an organic expression of the community school and of a particular stage and context of social development in which school played a central integrative role.

The roles of parents are quite different today. Many parents say they don't have time to run to school or to check on their children. Grandparent 3 said that "parents think that the teachers are their baby sitters and the teachers and principal have to take all the stuff from children now."

Parental involvement has changed in that the role of the parents has changed. Today's children are being reared by grandparents, foster homes, more single parents, and some are considered homeless.

Grandparent 1 M. Howard said,
One of the major changes that I see is that parents will take the side of their children, even though they are wrong. Some do not go to the school unless the child or children have been put out of school and then parents or grandparents go

to the school to raise Cain with the principal or teachers. When my children were in school I did not take their side. I would always talk to the teacher, and find out what the problem is, more than likely it was something that the children had done or said.

Grandparent 2 Nadine McNair said,

The changes I see is that teachers were different and were highly respected. The world has taken out moral and values in the school, so therefore children do not respect themselves, the teacher, or even their parents. Schools had standards and all children respected the adults and their parents. Today's generations of children are all selfish and parents buy things for their children to please them I see it with my great grandchildren too

All children agreed that in order for schools to increase parental involvement with today's parents you have to feed the parents, have a program or some kind of entertainment at the school to get them out. The children said that all that they see now is that when children come home from school, they don't do homework. All I see them doing is eating, playing those games, and on the telephone. It seems that the generation now is lost and living in a different world.

The grandchildren spoke of the generation that they now live in.

Grandchild 1 said, for my generation the goal is trying to find a decent job, have a car and enjoy life. Our generation lives one day at a time or paycheck to paycheck.

Grandchild 3 said, I have children to take care of, so I have to think of them and it takes everything I have to survive and support my children.

According to Comer et al., (1996) there is a three level approach that reveals how parents are involved in schools:

Level 1 50-100% of parents support the school's program through attending parent-teacher conferences, reinforcing learning at home, and participating in the school's social programs.

Level 2 10-50% of parents are actively engaged in the daily life of the school by being present on site and constructively involved in supporting the authentic activities.

Level 3 1-10% of parents are truly representatives, participating in collaborative decisions with school staff, students, and other identified persons. (p.48)
The findings from this study indicated that these data set findings fell into the same level of participation as revealed in Comer et al.'s investigation.

4. How is parental involvement perceived to impact student success?

When children are developing well, they learn well. When adults in their lives show trust, support, positive regard, high expectations, affiliation, and bonding, learning becomes naturally (Comer et. al, 1996). But what happens when children are not developing well, are not learning well? Some educators blame these children and their families. Parental involvement in school had been explicitly pointed out as a main factor of student success. According to (Henderson et al., 2007) “the evidence is consistent, positive and convincing: families have a major influence on their children’s achievement” (p. 2).

It is vital for educators to understand that the families who send their children to school each day want their children to succeed in school and life. The children that were teachers spoke of the children in their schools, whose parents were at school all of the time. These were the children that did their homework, had perfect attendance at school and knew they had to do well in school. They were motivated to learn. On the other hand those children whose parents had very little contact with the school lacked motivation did very little homework and did not do well in school. One parent said that there are some parents who are so overwhelmed with personal problems that they do not have any energy left for their children or had bad experiences in school themselves, and they don't want to have any contact with the teacher or the school. These statements support the findings by the National Parent Teacher Association, (2000):

When parents are involved, students tend to achieve more, regardless of socioeconomic status, ethnic/ racial backgrounds or the parent's education level

The more extensive the parent involvement is, the higher the student achievement.

When parents are involved in students' education, those students generally have higher grades and test scores, better attendance, and more consistently completed homework.

Students whose parents are involved in their lives have higher graduation rates and greater enrollment rates in postsecondary education.

In a program designed to involve parents in full partnerships, student achievement for disadvantaged children not only improves, but can also reach levels that are standard for middle class children. Children who are furthest behind are most likely to make the greatest gains.

If parents do not participate in school events, develop a working relationship with their children's educators, or keep up with what is happening in their children's school, their children are more likely to fall behind in academic performance (p. 12)

The Grandparents agreed that no matter what is believed or said about parental involvement, parents are the children's first teacher. Grandparent 3 recalled that she and her husband were not high school graduates, but were able to help their children learn to read and write. She further said that "I am proud of my children, they have never been in trouble and they all have decent jobs. I believe the school helped them become successful, but we were there to support the school." Grandparent 1 said, "I agree with grandparent 3, we taught our children to enjoy school. We did not have a lot, but our experiences in life gave them plenty of everyday learning and life skills to be successful."

Kukenydall (2004) stated that the "one marriage which must work for the sake of the children is the marriage between the home and school. School officials who work to improve parental involvement are sure to see significant gains in student achievement." (p.194). There are so many ways to encourage parental involvement, educators must

remain persistent. In some cases, training programs or workshops on effective parenting skills may be necessary to improve student success” and parental involvement (Kukenydale).

The National Parent Teacher Association, 2000 stated that the most accurate predictors of student achievement in school are not family income or social status, but the extent to which a child family is able to (1) create a home environment that encourages learning; (2) communicate high, yet reasonable, expectations for the child’s achievement and future career; and (3) become involved in the child’s education at school and in the community (p. 12).

Conclusions

Bloland (1992) stated that qualitative research should be viewed as the observation of day-to-day living of subjects. Case studies are intensive descriptions and analysis of a single or bounded system such as an individual, program, event group, intervention or community (Merriam, 1998). A case study design is employed to gain in depth understanding of the situation and meaning of those involved. The interest is in process outcomes.

Merriam (1998) stated that “qualitative research covers several forms of inquiry at helping researchers to understand and explain the meaning of social phenomena with as little disruption of the natural setting as possible” (p.5). Qualitative research implies a direct concern with individual experiences as they interact on a daily basis in the world, and with reality. As a result, the following conclusions are based on the study findings parental involvement a generational case study of families of diverse backgrounds.

Consciously raising of self- assurance empowers families was one of the themes identified using the data set and predetermined data codes. Two subthemes were also identified as important components of Consciously raising to Self-Assurance: Parental Involvement and Cultural Differences. The first conclusion was that it relates to giving voice to grandparents, parents, and grandchildren, in that parental involvement is important and that it is needed in order for children to be successful in school. Parental involvement in schools has been explicitly pointed out as a main factor of educational achievement, and policies that have in the past been informal and perhaps limited parental involvement must be changed into mandates aimed at maximizing parental involvement in all schools through all types of involvement (Epstein, 2001).

A second conclusion was that parental involvement does not require that parents be physically present in the school building. What parents do at home seems to have a strong influence on children's achievement regardless of a family's socioeconomic status. When parents are informed, they can reinforce classroom instruction at home and reinforce concepts through naturally occurring situations.

Another conclusion drawn from the data was that school leaders and staff matter. Based on the data, school leaders and staff had some effect on the parents and their involvement at the school site. The grandparents and children recalled a caring and nurturing educational environment that supported what the parents wanted and believed. It is important that school leaders and families are bound by a common set of expectations. This common set of expectations ultimately can lessen the disagreements between home and school and can enhance the support for the student's learning.

In addition to these conclusions drawn from the data it should be noted that there are differences in present-day parents and those of the past that reflected changes in the social structure and the overall context of schooling. Parental involvement has become more varied and, in some cases, more intense than those of their parents. Currently parents believe that they must have knowledge of the benefits of participation in school affairs and be involved in the development of a network outside of the school.

Limitations

Heppner and Heppner (2004) postulated that all studies have limitation and that no matter how diverse a sample, it will never be inclusive of everyone. It is important, however, to be aware of the limitations and to design the most rigorous study possible acknowledging these limitations.

The study was limited to participants in an urban setting in a metropolitan city. The study further was limited in design through the use of self reporting data during interviews, focus groups, and questionnaires from grandparents, children, and grandchildren about parental involvement and what effect it had on their children while in school. It was also limited in design through the use of self reporting data from questionnaire given to the grandparents and children on their learning and application of skills in parental involvement. The study was limited relative to the qualitative research skills and experience of the researcher. Researcher bias is assumed to be a limitation of the study. In order to address this bias, the researcher used triangulation of the review data.

One limitation of the case study design was the issue of internal validity and reliability (Creswell, 2003) and, therefore, the researcher used methods of data

triangulation. The researcher used multiple forms of data collection and, when possible received feedback from the participants through a process called member checks (Merriam, 1998).

Another limitation was the external validity or transferability of the study as it focused on only on three diverse families in a metropolitan city. Merriam (1998) noted that qualitative research is not intended to generalize the findings, but to interpret the events. The researcher did, however, discuss themes that emerged for the data analysis. The data collected, while limited, could be used to compare parental involvement in other urban schools that are struggling with the importance of parental involvement and if it really matters with their children. This study could also be useful in studying other diverse groups and if parental involvement helped improved their children's education or if they were involved in the education of their children lives at all..

Implications for Practice

The implications of this research for application in improving parental involvement could also impact grandparents, parents, and children in various ethnics, and socioeconomic groups, fathers, extended families, and schools in addressing the issues of diversity in parental involvement all over the world. The findings of the study articulated the importance of being deliberate and purposeful in understanding the impact that parent involvement, regardless of generations and diversity has on their involvement in particular and in their success in general. These findings supported Epstein's (2001) spheres of influence that directly affect student learning and development. The model of school, family, and community partnerships locates the student at the center, and clearly states that when families are involved, students' achievement increases, attendance and

attitude toward school are boosted, classroom behavior improves, and levels of aspiration including graduation rates and enrollment in higher education increase.. In Kansas City, families of this study were able to volunteer and participate in the education of their children. They recognized the need for involvement and knew that in order for their children to be successful in school they had to be involved. Bissinger, (2001) pointed out that when schools and families connect; the outcome is a caring community that helps all children succeeds in school and in life.

The study findings also revealed the importance of partnerships with the community to support the school and give voice to the grandparents, children and grandchildren. The researcher found consciously awakening to self-assurance came from an understanding of the actions of parents, their self confidence to building successful partnerships, and collaborating with each other. These findings were positive in association to the needs of the parents that they could not raise the children themselves. It took the home, school and community working together to provide the social, emotional, and academic growth and success of children.

The study findings indicated that *Consciously Raising of Self-Assurance* and *Rallying the Village* were essential to giving voice to families. The families interviewed described what their involvement was like when their children were in school, and how important it was for parents to be involved in their children's education. Additionally, the families who participated in this study attributed this sense of self-assurance and empowerment to their interest in their children's education and having the best education possible as well as an investment in the future of their grandchildren and great grandchildren. This need gave family voice, providing a "bridge" to the school-home

partnership. However, other questions were raised that suggested the need for future study.

Recommendations for Future Research

The results of this study could contribute to the current research and literature on how schools are successfully engaging parental involvement, what effect if any, does parental involvement have on children and how parental involvement effect other diverse families? Most recently the *No Child Left Behind Act of 2002* (NCLB) has added new demands to include parent involvement for the first time (Patrikakou & Wessiberg, 2003) NCLB consists of “regular” two-way and meaningful communication,” as parents being integral to children’s learning and should be able to act as full partners in education. Because of the rapid advance of such high standards, accountability, and testing movements in schools throughout the nation, there will be a need to engage schools, families, and communities as partners (Patrikakou & Wessiberg, 2003)

This study could serve as a guide for schools administrators who were interested in improving parental involvement by observing and keeping data on the attendance of various diverse families in their school population. It could also be used as an indication for understanding the next generation of children and why they will or will not be as involved as their parents or grandparents were in their children’s education.

One additional finding in the study is how the forms of involvement changed from generation to generation. The grandparents did not work and recalled a lot of volunteering at the school site, helping with homework, baking treats, and taking or pick-up children for school events. For today’s generation parent involvement is quite different. More parents are in the work force, and the fast pace of modern society and the

declining role of the family are all challenges for the involvement of families today. It is, therefore, recommended that additional studies be conducted on the training parents need when they volunteer at school, how school can meet the needs of the changing generations of parents, and what technology will be made available for parents.

An unintended positive finding was the effect of the actions of the grandparents, parents in the different schools that the children attended and the impact that this had on their involvement in their children's education. The question emerges whether public or private school matter to the type of involvement parents participate in. This area was not explored by this research study. Therefore, a recommendation for further study includes the parental involvement of children that attend private verse public or charter schools.

Another unintended positive effect of the actions of the grandparents and parents was the attitude of the administration toward parental involvement. Each participant recalled the leadership of the school while their children were in school. The leadership was very positive and they all had good relationships with their children's or grandchildren's principals or Nuns. This also brings up the questions about whether the principal and staff have an effect on parental involvement. This area was not explored in this research study.

Further study is needed in the form of longitudinal studies on the impact of the actions of parents, especially in the area of consciously raising to self-assurance, to determine if the effect of parental involvement has a long term effect on generation after generation. Furthermore, the investigation found there is a need to research if this newly found self-assurance would transfer with parents to other areas in education to help prepare their children for the global world.

Additional research is also needed in the area of the impact of parental involvement on the quality of family-teacher relationship. “It does not, matter how many notes or letters are sent home, but how effectively and sincere the communication was between the teacher and family” (Epstein, 2001; Kukenydall, 2004).The research must help schools identify practices and policies that encourage parent trust and involvement in the process of schooling.

Concluding Overview

This single case study examined the impact of parental involvement of three generation with diverse families and whether voice was given to “typically” groups through these actions. The findings of this inquiry suggested strong impact on issues associated with parental involvement and awakening to self-assurance as a result of actions taken by the grandparents, children, and grandchildren. Through individual interviews and focus groups and a questionnaire the researcher found that generations after generation were involved in the education of their children and no matter what research (Hale, Kukendall, Epstein) said, all parents are involved at some point and time in their children’s education and learning.

Additional data found participants felt self-assured to address issues, help their children with homework, and be a partner in the community as a result of having been given voice and a sense of belonging. Finally, based on the findings, the answer to the question of the impact of parental involvement with generations of diverse families really matter is yes. By using “typically” individual’s voices, the many diverse families, and the various generations that are rearing their children and grandchildren, changes the atmosphere of parental involvement as a partnership for the school, family and

community. This partnership provides the necessary means to empower parents toward activities that foster students' learning and development supports the school program, and preparing children for the 21st century. This supports the Michigan Department of Education (2001) views on partnerships and parental involvement in that "The main reason to create such partnerships is to help all youngsters succeed in school and in later life" (p. 2). Nevertheless, if the challenge is to improve parental involvement, schools will be faced with the challenge of seeking various ways and strategies to get and keep parents involved and how to be prepared for an every changing. There is a new generation of parents that do not have time for volunteering, going on field trips, or visiting the school unless the teacher or principal has done something wrong to their child.

These new challenges in parental involvement will require skills for school leaders and teachers that were not discussed or practiced by school leaders in the past. For those reasons, it is now crucial that educational leaders and teachers possess skills in how to engage families in parental involvement, and how to adapt, analyze, and seek solutions to situations with parents that were not an issue before. It is also crucial to parents today that their involvement must change, so that they help prepare their children for the 21st century.

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Appendix A

INFORMED CONSENT FORM

Dear Family Member Participant:

Thank you for considering participating in a research study titled, *Parental Involvement: A Generational Case Study with Families of Diverse Backgrounds*. This study is part of my dissertation research for a doctoral degree in educational leadership and policy analysis from the University of Missouri-Columbia. The information gathered should be beneficial to parental involvement programs in schools. Your participation is very important to this study.

PURPOSE

The purpose of this research is to examine whether the voice is given to parents through the use of the overlapping spheres of influence as guiding parental involvement in education. The researcher will use a case study approach to examine the study constructs.

PROCEDURES

If you choose to participate in this project, you will be invited to take part in thirty (30) minutes face to face focus group, one hour audio recorded interview, observations, and a short survey. The interview will be conducted in an approved location. In the event that significant new findings develop during the course of the study, the researcher may ask you to participate in additional audio recorded sessions in person or vial telephone. In addition to being recorded, all interviews will be transcribed verbatim for use by the researcher. The researcher may also ask additional questions. In addition, all participants will be allowed to review the transcripts to ensure accuracy.

PARTICIPATION

Participation in the study is completely voluntary. You may withdraw from participation at any time you wish without penalty, including in the middle of the interviews or after they have been completed. Your consent to participate or refusal to participate will not affect you in any way. You may also decline to answer any questions you feel are too uncomfortable to answer. Please do not hesitate to contact me with any questions or concerns about your participation. You can call me at (816) 966-1750 or (816) 418-4925. In addition, you are also welcome to contact the dissertation advisor for this research study, Dr. Barbara Martin, who can be reached at (660)543-8823. If you have questions about your rights as research participants, you should contact the University of Missouri Institutional Review Board Office (573) 882-9585.

CONFIDENTIALITY AND DISCLOSURE

Tapes and transcripts will remain confidential and separate from any identifying information. Fictitious names will be used during the data analysis and reporting. You will have the opportunity to verify the transcribed interview for accuracy what was stated and what you intended. Edits, deletions, and clarifications will be made immediately to the transcript to comply with your right to voluntarily release data. Only the researcher and the dissertation supervisor will have access to the identifiable data. Collected data will be kept locked and destroyed three years after the completion of the study.

Your identity will be confidential in the reporting of the results. I will not list any names, of participants, in my dissertation or any future publication of this study. If you have further questions regarding research participant's right, please contact the University of Missouri-Columbia Campus Institutional Review Board at (573) 882-9585, or visit <http://www.research.missouri.edu/crib/index.htm> or <http://ohrp.osophs.dhhs.gov/human>

subjects/guidance/45fr46.htm.

INJURY OR ILLNESS

The University of Missouri does not compensate human subjects if discomfort eventually results from the research. Nonetheless, the university holds medical, professional, and general liability insurance coverage, and provides its own medical attention and facilities if participants suffer as a direct result of negligence or fault from faculty or staff associated with the research. In such unlikely event, the Risk Management Officer should be contacted immediately at (573) 882-9585 to obtain a review of the matter and receive specific information. Related ethical guidelines about Protection of Human Subjects set forth in the Code of Federal Regulations “45 CFR 46” will be upheld. This statement is not to be construed as an admission of liability.

RISK AND BENEFITS

The risk of your participation is minimal. As stated above, the information gathered should be beneficial to schools that have parent involvement programs and responsible for implementing improvement in parental involvement.

COSTS TO STUDY PARTICIPANTS

There will be no cost to participate in the study other than your time.

COMPENSATION

The researcher will provide no compensation for participating in the study. If you choose to participate in this study, please complete the information below. A copy of this letter and your written consent should be retained by you for future reference.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Gustava Cooper-Baker

Doctoral Candidate

SIGNATURES

A signed statement of informed consent is required of all participants in this project.

Your signature indicates that you understand and voluntarily agree to the conditions of participation described above, and that you have received a copy of this form.

I agree to take part in this study. I have had a chance to ask questions about being in this study and have those questions answered.

Printed Name of Subject

Signature of Subject

Date

I have discussed this project and the items above with the subjects, using language that is understandable and appropriate for this consent.

Printed Name of Principal Investigator

Signature of Principal Investigator

Date

Please return to Gustava Cooper-Baker, 10617 Wenzel Ave. Kansas City, MO. 64137

Email: gcooperb@kcmsd.net

Appendix B

Interview Questions for Grandparents

Date: _____

Start Time: _____

| Questions | Information |
|-----------|-------------|
|-----------|-------------|

Opening Question: 5 min

| | |
|---|-----------------------------|
| 1. What is your name and tell me about your family? | Learn about the participant |
|---|-----------------------------|

Introductory Question: 5-10 min

| | |
|---|--|
| 2. How were you involved in the education of your child or children's life? | Q1: Model of Overlapping Spheres of Influence (OSI). |
|---|--|

Transition Questions: 5-10 min

| | |
|---|---|
| 3. Describe the types of involvement you participated in your child or children's school. | Q1: School-Family (OSI) Q4: Giving voice to grandparent(s) |
|---|---|

Key Question: 10-15 min

| | |
|---|---|
| 4. Did your involvement at your child or children's school have an affect on the success of your child or children's life? Probes: If so, in what way? | Q1: Family- (OSI) Q4: Giying voice to grandparent(s) |
|---|---|

Key Question: 10-15 min

| | |
|--|--|
| <p>5. How did your involvement at school improve the relationship of your family in the community?</p> <p>Probes: If so, in what manner?</p> | <p>Q1: Family- Community (OSI)</p> <p>Q4: Giving voice to grandparent(s)</p> |
|--|--|

Key Question 10-15 min

| | |
|---|--|
| <p>6. Did the diversity of communication strategies affect you helping your child or children learn at or your advocacy for make decisions about school issues?</p> <p>What strategies were used?</p> | <p>Q2: Home-School-Community (OSI)</p> <p>Q4: Giving voice to grandparent(s)</p> |
|---|--|

Key Question 10-15 min

| | |
|---|--|
| <p>7. Were there any problems or issues that kept you from being involved in your child's/children education?</p> <p>Probes: If so, in what manner?</p> | <p>Q1: Family-School (OSI)</p> <p>Q4: Giving voice to grandparent(s)</p> |
|---|--|

Key Question 10-15 min

| | |
|--|--|
| <p>8. Why do you think it was important to be involved in your child or children education?</p> <p>Probes: If so, in what manner</p> | <p>Q1: Family-School-Community (OSI)</p> <p>Q4: Giving voice to grandparent(s)</p> |
|--|--|

Ending Question 5-10 min

| | |
|---|---|
| <p>9. Is there anything you wish to share with me about parental involvement that I have not asked?</p> | <p>Q3: Giving voice to grandparent(s)</p> |
|---|---|

Appendix C

Interview Questions for Children

Date: _____

Start Time: _____

| Questions | Information |
|-----------|-------------|
|-----------|-------------|

Opening Question: 5 min

| | |
|---|-----------------------------|
| 1. What is your name and tell me about your family? | Learn about the participant |
|---|-----------------------------|

Introductory Question: 5-10 min

| | |
|---|--|
| 2. How were you involved in the education of your child or children's life? | Q1: Home-School Overlapping Spheres of Influence (OSI) |
|---|--|

Transition Question: 5-10 min

| | |
|--|--|
| 3. Describes the types of involvement you participated in your child or children's school. Probes: If so, in what manner? | Q1: Home-School (OSI) Q3: Giving voice to parent(s) |
|--|--|

Key Question 10-15 min

| | |
|--|--|
| 5. How did you know that you needed to be involved? in your child's education? Probes: If so, in what manner? | Q1: Home-School (OSI) Q4: Giving voice to parent(s) |
|--|--|

Key Question 10-15 min

| | |
|--|--|
| <p>6. Did your community influence you as to the type of parental involvement you participated in?</p> <p>Probes: If so, in what manner?</p> | <p>Q1: Home-School-Community (OSI) Q4: Giving voice to parent(s)</p> |
|--|--|

Key Question 5-10 min

| | |
|--|--|
| <p>7. Were there any barriers that stood in your way of being involved in your child's/children's education?</p> <p>Probes: If so, in what manner?</p> | <p>Q1: Home-Family (OSI) Q2: Giving voice to parent(s) Q4: Giving voice to parent(s)</p> |
|--|--|

Key Question 5-10 min

| | |
|---|--|
| <p>8. What do think about the school as being a home, school and community partnership?</p> <p>Probes: If so, in what manner?</p> | <p>Q1: Home-school-community (OSI)</p> |
|---|--|

Key Question 5-10 min

| | |
|--|--|
| <p>9. Do you think the staff, culture of the school and the location of the school affects how involve you are at the school site?</p> <p>Probes: If so, in what manner?</p> | <p>Q1: School-Community (OSI) Q2: Diversity of parental involvement Q3: Giving voice</p> |
|--|--|

Ending Question 5-10 min

| | |
|---|------------------|
| 10. Is there anything you wish to share with me about Parental involvement that I have not asked? | Q3: Giving voice |
|---|------------------|

Appendix D

Interview Questions for Grandchild

Date: _____

Start Time: _____ Age of Child _____

| Questions | Information |
|-----------|-------------|
|-----------|-------------|

Opening Question: 5 min

| | |
|--|--------------------------------|
| <p>1. What is your name and tell me about yourself? If family, please include.</p> | <p>Learn about participant</p> |
|--|--------------------------------|

Introductory Question: 5-10 min

| | |
|--|---|
| <p>2. How important was parental involvement to you when you were in school?</p> | <p>Q1: Home-School Overlapping Spheres of Influence (OSI) Q4: Giving voice to children over the age of 18</p> |
|--|---|

Transition Question 5-10 min

| | |
|---|--|
| <p>3. Describe the types of activities your parent(s) were involved in when you were in school?</p> <p>Probes: If so, in what manner?</p> | <p>Q1: Home-School (OSI) Q4: Giving voice to children over the age of 18.</p> |
|---|--|

Key Question: 5-10 min

| | |
|--|--|
| <p>4. What effect if any did parental involvement play on the grades or friends you had in school?</p> | <p>Q1: Home-School (OSI) Q4: Giving voice to children over the age of 18.</p> |
|--|--|

Key Question 5-10 min

| | |
|--|--|
| <p>5. Do you think your parents were able to attend school activities, volunteer and support the school as needed?</p> <p>Probes: If so, in what manner?</p> | <p>Q1: Home (OSI) Q3: Differences in parental involvement Q4: Giving voice to children over the age of 18.</p> |
|--|--|

Key Question 5-10 min

| | |
|--|---|
| <p>6. How important is the partnership of the school, home and community as one?</p> <p>Probes: If so, in what manner?</p> | <p>Q1: Home-School-Community (OSI) Q4: Giving Voice to children over the age of 18.</p> |
|--|---|

Key Question 5-10 min

| | |
|---|--|
| <p>7. Were there times when your parent (s) could not participate in school events?</p> <p>Probes: If so, in what manner?</p> | <p>Q4. Giving voice to children over the age of 18</p> |
|---|--|

Key Question 5-10 min

| | |
|--|---|
| <p>8. How do you think parental involvement was different for your parents / grandparents?</p> <p>Probes: If so, in what manner?</p> | <p>Q1: Home - School(OSI) Q3: Differences in parental involvement Q4: Giving voice to children over the age of 18</p> |
|--|---|

Key Question 5-10 min

| | |
|--|--|
| <p>8. What community activities were you involved in that supported parental involvement for your parents?</p> <p>Probes: If so, in what manner?</p> | <p>Q1: Home- Community (OSI) Q4: Giving voice to children over the age of 18</p> |
|--|--|

Key Question 5-10 min

| | |
|---|--|
| <p>9. What ethnicity differences did you notice in parental involvement in your school?</p> | <p>Q2: Diversity Q4: Giving voice to children over the age of 18</p> |
|---|--|

Ending question 5-10 min

| | |
|---|-------------------------|
| <p>9. Is there anything you wish to share with me about Parental involvement that I have not asked?</p> | <p>Q3: Giving voice</p> |
|---|-------------------------|

Appendix E
Questions for Focus Group

Grandparents

Date_____

Beginning time:_____ Ending time_____

Participants_____

Location_____

Questions:

1. What is parental involvement?

2. What differences do you see in parental involvement with families today?

3. Did the community you lived in play a role in your parental involvement?

4. What effect if any did parental involvement have on your children?

5. How can the school, families and community services support parental involvement?

Appendix F
Questions for Focus Group
Children

Date_____

Beginning time:_____ Ending time_____

Participants_____

Location_____

Questions:

1. What is parental involvement?

2. How are you involved in your child's school?

3. Do you think your involvement made a difference in how well your child's/children achieved in school?

4. What barriers were you faced with in the involvement of your child's/ children's education?

5. How can the school, families and community services support parental involvement?

Appendix G

Questions for Focus Group
Grandchildren

Date_____

Beginning time:_____ Ending time_____

Participants_____ Age_____

Location_____

Questions:

1. Were your parent(s) involved your education at school?

2. Do you feel that when your parents attended school events it helped you to in school?

3. What support systems (ex. Community programs, other family members) did your parents have in place to support parental involvement in your life?

4. Do you think that parental involvement really matters?

5. How can the school, families and community services support parental involvement?

Appendix H

| LEARNING Please select the response that best indicates the degree to which you learned the following as a result of your participation in your child's education through school involvement. | | | | Parental Involvement Spheres of Influence | APPLICATION Please select the response below that best indicates the degree to which you have APPLIED the following in your parental involvement with your child's school | | | |
|---|----------------------|---------------|---------------|--|---|---------------------|--------------|---------------|
| No Learning | Very Little Learning | Some Learning | Much Learning | | Applied Never | Applied Very Little | Applied Some | Applied Often |
| Sphere One Home | | | | | | | | |
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | I learned how to help my child with home work at home. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | I learned to provide specific activities for my child or children at home to support the school. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | I learned how send my child/ children to school read to learn. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | I learned how to encourage my child/children to do their best in school | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | I learned to practice the behavior I attend for my child/ children to have at school. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| Sphere Two School | | | | | | | | |
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | I learned about information on how to help parents with leadership roles in the school. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | I learned how to work with staff at the school to support parental involvement. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | I learned how to become more effective as a parent in the school. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | I learned that parental involvement is important for a good school. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| Sphere Three Community | | | | | | | | |
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | I learned that community support is needed for all schools. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | I learned that the parents have to work with the community to provide learning opportunities for children. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | I learned that the home, school and community must be a partnership to support parental involvement. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | I learned what community resources are available for me as a parent. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | I learned about the community of my child's/ children school. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |

| | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|--|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
|---|---|---|---|--|---|---|---|---|

Parental Involvement

Directions: For each learning outcome (middle column), please complete the learning and application columns on this and the back side of this page.

If you have additional comments about your involvement as a parent, please list these below.

Thank you taking time to complete this survey.

Appendix I

Data Codes

| | |
|--------------|---|
| GP1 | Grandmother one Martha Howard |
| GP2 | Grandmother two Nadine McNair |
| GP3 | Grandmother three Lula Rico |
| Child 1 | Child of grandmother 1-Lois Lane |
| Child 2 | Child of grandmother 2-Janet Marie Harriet |
| Child 3 | Child of grandmother 3-Carmen Baker |
| Grandchild 1 | Grandchild of grandmother 1 and child of child 1-Nat Lane |
| Grandchild 2 | Grandchild of grandmother 2 and child of child 2- Melanie Parrott |
| Grandchild 3 | Grandchild of grandmother 3 and child of child 3-Joy Granzel |

Interview analysis

Q- Questionnaire

VITA

Gustava Cooper-Baker was born, in Crossett, Arkansas, the daughter of the late George Cooper and Fannie B. Trotter-Cooper. She attended the public schools of Crossett, Arkansas and graduated from Thomas Williams Daniel High School. She received her B.S. degree in Elementary Education from A.M. & N. College (University Arkansas of Pine Bluff) Pine Bluff, Arkansas, a Masters of Education from the University of Arkansas-Fayetteville, Arkansas and an Education Specialist Degree from Central Missouri University (University of Central Missouri). Gustava is currently a candidate for the Doctor in Education program in Educational Leadership and Policy Analysis from the University of Missouri. Gustava has taught in several states, Iowa and Illinois. She has positions as classroom teacher, reading specialist, instructional assistant, and vice principal. She is currently employed by the Kansas City Missouri School District, as principal of George Washington Carver Elementary School.