EXPERIENCES OF PARENTS FORCED INTO EMERGENCY REMOTE INSTRUCTION DURING COVID-19

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DEDICATION

I dedicate this body of work to Woods, my partner in all things, and Phoebe, my love.

Through the two of you, I see who I was meant to be. Love you.

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First, I acknowledge God, who makes all things possible. To all the folks that listened to me, asked about this, prayed for me, or encouraged me in any way at all… thank you for it. We are not meant to do life alone. This especially includes my advisor, Dr. Dutton, for the time, encouragement, direction, and enthusiasm! Thank you! Also, to Dr. Snider for your time and introduction to the art and science of qualitative work. Thank you! And, to Dr. Hwang for your time and attention to detail, with grace. Thank you!

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BW, "We must be willing to let go of the life we planned so as to have the life that is waiting for us." Joseph Campbell

Woods, your encouragement carried me. You're the one I dream with and about, the only one I would and could have done this adventure with.

Phoebe- My "why" for everything. I love you madly.

ABSTRACT

J. MIA GUTIERREZ-WOODS

EXPERIENCES OF PARENTS FORCED INTO EMERGENCY REMOTE INSTRUCTION DURING COVID-19

DECEMBER 2022

The phenomenon of Emergency Remote Instruction (ERI) is not new, but in 2020 it was experienced at a historic scale. The purpose of this study was to examine the parent engagement experiences of parents with students in kindergarten through second grade during the COVID-19 school closings and their perceptions of their roles through the lenses of Joyce Epstein's parental involvement framework and Uri Bronfenbrenner's bioecological system's theory. Video recordings of the semi-structured interviews were captured, and transcripts were analyzed using three separate coding cycles. Through an interpretive phenomenological analysis (IPA), findings revealed two themes related to parent perceptions of roles they assumed during COVID-19 ERI and shifts in parent engagement approaches based on how schools implemented school closings. This study has implications for increasing parent engagement in schools, improving relationships between home and school, and developing a remote instruction method that incorporates the support of parents based on their feedback.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

APPENDICES

LIST OF FIGURES

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Parent engagement positively influences student achievement (Bond, 2019). The challenge has been to get and keep parents engaged, as engagement can differ in various settings (Mendez & Swick, 2018). Since challenges can occur in this process, parents and schools continue to work to overcome obstacles, such as schedule conflicts, self-efficacy, and differing cultural niches. No matter the obstacles, parents and schools have forged ahead into education with students top of mind and engagement as a foundational principle. For parents with students enrolled in Texas public elementary schools in March of 2020, these same parent engagement challenges were pushed front and center.

Prior to March of 2020, the role of the teacher and the role of the parent were clearly defined (Dong et al., 2020). In their dichotomous roles, teachers managed the responsibilities at school, whereas parents managed responsibilities at home. Teacher responsibilities included teaching, modifying curriculum to fit the needs of students, scaffolding to support individual learners, and acting as content experts and emotional support leaders. For parents of young learners, a typical school day included carpool drop-off and pick-up, signing the parent folder, reading a note about their student, and reviewing graded papers sent home. Unfortunately, this era has ended; the COVID-19 pandemic changed everything.

With the onset of the national crisis, parents were left in limbo, waiting to see when or if students would return to school. To address the gap, some schools created virtual learning options effortlessly, while others delivered instruction piecemeal. Some schools implemented a plan for the remainder of the school year, and some waited for local and state mandates.

Suddenly, parents were assigned the role of teacher regardless of their work schedule or availability, prior knowledge, educational background, or level of digital literacy (Garbe et al., 2020). COVID-19 did not introduce the topic of parent engagement; it did, however, create a sense of urgency for it because of the influence of parent engagement to the "success" of emergency remote learning.

Because of the pandemic, the role or the responsibilities of the parent shifted dramatically (Dong et al., 2020). The parent, already the primary caregiver, was now responsible for facilitating instruction. Depending on the student's age, facilitating was not enough, and the parent had to adopt the role of teacher. Furthermore, the teacher became a resource available via technology, and the parent was compelled to define or redefine parent engagement (Garbe et. al, 2020).

The American Psychological Association defines parent engagement as "parents and school staff working together to support and improve the learning, development, and health of children and adolescents" (2014). Gaps in the literature included what parent engagement looks like for e-learning, best practices for it as defined by the state of Texas or school districts, and specifically, emergency remote instruction (ERI). No Child Left Behind (2002) legislation included parent engagement as a critical piece to student success in school, and it carried over into (ESSA; 2015). Even with the federal legislature naming it as essential, the state of Texas neglected to include this engagement component in facilitating the transition from in-person or face-to-face learning to ERI during COVID-19 (Texas Education Agency [TEA], 2020).

Addressing these gaps creates a holistic approach to parent engagement. It establishes interconnectedness as foundational in the relationship between school and home, parent, and teacher (George et al., 2015). In general, parent engagement increases the likelihood of student

achievement, and parent engagement increases when families and schools collaborate (Shah et al., 2016).

Exploring ERI as a new setting or category for parent engagement is best done from a nested and holistic view. Bronfenbrenner's bioecological systems theory provides the lens to review the relationship between home and school and the influence of this relationship on the dynamics of ERI. The bioecological systems theory explores the different perspectives and the relationships between those perspectives, while the parental involvement framework focuses on the parents' experiences. Additionally, Epstein's (2011) parental involvement framework for six types of parental involvement, specifically parenting and learning at home, provides the construct for illuminating parents' experiences during ERI.

Theoretical Frameworks

This study employed principles of Bronfenbrenner's bioecological systems theory (2005) as well as Epstein's parental involvement framework (2011) to explore the experiences of parents forced into ERI. In a bioecological model, the individual is influenced by experiences, relationships, and environment, all within the context of a specific time or period. How a parent interacts with his or her child and those connected to their child depends on their development, their culture, experiences, and the context of the period the interaction occurs (Bronfenbrenner, 2005).

Complementing the bioecological model, Epstein's parental involvement framework outlines ways schools can create a partnership with parents to support parent engagement. When schools collaborate with parents as partners, the interactions have a positive influence on the student (Epstein, 2011).

Problem Statement

Several studies have documented the benefits of parent engagement on student success (Araque et al., 2017). Engagement was more critical than ever with the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic because young learners required so much support for remote learning. Although paradigms shift, the ability to adapt is an organic process. When Texas Governor Greg Abbott (Jackson, 2020) ordered school closings, students were forced to stay home while continuing instruction via technology, and that paradigm shift was forced instantly. Parents of young learners, especially students in grades kindergarten through second, received a crash course in e-learning, curricula, and pedagogy. Keeping students engaged without taking over the work became a delicate balance with no guidebook or training. The suddenness of the shift created an added responsibility to the role of the caregiver (Garbe et al., 2020). As a new phenomenon, exploring parent engagement within a forced ERI period illuminated the influence of the relationship between home and school.

Purpose Statement

The purpose of this study was to explore the experiences of parents whom the state of Texas subjected to the rigors of ERI to illuminate factors that influence parent engagement.

Research Questions

The following two questions guided this research study:

- What are parents' perceptions of their role in emergency remote instruction?
- What are the experiences of parents who participated in emergency remote instruction during school closures due to COVID-19?

Definition of Terms

Parent engagement is defined as parents and school staff working together to support staff working together to support and improve the learning, development, and health of children and adolescents (American Psychological Association, 2014).

Parental involvement is defined as parents' participation in their child's school as structured by schools (Fenton et al., 2017).

Emergency remote instruction is defined as the instruction offered online in response to a crisis or disaster (Hodges et al., 2020).

Young learners are defined as students of preprimary and primary school age (Khatib & Mellati, 2012).

Delimitations

This study's delimiters included the researcher's choice of Uri Bronfenbrenner's bioecological systems theory and Joyce Epstein's parental involvement framework as the lenses for the study. By using the bioecological systems theory, the researcher limited the scope to a view that schools and parents have a relationship and that they influence each other. By using Epstein's parental involvement framework, the researcher limited the scope to a view of using the types of involvement mentioned in the framework and by doing so excludes families or schools that do not fall into these involvement categories. Additionally, the criteria for participants served as delimitation. This limited the scope to families with young learners, which prompted generalizations about parent engagement.

Assumptions

The researcher assumed that the parents who participated in ERI experienced a new phenomenon, which in turn influenced parent engagement. The researcher assumed that

participants would share honest and, to the best of their ability, accurate accounts of their experiences.

Summary

The positive influence of parent engagement on student success is well documented and illustrates the value of the relationship between school and home. Prior to COVID-19, the relationships within the environment of the child's development were nested and defined. The global pandemic shifted the role of the parent and blurred lines between the relationships. Due to the unique nature of ERI, parents and schools were given a new context to consider. Through the lens of Bronfenbrenner's bioecological systems theory as the guide for the environments surrounding the individual and Epstein's parental involvement framework, which listed strategies to engage parents, this phenomenological study sought to understand how ERI influenced parent engagement as well as the relationship between family and home.

CHAPTER II

LITERATURE REVIEW

The year 2020 marked a new era in the world of education. Variations in public, private, and home-schooling systems for primary and secondary students have existed within the United States for nearly as long as it has been a republic. But the delineation of these educational systems—especially between classroom-based contexts versus those in the home—was previously well-defined (Davis, 2011). Curriculum planners produced lesson plans expressly for use in a classroom setting, written to be delivered by teachers with professional knowledge and experience in developmentally appropriate practices (Jeynes, 2007). Technology played a partial role as a platform for content delivery, but face-to-face instruction was the primary model for the young learner, as this type of interaction between teacher and student guides the direction of the lessons. The onset of the viral COVID-19 pandemic significantly blurred the lines between traditional classroom training and home-schooling (Kim & Asbury, 2020).

As the threat of COVID-19 spread across the globe, it altered our social interaction patterns, and it ultimately infiltrated our classrooms. Texas Governor Abbott issued an executive order that closed schools through May (Svitek, 2020), thus shifting schools to online learning (Snelling & Fingal, 2020). American educators had seemingly introduced a de facto hybrid of classroom learning with a home-school twist. Obstacles and concerns became topics of conversation; asynchronous versus synchronous delivery models became a debate; and the family dynamic was perceptibly changed (Garbe et al., 2020).

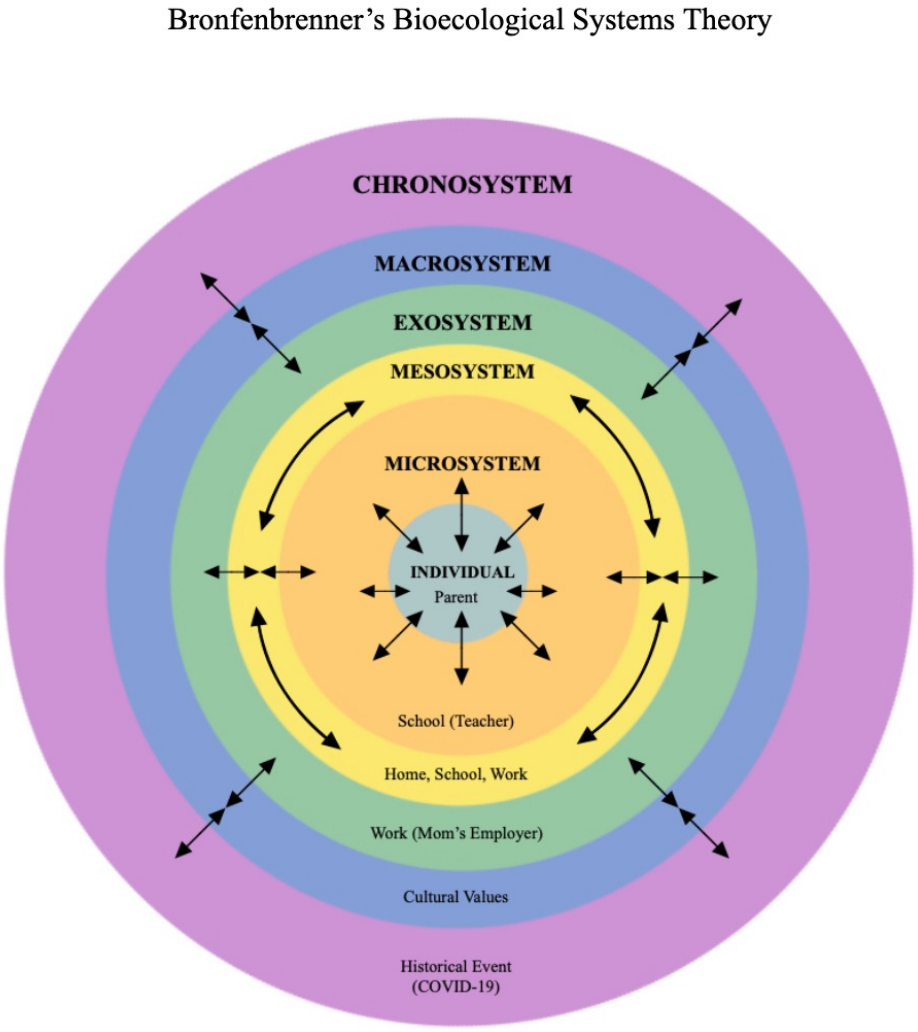
Bronfenbrenner's Bioecological Systems Theory

Bronfenbrenner's theory takes a broad and complex topic—human development—and presents it in nested layers to better understand the individual through the relationships between

that person and their direct/indirect settings (see Figure 1). Because of this interrelatedness, the environment's context is crucial to understanding the individual who sits at the system's center (Bronfenbrenner, 2005). The remaining five layers include the microsystem, mesosystem, exosystem, macrosystem, and chronosystem (Bronfenbrenner, 2005). While most of this study emphasized the first three layers of the model, all areas are applicable at some level and are thereby noteworthy. Each is described briefly below.

Figure 1

Bronfenbrenner's Bioecological Systems Theory



Note. This figure demonstrates the layers of the bioecological system's theory with the parent as the individual. Adapted from *Children and COVID-19: Understanding impact on the growth trajectory of an evolving generation,* by Haleemunnissa et al., 2021 (https://doi.org.10.1016.j.childyouth.2020.105754)

Individual

The individual, the center of the bioecological system, includes any attributes with which the person identifies, such as sex, race, age, health, etc. In the bioecological systems theory model, the individual must be examined within the context of his/her environment (Bronfenbrenner, 2005).

Microsystem

The microsystem is the layer that comprises the interaction of the immediate environments with the individual. Examples of this interaction include any environment that can be face-to-face, such as school, work, family, or church (Bronfenbrenner, 2005).

Mesosystem

The mesosystem layer refers to the interconnection between the microsystems (Bronfenbrenner, 2005). This is evident in the interaction between the family of a student enrolled in emergency remote learning and the teacher or school.

Exosystem

The exosystem layer takes indirect environments into account (Bronfenbrenner, 2005). An example of an indirect environments included the parents' employers.

Macrosystem

The macrosystem accounts for the individual's cultural, subcultural, and social context, such as customs, attitudes, ideologies, and laws (Bronfenbrenner, 2005). For example, if the familial culture values education, the behaviors to support this would be evident in the macrosystem. Other examples of the macrosystem include federal policies, such as ESSA (2015), or state guidelines, such as Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills (TEKS).

Chronosystem

The last or outermost layer is the chronosystem. This zone considers the role that time plays in development. A person's development and the development of the environment occur over the life course or within the context of this time, the period during the COVID-19 pandemic (Bronfenbrenner, 2005). For the parent, their chronosystem influences their relationship with technology and their perception of parent roles and teacher roles.

In summary, Bronfenbrenner's model linked parent engagement with the myriad of factors that influence adaptation and perception of the individual as a caregiver to their new role (Bond, 2019). The sudden shift in roles and responsibilities due to the pandemic represented a potential disruption in the ecosystem, challenging deeply rooted behaviors and/or notions of societal constructs.

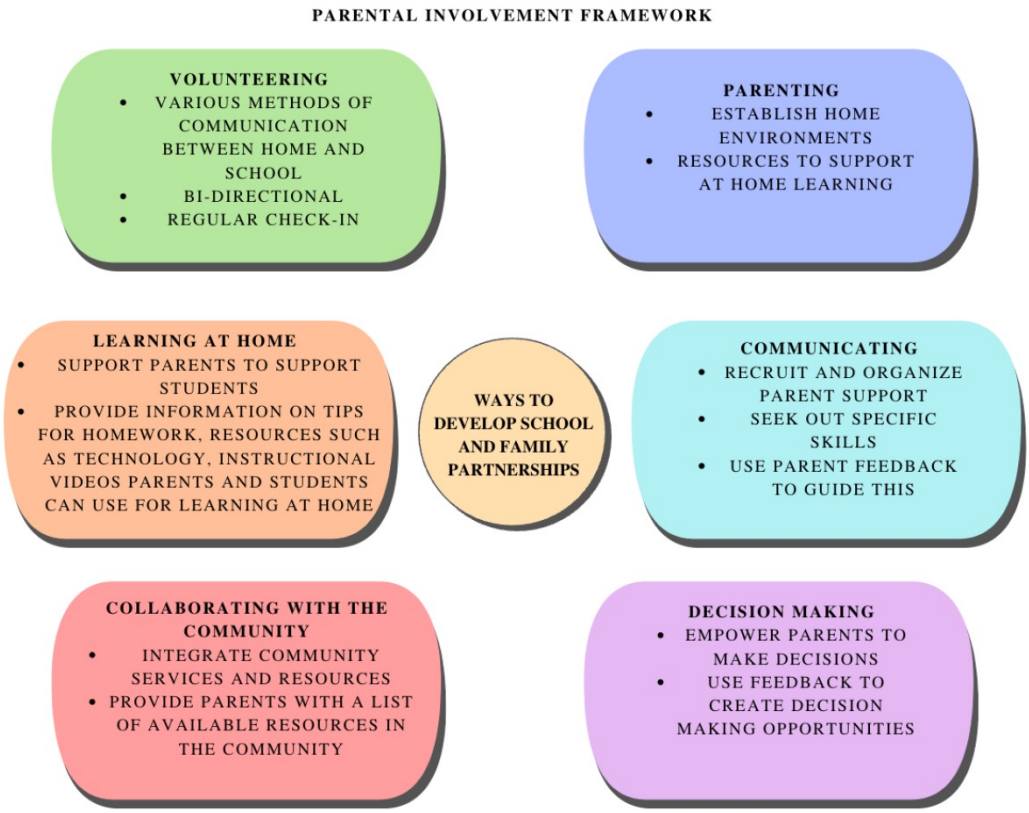
Because this study used Bronfenbrenner's framework to explore the experiences of parent engagement in emergency remote learning, the individual focus was the parent. While the child as a learner is significant to the model, the emphasis here remains with the parent as a supplemental instructor. The microsystem considered here was the school. Parental interactions with teachers primarily represent this system, but contacts with administrators and other institutional personnel are included as well. The relationship between the school and family served as the mesosystem in question. The overlap with the microsystem of the school was apparent. Still, the question of how these two institutions (family vs. school) engage one another on a more macro level gave this layer its nuance. The exosystem examined here includes the parents' employers. Given that all participants used public school as their form of childcare, their ability to balance work with teaching, and strategies they employed proved meaningful. The macrosystem and the chronosystem of this study varied due to the population interviewed.

Epstein's Parental Involvement Framework

The American Psychological Association defines parental engagement as "parents and school staff working together to support and improve the learning, development, and health of children and adolescents" (2014). This bioecological view placed Bronfenbrenner's model as the basis of parent engagement (Boulanger, 2019). Epstein's construct of parental engagement (2011) outlines six types of involvement that are critical for implementing a family and school partnership, categories that include parenting, communicating, volunteering, learning at home, decision making, and collaborating with the community (see Figure 2). The National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC, n.d.) also used these same six principles as their guide for family engagement best practices and extended these principles to include the use of technology as outlined in a joint statement with the Fred Rogers Center (Donahue, 2017). Overviews of Epstein's six types follow below.

Figure 2

Epstein's Parental Involvement Framework



Note. This demonstrates the six components of Epstein's Parental involvement framework. Adapted from *Contra la corriente: The role of Latino fathers in family-community engagement,* by Quinones & Klyama, 2021 (https://www.researchgate.net/publication/273060397_Contra_La_Corriente_The_Role_of_Latino_Fathers_in_Family-Community_Engagement)

Parenting

Parenting, the first type in Epstein's (2011) framework, refers to how families establish home environments to support their children as students. Parenting should include workshops or resources schools provide to equip parents to better support learning at each grade level.

Communicating

Communicating refers to communication from school to home and from home to school. These bidirectional conversations should include regular check-ins and clear information on policies, projects, and activities (Epstein, 2011).

Volunteering

Volunteering, the third type of involvement, refers to the recruitment and organization of parent help and support. In this model, volunteering can occur in any setting and take any form (Epstein, 2011).

Learning at Home

Learning at home, the fourth type of involvement refers to how parents are supported so they can support their learners. For the fourth type of involvement, Epstein (2011) suggested specific activities to help students gain and strengthen skills while engaging parents in what they are doing at home. Parents need the purpose of the activities, an understanding of the skills required for the activities, and ways to help develop and improve those skills.

Decision Making

Decision making is the fifth type of involvement in Epstein's (2011) framework and refers to how parents are included in decisions related to school. This area should include topics that encourage parent participation, such as curriculum.

Collaborating With the Community

Collaborating with the community, the sixth and final type of involvement in Epstein's (2011) framework, refers to the integration of resources and services from the community to strengthen the relationships between school and home. This can include connecting families with additional opportunities such as fine arts or mentorship programs. Reece et al. (2013) revealed

how a neighborhood-based collaboration increased the relationship between school and the community and positively strengthened parent engagement in situations where income, work schedules, and low levels of self-efficacy served as obstacles to engagement.

Parents' Role in Helping Learners at Home

In this framework, Epstein's (2011) fourth type of involvement, learning at home, refers to homework, work assigned from a teacher to the student to be done outside of class time. In a traditional model, students did the homework alone (Epstein, 2011). In Epstein's framework, homework is redefined to be more interactive with others. Teachers wrote lesson plans with developmentally appropriate practices as their guide. Parents were provided with tools such as directions for the assignments, calendars or timelines, and technology. The goal of Epstein's model is for parents and schools to work as partners. Epstein (2011) described learning at home as a type of involvement that directly influences student success. Auerbach (2012) introduced the concept of *authentic* partnerships as an extension of Epstein's model. For authentic partnership, families and schools have the resources needed to work collaboratively, understand common goals, and devise a plan together that benefits the development and success of the student. A suggestion from Epstein (2011) was for tools to include information relevant to all subjects studied in school and ways to support that learning using developmentally appropriate practices. This knowledge supports parents so they can better support their learners at home. It offers insight into the goal of the lessons and provides a reference on how to assist students while acquiring those skills. Epstein (2011) also redefined "help" at home. Help includes guiding, monitoring, and discussing but not "teaching" school subjects.

Parent Engagement and Student Achievement

Auerbach (2012) referred to the positive link between student achievement and parent engagement as common knowledge. Education policies, such as ESSA (2015), include school requirements to engage with parents to support students. When schools and parents work together, they increase their ability to assist students in meeting their educational goals (Docherty et al., 2018). This interaction may occur in different settings, such as home, school, and community (Mendez & Swick, 2018), so context acuity is essential for educators.

Evidence of parent engagement and student achievement can be seen in all ages. Shah et al. (2016) found that parent engagement, specifically parental monitoring and communication between parents and their middle school child during homework time, has shown to be significant indicators of academic achievement. Additionally, they added that parent communication with their child's teachers positively influences student achievement.

Another illustration of the link between parent engagement and student achievement is in a study by Barnett et al. (2020), where early childhood education centers' parent engagement practices were linked to greater parent engagement with their child at school and home, which was associated with increased school readiness. When schools engaged with parents in ways such as sharing information about the student or ways to support the student, parents were more involved with the school and more engaged with their children's activities at home and school. This increase in engagement proved to be an indicator of increased school readiness. Borup (2016) also illustrated the importance of parent engagement with students enrolled in a cyber high school. When parents were engaged, they supported their students in a variety of ways, including, managing or organizing schedules, monitoring or motivating students, or teaching.

Parent engagement in early education sets the stage for student achievement in later years. Gangolu (2019) explored the influence of parental involvement on student personal adjustment as predictors of student achievement at the high school level. When parents were involved and engaged early in their child's education, as early as the preschool years, students had a positive sense of personal adjustment (submissiveness-assertiveness). When parents engaged in ways such as communicating about the school, monitoring work, and encouraging work, students were more confident and assertive in expressing feelings and needs and gaining resources needed for success. The more involved parents are in their children's education, the higher their academic performance (Gangolu, 2019).

Even in populations with low achievement, parent engagement can be the catalyst for change. Fenton et al. (2017) first made a distinction between involvement and engagement because engagement "helps place parents in an empowering position" (p. 213). They further discussed how this approach established trust with parents and led parents to take a more collaborative approach with schools.

This interconnectedness between parents and schools illustrated Bronfenbrenner's idea of the mesosystem layer (Bronfenbrenner, 2005). The relationship between schools and parents has been seen under the scope of a traditional model, where students go to school, are taught by teachers, and return home to work independently. With COVID-19, the relationship changed. In-person ended, and a discussion on e-learning emerged.

Emergency Remote Instruction

On March 12, 2020, Prosper ISD, McKinney ISD, Celina ISD, and Frisco ISD, four school districts in Collin County, Texas, announced they were extending spring break over concerns about the novel coronavirus (Jackson, 2020). All in-person classes were suspended, and

all school events were postponed. By March 31, per Governor Abbot's executive order and from guidance from the American Red Cross (Svitek, 2020), only people performing essential duties needed to leave home, and school closings were extended to May 4. On April 17, the Texas governor announced that schools would remain closed for the remainder of the school year (Wiley & Lopez, 2020). With schools closed, superintendents were tasked with maintaining instructional continuity with the support of school staff and parents.

Public schools in Texas launched ERI—courses offered online in response to a crisis or disaster (Hodges et al., 2020). The urgency of the shift distinguished it from typical well-planned online learning experiences (Jan, 2020). To support the change, TEA provided opportunities for additional grants and launched a website to provide at-home learning resources targeted at teachers (TEA, 2020). TexasHomeLearning.org, the website launched by TEA (2020), included access to materials such as teacher guides, complete with TEKS guidelines by grade level or subject, technology support, and training. What was not included was information on how to engage parents to support learners, specifically young students, during this ERI. Though parents had access to this site, the language was geared toward teachers. For teachers to be effective in remote teaching during a pandemic, they had to rely heavily on Epstein's (2011) fourth type of involvement, learning at home. Emergency remote learning required a different pedagogical approach; one that involved a greater responsibility on parents to support that learning.

According to Greenway and Vamourek (2006), e-learning (remote learning) as we know it began with a virtual school that served as an extension of public school education with the CyberSchool Project in 1995. It was started by nine school district teachers in Eugene, Oregon, that sought to provide supplemental courses remotely. Teachers used technology and an asynchronous model to enhance the curriculum. Since then, there has been much discussion and

debate on the definition of e-learning. Depending on the author or audience in e-learning research, there is no common definition; the topic is viewed as a concept, a method, a tool, and an approach (Akorful & Abaidoo, 2015). For a holistic understanding of e-learning and its influence on parent engagement, a broader definition is in order.

Haythornthwait and Andrews (2007) offered the definition by the Higher Education Funding Council for England (HEFCE):

> [T]he use of technologies in learning opportunities, encompassing flexible learning as well as distance learning; and the use of information and communication technology as a communications and delivery tool, between individuals and groups, to support students and improve the management of learning. (p. 2)

More importantly, this definition acknowledges that learning is remote and uses technology as a method of distributing information. Remote or e-learning as an extension of public school means that the curriculum, designed by the school district, is delivered via technology in an asynchronous or synchronous method. Students are taught the lesson and complete assignments while at home. Texas teachers are responsible for implementing plans guided by the 2020 TEKS. During COVID-19 closures, teachers relied on parents to ensure the implementation of these plans.

Though evidence supports the link between student achievement and parent engagement (Kocayoruk, 2016), information on factors related to student achievement in a distance learning environment continues to evolve (DiPietro et al., 2008). In a discussion on teacher perceptions of parent engagement, Borup (2016) called for additional research on best practices for teachers to better support parent engagement as it is a positive indicator of virtual student success. With parents at home engaged as supporters of learners and now also facilitators, their engagement

must work to overcome any challenges in e-learning (Stites et al., 2021). They need to understand the purpose of the assignments, feel empowered by teachers and the school, and feel as though communication is bidirectional (Martinez & Haine-Schlagel, 2018).

In a review of K-12 virtual schools, Barbour and Reeves (2009) discovered that student challenges to this approach included individual motivation, time management skills, and technology proficiency. They reviewed three common methods, independent, asynchronous, and synchronous. They discovered limited research on the efficacy of all three approaches. During school closures, an asynchronous method was employed due to the sudden transition to remote learning. Further widening the gap in achievement in e-learning was technology, both access and proficiency (DiPietro et al., 2008). Again, the traditional curriculum has included technology, but the teaching and learning were meant to be face-to-face.

When faced with such a paradigm shift, there has been much discussion on what works best. Policymakers and educators were compelled to consider the tenets of quality e-learning. Furthermore, considerations had to be made for best practices specific to young learners. Borup et al. (2014) developed a framework to better understand adolescent online learning environments. In their review of literature on research and design in online communities, they discovered unique characteristics in an e-learning environment specific to the adolescent stage. In their search for research on pedagogy for K-12 virtual school learning, they recognized three constructs found in virtual higher education, student engagement, teacher engagement, and peer engagement. Considering the link between student success or achievement (Shah et al., 2016) and parent engagement, they added parent engagement as a fourth construct.

When the pandemic compelled schools to close their doors, the goal of instructional continuity focused on teacher engagement. Teachers posted lessons and videos to class pages,

hosted Zoom meetings, adjusted activities to be virtual, and worked to maintain the rapport previously established with students. According to Borup (2016), best practices for teachers include pedagogical knowledge of virtual learning, content knowledge, ways to build an online community safely, effective communication that supports the learners' success, and awareness of the diversity of students' academic needs. The teacher's role in e-learning includes previous requirements for traditional classroom teaching and digital literacy. Student and peer engagement relies on participation and interaction within the learning community. Best practices for parent engagement include supporting the young learner with encouragement, monitoring student progress, communication with teachers, and a clear understanding of the purpose of the assignments and expectations (Epstein, 2011).

Though ESSA (2015) continued the push for parent engagement in education at every level (TEA, 2020), COVID-19's suddenness prompted policymakers in education to rethink a pedagogical approach to quickly adapt to the new teaching environment. Unfortunately, the emphasis was on teachers and delivery, with some focus on student engagement. The obvious shift in the role for parents from supporters of young e-learners to facilitators of young e-learners meant parents needed different support from schools (Bates et al., 2021). Older, more experienced students tasked with taking their instruction online may have been an easy enough shift, depending on age and ability, but young learners new to school required more support. For parents to adapt their engagement, they needed a tool to support their young learners (Dong et al., 2020). Best practices suggested for online learning include tools to engage with teachers (DiPietro et al. 2008). Technology served as the medium between parent and teacher and teacher and student. During a pandemic, technology will be more critical than ever for students to continue their education (Almaiah et al., 2020).

TEA (2019) technology standards for kindergarten through second grade set goals for students to gain digital literacy knowledge. Teachers were to teach students to use the language, software knowledge, and navigate as digital citizens safely. Wang and Xing's (2018) definition of digital citizenship emphasized appropriate, responsible behavior with technology use. With ERI teachers were challenged with implementing formats that involved the use of the internet and technology devices without the face-to-face guidance and support of the teacher.

Though technology can enable students to make meaning in their assignments, it must be presented in a developmentally appropriate and safe way and should include a way to involve parents (Wang & Xing, 2018). Teachers can use technology to engage parents so they can engage students. With technology, teachers can engage with parents in ways such as sharing information, providing the purpose of the assignment, and demonstrating how concepts are taught, along with the rationale behind it (Epstein, 2011). If parents are engaged, their involvement increases, and they are more likely to keep students engaged (Kocayoruk, 2016). Keeping students engaged in a virtual world falls on the teacher and the person supporting that learner at home.

The parent becomes a resource for the student and the teacher. The teacher becomes a resource for the parent and student. This bidirectional relationship between work and home via technology is the only way to support the young learner in an ERI situation. Technology serves as a bridge between school and home contexts when parents are involved in digital assignments (Paiva et al., 2017).

This change in pedagogy was long overdue. Pedagogy does not change overnight; teachers and parents must be supported to make that shift. Evidence can be presented to support the benefits of this change in approach (Jan, 2020). Teachers can begin adapting the current

curriculum to different methods incorporating technology to communicate and involve the parent in a supporting role (Olmstead, 2013). Understanding the needs of e-learners will positively serve parents in their role as a supporter. Almaiah et al. (2020) noted the disagreement about challenges or factors determining successful e-learning systems as a gap in the knowledge or understanding of e-learning.

Pedagogy has evolved with and because of COVID-19 and e-learning. This change signaled a shift in parent engagement. Parent engagement is critical for students to succeed, and for that to continue, the role of supporters will need to adapt, and it should include healthy and safe ways to use technology to support these young learners and their parents. Teachers will play a role in this transition for parents from caregiver to teacher/facilitator (Borup, 2016). Without training or enthusiasm for online learning, parents will need new ways and more support to engage their young learners (Dong et al., 2020). This interconnection between home and school is more critical than ever.

Summary

The onset of the COVID-19 pandemic in early 2020 set the tone globally for adaptations in lifestyles and notably altered the world of education in the US and beyond. That same year, the spring break extensions of school districts within the state of Texas set the basis for maintaining instructional continuity via ERI, facilitated by teachers without prior experience of any such phenomenon and through the engagement of parents who were caught off-guard. The consequences of that adjustment were widespread. This phenomenological study evaluated these impacts from the parents' perspective on whom these new responsibilities were hoisted. Using as a filter the nested layering model of Bronfenbrenner’s bioecological theory of human development—especially the first three layers of individual, microsystem, and mesosystem—and

Epstein's parental involvement framework—notably the fourth aspect of learning at home—the researcher set out to understand how ERI shaped the participant's understanding of their new place in this paradigm shift. Given the known pedagogical influence of parent engagement, the effects of the pandemic signaled a significant shift in how young learners progress through the educational process. Undoubtedly adaptations will be in order, and the importance of the relationship between parent, student, teacher, and the educational institution will be magnified.

CHAPTER III

METHODOLOGY

Purpose of the Study

This phenomenological study aimed to describe the lived experiences of parents who participated in ERI for their young learners out of necessity during the COVID-19 crisis. This qualitative study employed semi-structured interviews and open-ended questions to encourage parents to describe the experiences of ERI regarding ways they engaged with their young learners and how interactions with the school supported the ERI.

Research Questions

- What are parents' perceptions of their role in Emergency Remote Instruction?
- What are the experiences of parents who participated in ERI during school closures due to COVID-19?

Research Design

This study employed an interpretative phenomenological analysis (IPA) approach. IPA is a detailed exploration of an experience with a dynamic research process where the researcher plays an active role (Tuffour, 2017). It is a two-stage interpretation of a particular experience used to explore the lived experiences of an individual by examining how that individual makes sense of their world within that context (Tuffour, 2017).

IPA was inspired by Edmund Husserl, who developed the phenomenological approach; Martin Heidegger, who extended that approach by adding a hermeneutic element; and Maurice Merleau-Ponty, who introduced the idea of embodiment to it (Tuffour, 2017). IPA's theoretical origins lie in phenomenology, idiography, and hermeneutics (Smith & Eatough, 2021). This integrative hermeneutic phenomenology was first introduced by Jonathon Smith (Tuffour, 2017).

While phenomenology seeks to understand the experience and idiography focuses on the individual or a single event, hermeneutics provides the interpretation. IPA is considered a double hermeneutic because there is the interpretation of the individual in the lived experience, as well as the interpretation the researcher makes of that individual's interpretation. Because IPA requires a smaller sample size, between 10 and 13 participants, saturation is reached quickly, and the researcher is afforded the opportunity to see similarities in the sample without being overwhelmed by the data (Smith & Eatough, 2021). An IPA approach allowed the researcher to immerse themselves in the data, thus becoming a tool to interpret it (Vagle, 2018).

Strengths in using this methodology include the active roles of the participant and researcher. Both the participant and researcher offer insight into the experience. The participants have a common experience that provides an understanding within a given context, while the researcher's domain knowledge and life experience further develop that context (Tuffour, 2017). Due to the relatively new use of IPA, specifically in disciplines outside of psychology, IPA includes some limitations, such as ambiguity in the phenomena. This could contribute to a limited perspective or an unrevealed cause of the experience (Smith & Eatough, 2021). IPA also lacks standardization (Tuffour, 2017).

An IPA approach likewise offers insight into the essence of the experience of a specific phenomenon (Creswell, 2016). The use of this approach emphasized the individual experience and variations between individuals (Vagle, 2018), and it created an opportunity to illuminate an experience within a natural context (Grossoehme, 2014). A phenomenological approach also allows for a richer description of the experience and offers a better understanding of an experience specific to that individual (Shiyanbola et al., 2018). Additionally, semi-structured interviews created space for the participants to share as much of the experience as possible.

Semi-structured interviews assumed some knowledge of the subject but sought to explore subjective knowledge (McIntosh & Morse, 2015). With semi-structured interviews, the participant had the privilege of insight into the experience, and they were the ones to illuminate it. This position left the interviewer in the role of listener and, when necessary, the ability to prompt further discussion (McIntosh & Morse, 2015).

Participants

The participants for this study were parents of elementary school-aged children, grades kindergarten through second, whose students were enrolled in public elementary schools in Texas during the school closings from March 2020 through May 2020 due to the COVID-19 pandemic. The sample included 13 parents with children enrolled in public elementary schools.

This sample size was appropriate for the study because the similarity of the population allowed the researcher to reach saturation in a short amount of time. In a study to operationalize and determine sample sizes, Guest et al. (2006) noted that major themes emerged as early as six interviews, and saturation was met within the first 12 interviews. Specifically, with interpretive phenomenological analysis, a smaller sample size offers a greater opportunity to capture the essence of the phenomena. Smith and Eatough (2021) asserted that to authentically describe and "do justice to the case" (p. 165), a sample size of one was best. However, for the rigor needed to establish trustworthiness for an academic setting, they created a guideline on sample size suggestions for IPA studies depending on degree level. For doctoral level work, specifically the dissertation, they suggested eight to 10 participants (Smith & Eatough, 2021). Given this validation, 13 participants served as an appropriate sample for this study, given its intended target and time.

Parents with children in kindergarten through second grade were included in the study based on the following criteria: 1) they must have been a parent whose child was enrolled in public school between August 2019 through December 2020, and 2) the child must have e-learned at home during the COVID-19 pandemic for a minimum of 2 months.

Participant Selection

Using existing employment contacts, I emailed families in school districts in Collin County that experienced school closings during COVID-19. The recruitment email explained the purpose of the study, the criteria for inclusion, and next steps (see Appendix A). Participants that replied to the recruitment email were contacted via email and sent an eligibility screener via Google link (see Appendix B). Once all criteria were met, participants received a demographic questionnaire (see Appendix C) via email. Qualifying participants were then contacted to schedule the interviews.

Setting

Due to in-person restrictions, interviews were conducted via Zoom, a web conferencing tool that contains a video and audio recording feature. Interviews were conducted from my private home office; participants were likewise encouraged to choose a location that afforded them privacy.

Protection of the Participants

Written consent was obtained prior to any meeting. Participants were advised in writing prior to any interviews of the right to refuse to answer any question, omit any part of their answer and end the interview at any time without any reason. They were also advised in writing that they could withdraw from the study anytime (see Appendix D).

One potential risk came in the form of the possibility of discomfort from sitting for an extended period. Participants were informed that they could take a break anytime. Emotional discomfort with questions asked posed another possible risk. Participants were advised that they could skip any question or stop at any time. Additionally, participants were provided with a list of resources in the consent form for participants needing to talk to a professional about the discomfort. An additional risk was the potential loss of confidentiality. Confidentiality was protected to the extent that is allowed by law. Anti-malware and antivirus software were updated and all data including recordings were stored on a password-protected personal laptop and password-protected Texas Woman's University (TWU) Google Drive. Recordings were deleted after transcription, and all data will be destroyed within 3 years after the study has finished. Yet another prospective risk was the possibility of internet video disruption. A waiting room and password were established, for the Zoom calls that restricted outside access during the interview. The loss of time served as the final risk considered here. An attempt was made to ensure all preparations were made to make the best use of time.

Data Sources

In a phenomenological approach, the researcher collects any data required to understand the phenomena (Grossoehme, 2014). The data sources for this study included those observations the researcher made during the interviews. I acted as an observer and collected data on any behavior detected, such as facial expressions, sounds, laughs, and/or hand gestures. Field notes also served as a data source. Any notes taken during the interview, the transcription of the interview, and reflexive writing about the process were likewise used as data sources.

Data Collection

I met with each of the participants separately for one interview. Meetings occurred online at a time that was convenient for participants. Each interview lasted a maximum of 90 minutes. At each interview the purpose of the study was explained at the onset of the meeting. The participants were advised that the interview was being recorded from the recording feature in Zoom and saved to my personal laptop. I asked the interview questions using a list of prewritten questions (see Appendix E), offered prompts to continue the discussion, and took notes of body language, including facial expressions and other actions observed during the interview. All sessions were recorded for transcription and coding (see Appendix F). At the end of the first interview, the next interview was scheduled for 2 weeks out. After completing the interview, the recording was uploaded to TWU's Panopto server for transcription (using the closed caption feature). The data from the closed caption feature was then uploaded into Atlas Ti for transcription and coding. I kept a reflexive journal for the duration of the study. Each step taken in data collection and analysis were documented in an audit log (see Appendix G). Using a holistic coding approach, as defined by Onwuegbuzie et al. (2016), responses were analyzed, and I created annotated notes used to identify phrases.

During the second cycle of coding, an axial coding method was employed to develop categories by grouping and sorting the revealed phrases (Storey, 2021). Participants whose responses fell into outlying categories were selected to participate in a second interview. A third cycle of coding using pattern coding was conducted to generate major themes for analysis (Onwuegbuzie et al., 2016).

After each cycle of coding, I made notes on additional questions to ask or made notes on data to clarify in follow-up interviews for the purpose of member checking. This process helped

to confirm my interpretation of the data while informally assessing how the answer varied (Candela, 2019).

Additionally, I engaged in debriefing sessions with my advisor following the interviews. These debriefings enhanced my ability as a data collector and offered immediate insight into the data (McMahon & Winch, 2018).

Data Analysis

Using the interpretive phenomenological approach, I conducted 90 minute interviews, recorded, and transcribed the interviews, and gathered field notes. Within this qualitative study, I followed stages of an interpretative phenomenological analysis as suggested by Smith and Eatough (2021). I read and reread the transcripts to gather a holistic view of the data, then reread the data using the frameworks as lenses for reflexivity, creating wide ranging notes, such as things observed, or words and phrases of interest (Storey, 2021). Those notes were kept in one column, and the researcher created another column to document descriptive themes and questions, or ideas formed during reflexive writing. I made use of an Excel spreadsheet for data analysis by organizing the data into categories (Terry, 2021). The data were then grouped into themes from Bronfenbrenner's bioecological systems theory (Bronfenbrenner, 2005) and Joyce Epstein's (2011) parental involvement framework. I linked themes and created thematic clusters by making connections between the themes. Once data were grouped into clusters, I coded them into groups to discern connections between the groups (Storey 2021). I produced a summary table of subordinate themes, themes, and participant quotations to create a narrative of the data (Storey, 2021).

Ensuring Rigor and Trustworthiness

I utilized Lincoln and Guba's evaluative criteria for ensuring trustworthiness (Schwandt et al., 2007), which involved establishing credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability. Schwandt et al. (2007) noted that credibility is gained through thick descriptions of what the participants shared and how they shared it. I captured a narrative through observation as well as listening. When participants were expressive with sighs or laughter or sounds of frustration, the researcher documented it as part of the account.

Additionally, crystallization and triangulation served to ensure credibility. Tracy and Hinrichs (2017) suggested multiple frameworks and researcher points of view. This study used two different frameworks, and the researcher's background as a teacher, parent, and administrator served as multiple points of view, as did the backgrounds of the participants. Additionally, the use of exemplar quotes served as a means of "showing" through dialogue versus "telling" (Tracy & Hinrichs, 2017). Lastly, multivocality was used as a method of credibility (Tracy & Hinrichs, 2017). I, along with several of the participants, shared similar views on parent engagement and ERI, yet, by introducing opposing views within the study, an additional perspective or voice was provided. I also engaged in member checking during the interviews to confirm the accuracy of responses. Because I provided the participants with my interpretation, each had the opportunity to confirm the accuracy of the account and revise or expound upon it. In a qualitative study (Santos et al., 2017), member checking clarified the researchers' findings and revealed information not observed.

How the topic resonated with the participants spoke to the transferability (Tracy & Hinrichs, 2017). Participants were eager to engage in an interview regarding the experience. They had different perspectives and were anxious to revisit that time via discussion and

welcomed the opportunity to process it. This study and its findings introduced areas in need of further research.

I expanded on Epstein's (2011) framework of parental involvement with the discussion of engagement and ERI. In Epstein's original work, ERI was not a context considered when outlining an approach with parents. Additionally, the phenomena of ERI during a global pandemic were foreign and, therefore significant. This context changed engagement between the parent and child, as well as engagement between parent and school. Confirming the relevance of the topic established worthiness (Alasuutari, 2010).

Lastly, I engaged in self-reflexivity throughout the study. I used reflexive journaling to bracket biases (Tufford & Newman, 2010) and an audit trail that detailed the methodology for data collection and analysis, which established trustworthiness (Carcary, 2021). Transparency regarding challenges in analysis, as well as biases and vulnerabilities, demonstrated sincerity in the analysis. I documented three to four pages of reflexive journals per participant where I disclosed my challenges, biases, and evaluation of the content. I also kept copious amounts of field notes regarding observable nonverbal communication from participants. These processes enabled me to use an authentic voice in analysis. I created an Excel worksheet to log all data collected in interviews, notes during the interviews, transcriptions, and reflexive writing. This allowed me to review all content over the course of the analysis, further ensuring rigor.

Instruments

Instruments for this study included a recruitment email, an eligibility questionnaire, a demographic questionnaire, an interview guide, Bronfenbrenner's bioecological system's theory

(2005), and Joyce Epstein's (2011) parental involvement framework as a guide for observing themes in the data and me, the researcher, as the interviewer.

Researcher as Instrument

My interest in the phenomenon of the global pandemic—which impacted all people, businesses, institutions, and systems—stems from working with families. When school districts were forced to close their doors and continue instruction remotely, which had not happened in the United States since 1937, when Chicago schools implemented remote instruction via radio (Foss, 2020), the topic became relevant to all families. Given prior academic interests (Master of Science in Family Studies with an emphasis on parent engagement), work experience with families, and managing a preschool that likewise went remote during the period in question, I prioritized understanding the families' experiences during the COVID–19 school closings.

I recruited from a pool of past and current families from my place of employment (a preschool), which added the benefit of previously established rapport. I was comfortable asking participants to reflect on that time and likewise confident that the participants would report when they needed to stop or take a break. Those previously established relationships led to relaxed and conversational interviews.

With a child experiencing ERI in a milestone year, I could readily relate to the experiences of new parents whose children were first-time students or in their milestone school years. I empathized with the losses the respondents spoke about, or regrets expressed about that time. As a parent, I also empathized with the notion of doing or being enough for one's child. I was comfortable asking parents to clarify or expand upon statements, without hesitation in reframing statements, interpreting comments, or asking for further explanation. Member

checking during the interviews further established credibility. The use of direct quotes in the findings addressed transferability.

During analysis, I worked through the lens of someone experienced in family studies and parent engagement and, as such, knew the terminology for experiences the parents described. At every stage of the process, I reflexively journaled to document experiences, reflect on preconceptions, and bracket those judgments. Specifically, I completed the first journal prior to the first interview in an attempt to bracket personal experiences from the experiences of the participants (Tufford & Newman, 2010). My audit trail consisted of rich descriptions of steps taken to validate conclusions from the interpretation of the data.

As a preschool director, former teacher, and doctoral student, I acknowledged entrance into the interview with a perspective of a parent but also someone with professional knowledge on the subject. I wrote about biases during the interview and analysis process as ways to bracket them throughout the process (Chan et al., 2013). I observed different styles, actions, and levels of parent engagement and considered the influence of engagement on students while continuously assessing areas of improvement from the vantage point of an administrator to better support parents. I attempted to get parents more engaged in their child's educational experience, considering that more information on the parental perspectives would help to serve them better.

I was experienced and trained as an interviewer. I had prior knowledge and experience from research performed during a technology camp at TWU. I was trained to journal bias prior to conducting interviews and journal after the interviews for bracketing. I was familiar with open-ended conversations to lengthen the interview (McCracken, 1988).

Ethical Considerations

I reminded participants that they did not have to participate, could stop at any time, or skip questions. The risks associated included a sense of vulnerability in discussing personal family dynamics with their school administrator. I minimized the risk by explaining that I, as the interviewer, would act as a researcher and not as an administrator of the school. Once the interview was transcribed, I deleted the recording. Each participant was given a pseudonym for the interview. The study had approval from the TWU Institutional Review Board (IRB) committee prior to the start of the study (see Appendix H).

Summary

This phenomenological study of the lived experiences of parents facilitating ERI during the COVID-19 school closing assisted the researcher in answering the following research questions:

- What are parents' perceptions of their role in Emergency Remote Instruction?
- What are the experiences of parents who participated in ERI during school closures due to COVID-19?

Using a purposive sample, I conducted semi-structured interviews with 13 participants and conducted follow-up interviews with six of the participants. I gathered data from the participants, imported the data into an excel spreadsheet, and coded and analyzed the data to determine themes in this study. I analyzed the data using IPA methods to capture the nature of the phenomena from the participant's perspective and my interpretation (Smith & Etough, 2021). With Bronfenbrenner's bioecological systems theory (2005) and Joyce Epstein's parental involvement framework (2011) as a lens, I investigated the relationship between school and home and the roles parents assumed to implement ERI during COVID-19.

CHAPTER IV

RESULTS

This phenomenological study aimed to explore parents' experiences in ERI during the COVID-19 school shutdown. Semi-structured interviews were conducted with parents from three different school districts in North Texas who had students enrolled in a Texas public school closed for in-person instruction during the COVID-19 pandemic in kindergarten through second grade. Interview questions focused on parent engagement experiences and parent roles during ERI.

This section discusses the data collection process, a description of the participants, an explanation of the data analysis method, and an exploration of themes related to the two research questions. Direct quotes from the participants further develop the narrative of the phenomena; however, identities remain anonymous through the use of code names.

Data Collection Procedure

I conducted 13 interviews with 13 participants, all via Zoom video conferencing due to COVID-19 in-person restrictions. Participants were contacted via email from a contact list from my place of employment, and each potential participant was invited to take part and sent a screening instrument to determine eligibility. I also sent each potential participant a consent form, and eligible participants additionally received a demographic questionnaire. Eligibility consisted of having at least one child enrolled in a Texas public school in kindergarten through second grade during the COVID-19 statewide school closings in 2020.

After submitting consent, each participant selected a date and time for their respective interview via email. All 13 participants participated in their scheduled interviews. I asked open-ended questions using a preset list as a guide. The interviews were approximately 90 minutes

long, and the respondents were reminded throughout the interview that they could end at any time or take a break. The interviews were recorded using the recording feature in Zoom and uploaded to Panopto, an asynchronous communication software, for transcription.

I watched and listened to each video recording three times. During the first viewing, I compared the transcription from Panopto to what was spoken by the participant. I used the second viewing to document the interviewee's body language and facial expressions. During the third viewing, I captured the essence of what was said in the session by taking notes and annotating the notes. Additionally, I played the video with audio while reading and glancing at the video and documented changes in behavior, inflection, and other observable cues.

For analysis, I performed in vivo coding for the first cycle. The researcher assigned codes to phrases related to parent engagement and perceived roles. After this assignment, the researcher reviewed the coded transcripts to examine the participants' engagement types and roles. The researcher documented descriptions of the codes and then categorized and grouped themes. Each research question yielded four themes.

Description of the Sample

The sample consisted of 13 participants, all females. The participants ranged in age from 31 to 45 (see Figure 3). Twelve participants were married, and one was divorced. Nine participants had three or more children, and one had one child. During the COVID-19 lockdown, seven participants worked from home, one of whom worked full-time. Six families had one or more students with a diagnosed learning difference. Nine participants had prior or current teaching experience (see Figure 4).

Figure 3

Age Range of Participants

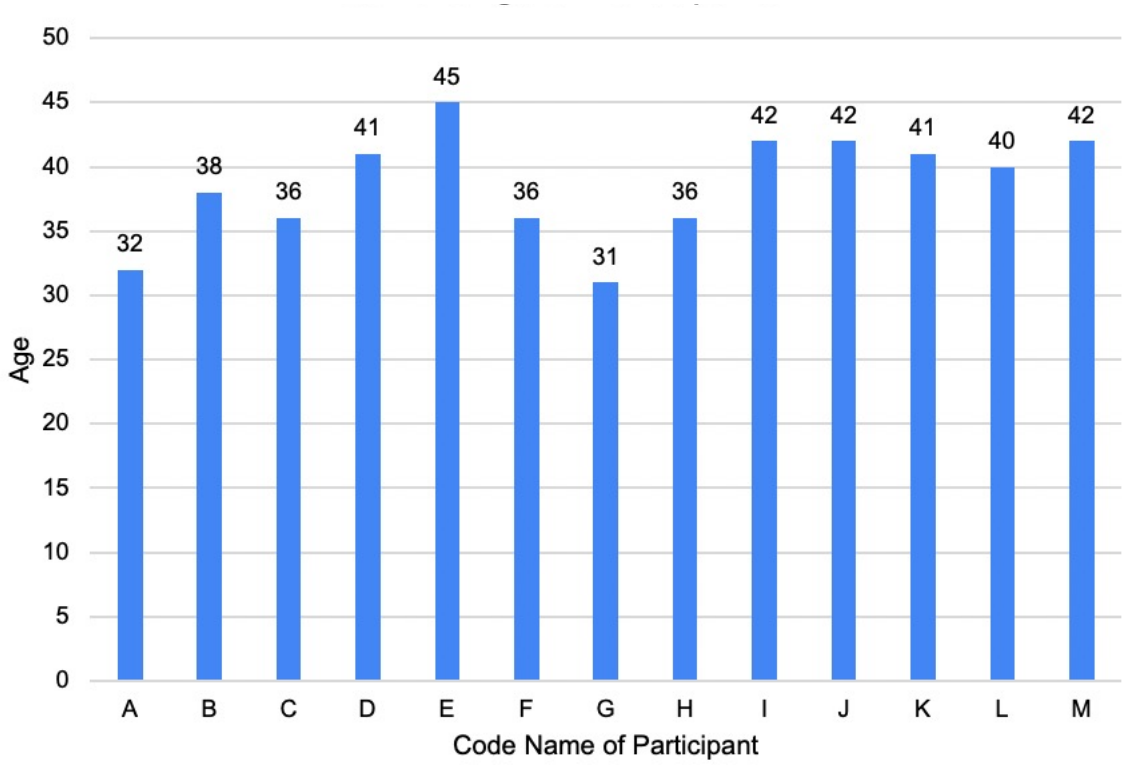
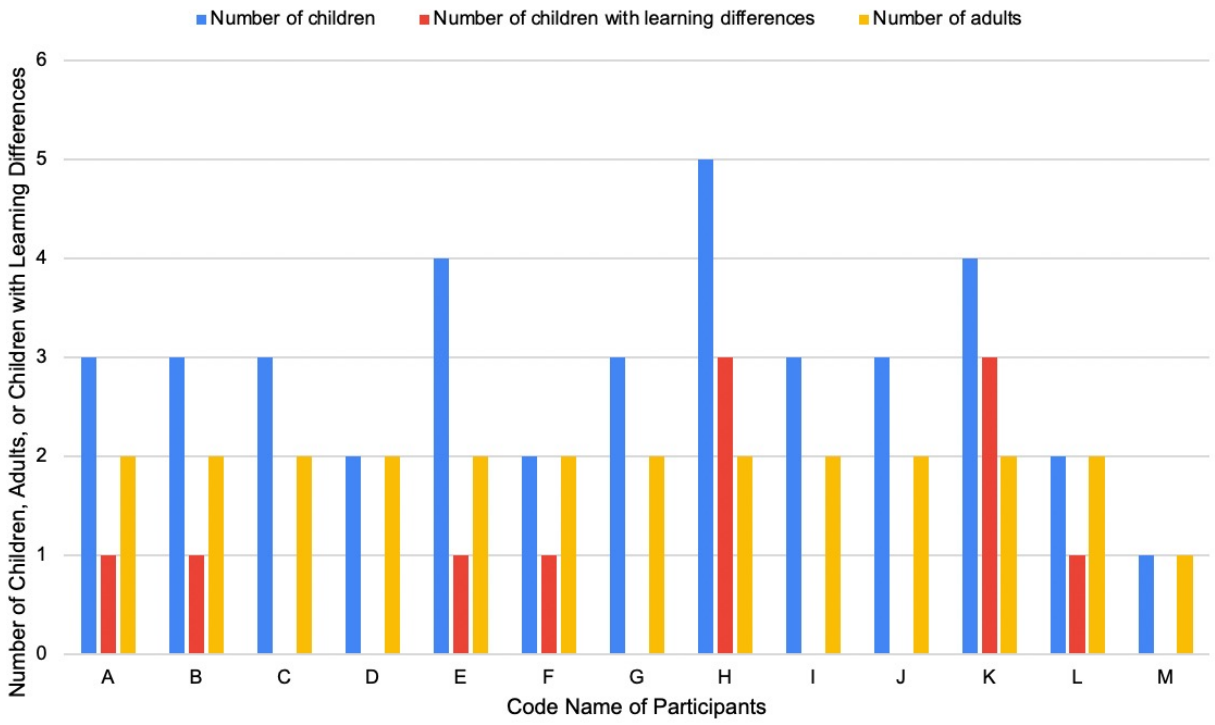


Figure 4

Number of Adults, Children, and Children With Learning Differences



Findings

I created four themes per research question after thoroughly analyzing the participants' responses. Themes related to RQ1 were categorically related to the various roles the parents saw themselves assuming during ERI, including 1) the teacher's role as it relates to the child's needs, 2) the perceived role of administrator, 3) the role of caregiver vs teacher, and 4) the role of employee vs teacher role. Specific themes relating to RQ2 centered on the engagement approach. These conceptual motifs included 1) influence of parent perceptions of engagement on approach, 2) influence of context on parent engagement, 3) parents' adaptations to the perceived needs of the child, and 4) how engagement changed depending on school support. Working through the

tensions in these respective roles and types of engagement proved prominent in the participants' assessments of their experience.

Parent Roles

RQ1: Theme 1: Teacher Role Depends on the Needs of the Child

The first predominant theme relating to roles indicates that the perceived role of the teacher depends upon the child's needs. This needs assessment generally fell into two buckets: those children who, for various reasons, their parents perceived they had diminished abilities; and children whose parents determined them to be more independently able. For parents with younger children who lacked the ability to read, write, or comprehend the material, their perceived role was that of a traditional teacher. They prepared materials, explained the lessons, filled in gaps in the material, developed modifications to the work, and performed anything else necessary for the child to attempt and complete the lesson. This adaptability was especially expressed by parents of students with a diagnosed learning difference:

> Parent C: He needed me completely. I had to take pictures of his assignments and upload them to the portal that we were working through. And there was just some things that kids don't think of, like lighting. 'You can't take it like that. The teacher can't read it.' So, there's just certain things I had to help him with. He couldn't read or follow the directions. He just needed me.
>
> Parent K: The second grader, though, I quickly realized that she needed a lot of handholding because even though she's good at things, reading directions and following all the steps and the way they had it laid out was super confusing. And I think that even more confusing was that she would like do it and then bring it to me to check and I would realize that she didn't do nearly what she was supposed to do.

Parent K emphasized how she had to set things up with technology, pointing out details of directions such as “uploading.”

For another parent, making connections was a form of “closing gaps” in the instruction:

> Parent E: And you just, I think with a child with learning disabilities, you’re going to have to be a little bit more involved. And so, I was just trying to piece together what I could for him.

Additionally, parents had to build time into a lesson for students with learning differences:

> Parent F: Mm-hmm. Yeah. Sometimes [my child] has more homework than others, and then with [my child] having dyslexia, it takes a lot longer to accomplish it. I just wanted to help her any way I could.
>
> Parent I: One of my children is dyslexic and has ADHD, and so this was not his forte at all.

Parents repeatedly discussed the level of needed support for a child with a learning difference, especially when they had other children for comparison:

> Parent I: A lot of just handholding, you walking him step by step, following up, making sure that what he said was done was actually done.

Parents with children who were more independently able in those areas took a more hands-off approach. Because they did not assume teacher responsibilities, they perceived their role as that of a parent. They kept their children accountable, supervised or checked on work, and acted as an additional resource needed to complete the work.

> Parent H: You know, and I am grateful, like she’s smart, like she wasn’t behind and, you know, so it made it a lot easier.

> Parent K: I know there are parents that have to hold their hands, but luckily, I don't have to do that. My kids…are on level, so it's just kind of check it at the end and be there for a question.

Although all parents reported some level of responsibility in completing their students' schoolwork, it varied based on the perceived needs of their child. It was evident that the more support a child needed, the more a parent took on the role of teacher.

RQ1: Theme 2: Administrator Role Depends on the Level of School Support

The second theme that emerged under this research question was that the perceived role of "the admin," or someone tasked with administrative duties related to ERI, was influenced by the level of school support received. Administrative duties included communicating with parents, supporting technology, creating class schedules, monitoring student success, and ensuring curriculum standards were met. When parents felt that communication was lacking or there was little access to teachers and the school, parents perceived the administrator role as a significant role to assume. Parents were eager to step in and perform the administrator role but expressed frustration with the lack of information provided by schools.

> Parent I: You would have to try to communicate with the teacher, who is also communicating with the other 20 some odd families. So, yeah, I just made the decision to move on or end it. I say the SPED part went away. Maybe I just stopped logging in. My child would see other kids didn't, and I didn't want to argue about why he had to, and they didn't. So, yeah, I probably ended it. It was easier.

Although most participants possessed prior teaching experience, there was a consensus that, at the onset of ERI, schools missed an opportunity to share expected outcomes or links to TEKS for each grade level.

In situations where technology was an obstacle, and they had little to no immediate access to the school, teachers, or other resources, they felt a stronger responsibility to provide administrative support to their students. If firewall protections on school issued laptops prevented access to "approved sites," uploading schoolwork was delayed or not possible. Or, if links to videos or lessons did not work, parents felt compelled to solve the problem and exercise decision making that could conflict with school standards or goals. They felt empowered to seek other technological sources to supplement what was provided.

> Parent G: I mean, they would give us a phone number saying, 'Here's technology support.' Did they respond very quickly? No. I just got our laptop or said skip it.

Parents recognized the obstacles with technology and felt it was their responsibility to overcome them.

> Parent L: Our district didn't have enough devices, so we had to just figure out how to share it or use a personal. But what about those that didn't have it? That's not right. Plus, the one they gave had blocks or whatever for websites, but it even blocked the websites they wanted us to use. That was a lot for the kids to figure out. And then, one of my kids knew how to get around it, so, that was weird to see.

Parents also expressed frustration with their respective school district's scheduling activities. They perceived negative impacts on their students' outcomes as a result:

> Parent B: Um, yeah, they posted the class schedule, and it was literally the same one from school. I figured out quickly he worked better in the afternoon, so I saved the hard stuff for later. That was tough, too, because at the beginning, like language arts' morning meeting was right at 8:00. He was still arguing about getting up and sat through that.

Then we wouldn't even do that work until lunch time. I get it. One day life is normal. Next day, Covid. I'm sure there was no time to make new schedules. But I did.

Additionally, the participants voiced frustration with their overall ability to monitor their children's progress, both in their alignment with curriculum standards and the child's individual grasp of the assigned material. The disconnect between the parent and the classroom teacher's methods/expectations served as a source of irritation:

> Parent K: I would review her work and see she missed something. I would try to go over that with her and she would be like, 'Mom, my teacher said that's ok. We are learning the steps and it's okay to add that.' I wasn't sure if that was true, or I didn't know what the point of the assignment was. It was hard to "check" the work when I don't know what the correct answer or the purpose, if you will, was.

From the parent perspective, the school was responsible for creating a new schedule, one that worked within a work-from-home setting, providing adequate communication about schoolwork, access to resources, as well as supplemental resources for students receiving additional services. Participants reported a lack of support in this area, attributing the gap to the rapid shift to ERI.

RQ1: Theme 3: Family Needs Determined Caregiver Role vs. Teacher Role

The third theme was that family needs and caregiving tasks were the determining factors between assuming the teacher role and the caregiver role. Participants paid particular attention to the areas of direct caregiving and by extension, housekeeping. In situations where one parent was absent, or there were multiple children in the home, and any of the children required more support or attention, that caregiving need took priority over teaching the other children. There

was much discussion about picking children to work with or help, especially for families with very young children.

> Parent M: It was huge to have another adult in the house at times because then I could take one kid and he could take another. And that meant that one didn't have to wait. Or I could feed the baby and the others still work and jump on Zoom. If I was alone, I really struggled. I, I just survived. I said, 'I want to do it, I want to help you, but brother is sick or crying' or whatever was happening.

Parents remained overwhelmed in situations where they perceived they had no choice. Or they questioned if the obvious choice was the best.

> Parent E: I had a three-year-old at home that needed lots of mommy time and attention, so I had Legos and coloring and things ready, but he needed me to engage with him, too, and be like present. It was hard. At the beginning the Zoom calls were at a set time and my younger would need something and didn't understand we had these people in our house, through a screen, but they couldn't wait, and he had to, and that was just hard. Yeah, it was tough. I didn't like that feeling. Having to choose and feeling like I always chose the other.

Most parents reported how they creatively approached meeting caregiving needs to ensure teaching time was available. Parents made efforts to prioritize teaching over specific caregiving tasks.

If parents had limited time, they also chose to teach over housekeeping. However, the deficit that that choice created led to a sense of discontent and inadequacy:

Parent J: The house was a disaster, I mean, everything was a disaster. After like six hours of teaching or managing a schedule, we would hit the end of the day and just, look around and be like, 'What happened?'

All participants described moments of feeling torn between children and added that it was not a new sensation. The added responsibility of teaching and the responsibility of preparing to teach made the choice more challenging and overwhelming. However, when the role of caregiving took priority over teaching (or even routine maintenance of the home), the parents all agreed that it was the only choice.

RQ1: Theme 4: Employment Demands Determined Employee Role vs. Teacher Role

The final theme from the interviews was that employment demands determined which role a parent would assume between the role of teacher and employee. For those who worked for outside employers, balancing meeting responsibilities at work and teaching their children became difficult to navigate. Work meetings could rarely be rescheduled, and financial obligations for the whole family had to take top priority. For those that did not work for an outside employer, the challenge still surfaced while they balanced teaching or trying to teach while maintaining a quiet work environment for a spouse. Those parents began to schedule walks or outside activities at the same time work meetings were scheduled, which meant having to miss school virtual meetings. Overwhelmingly, the consensus was that livelihood trumped all roles.

Parents already working from home had expectations that things would not change for them. This part was not new. The novel piece was working from home with school time happening in the same space. Moms reported that teaching children with the added pressure of performing in silence was challenging.

Parent E: At the time we were in a different house and his workspace was small, so I had to keep the children quiet so he could be on his work calls. And we don't know what is going to happen so we have to mind our Ps and Qs so he can keep that job. And he traveled before and now he was home all the time and used to working without us around so, yeah, that was super tough. He was more present, but on his schedule and with kids it's not a thing. Presence has to be on their schedule, or it just gets messy.

Parents that worked and assumed the responsibility of being the primary caregiver and/or teacher also felt work demands. Overall, the feeling was of being stretched too thin and having too many conflicting responsibilities. Ultimately, work demands outweighed other demands, especially given the level of uncertainty with the workforce and COVID.

Parent J: You're the entire crew–you do the cooking, cleaning and the washing and all of that. Plus, at the same time, I was like, I'm trying to divide like every, you know, I can only be split so many ways. And I was fortunate that my job was patient, but I couldn't not work. I couldn't just say, 'Oh my kids need whatever', it's not how it's done. I felt very guilty because I would sometimes be like, 'Ok, well, we can only do two hours today'. That was bad. I felt, I feel bad.

Other parents expressed that asking parents to juggle the demands of work and teaching was unrealistic and unmanageable.

Parent A: Over three weeks, I knew we could not do it while working at home and managing their schedules. Also, like it was literally every 20 to 30 minutes someone's alarm was going off to log back in. I just remember we would be working like on a call and alarms going off and yelling at kids to come back or stay on or get off so the other could get on, and your boss is like, 'Do you need a minute'? And we're like, 'No, it's

cool, we're just dying over here', with all the judgment of how bad we were doing it. Yeah, why would anyone think that could work? It's not like the '50s when every mom stays at home and just wears an apron or whatever. It sucked.

Work life balance became a more vital topic of discussion during this period. Parents reported feeling that they were in an impossible position. The teacher and school system were a vital part of the work life balance. Parents were used to working while children were at school working. Meshing the two worlds was a challenge. ERI puts parents in a state of constant adaptation and the impossible position of assuming multiple critical roles simultaneously.

Parent Experiences

These prior themes illuminated the foci for RQ2 involving engagement: What are the experiences of parents who participated in ERI during school closures due to COVID-19? Before a parent considered how or what to prioritize during ERI, they tapped into their prior knowledge about parent engagement. The parents' previous perceptions about parent engagement influenced how they approached their newfound roles.

RQ2: Theme 1: Parent Perceptions of Engagement Influence Approach

The first emergent engagement-related theme the respondents emphasized was that parent perceptions of engagement influence their approach. How they define parent engagement and how they view their role as a parent are based on culture, values, and what was taught to them (Torres & Hurtado-Vivas, 2011). The very idea of a parent engaging with their child sets expectations of what their relationship should look like and influenced expectations for the ERI period. The discussions revealed two types of approaches that could be categorized as hands-on and hands-off.

Participants provided background information on how they approached engagement prior to Covid, and that approach matched how they handled ERI. If a parent was "hands-on," those that thought engagement meant or looked like a high level of participation, being present, or intimately involved, then that was their initial approach during the pandemic:

> Parent C: I did appreciate seeing with my own eyes, getting to understand how hard the kids work in school and how important that relief is when they come home. That was good to see.

These participants took ERI as an opportunity to engage and get insight into the daily life of their student. Other parents took ERI as an opportunity to extend spring break or as optional busy work.

If the respondent thought engagement was creating an environment that was child led, fostered independence, and that they were to remain in the background, then that parent took a more hands off approach to ERI. If they were the type to receive information from school about the child, then during ERI they waited to be given information about the schoolwork:

> Parent A: When it first closed, we got nothing, so I was like, 'Ok, well, we'll just hang out here another week and I'll think of something to do, I guess.'

For parents that took a more hands-on approach, when work came with little to no instruction, they determined that it was their job to research how to teach it and supplement it in any way they saw fit. Parents that took a more supervisory or hands-off approach to parent engagement received the schoolwork and shared it directly with their students. If it did not include detailed instructions or tips on methodology, parents took that as a sign that the student had this information or did not need it.

RQ2: Theme 2: Parent Engagement Influenced by Context

Prior to this period, parent engagement was more about how they interacted with their child in the role of parent. When children were at home doing schoolwork, it was homework that was, theoretically, taught by the teacher prior to taking it home. Historically, the curriculum was designed with the idea that it would be delivered in a classroom by a teacher. In this new setting, the design was similar but with a big twist: it had to be delivered at home by a parent that may or may not be juggling other roles, may or may not have pedagogical knowledge, and/or may or may not feel that it was their responsibility to be teaching. During ERI, parents considered the context and teaching at home and determined how they would engage with their child.

The context of teaching at home varied when other responsibilities had to be considered, leading parents to adapt how they engaged. Some parents saw it as an opportunity and jumped in.

> Parent B: I did like having that new role with my son. I did like getting a real big peek into his education world, you know, even if it's not the same, but it was cool to get to spend some time with him that way as a mom and as a teacher.

Others adapted, even if reluctantly, by becoming what their child needed.

> Parent J: Yeah. I got to do school. I am not a teacher, but I did it. I didn't do it like teachers do it because I am the least patient person in the world. But what could we do?

Although parent perception influenced how they approached ERI, parent engagement adapted because of this new context. ERI introduced obstacles that students could not overcome without support from their parents. Before COVID, parents had an opportunity to work while children were at school, thus providing an environment that helped parents compartmentalize roles. ERI pushed parents into a situation where their roles were fluid. It removed any opportunity to transition between the roles, and parent engagement changed because of it.

RQ2: Theme 3: Parent Engagement Adapts to Perceived Needs of Child

No matter the initial view of parent engagement, or the context or time period, parent engagement was adapted to meet the needs of the child. If a parent felt their child needed more support with the schoolwork, such as having instructions read to them or logging in and out of applications, or typing up assignments, the parent matched the way they engaged to fit and meet the needs of that child. If the child was diagnosed with a learning difference, this situation influenced the way a parent engaged and increased the level of engagement. Parents with students with learning differences took a hands-on approach and sought partnerships with teachers and the school district to better support or serve their child. For them, parent engagement included more one-on-one time even at the expense of missing school scheduled meetings. For parents that had students that they perceived had fewer needs, they engaged in a different way, more hands off and had a lower level of engagement.

For a parent with a student new to school, the needs of the child directed how the parent engaged. If she felt there was a gap in her child's reading level and felt the school could not provide the resources because of the circumstance, that parent worked to close those gaps by securing resources of her own.

> Parent G: The way I was teaching it wasn't getting through to her, so I asked my sister, who teaches, for tips or like ways to do it for it to stick, so she could remember it.

Another mother had a practical concern to get the learning underway.

> Parent L: We got the laptop and I realized he couldn't use the pad and would move that cursor all over the place, so then he had both hands hitting stuff. And I thought, 'Man, that ain't gone work.' So I took two or, yeah, about two weeks where I learned him how to use the pad. He asked me to buy him a mouse and I said 'No.' I told him he could learn

it and that it would help him later. So, yeah, I had him sit on his hand and use the other for the pad and it worked. He got it. After that he could log on and use his Seesaw app and he did great.

The context of this new school life created constant opportunities for parents to adapt. Even parents that saw their role as supervisory had to engage more or differently when their students could not overcome an obstacle. All parents shared stories about adapting to meet the needs of their students. Some parents engaged early in ERI for the foundational steps, others engaged the length of ERI, but all adapted based on the needs of their children.

RQ2: Theme 4: Parent Engagement Will Change Depending on School Support

Parents that felt supported had stronger statements of self-efficacy in teaching and parent engagement than parents that did not. Parents that perceived strong communication between school and home, partnerships between school and home, felt better supported thus making them able to better engage with their students.

Parent I: When they sent the work out, for one kid I felt equipped and prepared, and we could do it. For the other, I needed help on how they would deliver it to him at school because of his disabilities and, nothing, so I felt completely ill-equipped because learning for him is hard. And so, I didn't know how to even try.

Though this parent was a willing participant, her level of engagement was low due to the lack of support. She looked to the school for direction and, after receiving none, was discouraged, which influenced her engagement.

For some parents, support included giving the students the tools necessary to do the work assigned.

Parent B: They just acted like the kids were going to jump on and login and do all the things. Meanwhile, he didn't know how to get on and then it was like I was supposed to leave him to it. He's so young. Yeah, they made a lot of assumptions. And I have high expectations, but they overestimated his abilities.

Parent D: I remember there were different passwords for everything, and I thought maybe my kid knew them or saved them to his Chromebook. He said he never logged in. That wasn't helpful. And I emailed asking for all these passwords and got something like, 'I sent it last week.'

Parents who perceived less communication or support expressed a struggle to engage with their child in a teaching setting. Time would get cut short from frustration or feelings of inadequacy on the parent's side. Parents that felt that they were not supported expressed feelings that the work was busy, pointless, and not conducive to furthering their child's education.

Parent M: Some, not all, but some or a lot of it felt like busy work. I think they assumed we couldn't figure out how to teach it or support it when they could have just asked. They could give the option. At times it felt like schools threw work out and basically didn't care if it got done, maybe because some of it was a repeat or review. Yeah, more communication on what the goals were and maybe how to meet them and we would have happily approached it like a team with the school. Yes.

Overall, the level of school support appeared to communicate how much of a partnership was expected from parents. When schools prioritized communication, resources, and staff access, parents felt encouraged to engage with their students and schoolwork. When they perceived a low level of support, they expressed that they struggled to engage with the schoolwork and their children in that setting.

Summary

The focus of this chapter was to present the findings of an interpretative phenomenological study of the lived experiences of parents that participated in ERI during the COVID-19 school closings relating to the two research questions posed:

- What are parents' perceptions of their role in Emergency Remote Instruction?
- What are the experiences of parents who participated in ERI during school closures due to COVID-19?

With these two questions as the foci of the respective exchanges, I conducted semi-structured interviews with parents of North Texas students, grades K-12, enrolled in a Texas public school whose doors were shuddered subsequent to the COVID-19 pandemic.

I facilitated 13 Zoom-enabled interviews with 13 female participants, each having slightly varied demographics (age, marital status, school district affiliation, etc.). COVID-19 protocols necessitated the video conferencing interview method. I watched and listened to each session three consecutive times to facilitate the encoding of keywords, the capture of body language, and ensure the accuracy of data collection.

The evaluation process produced four relevant themes per research question. For the first inquiry on roles, the initial emergent theme came in the form of the parent as teacher, specifically as that role relates to the child's needs. That theme produced two subcategories: children who, for various reasons, parents perceived them as having diminished abilities; and children whose parents determined them to be more independently able. The second theme for RQ1 was the respondents' adoption of the role of school administrator, those perceived duties including communication, technology support, class scheduling, monitoring student success, and ensuring curriculum standards were met. The third theme juxtaposes the role of caregiver with that of a

teacher, with the common perspective being that family needs take precedence. The final theme of the first research question contrasts the role of employee versus that of teacher with the tendency for livelihood to trump instruction.

The themes related to the second research question of parent engagement were equally forthcoming. The first theme spoke to the influence of the parent's perceptions of engagement on their approach to ERI. Respondents either presented a style of "hands-on" or "hands-off." The second theme emerged with the influence of context on the engagement model, with adaptability being key to teaching at home, given the considerations applicable to that environment. Thirdly for RQ2, the perceived needs of the child dictated the level of engagement, with diagnosed learning differences and the novelty of school rising as major influencers here. Finally, parents registered different levels of engagement based on the level of school support, presenting a relationship between that support offered and parental self-efficacy.

CHAPTER V

SUMMARY, DISCUSSION, & IMPLICATIONS

This qualitative study examined the experiences of 13 parents that participated in ERI with children within grades kindergarten through second during the COVID-19 school closing. Through interviews, parents shared their experiences with ERI, their perceived roles within that context, and their influence on their children's engagement. They discussed how they approached ERI and the experiences they shared with their families. Parents also completed a demographic questionnaire before the interviews.

Though school closings were not novel, this method of ERI was. Approximately 93% of households with school-age children reportedly participated in some form of distance learning during COVID-19 (U.S. Census Bureau, 2020). During this time, distance learning was sudden, coerced, and widespread. Parents were tasked with significant responsibility and had no time to prepare.

The purpose of this chapter is to discuss the findings of the study. This chapter includes an interpretation of the data as well as recommendations. It includes a review of the methodology used, a detailed description of the sample, a discussion of the findings within the context of the theoretical frameworks referenced in the study, a discussion of the strengths and limitations, and recommendations for further research.

Methodology

This qualitative study conducted interviews remotely using Zoom video conferencing. To encourage a conversation that allowed for more descriptive answers, the researcher asked open-ended questions and prompted participants along the way. The interviews were recorded using a recording option within Zoom, and that data was uploaded to Panopto, an asynchronous

communication software that enables users to retrieve transcriptions. The researcher used an IPA approach for analysis, allowing the researcher to interpret how participants made sense of the phenomena of ERI during a global pandemic (Pringle et al., 2011).

Description of the Sample

Participants included parents in North Texas with students enrolled in public school, grades kindergarten through second, during the COVID-19 school closings. Of the participants, all 13 were female, 12 were married, and nine of the interviewees had three or more children. In addition, six had a child with a diagnosed learning difference, nine had teaching experience, and seven worked from home. Participant ages ranged from 31 to 45, with an average age of 38. These added demographic factors contributed to the discussions of perceived roles and shifts in engagement during ERI, which connected the themes to the frameworks provided.

Comparison of the Findings

The findings in this study support the previous literature regarding the perceived roles of parents and perceived roles of those in education, as well as the theoretical framework of Bronfenbrenner's bioecological systems theory and Epstein's parental involvement framework. Prior to COVID-19, each participant in the child's educational world had a role to play. Parents were called to support schools by supporting the young learner at home. Teachers were tasked with developing students' abilities to learn. Schools were responsible for providing materials, tools, and methods for teaching as well as ways to engage parents. The findings of this study illustrated the importance of the roles needed for student academic success. Participants provided examples of how those roles were necessary for the success of the shift to ERI (Darling-Hammon & Hyler, 2020). The participants' discussion of the obstacles they faced in filling those roles provided the researcher with a description of how those roles should be effectively

executed. Their descriptions of shifting between roles also demonstrated the priority of those roles depending on the context (d'Orville, 2020).

The findings regarding parent engagement were also in agreement with the previous literature on engagement. The participants agreed that student success with ERI was not possible without the support of the parent. How much engagement or the type of engagement varied between parents, but there was a clear connection between perceived student success and parent engagement (Yang et al., 2021). Parents described situations where the age of the child or the ability of the child compelled them to adjust their engagement to better support the learning. Accessing technology, reading, and communicating with the teacher or help desk were examples of tasks that students could not execute with parent support. Furthermore, in situations where students were able to manage tasks associated with ERI, parents described maintaining engagement to ensure completion of the work or to ensure satisfactory work. For parents that appreciated the engagement, they described feelings of empowerment and increased confidence for when their students returned to face-to-face instruction.

The implications for the wider field of education are endless. As parents described roles that they were required to fill, they described gaps in those roles during COVID-19 and prior. They also expressed an interest in increased engagement and offered suggestions on how to improve the relationship between school and home. These discussions on perceived roles and the influence of environments of home and school, as well as the conversations around engagement, support the connection to the theoretical frameworks used to guide this study. The bioecological systems theory supported the meanings parents made about their roles and how they were interconnected. They acknowledged the importance of each role and environment and described the influences between them (Bratanoto et al., 2022). When they discussed engagement, they

were describing the components of Epstein's parental involvement framework and how that application guided them during engagement. Epstein's parental involvement framework served well as a guide through the discussion of student support during COVID-19 (Spear et al., 2021). Their insights also illuminated a need to add a seventh component, remote instruction, or an eighth, emergency remote instruction, to the six types of involvement. Schools did and continue to need direction on how to engage with their students in remote instruction settings, especially in an emergency setting (Novianti & Garzia, 2020).

Discussion of the Findings

This section reports the findings of this study as they relate to the research questions. The study consisted of two research questions:

RQ1: What are parents' perceptions of their role in Emergency Remote Instruction?

RQ2: What are the experiences of parents who participated in ERI during school closures due to COVID-19?

Using an interpretive phenomenological approach, each research question revealed four themes. Additionally, RQ1, regarding parent perceptions, connected to Bronfenbrenner's bioecological systems theory (Hamon & Smith, 2017), and RQ2, regarding parent engagement, connected to Epstein's parental involvement framework (Epstein, 2011).

Parents' Perceptions of Their Role in ERI

Parent perceptions of their roles shifted depending on the situation. The most prominent presented include the roles of teacher, administrator, caregiver, and employee. A summary of each finding is below.

RQ1: Theme 1: Teacher Role Depends on the Needs of the Child

The role of teacher depended on the needs of the child. How the parent perceived the needs of their child influenced how they approached the role of teacher. For these participants, the role of teacher included preparation, seeking additional resources, creating modifications, and exercising decision making authority on assignments.

Because the participants had students in kindergarten through 2nd grade, most of the respondents deemed the role of teacher necessary. However, two distinct approaches to this role presented themselves. The first of these approaches was framed as a traditional "teaching" role. This category was most apparent for those parents who regarded their child as requiring special attention, either due to age or diagnosed learning differences. Both attributes showed to be factors when parents assessed skill level, ability, concentration, and motivation. The younger learners needed a teacher to explain the lessons, support the work, answer questions and bridge gaps in the content. Likewise, those children with learning differences required dedicated attention to accommodate greater amounts of homework, extended study periods, etc.

For children that demonstrated greater independence, parents assumed a more hands-off posture in their approach to teaching, more akin to what could be called a traditional "parental" role. This perception included student accountability, supervision, and provision of resources on an as-needed basis. Nevertheless, despite the student's seeming level of independence, these parents also sensed an increased need for some type of teaching engagement for their child. In short, most students simply could not navigate remote instruction without some level of support; ERI highlighted the demands for pedagogical knowledge (Dong et al., 2020).

RQ1: Theme 2: Administrator Role Depends on the Level of School Support

Just as the need for a teacher was necessary for student support, so, too was the role of the school administrator. Parents were overwhelmed in the preparation required to teach from home. The administrator role helped create the learning environment and was dependent upon the level of support received by the school. Dos and Savas (2015) summarized the role as preparing the school for education and listed the support of teachers' planning and quickly resolving problems as just a few ways to achieve this. During ERI, parents assumed the role of teacher. As such, when schools poorly communicated plans, were inaccessible, or provided little to no technological support, failed to create consistent class schedules, and/or provided no guidance in assessing student success or curriculum standards adherence, parents took more initiative in the administrator role. This adaptation included changing plans or eliminating work, providing their own devices or means of technological access, shifting class periods to more optimal learning times of the day or making assumptions as to their child's progress.

Unanimously parents shared the same sentiment around schools not offering a timeline of the closing. Because there was no communication on how long ERI would last and because the decision was made week to week until mid-April, parents made decisions on how long to attempt to make the situation work. They made the decision on how important it was to work around the obstacles and keep students on track (George et al., 2015).

RQ1: Theme 3: Family Needs Determined Caregiver Role vs Teacher Role

The balance between the roles of caregiver and teacher was fluid and determined by the family's needs. Nine of the 13 participants had three or more children at home during ERI, children of school age or younger. For parents that perceived their role in ERI as teachers, they shared that, at times, teaching was not the priority when the needs of the other children were

more important. They attempted to keep the schedule provided by the teacher or school, but when other children that could not feed or care for themselves needed them to be a caregiver, that role took priority.

They also shared how providing emotional support to the child they were teaching or other children in the house also preempted the role of the teacher. This fluid back and forth shift, or simultaneous shift (Lutz, 2022), did not allow parents to take off one hat to put on another. Instead, parents described trying to wear multiple hats simultaneously, ultimately recognizing that state as an impossibility.

RQ1: Theme 4: Employment Demands Determined Employee Role vs Teacher Role

Seven of the participants had other jobs during the school closings. The struggle between balancing work outside and inside of the home was not new. But the participants felt that this effort was compounded by the added responsibility of teaching. For those working outside the home, learning to shift the work environment to fit within the home was similar to the transition the children experienced; spaces and schedules had to be created; schedules had to be coordinated; sacrifices had to be made.

Even those that worked from home prior to school closings found it difficult to balance a work schedule at home with the added responsibilities. Previously, those participants that worked from home arranged for meetings to take place during school hours. Because school was moved to home, a quick work call took more planning. Although this study focused on families with students in grades K-2nd, 12 of the 13 participants had three or more children, which meant three or more school schedules. As other studies have similarly indicated (e.g., Logan et al., 2021), parents felt that they should have been consulted for suggestions on how to make remote instruction possible. When asked about their experiences, Parent J described a “collision of

roles" that created anxiety and a situation that forced her to choose between the role of employee and parent or teacher. The demands of work remained even for those with understanding employers. Participants felt that because the entire state was experiencing school closings, employers appeared empathetic. However, since the duration of the school closings was unknown, the participants worked to maintain a separation of work life and home life which, at times, resulted in missed teaching opportunities.

Application to Bronfenbrenner's Bioecological Model

The group of themes of perceived roles and the shifts from the first research question aligns with Bronfenbrenner's bioecological systems theory. In this theory, relationships within the system are nested. The individual is influenced by the multi-levels of environments surrounding him/her. When a parent who represents one relationship within one layer is tasked with a role outside of their traditional domain, there is a disruption to the way the relationships interact within the environment. This rupture creates a shift in the bioecological system. School closings during COVID-19 meant that the interactions between the immediate and extended environments changed. These changed interactions included interactions with their children. Parents engaged differently with their children while they were assuming different roles (George et al., 2015).

Individual. For this study, the individual in the bioecological model is the parent, as the researcher was interested in parents' perceptions and their experiences during COVID-19. The participants shared their views on parenting at the beginning of the interviews. They were asked about how they approached parenting, priorities, where they got those ideas, and what it looked like in their home and outside of the home. Each parent expressed the importance of parenting and most considered the whole child. They expressed concern about academic achievement and

social interactions when thinking about the lockdown period. Their concerns were consistent with what they valued as parents (Misirli & Ergulec, 2021).

Microsystem. This layer consisted of the school and home. School districts implemented virtual learning, and the roles of the teacher and administrator were left to be filled by parents. For the home, the role of the caregiver was mentioned. When parents were forced into ERI, they assumed all three roles. The parents described the needs of younger children and ability as the reason for assuming the roles of teacher and administrator. They felt a responsibility to take over the teaching if they felt it was needed by their child. Even parents that expressed reluctance in assuming that role taught when they witnessed their child struggling. The participants all shared reasons for moving into the role of administrator. Ultimately, it was to allow their young learners a chance at success, which they felt was otherwise not possible due to age or ability (Dong et al., 2020).

Mesosystem. This layer is the interaction between the individual (parent) and the microsystem (teacher or family). Because ERI dictated that parents be both teacher and parent, this relationship had blurred boundaries. Twelve participants had more than one child, so being a teacher and parent simultaneously seemed impossible because it meant being more than one teacher and parent concurrently. There is no other person to interact with, leaving the roles overwhelming and, at times, vacant (Almaiah et al., 2020).

Exosystem. The exosystem included the parent's employer. When TEA and the State of Texas, mandated the school closings along with ERI, parents described the division they felt between what the state asked for and what their employer's required. When they viewed their role as an employee, they felt pulled to maintain the status quo at work while meeting all requirements for ERI. They described situations that felt impossible and overwhelming. All

parents had ideas they felt would have improved the situation and were frustrated that they were not part of the solution, especially since they saw themselves as the ones doing the work (Sonnenschein et al., 2021).

Macrosystem. The macrosystem considers the cultural views or ideologies that parents had prior to COVID-19 and during the lockdowns. Their beliefs on education, work, and parenting did not change during the lockdown. Those beliefs did, however, influence how they approached ERI and expected outcomes. Their view of what school looked like shaped their perception of ERI efficacy (Wyse et al., 2020).

Chronosystem. The chronosystem takes into account the historical context or period. For this study the historical event was mandatory ERI due to COVID-19 lockdown. All parents described how unique the situation was. They described feelings of fear, anxiety, and hopelessness during this time. They worried about the potential damage done to their children in all areas of development. They shared stories of heartache from missed opportunities, memories, and traditions. Parents described uncertainty about how their children would handle the pandemic long-term (Savitz-Romer et al., 2021).

Due to ERI, parents became parents and teachers. The two roles blended, changing the relationship between home and school. When employment moved home in addition to school, those relationships shifted yet again. This occurred within the context of a global pandemic through the lens of a preexisting cultural perspective. Parent engagement because of the global pandemic serves as a microcosm of the paradigm shift within the bioecological systems theory.

Experiences of Parents who Participated in ERI

The second research question regarding the parent engagement experiences during school closings also illuminated four themes. These motifs are noted as how perceptions of parent

engagement influence approach, how engagement is influenced by context, how engagement adapts to the perceived needs of the child, and how engagement changes based on school support. For this discussion, the participants were divided into two types of engagement: the collaborative group and the independent group. Recognizing that all fall within a range of the two types, no one participant was exactly collaborative but leaned toward that type; similarly, no one participant was exactly independent but tended toward that type.

RQ2: Theme 1: Parent Perceptions of Engagement Influence Approach

Parent engagement varies between parents (Gross et al., 2020). How a parent chooses to engage or interact with their child is based on previous experiences with their parents or guardians, cultural norms, values, expectations, goals, and more (Torres & Hortado-Vivas, 2011). That prior knowledge determined how parents received school closings. Again, with no duration mentioned until mid-April, parents were informed that school would shift from campus to home. The participants described what they felt about this news and their priorities.

The way parents approached ERI was influenced by their prior perceptions of engagement. The level of engagement with their children and teachers was the same when school was on campus or remote. Parents assigned tasks to themselves based on their perceived idea of engagement. Those previously involved with homework, communicating with the school, volunteering, and communicating with their children about school took this same "hands-on" approach to ERI. *Collaboratives* were active participants throughout the ERI school day as much as possible. These parents took a collaborative approach to school both before and during ERI.

The second group, *Independents*, were occasionally collaborative but took a more "hands-off" approach. They checked in as needed, would get involved if asked or saw something that required more attention, and wanted to be informed about their child regularly.

RQ2: Theme 2: Parent Engagement Influenced by Context

The context of teaching a child at home was new for these parents. No matter the type of parent or type of engagement, they sent their children to school, and someone else had the responsibility of introducing and implementing lessons. Someone else had the responsibility of closing the gaps. Even if teachers and parents worked together to help students meet milestones, the bulk of the responsibility fell on teachers. ERI changed that. Teachers no longer had direct access to their students. Prior to ERI, the parents' primary role was to be a parent. That role was broad enough, and now they added teaching. Participants reported that teaching their children was very different from helping with homework. Technology added an additional obstacle for parents unfamiliar with the requisite platforms.

Collaboratives wanted school from home to look like school at school so that the transition was easier on students. They wanted to devote the same energy to teaching that they had with homework or other parenting responsibilities. Independents wanted students to get something out of ERI but focused less on matching it to school. Both groups described the struggle of trying to teach material they were unfamiliar with and keeping students interested. Both groups said they had to change how they approached the teaching part. The parents shared that their interactions with their children were in response to their children's actions. These sentiments were similar to those found in other research on parents assisting students in remote instruction during COVID-19 (Sonnenschein et al., 2021), supporting the premise that engagement varied by context.

RQ2: Theme 3: Parent Engagement Adapts to Perceived Needs of Child

Similarly, the needs of each child varied, thus making engagement different between parents. Six participants had students with a diagnosed learning difference, and most had

students who were emergent readers or early fluent readers that required more support. None of the students were skilled in typing. Although all the students were familiar with technology at some level, the nuance of uploading assignments and submitting quality or legible work was an added obstacle.

Regardless of the child's needs, each participant adapted to meet that need. For parents that were the collaboratives, they continued to engage in similar ways, but with multiple children at home, they adjusted the approach based on the need of the child. For example, one participant had three students, one kindergartner who did not read. This parent worked to continue communication with the teachers of all her kids and sit in on calls when possible, but she found herself leaving her older children to work independently more often to spend more time with the younger child. This parent decreased her level of engagement with the older children to meet the increased needs of the kindergartner. The child's age influenced the demands and expectations in remote instruction (Sonnenschein et al., 2021).

Another participant had two children. The older child was diagnosed with dyslexia, and the younger one was an emergent reader. This parent found herself spending more time with the older child to keep his frustration level low, allowing him to finish his schoolwork. She set up the younger child to work independently as much as possible, but ultimately, she felt she left him too unsupported. She perceived the need for the older student was greater because she was unsure if he could catch up later without her support. She was confident the younger child would not fall too far behind without her. She shared that when her children were physically at school, she could split her time and support each child better. She explained she had to adjust based on their needs, and sometimes one child had a greater need than the other. This was a similar

sentiment from all participants. If students could keep up, parents pulled back and gave to other areas.

RQ2: Theme 4: Parent Engagement Will Change Depending on School Support

All participants commented on the level of support received from schools, specifically teachers. School support promoted by a positive relationship between school and home fosters student success (Wyse et al., 2020). When assignments were uploaded in advance, communication went out early, and teachers were accessible, the parents felt better equipped to teach. The participants described frustration when they felt they had to learn what to do while teaching it. They also expressed appreciation when websites were accessible or when teachers communicated flexibility in due dates. Some parents said they received reassurance that students would be given grace on due dates or completed work, which alleviated anxiety during the school day. When parents perceived little to no support, they described being overwhelmed and overtasked. Collaboratives worked harder to engage with students by adding assignments, seeking out additional devices or resources, or even taking over assignments. Independents either took over the assignment or told their children it was okay not to complete it. At times, they found they engaged less if the schools were not supportive enough. Overwhelmingly, school support contributed to feelings of self-efficacy, which empowered parents to engage with their students in this setting (Bhamani et al., 2020).

Linking to Epstein's Parental Involvement Framework

These four themes align with Epstein's parental involvement framework, a model for schools to increase parent engagement. In Epstein's framework, there are six types of parental involvement, including parenting, communicating, volunteering, learning at home, decision

making, and collaborating with the community serve as ways for parents to engage with their children.

Parenting. In Epstein's first type of involvement, parenting, the focus is to establish home environments to support children as students. Parents are encouraged to create routines, workspaces, and processes for homework. For Collaboratives, this meant establishing a designated workspace, creating a schedule, regular communication with teachers, and a strong presence when supporting schoolwork during the day. Those participants continued the level of engagement and adapted the way they did it to fit this new context (Gross et al., 2020).

Independents took a check-in approach. When schools gave the first notice of ERI, those parents waited to see how long it would last and engaged by keeping their children busy or entertained. If they had the required materials and the assignment worked well, that assignment would be completed. Collaboratives described a more positive sense of self-efficacy than the independents. That sense of self-efficacy guided them throughout the closings (Alamaiah et al., 2020).

Communicating. Epstein's second type of involvement, communicating, was also visible within this theme. In Epstein's model, communicating refers to effective bilateral forms of communication regarding student progress. Collaboratives described regular emails, texts, or phone calls from teachers to monitor student progress as well as their teaching progress. Collaboratives viewed schoolwork as a means of communication and used it to teach their children. They asked their student to show them how the teacher did it to understand the teacher's method. They sat in on or nearby Zoom sessions to hear the language used by the teacher, as well as the discussions from the students, to understand the perspective of the

assignment and goals. Modeling the language or walking through the problems communicated technique, which was a form of communication.

Independents communicated with teachers when necessary or when they felt they had an issue that could not be resolved. They made sure their students logged in to calls but did not monitor. If they helped their child with schoolwork and did not understand the method used, Independents reverted to a method they learned as a child.

Volunteering. Parents are recruited and organized based on the specific needs of the student, as well as the skills, talents, and availability of parents. The participants reported that during ERI, schools did not encourage them to take over the teaching. One parent reported that some of the work felt like busy work, so she supplemented it. Another participant suggested that requiring parental supervision for Zoom calls between students and teachers would have increased the quality of those calls. They also mentioned that teachers could have asked parents to monitor to take turns monitoring those calls to support the teacher. All participants acknowledged that the lack of volunteer requests was probably because teachers knew parents had to continue working. Collaboratives expected a call to volunteer and to be more engaged. When it did not happen, they improvised by participating in the Zoom calls or supplementing work (Garbe et al., 2020).

Homework. In Epstein's framework (2011), learning from home was meant as a supportive piece to the regular school day. It included sharing skills needed for an assignment or steps on how to monitor homework. During ERI, learning from home took on a whole new meaning. One parent shared that her child's teacher shared tips and techniques on methods they used in class. She found this helpful and encouraged her to engage with her child as a teacher. One participant reported that the specials teacher posted various options for P.E. activities or art.

This parent described how she would use some of the ideas or plans and sometimes didn't need to because her family had done something that was better suited for her family. She stated that it was helpful to access the activities that communicated the goals or objectives. She was able to keep that in mind when planning things for her whole family (Bates et al., 2021). Collaboratives used the work as an opportunity to teach and maximize what their child could get out of ERI. Independents viewed the work as a suggestion or practice material to keep their children on track.

Decision Making. Parents are encouraged to join organizations that assist in decision-making for school policies or plans (Raguindin et al., 2021). Both the Collaboratives and Independents repeatedly reported feeling empowered to make decisions for their children. According to Epstein's model, both teachers and school representatives should encourage parents to do so (Epstein, 2011). Parents are the most valuable representative of the child's environment, and their involvement aids schools in making decisions that are best suited for their students. With ERI, numerous unknowns required parents to make decisions, whether they wanted to or not. They had to make decisions on completing schoolwork, skipping assignments, schedule changes, and what they could attempt or complete in a day. The Collaboratives welcomed this opportunity and described it as a positive experience. The Independents felt that they had to make those decisions because they had other responsibilities hanging over them. They saw decision making as one more thing they had to tackle with ERI.

Collaborating With the Community. Community collaboration strengthens school programs and family practices (Raguindin et al., 2021). This includes providing information on social support for students or activities for students to acquire new skills. Because COVID was new and so much was unknown, some participants kept their community bubble small, meaning

social interactions were limited to the immediate family or those living in their home. There were other examples of creating bubbles within the neighborhood. One participant lived in a neighborhood that assigned jobs to different parents. One parent led physical education, another led art, and one led science. That parent reported that they did not follow the school curriculum because they were teaching various ages. This parent also reported giving up on teaching before the year officially ended.

Each engagement type is present within the themes regarding parent engagement. Parents were familiar with ways to engage and continued to do so based on their perceptions of it. As this was new to these participants, there was no right or wrong way to engage. Participants worked with what they had and prioritized based on the needs of the whole.

Both Bronfenbrenner's bioecological systems theory and Epstein's parental involvement framework were useful lenses to guide the study. Each provided a foundation that served to understand family systems during ERI. Bronfenbrenner's theory provided an outline of how the different systems interact. The participants, without knowing the theory, operated within this framework. Prior to ERI, they had their roles and compartmentalized other areas of life. These roles became convoluted during ERI.

Epstein's framework introduced a similar nestled approach to getting parents involved. With ERI, involvement was not sufficient. The engagement of families and schools working together better served the students. The participants' descriptions illustrated how fluid the types were as parents navigated their engagement.

Limitations

A limitation of this study is the sampling method. Participants volunteered and were invited to participate via email from a contact list the researcher had from their place of

employment. This limited the sample to parents in a higher socioeconomic demographic, mostly married and educated.

Another limitation of the study is the preexisting relationship the researcher had with the participants. The researcher could have knowingly or unknowingly made assumptions or interpretations based on previous knowledge, conversations, or biases.

Time is another limitation of the study. The participants were interviewed one to two times, and 90 minutes could limit how much could be shared. Additionally, the interviews were conducted via Zoom. This constraint may have introduced unforeseen consequences, as 90 minutes may have been a long time to sit on an interview in this format.

A virtual interview is a limitation because of the nature of virtual conversations in the pandemic environment. The participants and researcher had been living a year of virtual experiences, which may have had a negative or limiting effect on the conversation.

Another limitation of the study is time passed. Participants were asked to reflect on a period that was in the past and contained a variety of emotions that could have influenced their answers in this current time.

Strengths

Strengths of the study include the opportunity to process through the period of school closings. Because there was a history between participants and the researcher, the researcher had an existing rapport, and participants quickly let their guard down to answer questions. The sample size served as a strength. The researcher reached saturation quickly due to the small, homogeneous sample. Because the researcher used an IPA approach, this sample size of 13 allowed more time to interpret the data (Smith & Eatough, 2021). Analysis of the data revealed an anomaly within the sample. One parent reported a different experience with emotional-social

support for her children, planning and preparation in general, and how the special education teacher engaged with her student. This prompted the researcher to connect with a school administrator to understand what led to this different experience. With an established rapport and a smaller sample size, the researcher could fully develop an interpretation of the essence of the phenomena of ERI during a global pandemic.

Implications of the Study

While this study focused on parent engagement during a specific context, the potential for further research on parent engagement exists. Parent engagement is a topic that parents live but could better understand from a collaborative perspective. This study introduced gaps in the implementation of ERI from the parent perspective, and that information could show useful for future planning. The study also highlighted the need for increased communication between schools and parents, including expectations, evaluations, and standards, even outside the ERI context. The parents expressed an interest in a partnership and were eager to share ideas on implementation.

A recommendation for teachers during any period was to view parents as a resource to teachers and the classroom. Parents encouraged teachers to seek out specific skills or share specific needs to increase parent engagement. Parents also asked that teachers approach homework assignments flexibly or provide more information so parents can be a resource for homework. Parents were looking for ways the school communicated and were eager to respond. Additionally, this study illuminated a need for a better understanding of teacher evaluation of parental perceptions on engagement, such as how some parents view the role as collaborative with the school versus independent of the school, also outside of the ERI context. Lastly, the study also captured the significant influence of employment on engagement.

Recommendations for Further Research

Based on the findings from this qualitative study, the researcher's recommendations for future research include:

- Studies could examine the perspective of the teacher on ERI and the various types of parent engagement.
- Studies should examine the perspective of the student on ERI and how understanding that perspective will better serve students.
- Studies should examine the experiences of parents that worked outside of the home during school closings.
- Studies should examine a population from a greater area, such as statewide or nationwide.
- Studies should examine the experiences of a broader population to include more single-parent homes, and various SES.
- Studies could examine the experiences of parents with children younger than the K-2nd age range, such as infants.

Conclusion

The purpose of this qualitative study was to examine the experiences of parents with students in K-2nd during the COVID-19 school closings. Parents that had children enrolled in Texas public schools in grades K-2nd during school closings were interviewed about the experience of ERI. This section included two research questions, eight themed responses, and an examination of those themes within Bronfenbrenner's bioecological systems theory and Epstein's parental involvement framework. It also discussed IPA as the methodology,

limitations, strengths, implications for family studies, and future recommendations based on this study.

As Bronfenbrenner's theory asserts, the development of the individual is influenced by the multilayers of the surrounding environment (Boulanger, 2019). COVID-19 was a major life transition for parents of young children causing parents to assume new roles and responsibilities. This shift added a new way for parents to engage with their children and schools. The findings from this study have implications for school districts that benefit from a partnership with parents, as well as policymakers responsible for promoting remote instruction as a solution to school closings.

Researcher Reflection

Embarking on a dissertation requires curiosity, commitment, and an openness to the unknown. I have learned so much about the process, academia, research, and, most importantly myself. I am curious being willing to commit when I feel passionate about the commitment. I have an increased respect for the world of academia and those that live it every day. The process of researching a topic, the vulnerability in asking the question, and the rigor in the writing are front and center now. I admire those that do it for a living. I have also learned that curiosity will not end with this last chapter of my journey. I have new ideas every day for topics that need further review! I learned that I could persevere with the right support. I have had to ask questions and accept criticism. I have had to ask for help. I learned that these are positive practices to continue.

I have grown as a student, researcher, and as a person. In my everyday life, I am much quicker to find a "source" that can help me answer a question. When I have to solve a problem at work, the first thing I ask myself is, 'What does the literature say?' I have grown as a teacher. I

encourage my employees to continue their education. I model curiosity and welcome other people's ideas. This process has brought out the best in me, and I share that with others to inspire them to do the same.

I chose this topic because it was relevant to the world and specifically to me. When I started, I didn't realize how Covid and our life at that time had impacted me. My daughter was a senior that year of the shutdown, and the milestones she achieved were different than I dreamt. I didn't realize I was grieving with her as well as for her. Reading through the literature, interviewing the parents, and listening to their stories and similar heartaches helped me process my own experience. I heard their suggestions on what could have improved. I heard what they felt cheated out of and what they enjoyed. I heard about what became a priority in the middle of a crisis. As a person that runs a school, I am more thoughtful about how we plan events and give more consideration to safety. But the biggest lesson that is evident in how I work with my families is how I engage with them. I listened to the parents in my study and heard what they found helpful. I work to make those plans a reality. I am more intentional with how I communicate with my families. I emphasize the moments to savor and celebrate the achievements more. I work to be intentional in all areas of my daily work life. I also have a different plan should we have to shut down again. Honestly, the biggest lesson or skill I received was reflecting on my ideas, feelings, and process. I take time to process what I'm experiencing and allow that to guide my path. I am so thankful for this experience and the environment where it took place.

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APPENDIX A

PARENT RECRUITMENT EMAIL

To Whom It May Concern,

I am conducting a study on Parent Engagement in an emergency remote instruction environment during COVID-19.

To qualify for this study you must:

- Be 18 years of age or older
- Have a child that was enrolled in public school from August 2019 through December 2020 that went from in-person to remote instruction.
- Served as the primary caregiver of the child enrolled in public school from August 2019 through December 2020

Participants will be

Asked to complete a demographic questionnaire
interviewed _____ of times

The total time commitment is between _____ to _____.
Participation is completely voluntary and confidential. You may opt-out of the study at any time.

If you have any questions regarding the study, please contact me via email at jgutierrez1@twu.edu.

APPENDIX B

ELIGIBILITY SCREENER

1. Your Name _____
2. Your Age_____
3. Do you speak English _____
4. Did you live in Texas during the COVID-19 school closings from March 2020 through May 2020? _____
5. Did you have a student or students enrolled in school in grades kindergarten through second grade?_____
6. Child #1 age/grade (during March 2020)_____
7. Child #2 age/grade (during March 2020)_____
8. Child #3 age/grade (during March 2020)_____
9. Child #4 age/grade (during March 2020)_____

APPENDIX C

DEMOGRAPHIC QUESTIONNAIRE

1. Your pseudonym_____
2. Your marital status: Married Single Divorced Widowed
3. Number of children_____
4. Child #1 age/grade (during March 2020)_____, biological or step
5. Child #2 age/grade (during March 2020)_____, biological or step
6. Child #3 age/grade (during March 2020)_____, biological or step
7. Child #4 age/grade (during March 2020)_____, biological or step
8. Employment Status: Employed Unemployed
9. Work from home or outside of home prior to the time students were involved in remote instruction?
10. Work from home or outside of home during the time students were involved in remote instruction?
11. Education level_____
12. Occupation_____
13. Household income level: $0- $50,000 $51,000-$100,000 $101,000-$150,000 $151,000-$200,000 $201,000-$250,000 $250,000 +
14. Race_____
15. Ethnicity_____
16. Age of parent that served as primary caregiver _____
17. Other adult(s) in household and ages: _____

APPENDIX D

CONSENT FORM

TEXAS WOMAN'S UNIVERSITY (TWU)
CONSENT TO PARTICIPATE IN RESEARCH

Title: Parent Engagement Experiences of Parents Forced into Emergency Remote Instruction During COVID-19

Principal Investigator: J. Mia Gutierrez-Woods jgutierrez1@twu.edu 972/984-8234

Faculty Advisor: Catherine Dutton, PhD cdutton@twu.edu 940/898-2681

Summary and Key Information about the Study

You are being asked to participate in a research study conducted by Ms. J. Mia Gutierrez-Woods, a student at Texas Woman's University, as a part of her dissertation. The purpose of this research is to explore the parent engagement experiences of parents forced into Emergency Remote Instruction (ERI) during Texas school closings due to COVID-19. You have been invited to participate in this study because you have a child that was enrolled in a Texas public school during COVID-19. As a participant you will be asked to take part in a virtual interview regarding your parent engagement experiences with being forced into ERI. Parent engagement experiences can include how you supported your child's remote instruction, or how you communicated with teachers. This interview will be audio and video recorded, and only the researcher will have access to the recordings. The total time commitment for this study will be about three hours. The greatest risks of this study include potential loss of confidentiality, loss of time and emotional discomfort. We will discuss these risks and the rest of the study procedures in greater detail below.

Your participation in this study is completely voluntary. If you are interested in learning more about this study, please review this consent form carefully and take your time deciding whether or not you want to participate. Please contact J. Mia Gutierrez-Woods, the principal investigator (PI), if you have any questions/concerns about the study (see contact information above).

Description of Procedures

As a participant in this study, you will be asked to complete a demographic questionnaire. The form takes 10 minutes to complete. This consent form and questionnaire will be downloaded and stored on a password protected TWU google drive. The PI will contact you to schedule an interview. You will and the PI will decide when the interview will take place. The interview will be conducted via Zoom and will be recorded. You will be asked to keep video on for the entirety of the interview. The recording will be saved to my personal laptop. I will update antivirus and anti malware software prior to the interview. You will be asked to spend 90 minutes of your time in a virtual interview with the researcher. You can stop the interview at any time or request a break at any time during the interview. The researcher will ask you questions about your parent engagement experiences with ERI during COVID-19. Parent engagement experiences can include how you helped your child with remote learning or how you interacted/communicated with the teachers. After the interview is complete the PI will upload recordings of the interview

to TWUs Panopto server for transcription using the closed caption feature. After the transcriptions have been generated the PI will delete all recordings from the Panopto server. The PI will analyze the data for coding and you may be asked to do a second round of interviews to clarify any questions the PI has. The PI will analyze the data and you may be asked to interview a third time. The second and third round of interviews will last a maximum of 25 minutes each.

In order to be a participant in this study, you must be at least 18 years of age or older and have had a student, kindergarten through second grade, enrolled in Texas public schools during the COVID-19 school closings.

Potential Risks

The researcher will ask you questions about your experiences with ERI and engagement with your child. A possible risk in this study is physical discomfort. You may experience discomfort from sitting for an extended period of time on the call. You may take a break or end the interview at any time.

A possible risk in this study is emotional discomfort with these questions you are asked. If you become upset you may take breaks as needed. You may also stop answering questions at any time and end the interview. If you feel you need to talk to a professional about your discomfort, the researcher has provided you with a list of resources.

Another risk in this study is loss of confidentiality. Confidentiality will be protected to the extent that is allowed by law. The interview will be conducted virtually using Zoom. The researcher will update antimalware and antivirus software. The researcher will store all recordings and data on her password protected personal laptop and password protected TWU google drive. The researcher will also create a password for the zoom call and set up a waiting room. Only the PI and her faculty advisor will have access to the recordings. The signed consent form will be stored on a password protected TWU google drive. Recordings will be deleted after transcription. All data will be destroyed within three years after the study is finished. There is a potential risk of loss of confidentiality in all email, downloading, electronic meetings and internet transactions.

An additional risk in this study is potential internet video disruption. The PI will create a password and set up a waiting room for the zoom calls to restrict access during the interview. Your video recording and/or any personal information collected for this study will not be used or distributed for future research even after the researchers remove your personal or identifiable information (e.g., your name, date of birth, contact information).
An additional risk is loss of time. The researcher will make every attempt to ensure all preparations are made to make the best use of time.

The researchers will try to prevent any problem that could happen because of this research. You should let the researchers know at once if there is a problem and they will try to help you. However, TWU does not provide medical services or financial assistance for injuries that might happen because you are taking part in this research.

Participation and Benefits

Your involvement in this study is completely voluntary and you may withdraw from the study at any time.

Questions Regarding the Study

You will automatically receive an emailed copy of this receipt. We encourage you to download it and save it for future reference. If you have any questions about the research study you should ask the researchers; their contact information is at the top of this form. If you have questions about your rights as a participant in this research or the way this study has been conducted, you may contact the TWU Office of Research and Sponsored Programs at 940-898-3378 or via e-mail at IRB@twu.edu.

_____ _____

Signature of Participant Date

*If you would like to know the results of this study tell us where you want them to be sent:

Email_____or Address: _____

Resource List

American Psychological Association Psychologist Locator
http://locator.apa.org/
National Register of Health Service Psychologists
http://www.findapsychologist.org/
Mental Health of America Referrals
http://www.nmha.org/go/searchMHA
Psychology Today Find a Therapist
http://therapists.psychologytoday.com/rms/
National Board for Certified Counselors
http://www.nbcc.org/CounselorFind

APPENDIX E

INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

1. What do you know about parent engagement?
2. What does that look like at home? At school? In the community? At church?
3. Talk about your role as the parent?
4. What does homework mean to you?
5. What is your role in that?
6. (If participants have had kids in school) Thinking about Covid, spring break gets extended a few days, a week, months, etc. Take yourself back there. Schools are closed but not shut down. What was that like for you, in the very beginning?
7. How did it change as time went on?
8. Talk about your priorities for that time?
9. What did schoolwork look like?
10. What was your role?
11. Talk about you and technology.
12. Talk about your experiences or knowledge of education, curriculum, TEKS, etc.
13. What challenges did you experience with online remote instruction?
14. What did you like about it?

APPENDIX F

EDITED TRANSCRIPT (SAMPLE)

M: Can. OK, and then let me get. OK, so my dissertation is on parent engagement experiences during the COVID lockdown.

L: OK,

M: so parent engagement is defined as parents
and schools have working together to support and improve the learning, development and health of children.
So right off the bat, not thinking, covid, just in regular times, what is your view on parent engagement?

L: Very important. Do you want me to elaborate more or is that good?

M: Yeah, no. Please elaborate.

L: OK, so if you have no idea what your kids are doing at school, then you can't really help them at home.
This is my take on that. So being involved and active with the teachers is incredibly important, and I think it's important for teachers to know the parents are involved and wanting to work with them to help.
But it's not just solely the teacher's responsibility.

M: Oh, that's good.
I like that. OK. So when you're thinking about parenting agent at home, because I know that your mom and you work right right now.
So. Then you get that note that we're going to come back.
We're going to come back online. So first, what is your initial reaction, if you can remember when you get the extended break one?

L: How am I going to help but first grade in pre-K on a computer? It's not.
There's just no way that they can on the computer that long. What's the biggest response?
I mean, even my older one was in fourth grade. He's not going to learn on a computer.
But, you know, we're going to make the best of this and see what happens.

M: OK, so then you get the notice.
We're we're virtual. And I remember that they didn't. I actually had to look this up, so I wasn't sure.
But then I looked it up. And it was like the second week of April when the state finally said, we are not coming back the school year.
So up until then, there's still this trying to figure things out.
You were in prosper at the time,

and I believe that you all got some computers or Chromebooks or something that you were able to go pick out kind of get out.
What did you do? What what information did you get from them?

L: You know, those first two weeks were all it was a little. I think chaotic, I don't, you know, nobody knew what to do.
Nobody knew what to say if we did not have the Chromebook until they officially said, we're going to do this virtually.
And then they organized, I think, in a day or two. I think it may have been a Friday that they said OK on Monday.
From this time to this time, you're going to come drive through, you're going to pick up your child's belongings and the Chromebooks.
And there wasn't just a whole lot of information at the time until you kind of logged in and talk to your teacher.
And they had, especially for first grader.
I remember specifically, they had a like a different box.
Worksheet kind of a. This is how this is going to work, we're going to do this, then we're going to come over here,
especially initially because I don't feel like there were full on lessons yet which and I don't know that they really did go into the full lessons.
They had a few, but it wasn't a daily.

APPENDIX G

AUDIT TRAIL LOG (SAMPLE)

May 13, 2022

Working on my spreadsheet. I now have five sheets in the workbook titled "categories". The first worksheet is the master. It is a list of all phrases I pulled from the transcripts. As I read through the transcripts I pulled phrases out, like the chapter I read in the qualitative analysis book suggested. This is also a method attributed to Saldana. Anyway, I pulled out these phrases and attempted to group them. The groups of phrases are color coded to distinguish the participants. I colored code the participants so I could see who was giving me more or less and used that to decide who I should reach out to for follow up interviews. I put phrases in two columns, one for Parent Engagement and the other for Perceived Role. Under parent engagement it was any form of engagement form the parent side, or how they described it or ways they recognized it. It was the same for perceived role. It was based on their perspective, such as the roles they gave themselves or felt were given, what those roles were and meant.

The second worksheet is "organize". I have a column for Epstein and the numbers assigned to her framework. The next column is Parent Engagement. I took the phrases and put them into categories like academic participant, academic support, activity coordinator, advocate, caregiver, emotional support and etc. the next column was categories for Parent Engagement. Child, school, family and home. My last column is perceived role. I took those phrases from worksheet one and made categories like academic support, academic support not teacher, academic support let child lead, etc.

My third worksheet is categories. I have a column for parent engagement and listed out who or what the parent is engaged with-school, child, family, home and offered a column of descriptions for these. I did the same for perceived roles-teacher, admin, mom/parent, employee and gave descriptions of those.

My fourth worksheet was themes. I have a parent engagement column with the four themes that I pulled out from my interpretation of the data in the previous sheets. I have a column on notes of these themes for clarification. The next column is perceived role themes that I pulled out from the data and notes on those.

My final worksheet is colors of codes. That included a list of participant names, color coded and a letter assigned to them in the next column. The third column included LD (child with learning difference), MC (multiple children), WFH (worked from home). I used this while I was analyzing to see what I was noticing. I looked at how they prioritized or engaged and additional factors to these decision making exercises.

As I wrote out my analysis I referred back to these spreadsheets to keep reviewing what I was finding or feeling. It was important to have the phrases in front me to confirm if my themes or categories held up while I explained it. It also kept the data fresh as I pulled quotes to use.

APPENDIX H

IRB APPROVAL LETTER

August 30, 2021

Joseph Gutierrez-Woods

Human Dev & Family Studies

Re: Exempt - IRB-FY2021-308 Parent Experiences with ERI during COVID-19

Dear Joseph Gutierrez-Woods,

The above referenced study has been reviewed by the TWU IRB - Denton operating under FWA00000178 and was determined to be exempt on August 30, 2021.

Note that any modifications to this study must be submitted for IRB review prior to their implementation, including the submission of any agency approval letters, changes in research personnel, and any changes in study procedures or instruments. Additionally, the IRB must be notified immediately of any adverse events or unanticipated problems. All modification requests, incident reports, and requests to close the file must be submitted through Cayuse.

On August 29, 2023, this approval will expire and the study must be renewed or closed. A reminder will be sent 45 days prior to this date.

If you have any questions or need additional information, please email your IRB analyst at irb@twu.edu or refer to the IRB website.

Sincerely,

TWU IRB - Denton