Parental Involvement in Twenty-First Century Schools and the Implications of the Changing Family Structure: Recommendations for Leaders

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ABSTRACT

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PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT IN TWENTY-FIRST CENTURY SCHOOLS AND THE IMPLICATIONS OF THE CHANGING FAMILY STRUCTURE:

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR LEADERS

Committee Chair: Barbara Hill, Ed.D.

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The purpose of this mixed-methods study is to identify major factors that directly affect parental involvement in 21st century schools. This study examined several elements of parental involvement. It calculated the idea of the changing family context and parental involvement, technology and parental involvement, the impact of Cultural Capital and parental involvement, the impact of the Academic Parent Teacher Teams program and parental involvement, and parents’ demographics and parental involvement. Data gathered to inform the research were derived from parent surveys and teachers and administrators interviews. The research examined the relationship between the parental involvement and parents’ perception of the school's accessibility, parents' perception of school's communication, parents’ perception of the school’s climate, parent’s perception of their role in student's learning, teachers’ perceptions of the role of technology, parents’
perceptions of the usefulness of the Academic Parent Teacher Teams (APTT) Program, teachers’ perceptions of the usefulness of the APTT Program, Cultural Capital, and parents’ demographics: level of education, occupation, socioeconomic level, parental structure, ethnicity, and marital status parental. The benefits of the research are to inform educators how to structure programs that will directly assist parents on how to help their children more effectively at home, to re-educate parents on how to unpack standards, and measure the successfulness of a program that helped to bridge the gap between family and school.

The researcher focused this work on studies examining the associations between family, home, and school because these associations began emerging as efforts to assess the efficacy of governmental programs and other interventions. In the late 1990s, scholarly attention turned to “community control of schools, especially in the education of low-income children, special education students, and English language learners” (McKenna & Millen, 2013, p. 14). These researchers sought to recommend strategies that would promote parent, family, and community involvement. These areas and these children were considered as the ones that could benefit the most from parental involvement. The results from these studies seek to add more clarity on how educators today can enlighten schools on how to bridge the family and school gap in the 21st century.
PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT IN TWENTY-FIRST CENTURY SCHOOLS AND THE
IMPLICATIONS OF THE CHANGING FAMILY STRUCTURE:
RECOMMENDATIONS FOR LEADERS

A DISSERTATION
SUBMITTED TO THE FACULTY OF CLARK ATLANTA UNIVERSITY
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BY

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DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATIONAL LEADERSHIP

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I would like to thank my heavenly Father, God, who is the maker and creator of all things—the sustainer of life—who ignited a spark that has led to this prodigious accomplishment. Every weakness we have is an opportunity for God to show His strength in our life. “His grace is sufficient . . . , for His power is made perfect in weakness (2 Corinthians 12:9). It is because of this grace I have decided to be the change I wish to see in the world.

A “thank you” is extended to the following individuals who without their contributions and support this work would not have been successful: my family and friends for support, encouragement, and love. Demonstrated through you, I recognize “ability is what you are capable of doing; motivation determines what you do; and attitude determines how well you do it” (Anonymous).

I would like to thank Clark Atlanta University’s faculty and staff, especially the School of Education, for their efforts and patience with me as I embarked upon this journey into another dimension. “No one said it would be easy, you just promised it would be worth it” (Lou Holtz). Upon completion of this work, I have learned “success is no accident. It is hard work, perseverance, learning, studying, sacrifice, and most of all, love of what you are doing” (Pele).
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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Parental involvement in schools has been significantly examined within sociological research. Dominant themes in the literature highlight the positive impact on children’s academic performance, school culture, and community-school partnerships by strong parent-school relationships (Conroy, 2012; Jeynes, 2011). In the 21st century, however, the nature of common family structures no longer mirrors that of earlier decades within which parental involvement research was originated (Jeynes, 2011). Consequently, a wide gap within the literature exists with respect to applicable parental involvement practices to the changing social landscape of the globalized community.

Parental involvement with schools is dependent on a wide spectrum of variables, with these forces additionally not existing in a vacuum but highly dependent on one another. These factors include the issues traditionally cited in the parental involvement literature as well as new factors more pertinent to the 21st century family (Manz, Power, Ginsburg-Block, & Dowrick, 2010).

This study examines the factors which influence parental involvement in the 21st century using a mixed-methods approach and seeks to fill a gap within the literature opened by inattention to emerging lifestyle choices, shifting family structures, work-life relationships, technology, and other factors which render new parental involvement deviant from its previous conceptions. This chapter outlines the study’s research
questions and significance, transferring particular attention to the weaknesses in the existing literature, which warrant this study.

Increasing evidence suggested that previous research on parent-school relationships is inapplicable to 21st century society (Manz et al., 2010). Parental involvement had traditionally been conceived as manifesting in deliberate and visible actions; more recent and meaningful research cite that parental engagement in the 21st century is more subtle but remains informed by communications (especially digital technology), school climate, and other variables acknowledged within the previous literature (Jeynes, 2011). Similarly, more recent evidence suggests that school-based efforts for fostering greater parental engagement have yet to change in practice, fostering a wide research-practice gap in the education field (Conroy, 2012; Jeynes, 2011).

Jeynes (2011) described the urgent need for greater and more recent research into parental involvement within the context of the 21st century as follows:

One of the most intriguing realities of parental involvement research is that the theories of parental involvement that emerged in the 1980s, especially, and also during the 1990s, preceded the most sophisticated research that was done on the topic. Part of this trend actually benefited parental engagement research, because the theories were needed in order to create more interest in parental involvement research. Consequently, most researchers in this discipline are thankful for the emergence of these theories. The quantitative and qualitative analyses of the past decade have reached a significant enough level so that we, as the academic community, need to examine the possibility of questioning current parental
involvement theories as insufficient to explain some of the results that are emerging. (p. 11)

Additional researchers have similarly argued for the social science research community to drive empirical examination of the change role of the family with respect to the education system, presuming that the family structure and behaviors within that structure have been irrevocably transformed; this has, in consequence, created conditions wherein previous parent-school relationship research is not only insufficient but largely inapplicable (Cripps & Zyromski, 2009; De Carvalho, 2001). Jeynes (2011) cited that “new questions on family engagement are being asked that even 10 years ago few would have ever imagined. It is important to embrace these developments rather than resist them” (p. 13). The study proposed herein sought to examine these developments in order to meaningfully audit parental involvement and school relationship for the 21st century.

The Leadership Role

With the surge of the altering family composition and parental involvement, schools will need to adjust practices, policies, and procedures to adapt to this change. One way leaders can assist schools in adapting to this change is by creating a school environment in which all families feel welcomed. School leaders must aid teachers in producing high academic environments where curriculum and instructional skills are combined to scaffold learning for all students. One of the most valuable ways to augment motivation and excitement for learning is through altering the school's culture (Renchler, 1992). By efficiently and successfully organizing the school's culture, leaders can amplify teacher and student motivation simultaneously, thereby, mounting parental
involvement in school activities and events so that the force of learning will yield sustained gains (Renchler, 1992).

Another way leaders can create an environment in which high academics is fostered is through programs that are designed to teach parents how to unpack Common Core Standards. The Academic Parent Teacher Teams is a program designed to assist parents in understanding how to teach targeted skills to their children. It gives a clearer understanding of what differentiated instructions look like. Parents are empowered to assist students with homework. By effectively communicating a clear and concise articulated vision, a leader can regulate where things need to go and be committed to that vision in order to craft changes in the academic school environment (Checkley, 2000). After conversing with stakeholders concerning the vision, the leader must be willing to empower others to help carry out the vision. Measures leaders should embark upon might include the following:

- encouraging teachers to use innovative advances in the teaching of lower-level learners;
- developing professional learning activities, classroom instructions, and schoolwide programs that go further than the exterior in observing diversity; and
- establishing a stalwart loyalty among staff members to empower students through education.
One of the most complex tasks of school leadership is effectively managing change (Checkley, 2000). However, with commitment and vision, leaders can create environments where all students learn.

**Statement of the Problem**

A range of barriers exists to meaningful examination of the "new" parent-school relationship with parental involvement in schools inevitably affected by more common family structures, which digress considerably from the traditional, nuclear family structures (Denessen, Bakker, & Gierveld, 2007). Shifting gender relationships where women are no longer bound by their familial roles as wives and mothers—for they are in the workplace as significantly as their male counterparts—affects parental engagement, as does single-parent households, mounting cultural diversity and potential lingual differences between the schools stakeholder groups, and same-gender parenthood. The parental involvement research has not kept pace with the changing family context (the "new" parent), creating conditions through which schools’ strategies for fortifying parent-school relationships are largely inadequate to many students and their families (De Carvalho, 2001).

Importantly, evidence additionally prevails that a strong resistance to acknowledging the changing family structure’s impact on parental involvement exists within multiple disciplines, with this resistance sourced from an effort to maintain a political correctness that frames over-emphasis on nontraditional family structures as unethical or insensitive (Jeynes, 2011). All of these factors have compounded to shape a parent-involvement research barrier in the 21st century that impedes effective school and
community-based actions for providing parents with opportunities to be involved in their children’s academic lives. By extension, this body of research addressed the following problem: current recommendations for supporting parental involvement in schools are outdated and inapplicable to the 21st century family.

**Purpose of the Study**

The purpose of this study was to investigate the significant relationship between parents’ perceptions of the school’s accessibility, the school’s communication, the school’s climate, parents’ perceptions of their role in student learning, teachers’ perceptions of the role of technology, parents’ perceptions of the usefulness of the Academic Parent Teacher Teams (APTT) program, teachers’ perceptions of the usefulness of the Academic Parent Teacher Teams (APTT) program, Cultural Capital Theory, and parents’ demographics. Parents’ demographics included level of education, occupation, socioeconomic level, parental structure, ethnicity, marital status, and parental involvement. These demographics are critical to establishing a framework for assessing levels of parental involvement in schools for 21st century parents and making subsequent recommendations to schools for driving parental involvement strategies which are applicable to changing family contexts.

**Research Questions**

The research questions for this study are:

RQ1: Is there a significant relationship between parents’ perceptions of the school’s accessibility and parental involvement?
RQ2: Is there a significant relationship between parents’ perceptions of the school’s communication and parental involvement?

RQ3: Is there a significant relationship between parents’ perceptions of the school’s climate and parental involvement?

RQ4: Is there a significant relationship between parents’ perceptions of their role in students’ learning and parental involvement?

RQ5: What are teachers’ perceptions of the role of technology and parental involvement?

RQ6: What are parents’ perceptions of the usefulness of the Academic Parent Teacher Teams (APTT) Program and its impact on parental involvement?

RQ7: What are teachers’ perceptions of the usefulness of the Academic Parent Teacher Teams (APTT) Program and its impact on parental involvement?

RQ8: Does the level of cultural capital make a significant difference in parents’ involvement in their children's schooling?

RQ9: Is there a significant relationship between parents’ demographics—level of education, occupation, socioeconomic level, parental structure, ethnicity, and marital status—on parental involvement?

**Significance of the Study**

Understanding parental involvement in the 21st century is a significant undertaking in that the family structure has changed over the past decades; therefore, strategies for parental involvement should mirror this subtle, yet pivotal, change. The majority of existing parent-school or parental involvement literature has focused on
support policies, recommendations, and conclusions which pertain directly to two-parent households (Jeynes, 2011). Jeynes cited that new family structures inevitably yield unique challenges to parent-school involvement which most school-based strategies for fostering parental engagement do not address. Two-parent families are far more optimally positioned to demonstrate a high level of engagement with schools than single-parent households; yet, research on single-parent school involvement frequently highlights that these parents genuinely desire a higher level of participation in their students' academic lives (Gonzalez, Borders, Hines, Villalba, & Henderson, 2013). The writing cited that an unfortunate lack of research regarding specific new family structures and parental involvement in schools exist, with single-parent and step-parent engagement only recently examined within the research (Gonzalez et al., 2013; Jeynes, 2011; Parker, Grenville, & Flessa, 2011; Woodrum, 2011).

In addition to family structures, which diverge from the traditional nuclear family context, mounting cultural diversity has affected parental involvement strategies (Denessen, Bakker, & Gierveld, 2007; Ramirez, 2001). Denessen et al. cited that cultural differences inevitably impact school-based strategies for fostering parental involvement with the large majority of parental involvement strategies not sufficient in their cultural competency when school populations are diverse. In the United States, cultural diversity is substantial and increasing with direct and indirect biases to minority families which affect many parental participation approaches (Hashmi & Akhter, 2013).

The essence of parental involvement research is defined significantly by asserting that academic performance of children is higher in accordance with parental engagement
(Hashmi & Akhter, 2013). The popular legislation, No Child Left Behind Act (NCLBA) which has since been rendered inoperative for a wide spectrum of problems, stipulated that parental participation was paramount: “a vital and fundamental role in facilitating the children’s learning is played by their parents” (Hashmi & Akhter, 2013, p. 34). The Act additionally cited that parents needed to be sufficiently motivated to be participants in their children’s education with occasions provided for parents to share equivalent contribution in their students’ schooling (Hashmi & Akhter, 2013). The approaches arose from the school by which the NCLBA’s recommendations were grounded in research, which defined parental involvement in terms of visible and overt actions (Jeynes, 2011).

Parental involvement research has traditionally defined such involvement in terms of home and school-based activities that were measurable and concrete with more subtle participation scantily examined or entirely absent within the literature (Jeynes, 2011). Ramirez (2001) cited that current research must define parents not in terms of natural science but in terms of any family member who participates in raising the child and who participates in the child's education. Moreover, actions that constitute participation may not be in terms of communication, physical presence at the school, meeting attendance, and other traditional means of defining participation. Ramirez also cited that parental involvement in schools is far broader than the traditional research stipulates, with parent help with homework, discussion of from-school communications with the student, and other at-home forms of participation less visible to the schools, but still indicative of parental involvement.
The use of a more comprehensive definition for parental involvement that affords attention to more subtle strategies for manifesting involvement is a significant issue—which this study seeks to address—as is the inadequate attention paid to barriers to engagement. De Carvalho (2001) cited that parental involvement with schools is generally not assessed in parallel with existing barriers to such engagement; subsequently, this creates conditions through which policies for supporting parental involvement are less meaningful and relevant. De Carvalho cited the following assertion regarding barriers to involvement:

Impediments to parental involvement are reduced to parents' timidity, uneasiness at school, time constraints, and lack of encouragement from teenagers, which can be reversed by school personnel's openness and warmth, and the provision of a range of opportunities for parents. In addition to involvement in traditional fund-raising, help at special classes, sports, bands, academic clubs, and parties, participation is now invited in school governance, curriculum, and budgeting.

(p. 2)

Additional gaps in the literature included inattention to middle and high school contexts with most parental involvement literature focusing intently on the elementary schools (Jeynes, 2011).

In defining parental involvement, the literature that acknowledges the changing family system’s position in the parent-school relationship argued for a policy-specific framing of the term. De Carvalho (2001) posited that parental involvement is first and foremost a policy strategy through which a school responds to school and family issues in
order to foster improvements. These improvements include, but are not limited to, bolstered academic performance, meeting institutional goals, and forging community-school connections. However, De Carvalho cited the following:

It is important to distinguish between parental involvement in education as a desirable attitude and practice of individual parents, …and parental involvement as a policy strategy designed to promote it where it appears lacking, and as a formal incentive aiming at enhancing school outcomes in an indirect way in the name of democratic opportunity. (p. 4)

De Carvalho stated that parental involvement can, in many instances, be more problematic than helpful with effective strategies for fostering parental involvement necessarily acknowledging this issue:

Nevertheless, the general policy formula espouses a romanticized view of education and family-school relations. It encloses and conceals different parental role constructions and levels of involvement related to both family and school particular contexts and practices, as well as potential conflicts in family-school and teacher-parent relations, and even among parents, associated with diversity of social class, ethnicity, family organization, and values. (p. 5)

Previous models of parental involvement have stipulated that levels of involvement exist, with the least impactful element being at-home involvement and the more impactful elements pertaining to school activities and school decision-making. Importantly, these models are those which have been framed as inapplicable to nontraditional families as
unique barriers to the higher levels of participation and that undoubtedly exist for the new parent (Jeynes, 2011).

The most negative outcomes of parental involvement strategies in the United States have been with respect to severe discrimination against socioeconomically challenged families; this, in turn, created an ethnic bias wherein certain minority populations are disproportionately represented in urban, impoverished areas (Heggins & Jones, 2004). More recent research has clearly highlighted that parents desire greater opportunities for involvement in their child’s school, but existing policies do not cater to unique scheduling, transportation, linguistic needs, and socioeconomic needs. Very frequently, school definitions of involvement opportunities include those which are technologically based, such as online parent forums and direct email engagement. In the absence of access to such technologies, however, parents are alienated from such opportunities and dismissed as uninvolved (Heggins & Jones, 2004; Juhasz, 2004). De Carvalho (2001) cited the following:

A general effect may be reinforcing patterns of discrimination based on social class, ethnicity, and gender through the creation of new stratified structures of participation with lower-class and minority mothers helping in the school cafeteria, for instance, while upper-middle class mothers and fathers act as classroom volunteers and school council members. (p. 5)

Thus, De Carvalho argued that future parent involvement research must first ask why schools are apparently dependent upon parental involvement in order to achieve higher
performance in student achievement before strategies can be meaningfully implemented for improving parent-school relationships.

Any inquiry into parental involvement is consequently an examination of family-school relationships through which outdated theories must be dismantled (Jeynes, 2011). De Carvalho (2001) and Jeynes (2011) hypothesized that it is universally accepted within the literature that parental involvement is a positive and necessary force in students’ lives, but the choice of strategies for promoting parental involvement depends on a more accurate understanding of why parents are so influential on student achievement. Present strategies for improving parent-school relationships or parental involvement are insufficient because they are grounded in outdated theories which are not meaningful to new family structures (Jeynes, 2011). De Carvalho (2001) cited the following description of problematic theoretical frameworks for assessing parental involvement:

Accordingly, from the school perspective there are two ways of seeing the family. First, the family is a resource for school achievement, and parental involvement in education in the home and school is taken for granted as natural. Second, the family is deficient and itself in need of education, and thus parental support of schooling becomes an explicit requirement for student achievement. Within this logic, family-school relations appear as essentially convergent, and school success or failure becomes a simple matter of family accountability. Hence, educational policy has tended implicitly and/or explicitly to encompass the family, ignoring the conditions of its positive contribution to schooling in the first case, and focusing on parental re-education in the second case. (p. 7)
Policies resultant from these perspectives are often conflicting and marked by cultural incompetency (De Carvalho, 2001)

Investigating variables that appear in the traditional literature that may enhance parental involvement for the new parent can be tested for their continued relevancy in the 21st century. These variables included accessibility, communication channels between parents and schools, a welcoming school climate, parents’ perception of their role regarding school involvement, teachers’ perceptions of the role of technology, parents’ perceptions of the usefulness of the Academic Parent Teacher Teams (APTT) program, teachers’ perceptions of the usefulness of the (APTT) program, Cultural Capital Theory, and parents’ demographics. Parents’ demographics included parents’ level of education, occupation, socioeconomic level, parental structure, ethnicity, and marital status (Loutzenheiser, 2005; McGregor, 2005; Michael, Dittus, & Epstein, 2007; Stewart, 2004; Voyles, 2012; Yang, 2006).

**Summary**

The more effective interventions for supporting parental involvement with schools in the 21st century have acknowledged that the family structure is no longer the same as it was when parental involvement research was initiated; the persistence of outdated theoretical frameworks in shaping policies presumably supportive of parental involvement is severely problematic and, at worst, discriminatory against many nontraditional family structures. Stewart (2004) cited that parental involvement strategies, which are sourced directly from the perspectives of parents and students, have
been the most beneficial in supporting diverse school communities wherein parental participation is low due to sociocultural and socioeconomic conditions.

Effective strategies have acknowledged the positive role played by parent-child communication, mutual goal-setting with respect to parental involvement, predictability regarding involvement opportunities, and regular evaluations of parental involvement policies. According to Stewart (2004),

The success story of this system conveys the message that students of all races are likelier to flourish in an environment where all entities are working together for academic excellence. It is also important to have parental involvement as an essential component of the general plan. (p. 2)

This study sought to give voice to the new parent in order to determine the most likely predictors of parental involvement, with the potential need to redefine this involvement in terms of multiple subtle actions as well as overt and visible actions. This study also discussed the holes in the current research by conceding that the new parent structure is faced with exceptional tests to parental contribution to children's education, which are insufficiently addressed in both research and practice. In turn, the analysis of research questions provided recommendations for fostering a school-based strategy for supporting the new parent, which is undergirded by unique variables affecting participation opportunities.
CHAPTER II
REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

Organization of the Review

In the past decades, researchers have studied the effects of parental involvement on children's education. Many of the studies have examined ways schools can make efforts to support parents in their children's education. This study investigated factors that influence parental involvement such as parents’ perceptions of the school’s accessibility, parents’ perceptions of the school’s communication, parents’ perceptions of the school’s climate, parents’ perception of their role in student learning, teachers’ perceptions of the role of technology, parents’ perceptions of the usefulness of the APTT Program, teachers’ perceptions of the usefulness of the APTT Program, Cultural Capital Theory, and parents’ demographics.

Dependent Variable

Parental Involvement

Parental involvement in this study has been determined as the dependent variable. Parental involvement, parental engagement, parental participation and family engagement were all used interchangeably. Parental involvement refers to multiple subtle actions as well as overt and visible actions from the parent with the child's scholastic learning in the home and school (e.g., the family member may be able to provide a quiet study
environment at home, but may not be able to help students with homework). More at-home forms of participation less visible to the school, but still indicative of parental engagement, was used to define parental involvement.

It has long been established that the ability of schools to cultivate and maintain collaborative relationships with parents is sound educational practice (McKenna & Millen, 2013; Rodriguez, Blatz, & Elbaum, 2014). This belief was based on the rationale that parents, usually mothers, are the first and best teachers of their children (Sad & Gurbuzturk, 2013). By the time a child starts school, the parent’s role as teacher does not cease. Albeit teachers implement a curriculum within the classroom setting, formal education extends beyond the provision of students with knowledge, skills or attitudes. This is generally why parents are regarded as a constant and fundamental component of a curriculum. Apart from these, parental involvement promotes the idea that educating a child holistically (emotionally, physically, psychologically, and spiritually) is preferred rather than as a contrasting idea in the education of children.

Going back as far as the time of the illumination period, theorists had already accentuated the magnitude of family involvement in children’s development and learning, with many contemporary educational scholars following suit (McKenna & Millen, 2013). However, the linkages between family, home, and education comprised a much younger and thus less developed concept. Notably, the concept of parental involvement encompassed different parental behaviors that may or may not influence a child’s reasoning process and school academic achievement (Sad & Gurbuzturk, 2013). Therefore, there is a broad range of activities that may be considered as parental
involvement, including (a) getting informed about and supporting curricula being implemented; (b) volunteering in, or visiting, classrooms; (c) monitoring a child’s progress with the help of the teacher; or (d) constructing a home atmosphere that is physically and psychologically beneficial to learning needs (Sad & Gurbuzturk, 2013). These ways upon which parents support their children’s education remain relevant no matter what changes are seen in family structures.

According to McKenna and Millen (2013), it was in the 1960s when educators and policy-makers intensified their attention on parent involvement as a resource of supporting high student achievement of poor and low or underachieving students. Subsequently, federal government initiatives such as Head Start, Follow Through, and Title I programs included legislation mandating parental involvement in student learning within the framework of holistically educating the child (McKenna & Millen, 2013), thus bridging the gap between family and school relationships.

Studies examining the associations between family, home, and school began to emerge in an effort to assess the efficacy of such governmental programs and other interventions. In the late 1990s, scholarly attention turned to “community control of schools, especially in the education of low-income children, special education students, and English language learners” (McKenna & Millen, 2013, p. 14). The researchers sought to recommend strategies that would promote parent, family, and community involvement. These areas and these children were considered as the ones that could benefit the most from parental involvement.
The promotion of parent–school collaboration may be approached from three perspectives. First, there is solid evidence showing that parent involvement is associated with improved student outcomes, including increased student attendance and satisfaction with school; better academic achievement; motivation; school attachment; responsibility; self-efficacy; and confidence (Sad & Gurbuzturk, 2013). Second, a number of educational scholars have emphasized the social justice perspective holding that parental engagement is just the right thing for schools to undertake (Rodriguez et al., 2014). The third perspective postulated that parental involvement in their children’s learning is integrated in legal frameworks, such as that of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act of 2006 (IDEA) and the No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB) (McKenna & Millen, 2013). The educational reforms undertaken by many states, such as California, Illinois, Minnesota, and Missouri, highlight the need to increase parents’ involvement (Pomerantz, Moorman, & Litwack, 2007).

Due to these perspectives, there was voluminous extant literature devoted to understanding why parents become involved as well as how academic institutions can facilitate and foster this involvement. For instance, Hoover-Dempsey et al. (2005) developed a parental involvement theory identifying parent, school, and child attributes that explain parents’ rationale for involvement. The very heartbeat of this philosophy was that parental involvement increased as a response to teacher invitations to involve parents. This philosophy surmised that parents would increase their involvement with their children’s school life if the school would make them feel welcomed, or if the school had programs that involved the parents. In the absence of such programs, parents
presumably would not impede their children’s schooling as long as they remained convinced that the school was providing an optimal education for their children.

Another important component of this theory was that the degree of parental involvement was determined by parents’ perceptions about how much they could contribute to their child’s progress (Hoover-Dempsey et al., 2005). If schools do not indicate that they can contribute, parents would believe that the education of their children should become the responsibility of the school. This is faulty thinking on the part of the parents that schools unintentionally affirm by keeping parents out of their children’s education.

However, what exactly is parental involvement, which may also be called parental participation or parental engagement? In their literature review on theories and research pertaining to parental involvement in children’s schooling, Pomerantz, Moorman, and Litwack (2007) explained that parental involvement equates with the commitment of resources to the academic arena of children’s lives. Pomerantz et al. made broad distinctions between involvement based at school and based at home.

From the inception of A Nation at Risk (1983) public education had seemingly been under great scrutiny. Major legislation has made parental involvement in their children's education a national priority. Legislation such as Goals 2000 (Educate America Act) and the reauthorized Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) are just a few legislations that have taken an interest in parental involvement. Nationwide, school districts are being asked to reconsider their parent involvement policies and programs and to exhibit better innovative approaches in order to obtain money from the
federal government (U.S. Department of Education, 1994). In particular, eligibility for Title I funding (money allocated to school districts in high poverty areas) is now conditional (based on the implementation of “compacts” in which families and schools agree to share reciprocal accountability for student's learning). Also, a joint venture must be fashioned between homes, schools, and communities that require an unparalleled level of contact and communication between parents and educators (e.g., U.S. Department of Education, 1994).

**Independent Variables**

**Accessibility**

In today's educational arenas, one of the most debated topics is parental involvement. Through this body of research, parents’ perceptions of the school accessibility and parental involvement were overwhelming (Cary, 2006). The intensity of parental involvement within a school setting is linked with the accessibility of school activities as well as the recruitment technique of the school’s parent-teacher liaison. Cary’s article expressed that having a parent-teacher liaison in a school environment is indispensable for supporting parental involvement activities. If parents feel welcomed and given many opportunities to participate, there is a greater probability they will become involved in school life (Cary, 2006).

Using the 1992 National Education Longitudinal Study (NELS) data set, Jeynes’ (2005) results indicated that higher academic achievement among teenagers was attributed to specific aspects of parental involvement even though gender, race, and social status were controlled. The single greatest predictor of academic achievement from this
study was family structure. The degree to which parents discussed school-related issues and participated in school functions also had a positive impact on adolescent academic success. Schools that created opportunities of effortless accessibility for parents to engage in school-sponsored activities showed to have higher rates of parent participation.

**School Communication**

The lowest levels of parental involvement have been attributed to a deficiency of communication between teachers and parents (Moore, 2006). According to Moore, communication is imperative to creating an environment of trust and mutual respect between parents and schools. Instituting a line of communication should be one of the major objectives of schools, thus, creating an environment that fosters honesty and support between the school and parents. Studies supported the idea of teachers establishing partnerships with parents and keeping them informed. Moore established that parents and teachers who work together have been shown to accuse each other for a deficiency of student motivation, low student performance, or misconduct less frequently. One principle way to establish partnerships is through simple programs that involve both parents and teachers working together. Being degraded or spoken to in a condescending way are ways to quickly alienate parents and cause them to disconnect from the life of the school. Many parents have expressed that this issue is why they do not feel welcomed in their child’s school (Moore, 2006).

Parents who are allowed increased opportunities to extensively help their child’s school in an approach that provides them a sense of contentment and satisfaction will be more apt and willing to assist in many other ways. Peressini (1998) expressed that
communication should not be exclusively at the discretion of educators, but parents should be allowed to bring their respective level of expertise to the discussion as well as respond and ask questions. When parents can offer solutions of their own that may assist the school, they feel that their involvement is at a much higher intensity than if they were just listening to teachers and administrators tell them what is unfolding at the school (Peressini, 1998).

It is germane that parental participation within meetings is promoted by educators because “many educators and parents view decision-making as the most empowering and prolific type of parental involvement, and is also considered the most complicated and taxing type to organize and implement” (Peressini, 1998, p. 572). Schools should seek to find grounds on which parents can propose their resolution to issues uninhibited. Once schools have conquered this hurdle, they have solved a key quandary that is visible in many schools.

**School Climate**

Research indicates that just about all parents care about their children, want them to achieve, and believe that parental involvement is critical to a successful educational experience (Epstein et al., 2009). Unfortunately, these obligations often go "astray." In some instances, an unwelcomed school atmosphere may create a barrier that discourages participation. Teachers may feel that families are not valuable resources in educating students, or that finding time in their "busy" school day is not possible (Grant & Ray, 2010).
Over many decades, researchers and educators have progressively acknowledged the significance of a positive K-12 school climate. A summary report conducted by Cohen, McCabe, Michelli, and Pickeral (2009) revealed that school climate was associated with and promoted school safety, healthy relationships, engaged learning and teaching, and school improvement efforts.

Evidence showed a strong connection between parental involvement in schools and a student's high academic achievement, greater attendance, better optimistic attitude, and continued education (Henderson & Berla, 1994; Hickman, 1996). However, families may not become involved if they do not feel the school climate—the social and educational atmosphere of the school—is one that makes them feel welcomed, respected, trusted, heard, and needed. Research revealed that there is a correlation between the school climate and the degree to which parents and families actively participate in their children's education (Comer & Haynes, 1992; Dauber & Epstein, 1993). By establishing a constructive school climate through reaching out to families and providing structures and activities for them to become involved, the result is valuable, ongoing, and successful partnerships between the school and the family. From these partnerships, a connection between the two parties supports student learning and creates innovative opportunities in their future (Comer & Haynes, 1992; Dauber & Epstein, 1993).

Research by Epstein et al. (2009) of overlapping spheres of influence between the home, school, and community highlighted the notion that family involvement in school academics promoted a positive school climate. Thinking of the school environment in terms of an extended family, using language that is simple to understand, demonstrating
openness and enthusiasm, and showing respect toward parents’ diversity are all ways to promote a positive school climate and to help bridge the gap between home and school. Increasing their understanding and respect for student and family diversity, schools tend to create a more caring school environment. Exhibiting an attitude that parents are valued and recognizing their time restrictions and familial commitments are other relevant fundamentals of school climates that are conducive to promoting parental involvement (Epstein et al., 2009).

With regard to parental involvement, Moos’ (1981) definition of climate specified that schools with positive climates actively execute the following:

- Encourage families to contribute and establish relationships with the faculty and staff as well as with other families.
- Provide parenting skills and resources and promote resources for healthy child development as well as provide training for parents' own self-esteem.
- Provide a participatory environment in which parents are encouraged to have a say and be an instrumental piece of the decision-making process on issues affecting their children’s education.

Parents’ Perceptions of their Role in Student Learning

Unfortunately, there has been a paradigm of thinking that schooling and student learning are the sole responsibilities of educators (Borgatta, 2013). While educators take their professional responsibilities seriously, they also recognize that they cannot do it alone. They need and depend on the support from parents and community members. Role theory conferred the predisposition for human behaviors to structure distinguishing
outlines that may be calculated if one knows the social framework in which those manners emerge (Borgatta, 2013). According to Borgatta (2013), this theory explained those behavior patterns, manners (or roles) by being presumptuous that persons within an environment materialize as members of acknowledged social identities (or positions) and that they and others hold ideas (expectations) about behaviors in that setting. Its terminologies, lexis, and concerns are fashionable among both social theorists and practitioners, and role concepts have engendered both hypothesis and a copious body of research (Borgatta, 2013). Nevertheless, divergences have arisen about the language of role vocabulary and the heartbeat of role theory, and dissimilar adaptations of the theory have emerged amid groups of authors who seem to be naive of unconventional descriptions (Borgatta, 2013).

Role theory has been destabilized by a relationship with contentious theories in sociology as well. Nevertheless, according to Hoover-Dempsey et al. (2005), role construction or role theory is defined as parents’ viewpoints about what they are considered to do in relation to their child's academic success. Basically, it is their predisposed mindset depicted from their own perspective to be self-motivated contributors in their children's learning.

**Teachers’ Perceptions of the Role of Technology**

Technological growth is so rapid that to be effective, educators must both adjust to the changing environment within which they teach and make efforts to predict the implications of future changes so as to prepare students for the environments they will work in post-graduation (Molebash & Fisher, 2003). Educators are essentially charged
with preparing the students of today for a world that has yet to be created and jobs yet invented (Molebash & Fisher, 2003). Molebash and Fisher explained that to properly prepare our students, educators must move from the traditional paradigm of the teacher as all-knowing and the transferor of information to a paradigm of the teacher as a facilitator of learning. Teachers must now move toward creating learning environments that are contextual and engaging. Students must learn how to effectively communicate and access information within highly technologically-driven societies. Students must also learn to be lifelong learners given the ever-changing environments. Therefore, educators must teach students how to learn on their own. Education must move from teacher-centered pedagogy to student-centered pedagogy (Molebash and Fisher, 2003).

However, this transition cannot be successful without the participation of parental involvement.

A way that is germane in severing communication barriers and bridging the gaps among socioeconomic differences, disabilities, and ethnic differences is through technology (Follansbee et al., 1996; Otterbourg, 1998). It is believed that student success can be based on effective parental involvement. Effective communication includes consistency, content accessibility, and ensuring that the diverse needs of parents are able to be met (Follansbee et al., 1996; Otterbourg, 1998).

Based on Hendley’s (2013) results, technology communication had a great potential for increasing parental involvement. His study, in particular, on online communication endorsed positive parental involvement and, at the same time, supported contact without face-to-face confrontation. Follansbee et al. (1996) emphasized that
online communication was the most likely key element for severing the previously mentioned barriers to communication. It not only heightened parental involvement, it also supported student learning and ascertained that teachers who made access to online communication available also had a significant quantity of positive parent interactions than the teachers who did not have online accessibility. Reflecting on these findings and the previously revealed obstacles to parental involvement, a potential solution for increasing positive communication with parents is technology (Follansbee et al., 1996; Otterbourg, 1998).

Furthermore, results identified in the literature recommended creating an environment in which parents feel comfortable within the school setting, thereby fostering a greater participation rate among parents (Hendley, 2013). The study also concluded that online communication served to familiarize parents and guardians with the school, promoted parents' comfort levels, amplified participation, and increased technology use. Also, online communication granted parents access to information about the daily school calendar and upcoming events; therefore, a higher participation rate was noted in parental involvement. In addition, parents believed the online communication methods kept them better informed about school events and most participants believed methods improved communication between school and home. With these finding, then, the assertion that technology can play a role in improving home-school communication has validity (Hendley, 2013).

The review assessed three types of information to measure technology in the form of communication: the school calendar, the school lunch menu, and the daily school
news. The conclusions were (a) parents were much more favorable toward the school calendar (while the school lunch menu was viewed as being the least helpful of the three types of information); (b) parents wanted to know about upcoming events; and (c) parents were interested in daily school news. With the three types of information provided, parents were assisted with planning for participation, the school calendar provided them with an advance organizer, and time was allowed to schedule other activities around school events.

Furthermore, the results implied that the school’s webpage and the school’s newsletter were meaningful tools for increasing parental communication. However, final emphasis should be on locating additional means for promoting home-school communication in order to improve parental engagement. From the study, innovative communication tools through the use of technology seemed to correlate with increased parental involvement (Hendley, 2013).

**Academic Parent Teacher Teams Program (APTT)**

The components of the WestEd’s Academic Parent Teacher Teams (APTT) Model involved a classroom-based, teacher-directed, information-driven family involvement model (Lopez & Caspe, 2014). Its wide-range design was entrenched in demonstrating for families how to support children’s academic goals by connecting home and school learning; assisting with coaching and technical support, which also supported activities that align fiscal and human resources, and incorporate program evaluation and accountability; and assuring its research-based infrastructure is rooted in aligning
curriculum, instruction, and assessment as it builds the capacity of educators, families, and the community to advance student achievement (Lopez & Caspe, 2014).

According to Lopez and Caspe (2014), APTT is a logical and assimilated method to parent-teacher collaboration. Annually, the classroom teacher requests families to take part in three 75-minute meetings (all families must be represented) and one 30-minute individual meeting, which includes the student, the teacher, and the student’s family. Important information is shared during APTT meetings. Teachers (a) share student performance results that are measureable, (b) evaluate grade-level fundamental skills, and (c) exhibit tangible activities (through assimilation) that families can do at home to aid students in becoming fluent in those skills.

Another important element that occurs during the APTT meeting is that families get to practice the demonstrated activities with other families in the class, after which each family sets a 60-day academic goal for their student. When families attend APTT meetings, they leave feeling knowledgeable, their role is unambiguous, and they are empowered to help improve their child’s learning results (Lopez and Caspe, 2014). Through teacher coaching and mentoring, families can improve their capability to be legitimate collaborators for academic success. The focal points of the APTT model are:

- to change conventional parent teacher conferences;
- to allow teachers an average of 25 to 30 hours of contracted time in a year to be used for planning, preparing, and conducting APTT meetings;
• to display current student data so that during the first APTT team meeting, which takes place within the first three weeks of school, or as soon as benchmark data are available (information is relevant);
• to empower teachers with current statistics so that this data are available to drive planning, selection of grade level foundational skills, instruction, and goal setting with families;
• to provide individual 30-minute sessions with each family, which is another chief component of the program that comes next. These meetings typically happen during October and November. The first meeting occurs in early fall; the second APTT team meeting is generally assembled in the winter; and the last team meeting transpires in the spring. Families should have a minimum of least 60 days between team meetings to meet the academic goals they set for their children (Lopez & Caspe, 2014).

Parents’ Perceptions of the Usefulness of APTT

The APTT Program is designed to replace the traditional parent-teacher conferences. Its purpose is to provide parents with skills and activities they have learned from the teacher(s) during APTT meetings to utilize at home with their children. This approach employs parents as teachers and allows for more academic engagement from the parent in their child's learning.

Teachers’ Perceptions of the Usefulness of APTT

Since this program is a classroom-based, teacher-led, data-driven family engagement model (Lopez and Caspe, 2014), teachers are able to converse with parents
by demonstrating how to teach standard based skills at home. The premise behind this model is to more effectively engage parents in the academic life of the child. This model is used to measure the participation of parents in the school life of their children. Teachers are able to link academic goals at school with learning at home by engaging families in the APTT meetings. By increasing parental participation at school and home, schools should see an increase in academic performance by students.

**Cultural Capital**

Cultural capital is defined as a set of values, an exposure to information, and a world view understanding of the educational process. These values, information, and understandings give the individual influence in society. This knowledge is then used to navigate through the educational process. According to the Cultural Capital Theory, the more cultural capital a parent has, the more involved they are in their child’s learning (i.e., parents with more cultural capital regarding advanced placement classes, SAT and PSAT preparation, college and career choices, and knowledge are more apt to participate in their children’s school life than parents who are less informed and knowledgeable) (Lee & Bowen, 2006).

**Parents’ Demographics**

This section of the study examined parental demographics. Measuring demographics shows if there is a correlation between the dependent variable. Parent demographics included: parent’s level of education, occupation, socioeconomic level, parental structure, and ethnicity.
Parents’ Educational Level

Davis-Kean (2005) asserted that parental aspirations for their child’s education were found to correlate with parental educational backgrounds. The degree of schooling that parents obtain influences how they format their home life as well as how they intermingle with their children in encouraging academic achievement. According to Davis-Kean, parents who are extremely educated place more value on the significance of education and worth on the learning process; vastly educated parents are also more prone to produce environments for their children that are flourishing in educational materials, resources, and experiences (Davis-Kean, 2005). Therefore, these motivating environments are correlated to better academic outcomes. Acting as “co-teachers,” parents in the home may fashion improved balances of motivation and an ardent drive for their children (Davis-Kean, 2005).

According to Davis-Kean’s (2005) research, the temperament of parents’ predisposition toward and connection with their children’s education and schooling was significant; parental predisposition towards education was a predictor of student success. Parents with more education were more likely to get involved in the school, and better-educated parents were seemingly more proverbial with how schools operate; parents were more prone to being comfortable with school structure. Accordingly, children were sentient of their parents’ comfort levels with education and it was mirrored in their academic outcomes (Davis-Kean, 2005).

In an article entitled “Identifying and Removing Barriers to Student Achievement,” Baird, Pavelsky, Savage, and Valburg (n. d.) concluded that students who
held high expectations for themselves were a critical predictor in determining academic success. Expectations for school success were placed on children in school and in the home seemed to have had a positive effect on academic achievement. The lower the level of education of parents, the less likely they were to having high expectations for the children's academic career success (Baird et al., n.d). Even though teacher expectations of students were tremendously significant, more importantly were the students’ expectations of themselves. When parents’ perceptions of education were inadequate and they did not value the culture of learning, their children were doubtful to have high expectations for themselves and value the learning process (Baird et al., n.d).

**Parents’ Occupation**

The measure to which parents embrace high academic expectations and how they are to communicate their expectations to their children have fluctuated depending on the role of social strata and parental occupation. Cohen (1988) showed that “white-collar” parents had a propensity to persuade their children's academic achievement through acknowledged expectations and modeling, while “blue-collar” parents tended to influence their children through affirmed declarations only. While parents’ education-related viewpoints were extensively linked with their achievement-fostering behaviors in the home, for low-income African-American third and fourth graders, parent beliefs and expectations were more strongly associated to student achievement in reading and math than were parents’ account of training in the home (Cohen, 1988).

There was some verification for differences in the variety of parent expectations related to school and career. Cohen (1988) established that parents of low-achieving,
low-income African-American children placed more focus on good behavior more than learning. Interestingly, they still held great career ambitions for their children (e.g., doctor, lawyer, nurse), even when they were in early elementary grades. Parents of children who were high achievers academically supported learning more than behavior, and they specified that they wanted their children to attain their personal career goals (Cohen, 1988).

**Socioeconomic Level**

Battle and Coates (2004) conducted a study on black female achievement and the influence of family structure. According to the researchers, during their study, it appeared that one of the best forecasters of educational results for students, predominantly for girls who experienced or was experiencing poverty were their socioeconomic level. Socioeconomic Status (SES) has been used in many research studies to determine cause and effect.

According to Henderson and Mapp (2002) in their comprehensive study by the Southwest Education Development Laboratory (SEDL), parental involvement revealed positive outcomes on high student academic attainment at all socioeconomic levels, though engagement was more needful for low socioeconomic schools, as they were more probable to have lower test scores and graduation rates. The SEDL conclusions discovered that children who did have parents who were engaged in their school life, regardless of socioeconomic level, were more likely to graduate and go on to higher education, attend school frequently, earn high grades, have better test scores, engage in more academically challenging programs, and have better behavior and social skills. The
SEDL determined that the most prolific characteristic of parental involvement was learning at home. They found that programs which encouraged parents in extending school activities at home were the best predictors of future student achievement (Henderson & Mapp, 2002).

**Parental Structure**

Myers and Myers (2015) measured parental involvement through activities such as common school meetings, parent-teacher council (PTC) meetings, general scheduled parent–teacher conferences, school or class activities, volunteering in events, committee membership and participation, and fundraising involvement. The results of this study showed that parental involvement was significantly lower among all the nine nontraditional family types when compared to the category of a traditional biological married set of parents. Meanwhile, Myers and Myers emphasized that their study findings supported earlier research on family structures and impact on family involvement. These studies demonstrated that, compared to the family structure that has a set of two married biological parents, those in alternative families tended to drop out of high school more often, completed fewer years of formal schooling, scored lower on standardized tests, and reported lower grades than others (Myers & Myers, 2015). There were also studies that indicated that because students came from single-parent families, minority children had to endure educational disadvantages (Battle & Coates, 2004). Some researchers have focused on the adverse impacts of father-absence among black males, suggesting that the absence of a father can lead to poor educational
achievement, homosexuality, premarital sex, and criminal behavior (Battle & Coates, 2004).

According to Jeynes (2011), research into the impact of family structure on parental involvement is relatively recent because “researchers know little about the relationship between certain specific family structures and parental engagement” (p. 15). For example, there is little empirical knowledge demonstrating how living in a two-parent family enhances parental involvement.

**Ethnicity**

One of the serious concerns for schools is how to aggressively employ parents from groups that are considered marginal in the family-school joint endeavor process (De Gaetano, 2007). Although minority parents may have been marginalized in schools because of their race, class, and cultural differences, “many school workers deduced that Latino parents did not care about their children’s education” (De Gaetano, 2007, p. 145). According to De Gaetano, an often overlooked issue is how minority parents are to be persuaded to invest in the schooling process in ways that are affirming and empowering to them and in ways that are advantageous to schools.

Notably, numerous researchers emphasized the significance of building on culture and language when working with minority parents (De Gaetano, 2007). However, according to De Gaetano, it cannot be emphasized enough that it is not uncommon for schools to overlook or downright ignore the cultures and languages of parents that are different from that of the dominant culture. In light of the current family diversity in the United States, modern scholars have been highlighting the significance of using different
culturally appropriate methodological and theoretical frameworks to investigate ethnic families (Hossain & Shipman, 2009).

**Marital Status**

In a study conducted by Astone and McLanahan (1991), the relationship between family structures (whether both parents are present in the household) and student achievement in high school were examined. The authors incorporated ideologies from child development theories with sociological representations of academic accomplishment (Astone & McLanahan, 1991). In addition, the authors evaluated statistics from a high school study program of a 1986 sophomore cohort to determine whether differences in attainment were correlated with differences in parents’ educational ambition for the children and parenting styles. The conclusions from the study revealed that children who lived with single parents or stepparents during their teenage years received less support and help with school work than children who lived with both natural parents; differences in parental behavior, however, accounted for little of the difference in educational attainment between children from intact and non-intact families (Astone & McLanahan, 1991).

According to a multivariate study by Fantuzzo, Tighe, and Childs (2000), three types of parental involvement were examined: home-based involvement, school-based involvement, and home-school conferencing. There were higher levels of home-school conferencing and home-based involvement in two-parent families where there was a married couple than in single-parent households. Fantuzzo et al. developed and evaluated the Family Involvement Questionnaire (FIQ), a multidimensional scale of family involvement.
involvement in early childhood education. The FIQ was guided by theory and co-constructed with parents and teachers in preschool, kindergarten, and first-grade programs in a large urban school district. The constructs of the study revealed that parents with education beyond high school were engaged in higher levels of school-based involvement and home-school conferencing than parents with less than high school education (Fantuzzo et al., 2000). Head Start evidenced the highest levels of school-based involvement activity; however, higher school-based contact was not associated with higher levels of home-school conferencing or home-based involvement (Fantuzzo et al., 2000).

**Summary**

Parental involvement is integral to children’s success in their academic performances. Shown in this literature review were the various aspects of new family structures that are related to parental involvement. Additionally, the chapter discussed parental involvement in light of new family structures. To note, family structures have changed over time such that traditional definitions of families do not apply anymore in many cases. In most families, both parents work and the time to supervise children’s schooling is significantly reduced. Other families only have a mother or father raising the children as a result of either parents working abroad or parents being divorced. In more recent times, the family structure has evolved once again to include new factors, such as parents being of the same gender. This has come to the forefront of societal issues as marriage between same-sex couples has garnered greater acceptance in society.
CHAPTER III
THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Research Design

In this chapter, the research design and the theory of variables are highlighted. The independent and dependent variables are noted along with a brief description of their definitions and conceptual understandings. Also, within this chapter is a more defined description of the relationship among the independent and dependent variables.

The research was designed to utilize the structure of a mixed-method approach. Quantitative studies test specific hypotheses or examine the relationship between variables. These tested hypotheses are usually stated in advance and incorporate measures that can be analyzed statistically. This type of research uses tables or charts to display findings that can be generalized beyond the sample to a wider population (Gall, Borg, & Gall, 2003). Quantitative data disclose generalized information for a large sample of participants. This study tested the independent variables to examine if there was a significant relationship between the dependent variable—parental involvement.

Qualitative research is a situated activity that locates the observer in the world. It consists of a set of interpretive material practices that make the world visible (Creswell, 2007). These practices transform the world. They turn the world into a series of representations, including field notes, interviews, conversations, photographs, recordings, and memos to the self. Qualitative data can provide meaning and context in the
participant’s environment of study. This study explored the phenomena that the participants shared and how practices, policies, and future recommendations would be addressed.

The researcher chose to conduct a quantitative and qualitative study because together, both methods yielded the information necessary to adequately address the study. Within this framework, the chapter identified variables that were crucial in examining a significant relationship between the dependent and independent variables: accessibility, school’s communication, school’s climate, parents’ perceptions of their role in student learning, teachers’ perceptions of the role of technology, parents’ perceptions of the usefulness of the Academic Parent Teacher Teams (APTT) Program, teachers’ perceptions of the usefulness of the Academic Parent Teacher Teams (APTT) Program, Cultural Capital Theory, and parental demographics. Parental demographics—level of education, occupation, socioeconomic level, parental structure, ethnicity, and marital status—were defined within context and their relationship with parental involvement. This study used appropriate diagrams and charts to depict how these variables impacted upon each other through input and output connections to the dependent variable.

Variables and other key terms that framed this research are defined in this chapter. From the literature review, multiple theories were selected to analyze factors that shaped parent involvement; however, the theoretical framework for this research was based on the premise of eight theoretical perspectives that undergirded the significance of this investigation, and an examination of the three prevalent theories in support of those perspectives.
Definition of Variables and Other Terms

Dependent Variable

In this study, parental involvement is the dependent variable. Parental involvement, parental engagement, parental participation, and family engagement are used interchangeably. These terms are referred to as multiple subtle actions as well as overt and visible actions from the parent with the child’s academic learning in the home and school. For example, a family member may not be able to attend school meetings, but he or she can help the student with homework. Other at-home forms of participation less visible to the school but still indicative of parental engagement are used to define parental involvement.

This study examined the relationship between parents’ perceptions of school accessibility, parents’ perception of school communication, parents’ perceptions of school climate, parents’ role in student learning, teachers’ perceptions of the role of technology, parents’ perceptions of the usefulness of the APTT Program, teachers’ perceptions of the usefulness of the APTT Program, Cultural Capital Theory, and parents demographics (parents’ level of education, occupation, socioeconomic level, parental structure, ethnicity, and marital status), and parental involvement.

Independent Variables

For the purpose of this study, the variable, parents’ perceptions of the school’s accessibility, is defined as parents’ perception of how available faculty and staff are to assist them with information regarding their child’s education.
Parents’ perceptions of the school’s communication is defined as parents’ perceptions of how effective the school informs, involves, engages, and empowers them pertaining to school life.

Parents’ perceptions of the school’s climate is defined as the level of approachableness parents feel teachers and administrators are within the school and how welcoming the school environment is not only for the parents, but also for the student (Moos, 1981).

Parents’ perceptions of their role in student learning can also be referred to as role theory and, in general, suggests that roles are a set of expectations that are socially constructed and held by groups for describing the behavior of individual members. Additionally, parents’ role in student learning can be identified by how parents think they should participate in their children's learning.

Teachers’ perceptions of the role of technology is defined as how teachers view technology and its impact on the level of parental involvement in the life of the school.

Parents’ perceptions of the usefulness of the APTT program means parents’ perceptions of the effectiveness of the skills and activities taught during APTT meetings.

Teachers’ perceptions of the usefulness of the APTT program means teachers’ perceptions of parents’ participation during APTT meetings and the impact on parental involvement.

Cultural capital refers to the collection of symbolic elements such as skills, tastes, posture, clothing, mannerisms, material belongings, and credentials that one acquires through being part of a particular social class.
Parents’ demographics include parents’ level of education, occupation, socioeconomic level, parental structure, ethnicity, and marital status. The level of education is the highest degree the parent has obtained. Parents’ occupation is defined as the job or career that the parent maintains; the way parents financially support the family? Socioeconomic level refers to students who receive free or reduced lunch. Parental structure is defined as the relationship of the parent to the child (e.g., biological parents, non-biological parents, or guardians, etc.). Ethnicity refers to the race of the parents; this ethnicity can be racial, national, or tribal with emphasis on how the parents define themselves. Marital status refers to whether a parent is married, single, never married, divorced, separated, widowed, or engaged in alternative living arrangements.

Other Terms

New Parent/New Family Structure. Family structures have changed over time, such that traditional definitions of families do not apply anymore, in many cases (De Carvalho, 2001). In this regard, the “new parent” has emerged. The new parent or new family structure in this study is not the traditional nuclear family structure which typically included a husband, wife, and child; it is a person or persons living in the home, raising, nurturing, and participating in the academic learning of a child (i.e., foster parents, grandparents, single parents, aunts and uncles, guardians, and same gender parents), regardless of biological status. Also, the students in the home are classified as biological or nonbiological in relation to the parents.

Family-school/home-school/parent-school relationship. For the purpose of this study, family-school relationship, home-school relationship, and parent-school
relationship are used interchangeably. These terms mean the involvement, participation, and engagement of parents or guardians in the academic life of their children.

Educational theorists have identified some basic fundamentals of how children learn and develop, which provide guidance and support of learning during formal education (Epstein et al., 2009). Epstein et al. perceived overlapping spheres of influence, where school and family each contributes, suggesting that both environments—home and school—should be caring, welcoming and mutually supportive.

McDermott (2008) described the home-school relationship as a dynamic learning process for adults and children alike. He also suggested that the Incredible Years Movement understood that a caring relationship between parent, teacher, and child is fundamental to a child’s well-being. Children live in the socializing environments of home and school. Over the years, research has shown that strengthening the relationship between schools and families promoted children's school success (Lopez and Caspe, 2014).

Theory of Variables

Whether you plan on chaperoning your second-grader's school field trip, reading to your pre-kindergartner's class for career day, coaching your son’s baseball team or helping your little learner start a club, parental involvement has been seen as a positive influence in a child’s development. The theoretical framework for this study was composed of three key theories: Six Types of Parental Involvement (Epstein, 2009), Cultural Capital Theory (Lee & Bowen, 2006), and Role Construction Theory (Hoover-Dempsey et al., 2005).
Epstein et al. (2009) developed a framework for defining six different types of parent involvement. This framework has helped educators in developing school and family partnership programs. In the study, Epstein et al. noted: “There are many reasons for developing school, family, and community partnerships. The main reason to create such partnerships is to help all youngsters succeed in school and in later life” (pp. 25-38). The framework of Epstein et al. defined the six types of involvement and listed sample practices or activities that describe the involvement more fully. The authors’ work also described the challenges inherent in fostering each type of parent involvement as well as the expected results of implementing them for students, parents, and teachers.

The Epstein et al. Model for Parental Involvement included:

1. **Parenting**
   - Help all families establish home environments to support children as students.
   - Help parents with parenting skills, family support, understanding child and adolescent development, and helping set home conditions to support learning at each age and grade level. This stage of the model helps schools in considering families’ backgrounds, cultures, and goals for children when developing policies.

2. **Communicating**
   - Help to design effective forms of school-to-home and home-to-school communications about school programs and children's progress.
• Create an environment in which communication with families about school programs and student progress is ongoing. Involves two-way communication channels between school and home.

3. **Volunteering**

• School and classroom volunteer programs are developed to help teachers, administrators, students, and other parents create a school environment of acceptance.

• Improvement to develop better recruitment practices, training, activities, and schedules to involve families as volunteers and as audiences and participants at the school.

• Enable educators to work with volunteers who support students and the school. Annual postcard survey to identify all available talents, times, and locations of volunteers.

4. **Learning at Home**

• Provide information and ideas to families about how to help students at home with homework and other curriculum-related activities, decisions and planning.

• Involve families with their children's academic learning at home.

  Encourages teachers to design homework that enables students to share and discuss interesting tasks.
5. **Decision-Making**

- Include families as active participants in school decisions, governance, and advocacy through networks such as school councils or improvement teams, committees, and parent organizations. Parents are full partners in the decisions that affect children and families.

6. **Collaborating with the Community**

- Community resources are used to strengthen schools, family practices and student learning. Resources and services are available for families, students, and the school with community groups, including businesses, agencies, cultural and civic organizations, and colleges or universities.

- Enable all to contribute service to the community.

**Cultural Capital Theory**

Bourdieu's (1983) concept of cultural capital referred to the collection of symbolic elements, such as skills, tastes, posture, clothing, mannerisms, material belongings, and credentials that one acquires through being part of a particular social class. Sharing similar forms of cultural capital with others—the same taste in movies, for example, or a degree from an Ivy League school—creates a sense of collective identity and group position (“people like us”). But Bourdieu also addressed the notion that cultural capital is a major source of social inequality. Certain forms of cultural capital are valued over others, and can help or hinder one’s social mobility just as much as income or wealth (Bourdieu, 1983; Lee & Bowen, 2006).
According to Bourdieu (1983), cultural capital comes in three forms—embodied, objectified, and institutionalized. One’s accent or dialect is an example of embodied cultural capital, while a luxury car or record collection are examples of cultural capital in its objectified state. In its institutionalized form, cultural capital refers to credentials and qualifications such as degrees or titles that symbolize cultural competence and authority.

The Cultural Capital Theory developed by Bourdieu (1983) and applied to elementary schools by Lee and Bowen (2006), provided a theory for predicting how parents are involved in children’s elementary education. Specifically, it predicts that parents with greater cultural capital will be more involved and that involvement will be more efficacious in helping their children succeed. Since cultural capital can create social inequities, whether intentional or not, the more social cultural capital a parent has the more involved the parents are in their student’s learning. However, Lee and Bowen’s application of Bourdieu’s (1983) Cultural Capital Theory (CCT), specifically the concepts of field, habitus, and cultural capital (CC), offered a theoretical context as a basis for hypothesizing about those relationships.

The field, in this case the school, referred to the environment and the norms that are expected and valued within that environment (Lee & Bowen, 2006). Habitus included the individual’s values, the lens through which the individual sees the world, and one’s consequent actions (Lee & Bowen, 2006). The degree of fit between the field and habitus determines the level of cultural capital the parent has within that particular field (school). The more the habitus differs from the field, the greater chance there is for
misunderstanding, suspicion, and a devaluing of the individual; such individuals will feel less welcomed and, consequently, be less involved (Lee & Bowen, 2006).

**Role Construction Theory**

Within Hoover-Dempsey’s et al. (2005) revised model of parental involvement, there were five levels of parental beliefs and expectations that affect the type and level of parental involvement. Level 1 of the model emphasized three major factors that influence the variety and frequency of family involvement. These factors at level 1 interacted to shape the forms and frequencies of family involvement. These three factors were parents’ personal motivators, perceptions of invitations to be involved, and life context variables (Hoover-Dempsey et al., 2005). The two personal motivators identified in the model are parental role construction for involvement and parents’ sense of self-efficacy for helping their children to be successful during school years. Level 1.5 of the model defined several forms of involvement. One form of involvement incorporated parents’ clear communication with their children about their personal and family values, goals, expectations, and aspirations for student learning (Hoover-Dempsey et al., 2005). The model also acknowledged that families supported student learning through involvement activities at home.

Finally, the model included participation in school-based activities (Hoover-Dempsey et al., 2005). Level 2 of the model argued that parents influenced the students’ attributes necessary for school success. These active ingredients are: encouragement, modeling, reinforcement, and instruction. Level 3 asserted that these mechanisms remained inert unless students perceive their parents’ actions (Hoover-Dempsey et al.,
2005). Level 4 of the model viewed students as the authors of their academic success. It described a set of four student beliefs and behaviors associated with academic achievement: academic self-efficacy, intrinsic motivation to learn, self-regulatory skills, and social dimensions of school success (Hoover-Dempsey et al., 2005). Level 5 explained that the ultimate goal of the process is student achievement. The Hoover-Dempsey et al. model asserted that parent involvement, as described at each level of the process, influenced and to some degree predicted student outcomes.

**Relationship among Variables**

The predicted relationship among the independent and dependent variables were presented and examined in relation to parental involvement theories. Understanding the relationship of variables is the underpinning of determining the relationship between variables. A diagram has been included to further depict how these variables impact upon each other through their input/output connections. The framework for Epstein et al. (2009) different types of parental involvement addressed how accessibility, communication, and climate are important factors to help increase parental involvement through partnership. According to Epstein, “the main reason to create such partnerships is to help all youngsters succeed in school and in later life” (pp. 25-38).

Other theories suggested that parental involvement is influenced by norms and values within a particular societal environment. Cultural capital suggested that parental involvement can be influenced by parental beliefs and expectations. Cultural capital created a sense of collective identity and group position (i.e., “people like us”) (Lee &
Bowen, 2006). With this theory, parental demographics become fundamental predictors in increasing parental involvement.

The Hoover-Dempsey et al. (2005) model asserted that parental involvement influenced and to some degree predicted student outcomes. When parents felt it was their responsibility to participate in their student's learning, results indicated that parental involvement was greater among those parents with high expectations from their children.

Role Theory by Hoover et al. (2005) also suggested that teachers’ perceptions of the role of technology can be addressed by looking at teachers’ beliefs and expectations. How a teacher believes technology will enhance participation will affect the type and level of parental involvement. If parents have multiple opportunities to become involved in their child's school life, they participate more (Cary, 2006).

Based upon the information provided in this chapter, the examination measuring the relationship between the dependent and independent variables provided a greater understanding of the purpose for conducting this study based upon the theoretical perspectives shown in Figure 1.

**Limitations of the Study**

Even though current research suggested that parental involvement was beneficial at all grade levels and all types of schools (Jeynes, 2001), there were limitations to the current research:

1. A noticeable limitation of this study was that its focus was on one location and school. This study was conducted in a Title 1, urban school where all participants’ children attended.
Figure 1: Relationship among the independent and dependent variables.
2. Since this study was primarily a quantitative research approach, surveys were one of the data instruments that were utilized to collect and interpret data; therefore, another limitation was that the study had to assume that the self-reported data contained therein was truthful.

3. Another limitation of the study positioned that it must rely on the authenticity and accuracy of the respondents.

4. A fourth limitation of this study was that while most practitioners and researchers supported the policy direction of increased parent involvement, few agreed about what constitutes effective involvement (U.S. Department of Education, 1994). Confusion persisted regarding the activities, goals, and desired outcomes of various parent involvement programs and policies. A major source of this confusion was the lack of scientific rigor in the research informing practice and policy (U.S. Department of Education, 1994). For this reason, less is known about parent involvement than commonly is assumed. Nonetheless, early studies suggesting the importance of parent involvement were treated as definitive, regardless of the equivocal nature of the data, and these studies were used to support the position that all types of parent involvement are important (Jeynes, 2011).

5. Another limitation posited by this study was that there is more research on single parents and stepparents than other forms of “new” family structures and their relationship with parental involvement (Myers & Myers, 2015). This study did not yield any nontraditional family structures, but contained enough
allusive information to ensure the attention of researchers of social science, policy makers, and educators.

6. A final limitation of the study showed that the final sample parent population was limited in size and did not fully reflect the representation of the schools' total parent population. During the project, the researcher was given another job opportunity and was not available to distribute and collect parent surveys; thus, a small parent sample was used.

**Summary**

This research study investigated the relationship of factors that influence parental involvement in nontraditional family structures—situated in an urban, Title 1 elementary school located outside of the Metropolitan area of the city. The study investigated areas related to the following: parents’ perceptions of school’s accessibility, parents’ perceptions of the school’s communication, parents’ perceptions of the school climate, parents’ perceptions of their role in student's learning, teachers’ perceptions of the role of technology, parents’ perceptions of the usefulness the APTT Program, teachers’ perceptions of the usefulness of the APTT Program, Cultural Capital Theory, and parental demographics (parents’ level of education, occupation, socioeconomic level, parental structure, ethnicity, and marital status), and parental involvement.
CHAPTER IV
RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

A mixed-method approach was used for setting forth this framework and carrying out the research inquiry of this study which includes the setting, the procedures for selecting the participants, the instruments, and other methods of gathering information. The Pearson Correlation analysis, ANOVA test, and a descriptive-analysis approach were used for assessing the data and drawing meaning from such data.

Research Design

A quantitative research approach was chosen as the primary method of design because this study examined the relationship between factors that influenced parental involvement within the new family structure. Within quantitative research, the emphasis is on objectivity and the use of statistics or data gathered through interviews, surveys, polls, or questionnaires (Wiersma & Jurs, 2009). With quantitative research methods, numerical data are gathered and then generalized across groups of people to explain trends or phenomena. This study examined the significant relationship of factors to parental involvement with the key sources of data used being a document analysis of parent surveys.

A qualitative research approach was also chosen as a secondary method of design due to the nature of the hypothesis under examination. The qualitative design utilized a phenomenological approach to analyze the data. A phenomenological approach,
according to Creswell (2007), is defined as individuals sharing a common experience or phenomenon. Researchers turn to a phenomenon or an abiding concern of interest to describe what constitutes the nature of the lived experience. The description of the phenomenon is very detailed in nature and maintains a strong relationship to the topic under study. Data collection from the individuals who have experienced the phenomenon often consists of in-depth, multiple interviews with participants. A phenomenological approach focuses attention on gathering data that will lead to a textual description and a structural description of the experience (Creswell, 2007). It is important to recognize these experiences so that policies and practices can be developed to provide a deeper, more meaningful understanding about the features of the phenomenon.

The key qualitative data source was open-ended interviews from teachers transcribed by the researcher. Both data sources were used to address the following research questions:

RQ1: Is there a significant relationship between parents’ perceptions of the school’s accessibility and parental involvement?

RQ2: Is there a significant relationship between parents’ perceptions of the school’s communication and parental involvement?

RQ3: Is there a significant relationship between parents’ perceptions of the school’s climate and parental involvement?

RQ4: Is there a significant relationship between parents’ perceptions of their role in students’ learning and parental involvement?
RQ5: What are teachers’ perceptions of the role of technology and parental involvement?

RQ6: What are parents’ perceptions of the usefulness of the Academic Parent Teacher Teams (APTT) Program and its impact on parental involvement?

RQ7: What are teachers’ perceptions of the usefulness of the Academic Parent Teacher Teams (APTT) Program and its impact on parental involvement?

RQ8: Does the level of cultural capital make a significant difference in parents’ involvement in their children's schooling?

RQ9: Is there a significant relationship between parents’ demographics—level of education, occupation, socioeconomic level, parental structure, ethnicity, and marital status—on parental involvement?

Description of Organization and Setting

This section describes the physical location and key components of the locale for the study under examination. The school in which the study took place is a Title 1 school because over 80% of the students receive free or reduced lunch, which makes it a viable source for examination of information and research. For reasons of anonymity, the school in this research will be hereafter known as N.A.A. Elementary School.

Organization

This study examined parental involvement within the context of the "new" family structure and factors that influenced parental involvement. The cultural context was a pre-k through fifth grade, small, urban, elementary school located outside of the metropolitan area of the city. Since a redistricting in 1988-1989, N.A.A. Elementary
School has housed elementary grades—prekindergarten through fifth. Enrolment has remained steady at slightly more than 450 to 500 students. The racial makeup of the school was Caucasian (42.8%), African American (42.4%), Hispanic (10.5%), and multiracial (3.5%). Eighty-five percent of students received a free or reduced lunch. This was the highest percentage of free and reduced lunch in the area where the study was conducted. The student/teacher ratio at this school was 15:2, which is the ninth best among 19 elementary schools in this particular school district. Table 1 gives an exact differentiation of demographics.

Table 1

*N.A.A. Elementary School Demographics*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Demographic</th>
<th>Number/Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Total Population</td>
<td>455</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>231 (50.7%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>224 (49.3%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hispanic</td>
<td>48 (10.5%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>African-American</td>
<td>193 (42.4%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Caucasian</td>
<td>195 (42.8%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Multiracial</td>
<td>16 (3.5%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EcD (Free/Reduced Lunch)</td>
<td>85%*</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(*As of end of 2013-2014)

| Total Minority Population           | 260 (57.1%)    |

| Enrollment by Grade                |                |
| Pre-K                               | 47 (avg. 23)   |
| K                                   | 53 (avg. 18)   |

(continued)
Table 1 (continued)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Demographic</th>
<th>Number/Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>84 (avg. 21)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>83 (avg. 21)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>69 (avg. 23)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>59 (avg. 20)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>60 (avg. 20)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Setting**

The demographics, economics, and growth of this city and school under study have changed dramatically over many decades. According to the local Chamber of Commerce (2015), the antebellum and Victorian style homes seem to have dominated the city's early and mid-19th century development. Some of most beautiful houses and buildings are contained in this city’s six historic districts. The central business district has many different architectural style buildings such as Neoclassical, Italianate, Classical Revival, Romanesque, and Victorian.

The nine-square block district is laid out in a grid pattern and can be said to mimic that of the Washington-type plan in Georgia, which includes wide avenues and a public square. The square is affixed with a Neo-Greek Revival courthouse which was built in 1904. The center of the dome rises more than 100 feet above the square and was fitted for a four-face clock that was originally hand wound but was converted to electric in the mid 1900s. Religious presence was integral in the central business district as well as the first Carnegie-endowed library in the state and within this district. The historic black commercial section in the district is a rare survivor of the once segregation of black
and white commercial areas. Combined, the district tells the story of rich commercial history in the early 19th century of the city.

Today, there is a great lineup of specialty retail shops and restaurants that line the streets in this 21st century city. There is an outdoor mall situated in this now high-growth area; 900,000 square feet of great power and lifestyle retailing features a generous use of green space, boulevard parking, and distinctive architecture. The center is strategically located adjacent to power retail including other major commerce, forming a retail nucleus for a trade area that draws from many surrounding counties. According to the local Chamber of Commerce (2015) statistics, there is 5.4 million square feet of retail space within a three-mile radius of this outdoor mall; the city opened a 362,000 square feet, 136-bed, state-of-the-art hospital in late 2012. It is staffed by more than 800 employees and has a medical staff of over 300 physicians. A large motor company opened their $1.2 billion automotive plant in 2009, creating 2,500 jobs in the market; also adjacent to the center, another medical facility opened their new 212,000 square feet facility in late 2012 as well. The hospital includes 50 beds, created more than 500 new jobs, and is expected to generate $500 million in economic activity in the first 5 years. This city is staffed with major industrial commerce; it is 19.5 square miles and its population is approximately 33,039.

According to the U.S. Census (2008), from 2000-2010, the population of the city grew by 42.7% as compared to 1990-2000, when the county grew by 65.7%. The city grew by 30% from 1990-2000 and in 2000-2010 grew 103.4%, with an average household income of $36,142.00. The census also recorded that the racial composition of
the city indicated that 59% were Caucasian, 30% were African-American, and 3% were Asian. The remaining 3% population included American Indian or Eskimo, Asian or Pacific Islander, and Other. Of all races, 89% of the census population identified themselves as non-Hispanics or Latinos, while 11% identified themselves as such. The age distribution projected that 35-44 year olds made up the highest percentage of the population (17.0%), followed by 5-14 year olds at 15.6%, 45-54 year olds at 14.2%, and 15-24 year olds at 13.6% (U.S. Census, 2008). Additionally, the latest information showed that 29.4% of citizens in the city were high school graduates, 18.6% had some college experience, and 25.1% were college graduates (U.S. Census, 2008).

With more than 22,464 students in 30 schools, the school system experienced a growth rate of 4-6% each year (Chamber of Commerce, 2015). The school system consisted of 1 pre-K school, 20 elementary schools, 7 middle schools, 3 high schools, 1 technology charter school, and an alternative school.

**Sampling Procedures**

This study utilized a sample method to collect the necessary data for the research from the selected N.A.A. Title 1 Elementary School. The sample consisted of only parents who had students in grades K-5. The researcher guaranteed anonymity and confidentiality for all participants. None of the participants was identifiable in any printed documents and subjects participated voluntarily.

**Population**

The overall population of parents from this Title 1 elementary school was estimated to be between 450-500 individuals. Some 200 parents who had children
enrolled in grades kindergarten through fifth were selected to participate in the study. The study targeted participants who shared the experience of raising children absent of the traditional nuclear family. Grandparents, single parents, foster parents, stepparents, Godparents, guardians, aunts, and uncles were the categories of the new family structure that the researcher aimed for as participants in this research. This category also included cultural diversity, potential lingual differences, and same gender relationships.

Nine classroom teachers participated in the research; however, 12 regular education teachers who conduct Academic Parent Teacher Teams (APTT) meetings for parental involvement were randomly selected from the population to be interviewed. Teachers were chosen independent of a particular subject or grade level taught. Age, level of education, and other demographics of the parents were measured using the devised instrumentation.

**Working with Human Subjects**

All participants were offered the opportunity to participate in the study by signing a consent form. All potential participants were over the age of 18 years and were able to provide self-consent. Upon agreement to participate, all participants were told the nature and intent of the study and given a brief letter which outlined the purpose of the study, the parameters of the study (participant requirements and responsibilities), as well as any associated potential risks or benefits as a result of participating in the study (there were no risks associated with participation in this study).

Participants were also provided an interview timeframe and a letter of confidentiality, which ensured the safekeeping of their identities and ensured that all
information collected would only be used for the purpose of the study. Within the letter of confidentiality, a statement was made to acknowledge that all participants understood that no monetary benefit was gained by themselves or the researcher in participating in the survey.

The researcher submitted documentation for the study to the Internal Review Board (IRB) of Clark Atlanta University for permission and clearance to complete the study and also to determine appropriateness of the instruments that were administered to the human subjects. The researcher also gained the permission from the institution's district under study to conduct the research as prescribed. After permission was granted at all levels, the researcher supplied a statement of introduction to the projected participants.

**Instrumentation**

The instrumentation by which this mixed research method utilized was to show the relationship between variables consisted of two data sources: interviews and surveys. A survey was formulated using a three-point frequency scale developed by the researcher in collaboration with the dissertation committee at Clark Atlanta University (CAU). Additionally, the survey collected demographical information regarding the participants. Likewise, the researcher developed an open ended questionnaire, approved by the dissertation committee at CAU, for interviews conducted with 12 regular education teachers. Both instruments were used in conjunction to assess parental involvement (Griffith, 1996; Hagedorn, Roth, O’Donnell, Smith, & Mulligan, 2008; Ringenberg, Funk, Mullen, Wilford, & Kramer, 2005). All interviews of teachers were conducted at
N.A.A. Elementary School where the children of the participating parents attended. Questions during the interviews centered on the usefulness of the APTT Program and its impact on parental involvement. Additional questions of the interview for teachers addressed the role of technology and parental involvement.

There are many benefits to multiple data sources. The first benefit is the ability to compare past literature with present dynamics to see what worked in the past to make better judgments in the future. Another benefit of multiple data sources is that it affords the capacity to analyze multiple voices. Using multiple data sources provides the ability to understand and appreciate different perspectives. Finally, because parent involvement includes both parents and educators, utilizing multiple data sources increases collaboration efforts between the two. Thus, parents have an active voice, which allows them to feel a sense of ownership in the decisions that affect their children's education.

**Participants**

A convenient sample population of 200 parents who had students enrolled in grades kindergarten through fifth grade was selected to participate in the study. The participants in this study all had children attending N.A.A. Elementary School, a Title 1 school located outside of the metropolitan area of the city, therefore, making them viable candidates to participate in this research. These parents were selected because they were the primary caregivers of the children. Some were already identified based on their current parent-school relationship.

Stratified random sampling ensures small subgroups (strata) are represented (Marshall, 1996). It is normally proportional to their part of the population. Researchers
segment the population into strata, then randomly select within that strata (Marshall, 1996). The total population of teachers who participated in the study was 75, but a sample population of teachers was stratified by grade. Twelve regular education teachers who conducted APTT meetings were randomly selected (two per grade level) to represent the teacher population.

Access to conduct the study was gained by permission from the school district in which the elementary school was located, as well as the administration of the elementary school from which the selected participants (parents and teachers) were drawn. Additional approval was granted from the Internal Review Board (IRB) at Clark Atlanta University to proceed with in the implementation of the study.

**Location of Research**

All interviews of teachers were conducted at N.A.A. Elementary School outside the municipal area of the city where the participating parents' children attended. Parent surveys were disseminated personally by the researcher's team, which consisted of the selected school's principal, academic coach, and one teacher. Questions during the interviews and on the surveys addressed factors that influenced parental involvement within the school and how they affected the daily life as a new family structure.

**Data Collection Procedures**

The steps used to collect the necessary data were numerated clearly and carefully. All procedures were detailed to ensure that other researchers could replicate the study easily using the same procedures. The nature of the materials and other instruments that
were used to gather data was specified. Surveys were used to collect data from parents, and the method of data collection from teachers was semistructured interviews.

**Survey for the Parents**

The administration of various instruments collected data that were germane in providing insight to understanding factors that influenced parental involvement or predictors that determined parental involvement. Two hundred surveys were administered to parents with children in grades kindergarten through fifth to facilitate the appropriate collection of data as it related to examining the relationship between parental involvement and parents’ perceptions of school’s accessibility, parents’ perceptions of the school’s communication, parents’ perceptions of the school’s climate, parents’ perceptions of the role in students’ learning, teachers’ perceptions of the role of technology, parents’ perceptions of the usefulness of the APTT Program, teachers’ perceptions of the usefulness of the APTT Program, and parental demographics (parents’ level of education, occupation, socioeconomic level, parental structure, marital status, and ethnicity).

Data were collected by the distribution of a three-point frequency survey scale approved by the researcher’s dissertation committee. The 200 surveys were sent out to parents within the Title 1 elementary school under examination either through electronic means or personal delivery by the researcher’s team. However, it also was administered on site for parents who self-selected to participate. Teachers were asked to place surveys in students' daily communication folders (a previously devised means of communicating with parents) on the first official school day, and upon completion, returned to the
researcher's team by the teachers. Instructions were provided for the completion of the survey. The survey questions filtered out those parents that were of a traditional nuclear family structure. The timeline for administering, completing and receiving the returned surveys was one school business week. Follow-up was made on two more days of the following week to ensure successful and timely completion of the instruments.

Parents were given a letter of confidentiality (Appendix A) associated with this research survey and was guaranteed anonymity, except in the instance of generalized demographics. Participants were also informed through a subsection on the letter of confidentiality that there was no payment associated with completing the survey. The completion of the survey was strictly voluntary and for the sole purpose of research. No monetary value was associated with the completion of the survey for the participants or the researcher.

**Interviews with Teachers**

As it relates to one-on-one interviewing, “the researcher needs individuals who are not hesitant to speak and share ideas, and needs to determine a setting in which this is possible” (Creswell, 2007, p. 133). This will help to assure that the researcher has adequate tools and information from which to draw conclusions. Interviews also provide the opportunity to speak freely and candidly about potential questions for the interview.

Twelve teachers were asked to participate in the interview process in order to present another voice or perspective to the research; nine responded in the affirmative. Teachers from the same elementary school as the parent participants in the study were asked to complete an interview. During the one-on-one interviews, an audio recording
was employed and the recordings were transcribed. Interviews were held at the elementary school of the study. Participants were notified of the interview audio recording and copies of the transcription were available for each interviewee for review and approval at the conclusion of the research study. Along with responses from the interviews, notes were documented as a reference to any nonverbal modes of communication offered by the participants that were observed during the course of the interaction between the researcher and respondent. Bogdan and Bilkin (2003) stated that personal logging “helps the researcher to keep track of the development of the project” (p. 74).

**Description of Data Analysis Method**

Quantitative analysis is the process of presenting and interpreting numerical data (Bryman, 2006). A Pearson correlation analysis in quantitative research was utilized to substantiate this research study and establish face and content validity. Correlation is a unique technique for investigating the relationship between two quantitative, continuous variables (Bryman, 2006). The Pearson correlation coefficient also measures the strength and direction of the association between two variables (Bryman, 2006). The “results” section of research studies, including quantitative data analysis, often contains **descriptive statistics** and **inferential statistics** (Bryman, 2006).

The qualitative method utilized a phenomenological approach to analyze the data. A phenomenological approach, according to Creswell (2007), is defined as individuals sharing a common experience or phenomenon. It is important to recognize these experiences so that policies and practices can be developed to provide a deeper and more
meaningful understanding about the features of the phenomenon. This study used the
data collected to provide a better understanding of practices and policies and their effect
on parental involvement.

Since this study examined factors that influenced parental involvement and
teachers’ and parents’ perceptions of the APTT Program, a mixed-method approach was
used. Research questions 1-4 and questions 6 and 8 used a quantitative method to
examine the relationship of variables through Pearson correlation analysis; the interview
data of the teachers were evaluated using a qualitative method. The quantitative side
involved survey research, while the qualitative side used the semistructured interviews.

However, research questions 5 and 7 (teachers’ perceptions of the usefulness of
the APTT Program and teachers’ perceptions of the use of technology) used analysis of
variance (ANOVA). Analysis of variance (ANOVA) permits examination of several
samples at the same time for purposes of determining whether a significant relationship
exists between them (Hayes & Preacher, 2014). Reasoning is identical to t-tests; analysis
of variance includes independent variables of two or more samples (Hayes & Preacher,
2014). Differences between samples as well as the difference within one sample are
determined. ANOVA is based upon four assumptions: the level of measurement, the
sampling method, the distribution of the population, and the homogeneity of the variance
(Hayes & Preacher, 2014). In order to determine whether differences are significant,
ANOVA is concerned with differences between and within the samples, which is referred
to as the variance. It can evaluate if the variance is larger between samples as compared
to that among sample members. If differences are found to be true, then the differences are considered to be significant.

The primary data analysis was the survey dealing with the parents’ component of the research study (Appendix B); the survey provided detailed insights of what and how various factors influenced parental involvement. Additionally, a qualitative method using interviews of teachers served as a secondary source of the research method that should further substantiate the significance of this research. The researcher compiled the data and completed the analysis process with support provided by the dissertation team. The ultimate goal of data analysis was to draw conclusions about the factors that influence parental involvement. Together, all information, both qualitative and quantitative, were utilized to draw important conclusions about the factors that influence parental involvement.

**Summary**

Conducting interviews and examining the relationship among variables through surveys were all data-rendering sources that were tested by the Pearson Correlation analysis and Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) and applied to the initial problem or inquiry. By administering a survey, quantitative information produced substantiation of the significance of this study. Such information created an even greater foundation for adding new knowledge and facts to understanding the factors that influence parental involvement.

Based upon information that was rendered as a result of the research inquiry, it was important to establish credibility of the data that was developed. According to
Eisner (1991), it is important to “seek a confluence of evidence that breeds credibility that allows us to feel confident about our observations, interpretations, and conclusions” (p. 110). The data gathered were evaluated to show whether or not a correlational relationship between the level of parental involvement and factors that influence it existed. In addition, the data presented a persuasive argument that the original research questions were worthy of investing time and effort to answer.
CHAPTER V
ANALYSIS OF THE DATA

Introduction

The purpose of this study was to examine factors that influenced parental involvement, particularly from nontraditional families. The data analysis process was based on the research questions derived from the theoretical framework, which concentrated on determining the relationship between the independent variables: accessibility, communication, school climate, parents’ perceptions of their role in students’ learning, teachers’ perceptions of the role of technology, parents’ perception of the usefulness of the APTT Program, teachers’ perceptions of the usefulness of the APTT Program, Cultural Capital Theory, and parents’ demographics; the dependent variable was parental involvement. This chapter presents the results of the data analysis of both the quantitative and qualitative studies, respectively.

Quantitative Data Analysis

Analysis of Descriptive Data

The demographic data of parents who participated in the study were analyzed using descriptive statistics. A total of 35 out of 200 respondents participated in the quantitative portion of the study. An analysis of demographic data is presented in the following tables. Table 2 shows that 30.3% of the participants had an associate degree or other technical skills training.
As noted in Table 3, 27.3% of the participants in the study were in an occupation that required a four-year degree.

Table 2

*Educational Level of Participants*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percent</th>
<th>Valid Percent</th>
<th>Cumulative Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Valid</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HS/GED</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>25.7</td>
<td>27.3</td>
<td>27.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TC/A.A.</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>28.6</td>
<td>30.3</td>
<td>57.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>College</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>22.9</td>
<td>24.2</td>
<td>81.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Graduate School</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>11.4</td>
<td>12.1</td>
<td>93.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Post Graduate</td>
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<td>5.7</td>
<td>6.1</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>System</td>
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<td>5.7</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
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</tr>
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Table 3

*Occupation of Participants*

<table>
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<th>Valid Percent</th>
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</thead>
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<tr>
<td>Valid</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not Employed</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>20.0</td>
<td>21.2</td>
<td>21.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TS/Training</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>14.3</td>
<td>15.2</td>
<td>36.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Degree</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>25.7</td>
<td>27.3</td>
<td>63.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sales</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>5.7</td>
<td>6.1</td>
<td>69.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Management</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>5.7</td>
<td>6.1</td>
<td>75.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Self Employed</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>8.6</td>
<td>9.1</td>
<td>84.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sprv 1-5</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>8.6</td>
<td>9.1</td>
<td>93.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sprv 5+</td>
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<td>5.7</td>
<td>6.1</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>94.3</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Missing</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>System</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>5.7</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 4 highlights that 61.8% of the participants in this study lived with their biological mother whether she was married or single.

Table 4

Participants’ Relationship to Child

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percent</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Valid</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mother</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>60.0</td>
<td>61.8</td>
<td>61.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Father</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>14.3</td>
<td>14.7</td>
<td>76.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grandparent</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>11.4</td>
<td>11.8</td>
<td>88.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Step parent</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>5.7</td>
<td>5.9</td>
<td>94.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B/FM</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>5.7</td>
<td>5.9</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>97.1</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Missing</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>System</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2.9</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In Table 5, parental demographics reveal that there was an even distribution of parents that classified their children as receiving free or reduced lunch and paying full price for lunch; both showed 48.5% and 3.0% no response.

Table 5

Socioeconomic Status (SES) of Participants

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percent</th>
<th>Valid Percent</th>
<th>Cumulative Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Valid</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F/R</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>45.7</td>
<td>48.5</td>
<td>48.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Full Price</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>45.7</td>
<td>48.5</td>
<td>97.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No Response</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2.9</td>
<td>3.0</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>94.3</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Missing</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>System</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>5.7</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
As shown in Table 6, the marital status of participants was 70.6% married, 17.6% single, and 5.9% divorced.

Table 6

*Marital Status of Participants*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percent</th>
<th>Valid Percent</th>
<th>Cumulative Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Valid</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Single</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>17.1</td>
<td>17.6</td>
<td>17.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Married</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>68.6</td>
<td>70.6</td>
<td>88.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Divorce</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>5.7</td>
<td>5.9</td>
<td>94.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Widow</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2.9</td>
<td>2.9</td>
<td>97.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alternative Living Arrangement</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2.9</td>
<td>2.9</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>97.1</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Missing</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>System</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2.9</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 7 indicates that 52.9% of the respondents were between the ages of 30-39.

This represented the highest category of the age groups that responded.

Table 7

*Age of Participants*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percent</th>
<th>Valid Percent</th>
<th>Cumulative Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Valid</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20-29</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>8.6</td>
<td>8.8</td>
<td>8.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30-39</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>51.4</td>
<td>52.9</td>
<td>61.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>40-49</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>28.6</td>
<td>29.4</td>
<td>91.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>50-59</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>8.6</td>
<td>8.8</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>97.1</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Missing</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>System</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2.9</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 8 establishes that 44.1% of the respondents identified themselves as white, non-Hispanic which was the highest representatives for this group of participants, followed by blacks at 35.3%, Hispanic at 11.8%, and others at 8.8%.

Table 8

*Ethnicity of Participants*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percent</th>
<th>Valid Percent</th>
<th>Cumulative Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Valid</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Black</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>34.3</td>
<td>35.3</td>
<td>35.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hispanic</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>11.4</td>
<td>11.8</td>
<td>47.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>White</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>42.9</td>
<td>44.1</td>
<td>91.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>8.6</td>
<td>8.8</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>97.1</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Missing</td>
<td>System</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2.9</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The researcher collected a total of 35 out of 200 surveys from participants that were elementary school parents in this Title 1 public school setting. In addition to the selected variables as they related to demographics (survey questions 42-94), the survey also included questions concerning parents’ perceptions of the school’s accessibility (survey questions 1-6), parents’ perceptions of the school’s communication (survey questions 7-12), parents’ perceptions of the school’s climate (survey questions 13-18), parents’ perceptions of their role in students’ learning (survey questions 19-25), parents’ perceptions of the usefulness of the Academic Parent Teacher Teams (APTT) Program (survey questions 26-32); survey questions 42-57 captured information for the question,
“Does the level of cultural capital make a significant difference in parent's involvement in their children schooling.”

The dependent variable, parental involvement (survey questions 33-41) was assembled on the survey and measured utilizing a three-point frequency scale with the following response options: 3 = Always, 2 = Sometimes, and 1 = Never. Summary analysis was conducted utilizing the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) software. A Pearson r Correlation and ANOVA were employed. The Pearson Correlation probability level of 0.05 indicated a significant relationship between variables. The survey results were evaluated and displayed in Table 9 where indicated.

Table 9

*Pearson Correlation of Variables*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>ParInvolve</th>
<th>SchlAccess</th>
<th>SchlComm</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Pearson Correlation</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>-0.39</td>
<td>-0.53</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sig. (2-tailed)</td>
<td></td>
<td>0.826</td>
<td>0.764</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pearson Correlation</td>
<td>-0.039</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0.214</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SchlAccess</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sig. (2-tailed)</td>
<td>0.826</td>
<td></td>
<td>0.217</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>35</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pearson Correlation</td>
<td>-0.053</td>
<td>0.214</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SchlComm</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sig. (2-tailed)</td>
<td>0.764</td>
<td>0.217</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pearson Correlation</td>
<td>0.281</td>
<td>0.223</td>
<td>0.458**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SchlClim</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sig. (2-tailed)</td>
<td>0.102</td>
<td>0.197</td>
<td>0.006</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>35</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

(continued)
Table 9 (continued)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ParStudLearn</th>
<th>ParInvolve</th>
<th>SchlAccess</th>
<th>SchlComm</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Pearson Correlation</td>
<td>.196</td>
<td>-.090</td>
<td>-.344*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sig. (2-tailed)</td>
<td>.259</td>
<td>.607</td>
<td>.043</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>35</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pearson Correlation</td>
<td>.446**</td>
<td>.083</td>
<td>.312</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UsefulnessAPTT</td>
<td>Sig. (2-tailed)</td>
<td>.007</td>
<td>.634</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>35</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
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<th>SchlClim</th>
<th>ParStudLearn</th>
<th>UsefulnessAPTT</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Pearson Correlation</td>
<td>.281</td>
<td>.196</td>
<td>.446**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sig. (2-tailed)</td>
<td>.102</td>
<td>.259</td>
<td>.007</td>
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<td>35</td>
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<td>Pearson Correlation</td>
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<td>-.090</td>
<td>.083</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SchlAccess</td>
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<td>.607</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pearson Correlation</td>
<td>.458**</td>
<td>-.344*</td>
<td>.312</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SchlComm</td>
<td>Sig. (2-tailed)</td>
<td>.006</td>
<td>.043</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pearson Correlation</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>.000</td>
<td>.284</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SchlClim</td>
<td>Sig. (2-tailed)</td>
<td>1.000</td>
<td>.098</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pearson Correlation</td>
<td>.000</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>.169</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ParStudLearn</td>
<td>Sig. (2-tailed)</td>
<td>1.000</td>
<td>.331</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pearson Correlation</td>
<td>.284</td>
<td>.169</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UsefulnessAPTT</td>
<td>Sig. (2-tailed)</td>
<td>.098</td>
<td>.331</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>35</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

*. Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).
Data Analysis of Research Questions

RQ1: Is there a significant relationship between parents’ perceptions of the school’s accessibility and parental involvement?

According to this sample of the population from Table 9, Pearson Correlation of .826 indicated that there was no significant relationship between parents' perception of school's accessibility and parental involvement.

RQ2: Is there a significant relationship between parents’ perceptions of the school’s communication and parental involvement?

As indicated by Table 9, Pearson Correlation of .764 indicated no relationship between parents’ perceptions of the school’s communication and parental involvement.

RQ3: Is there a significant relationship between parents’ perceptions of the school’s climate and parental involvement?

A Pearson Correlation of .102 is indicative of no relationship between parents’ perception of the school’s climate and parental involvement (see Table 9).

RQ4: Is there a significant relationship between parents’ perceptions of their role in students’ learning and parental involvement?

A Pearson Correlation of .259 indicated no relationship between parent's perception of their role in student's learning and parental involvement (see Table 9).

RQ6: What are parents’ perceptions of the usefulness of the Academic Parent Teacher Teams (APTT) Program and its impact on parental involvement?

The parents surveyed agreed that the APTT Program was a useful program and had an impact on parental involvement. A Pearson Correlation measured a 0.007 rating
indicating a significant relationship between the usefulness of the Academic Parent Teacher Teams Program and parental involvement (see Table 9).

RQ8: Does the level of cultural capital make a significant difference in parents’ involvement in their children’s schooling?

Cultural capital was measured based on survey questions 42-57—parents’ educational level and parents’ occupations. An Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) shown in Table 10 indicates a rating of .768 for parental involvement and parents’ level of education; Table 11 shows a rating of .510 for parental involvement and parents’ occupation. There was no significant relationship between or within these groups as shown in both tables.

Table 10

ANOVA: Parental Involvement and Educational Level of Parents

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Sum of Squares</th>
<th>df</th>
<th>Mean Square</th>
<th>F</th>
<th>Sig.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Between Groups</td>
<td>21.613</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5.403</td>
<td>.455</td>
<td>.768</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Within Groups</td>
<td>332.447</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>11.873</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>354.061</td>
<td>32</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 11

ANOVA: Parental Involvement and Occupation of Parents

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Sum of Squares</th>
<th>df</th>
<th>Mean Square</th>
<th>F</th>
<th>Sig.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Between Groups</td>
<td>77.498</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>11.071</td>
<td>.916</td>
<td>.510</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Within Groups</td>
<td>302.017</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>12.081</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>379.515</td>
<td>32</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
According to this study and the sample population used, parents’ level of education or their occupation did not make a significant difference in their involvement in their children’s school activities.

A cross tabulation in Figures 2 and 3 were also used to support the rating from Tables 10 and 11. The variables were grouped in two categories: low educational level and high educational level. The results were consistent with Tables 10 and 11 in that no significant relationship among parental involvement and parents’ level of education or parents’ occupation was found among this group that participated.

Figure 2: Cross tabulation: parental involvement and educational level of parents.
Figure 3: Cross tabulation: parental involvement and parents’ occupations.

RQ9: Is there a significant relationship between parents’ demographics—level of education, occupation, socioeconomic level, parental structure, ethnicity, and marital status—on parental involvement?

According to Table 12 using Pearson Correlation, there was no significant relationship to any of the demographics and parental involvement. In other words, the demographics for this sample population did not have an effect on the level of parent participation.
Table 12

*Pearson Correlations for Parents’ Demographics*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>ParInvolve</th>
<th>edu lvl</th>
<th>occup</th>
<th>rel child</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Pearson Correlation</strong></td>
<td>1</td>
<td>-.035</td>
<td>-.004</td>
<td>.155</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Sig. (2-tailed)</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td>.845</td>
<td>.982</td>
<td>.382</td>
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<tr>
<td>N</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Pearson Correlation</strong></td>
<td>-.035</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>.267</td>
<td>.142</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Sig. (2-tailed)</strong></td>
<td>.845</td>
<td>.140</td>
<td>.431</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Pearson Correlation</strong></td>
<td>-.004</td>
<td>.267</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>-.072</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Sig. (2-tailed)</strong></td>
<td>.982</td>
<td>.140</td>
<td>.690</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>N</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Pearson Correlation</strong></td>
<td>.155</td>
<td>.142</td>
<td>-.072</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Sig. (2-tailed)</strong></td>
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<td>33</td>
<td>34</td>
</tr>
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<td><strong>Pearson Correlation</strong></td>
<td>.032</td>
<td>.268</td>
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<td>-.077</td>
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<td><strong>Sig. (2-tailed)</strong></td>
<td>.860</td>
<td>.139</td>
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<tr>
<td>N</td>
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<td>32</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Pearson Correlation</strong></td>
<td>-.064</td>
<td>-.167</td>
<td>-.127</td>
<td>.436**</td>
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<td>.481</td>
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<td>33</td>
<td>33</td>
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</tr>
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<td><strong>Pearson Correlation</strong></td>
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<td>-.018</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Sig. (2-tailed)</strong></td>
<td>.140</td>
<td>.921</td>
<td>.883</td>
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<td>33</td>
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<td><strong>Pearson Correlation</strong></td>
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<td><strong>Sig. (2-tailed)</strong></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
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<td>34</td>
<td>33</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Variable</td>
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<td>N</td>
<td>Sig. (2-tailed)</td>
</tr>
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<tr>
<td>ParInvolve</td>
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<td>edu lvl</td>
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<td>.719</td>
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<td>Occup</td>
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<td>.584</td>
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<tr>
<td>rel child</td>
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<td>.167</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>.129</td>
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<td>.268</td>
<td>-.167</td>
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<td>-.018</td>
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<td>Age</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Qualitative Data Analysis

Qualitative information was collected and analyzed from 9 of the 12 interviews with teachers in grades K-5 who used technology in their class as well as participated in the Academic Parent Teacher Teams (APTT) Program. The participants were chosen from the school where the research took place and who had children in the aforementioned school. The principal of the school where the study was conducted was also interviewed so that the researcher could determine, from the administrator's perspective, if school administrators felt parental involvement would increase if teachers utilized technology more and if parental involvement would increase if the APTT Program provided needed resources and skills. The outcomes were discussed after each related research question was restated.

Analysis of Interviews

Responses to the interview questions provided answers to two of the nine research questions. The interview participants included 9 of the 12 teachers who utilized technology consistently and participated in the Academic Parent Teacher Teams (APTT) Program. The remaining three teachers did not respond to the invitation to participate. The interview responses were stated after each corresponding research question.

RQ5: What are teachers’ perceptions of the role of technology and parental involvement?

According to teachers’ responses from the interviews, overwhelmingly teachers felt technology assisted them in effectively communicating with parents and parents with them. All teachers interviewed utilized some form of technology in the classroom to
communicate with parents (e.g. email, blog, newsletters, cell phone calls, text messages, parent school portal, and webpage). The interviews revealed that parents preferred to communicate with teachers via some form of technology (email). Teachers felt that technology provided them with immediate access and feedback from parents. Most of the teachers felt technology forced parents to communicate because of its multiple uses (reporting behavior as well as academics), and parental involvement increased because of it. The other two teachers felt parents who cared about their children's learning would be involved with or without the assistance of technology, but technology does make it more readily available and viable. Moreover, teachers felt technology increased parental involvement because parents were now able to access grades and student conduct via technology. One teacher vehemently expressed: “It (technology) allows me to make contact with parents from multiple sources, therefore increasing my odds of speaking with them” (Teacher 3, personal communication, September 25, 2015).

The principal of the school where the research was conducted also felt that technology had an impact on parental involvement. He felt the greatest impact could be seen when parents accessed the parent portal Infinite Campus. Infinite Campus provides parents with current online information about student achievement. The Campus Portal mobile application, which is also available to parents, provides a fast and convenient way for parents and students to check grades, assignments, schedules, and attendance, and acts as a daily planner. With the ease and convenience of technology, parents can access student information without having to wait for a teacher or administrator to respond to a
RQ7: What are teachers’ perceptions of the usefulness of the Academic Parent Teacher Teams (APTT) Program and its impact on parental involvement?

The nine teachers interviewed agreed that the usefulness of the APTT program was designed to increase parental involvement in the students’ educational process. Teachers believed its usefulness helped parents with educating their children by teaching parents targeted skills for each specific grade level so that parents were prepared with assisting their students with homework. Teachers also believed that the APTT Program had been effective in its usefulness and had increased parental involvement because of the new state standards that parents did not understand. Many of them stated that the program had seemingly given parents confidence to help their children at home. Many teachers who were interviewed felt the program was most effective in encouraging parental involvement and effectively designed. Teachers said that they have noticed an increase in participation during APTT meetings. They felt the word is getting out even though the program is only two years in its inception. The teachers agreed that there was no significant increase in homework completion, but more correct homework was being submitted by students. Most of them noted that students had typically submitted homework; however, assignments were generally incorrect.

**Emergent Themes**

Two dominant themes appeared during the teacher interviews: Technology and Academic Parent Teacher Teams (APTT) Program. Teachers agreed that technology
provided them with the ease and convenience of communicating with parents. Teachers noted experiencing an increase in the amount of communication from parents, especially in the form of email. The administrator of the school felt parents accessed the online school parent portal (Infinite Campus) more within the last year. The online system tracked the number of times an account was accessed.

Teachers agreed that the APTT Program provided parents with tools necessary to assist their child's learning at home. Two of the teachers interviewed cited parents understood the expectations from the school in regards to students continuing to learn at home. Teachers believed the APTT Program had been most beneficial in helping parents understand how to unpack state standards. Activities were utilized that correlated with state standards to teach parents during APTT meetings.

Summary

This chapter provided a quantitative and qualitative analysis of the data collected within this research. The data collected were derived from surveys and interviews. The analysis of the data revealed that the independent variables: accessibility, communication, school climate, parents’ perceptions of their role in students’ learning, teachers’ perceptions of the role of technology, teachers’ perceptions of the usefulness of the APTT Program, Cultural Capital Theory, and parent demographics did not have a significant relationship with the dependent variable of parental involvement. However, the research question regarding parents' perception of the usefulness of the APTT Program showed a significant relationship to the dependent variable—parental involvement. The quantitative data were analyzed using the SPSS and ANOVA to determine the
correlations among the variables. The qualitative data collected were transcribed and analyzed and two dominant themes emerged. By using the mixed-method approach, the researcher was able to see the relationship between the descriptive and statistical data in order to accurately answer the research questions that provided guidance for the study.
CHAPTER VI
FINDINGS, IMPLICATIONS, RECOMMENDATIONS, AND CONCLUSIONS

Introduction

The purpose of this study was to examine factors that influenced parental involvement through the following independent variables: accessibility, communication, school climate, and parents’ perception of their role in student's learning, teachers' perceptions of the role of technology, parents' perception of the usefulness of the APTT Program, teachers' perception of the usefulness of the APTT Program, Cultural Capital Theory, and parents’ demographics.

Analysis of the data revealed that most of the independent variables did not have a significant relationship to parental involvement among the surveyed population at the institution being examined. Pearson Correlations and ANOVA revealed that parents’ perceptions of the APTT Program, an independent variable, was the variable most strongly impacted by parental involvement.

This chapter presents the major findings discovered in the study. Recommendations are made to begin the framework for improving factors that influence parental involvement in the institution being examined. Conclusions are made based on the findings, and implications are defined and explained.
Findings

RQ1: Is there a significant relationship between parents’ perceptions of the school’s accessibility and parental involvement?

Based on the results of survey questions 1-6, there was no significant relationship between parents’ perceptions of the school’s accessibility and parental involvement. This was evidenced by a .826 Pearson Correlation at the -.039 significant relation coefficient. The .826 Pearson Correlation reflected the absence of a significant relationship between these variables.

RQ2: Is there a significant relationship between parents’ perceptions of the school’s communication and parental involvement?

There was no significant relationship between parents’ perceptions of the school’s communication and parental involvement based on survey questions 7-12. A Pearson Correlation rating of .764 demonstrated a strong correlation at the -.053 confidence level.

RQ3: Is there a significant relationship between parents’ perceptions of the school’s climate and parental involvement?

There was no significant relationship between parents’ perceptions of the school’s climate and parental involvement. Based on survey questions 13-18, parents did not feel that it was important for them to be recognized and made to feel welcomed in order to be involved in their child's education. The strong correlation was displayed in the .102 Pearson Correlation at the .281 confidence level.

RQ4: Is there a significant relationship between parents’ perceptions of their role in students’ learning and parental involvement?
There was no significant relationship between parents’ perceptions of their role in students’ learning based on survey questions 19-25. The low Pearson Correlation rating of .259 did not demonstrate a significant relationship between these variables.

RQ5: What are teachers’ perceptions of the role of technology and parental involvement?

Based on the qualitative data analyzed, teachers interviewed overwhelmingly felt technology assisted them in effectively communicating with parents and parents with them. Teachers felt technology provided them with immediate access and feedback from parents. With an increase in communication, teachers felt parents are more involved in their child’s education because of the easy and convenience of technology.

RQ6: What are parents’ perceptions of the usefulness of the Academic Parent Teacher Teams (APTT) Program and its impact on parental involvement?

According to the Pearson Correlation rating of .007, parents felt that the APTT program was very useful in assisting them with being involved in their child’s learning. Pearson Correlations require a rating of .005 or slightly more to show a significant relationship between variables. Parents’ perceptions of the usefulness of the APTT program yielded significant results on the Pearson Correlation test.

RQ7: What are teachers’ perceptions of the usefulness of the Academic Parent Teacher Teams (APTT) Program and its impact on parental involvement?

Based on interview question 8-12, teachers felt the APTT program had a great effect on parental involvement. They believed its usefulness was designed to help parents with educating their children by learning targeted skills for each specific grade
level so that parents are prepared with assisting their children with homework. Teachers said that they had noticed an increase in participation during APTT meetings. They felt the word was being communicated about the success of this tool even though the program was only two years in its inception.

RQ8: Does the level of cultural capital make a significant difference in parents’ involvement in their children’s schooling?

Cultural capital was measured using survey questions 42-57 (measuring parent's educational level and parent's occupation). Based on The ANOVA test, there was no significant relationship between cultural capital and parental involvement. The ANOVA test of -.768 (parent's educational level) and .510 (parent's occupation) demonstrated no significant relationship between variables.

RQ9: Is there a significant relationship between parents’ demographics—level of education, occupation, socioeconomic level, parental structure, ethnicity, and marital status—on parental involvement?

Based on the analyzed data from the Pearson Correlation, there was no significant relationship in any of the demographic variables and parental involvement.

Implications

Based on the outcomes of the quantitative research, the structure of the family unit itself did not matter. This investigative group of parents was able to participate in their child’s education with the help of a program that explicitly spelled out “how” to help their child succeed in school. The research yielded outcomes that supported the Academic Parent Teacher Teams (APTT) program in that it assisted parents with
educating their children, thus creating an environment of involvement. The components of the APTT program are (a) three 75-minutes meetings per year and one 30-minute individual session, (b) teachers share student performance data (benchmark or previous standardized tests), (c) review grade level foundations skills, (d) demonstrate concrete activities families can do at home, (e) APTT meetings take the place of traditional parent-teacher conferences, (f) parents are still allowed conferences if requested, and (g) parents are surveyed for quality feedback. During the meetings teachers (a) teach a grade-level standard; (b) create a performance task (activity) that correlates with the lesson; (c) teach strategies on how to deliver the lesson to multiple learning styles using differentiated instructions; (d) parents are able to ask questions; (e) parents work in groups with other participating families; and (f) parents set goals for their child.

The parents surveyed agreed that Academic Parent Teacher Teams (APTT) Program was useful and had an impact on parental involvement. The Pearson Correlation measured a 0.007 probability level indicating a significant relationship between the usefulness of the Academic Parent Teacher Teams and parental involvement. When talking with parents, teachers agreed they felt the APTT program provided parents with tools necessary to assist their child’s learning at home. Of the teachers interviewed, two expressed that parents understood the expectations from the school in regards to students continuing to learn at home. Teachers believed parents were able to unpack state standards appropriately. Another benefit parents noted regarding the APTT program was the activities or performance tasks they were asked to complete correlated with state standards.
The qualitative data indicated teachers felt technology provided them with immediate access and feedback from parents. All nine of the teachers felt technology forced parents to communicate because of its multiple usage (tracking behavior as well as academics) and parental involvement increased because of it. Accordingly, the research suggested technology made communication between parent and school more readily available and viable. Teachers noted an increased chance of being able to reach parents when trying to contact them.

Interview questions 8-12 examined teachers’ perceptions of the usefulness of the APTT program and its impact on parental involvement. Teachers felt the APTT program had a great effect on parental involvement due to an increase in parent participation in APTT meetings. The meeting are designed to help parents assist their children at home through learning targeted skills for each specific grade level. With this information, parents are now prepared to assist with homework. Teachers reported parents felt more confident to help students with homework. They felt the word was being communicated about the success of this tool even though the program was only two years in its inception.

**Recommendations**

**School Leaders Recommendations**

- School level leaders should ensure student performance data are readily available for use with the APTT program.
- There should be mutual goal-setting between the school and parents. This is a required objective outlined in the APTT’s guidelines.
• The APTT tool should be used as a resource for teachers' professional development for its effective implementation.

• Local schools should assist in the re-education of parents' role in student achievement and use the APTT program to assist them.

District Office Administrators Recommendations

• A greater focus of funds should be allocated to promote professional learning for teachers to teach parents how to differentiate instructions and how to teach adult learners.

Policy Recommendations

• Government should define parental involvement and engagement to include both overt and subtle actions of parents.
  ▪ State government should provide relevant strategies for implementing parental involvement based on current research using programs such as APTT.
  ▪ More parental involvement strategies should be sourced directly from the perspective of parents and students, especially in supporting diverse school communities wherein parental participation is low due to socio-cultural and socioeconomic conditions.

• Since the APTT program was found to be successful, local agencies should mandate regular evaluations of parental involvement policies that promote “how” to help parents help children succeed academically.

• Policy makers should explore more use of technology to promote parental involvement.
Recommendations for Future Research

The goal of the study was to investigate factors that influenced parental involvement at one elementary school located outside of metropolitan Atlanta. Data were collected from a well-established elementary school with a very diverse student body population. The APTT program was found to be very successful within the group studied. Because the APTT program had been successful in this school:

1. More schools should pilot this type of program to measure its effectiveness in increasing parental involvement.

2. More research should be devoted to researching programs that teach parents how to unpack standards and differentiate instructions.

Conclusions

As schools have pushed into the 21st century, the idea of a reciprocal relationship between school and home has been championed by researchers, educators, and parents alike (Knopf & Swick, 2007). Knowledge about parental involvement and leadership by future school leaders should be components of effective and ongoing preparatory programs. Educators and parents believe parental involvement is essential in the education of children and leads to academic gains (Baker & Soden, 1997; Barge & Loges, 2003; Maynard & Howley, 1997; U.S. Department of Education, 1994). For years, many researchers have studied parental involvement and its effects on student education. Studies have yielded varying results but most of them noted that student success should drive involvement, and involvement should be present throughout the entirety of a child's education. Furthermore, involvement should be seen as a process, not
a single event. The family is a resource for school achievement, and parental involvement in education in the home and school is taken for granted as natural. Thus, parental support of schooling becomes an explicit requirement for student achievement. Within this logic, family-school relations appear as essentially convergent, and school success or failure becomes a simple matter of family accountability.

Dating as far back as the Enlightenment period, philosophers had already emphasized the importance of families in children’s development and learning, with many contemporary educational scholars following suit (McKenna & Millen, 2013). According to Sad and Gurbuzturk (2013), the concept of parental involvement can encompass different parental behaviors that directly or indirectly impact a child’s cognitive development and school achievement. Therefore, there is a broad range of activities that may be considered as parental involvement including, getting informed about and supporting curricula being implemented; volunteering in, or visiting, classrooms; monitoring a child’s progress with the help of the teacher; or creating a home environment that is physically and psychologically conducive to learning. These ways upon which parents support their children’s education remain relevant no matter what changes are seen in family structure.

There is solid evidence showing that parent involvement is associated with improved student outcomes, including increased student attendance and satisfaction with school, better academic achievement, motivation, school attachment, responsibility, self-efficacy, and confidence (Sad & Gurbuzturk, 2013). A number of educational scholars have emphasized the social justice perspective holding that parental engagement is not
only just, but also the right thing for schools to undertake. Another perspective postulates that parental involvement in their children’s learning is integrated in legal frameworks such as that of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act of 2006 (IDEA) and the No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB).

This study was designed to exclusively measure factors that influenced parental involvement using a five-point frequency scale survey for parents and interviews of teachers and one administrator. Expanding this study to include interviewing parents and conducting a focus group could result in a comparative research project that would compare the results of what parents say when face-to-face and how they respond to the same questions in written form.

Although the population surveyed did not yield significant development into these new family structures, it supported the evidence that parental involvement increased student's academic success. The APTT program provided an avenue by which parents were confident in teaching learned strategies.

In this study, parents were surveyed and teachers and an administrator were interviewed about parental involvement to determine both their understanding of it and their strategies to influence it. As a result of this study, the following conclusions were developed:

1. The value of this knowledge to future administrators is relevant in linking parental involvement and academic success.
2. Based on the results of this research, there was not a strong correlation between the stated variable and parental involvement, except with one variable.

3. The most significant relationship was between the parents’ perception of the usefulness of APTT and parental involvement.

4. There was no significant relationship found between any of the demographic variables and parental involvement. In other words, in this population, these demographic variables do not seem to determine the level of parental involvement.

5. The participation in the APTT program was indicative of parents being involved in their child's education. The program affords parents the opportunity to learn targeted skills and redelivery to their students. Teachers noted that students' homework came back correct and completed. They attributed this improvement to parents participating in the APTT program with the knowledge to assist students with unpacking Common Core standards.

After decades of intensive educational reforms and circular interventions with little to no success at improving student achievement, it is time to focus on this already known fact: parents are students’ first teachers (Moore, 2006). In addition, the APTT program provided parents an important tool directly related to assisting students to achieve greater academic gains. Thus, parents are better able to understand the "how" in helping students continue to be successful academically.
APPENDIX A

PARTICIPANTS’ LETTER OF CONFIDENTIALITY

Re: Parental Involvement in 21st century Schools: The Implications of the Changing Family Structure - Recommendations for Leaders

Dear Prospective Participant:

Thank you for considering participation in this study. I would like to introduce myself, inform you of what this study is about, and share how you will be involved. My name is Anetta R. Smith and I am a Doctoral student, at Clark Atlanta University, School of Education. My professional experience with education have contributed to my current interest in the daily practices of parents and leaders.

The enclosed survey, entitled "Parental Involvement in 21st century Schools: The Implications of the Changing Family Structure," is being conducted as part of my dissertation research project. This study seeks to examine the relationship between factors that influence parental involvement. You will be asked to do the following:

• Complete a voluntary consent form

• Complete The "Parental Involvement in 21st century Schools: The Implications of the Changing Family Structure" survey that will take approximately 15 minutes to complete or the interview which the time limit will be at discretion of the interviewee.

There are no known risks or discomforts associated with your participation in this study. You will not be asked for information that will identify you. Only researchers will have access to individual survey responses, which will be coded to protect your identity. Your participation in this study is completely voluntary and refusal or withdrawal from the study will result in no penalty or loss of benefits. No monetary value is associated with this study for the participant or researcher. Feel free to contact me if you have questions or need further information. I can be reached at: Clark Atlanta University, School of Education, Clement Hall, 323 Rufus E. James P. Brawley Drive, S.W. Atlanta, GA 30314, Phone: 404-880-8505.

Alternatively, you may contact Dr. Barbara Hill, Department Chair of School of Education, at Clark Atlanta University, 404-880-8505.

Sincerely yours,

Anetta R. Smith, Researcher
APPENDIX B

RESEARCH SURVEY

Parent Survey: Please answer “always, sometimes, or never” to the following questions. Then, answer the questions concerning your demographics. Please provide only one answer per question unless stated in the demographic section.

Parents’ Perceptions of School Accessibility

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<thead>
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<th>Indicator</th>
<th>Always</th>
<th>Sometimes</th>
<th>Never</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. I feel the school assists me so I can attend school meetings more often.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. I have no transportation to attend a school function.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. I feel the school and teachers are readily available to assist me about my child.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. I feel the scheduling of the school's open house and other activities should be changed to better meet my needs as a parent.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. I feel teachers schedule will accommodate my schedule.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. I feel the administrators of this school willingly change program schedule to accommodate my schedule.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Parents’ Perceptions of School Communication

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Indicator</th>
<th>Always</th>
<th>Sometimes</th>
<th>Never</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>7. I receive timely school communication.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. I receive communication in many different ways, such as: parent information packets, telephone calls, newsletters, e-mail, parent-teacher conferences, home visits, public meetings and school/district websites.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Indicator</td>
<td>Always</td>
<td>Sometimes</td>
<td>Never</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>--------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>--------</td>
<td>-----------</td>
<td>-------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. School communication with me is always done in a consistent manner and is available for all parents.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. School communication and information is easy to understand and provided in a language I can understand.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11. I am provided regular reports of my child's educational progress.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>12. I am encouraged to communicate to school staff any concerns I may have related to my child's grade/program placement and academic progress.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Parents’ Perceptions of the School's Climate

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Indicator</th>
<th>Always</th>
<th>Sometimes</th>
<th>Never</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>13. I feel welcomed and valued when visiting the school.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14. The teacher doesn’t really want me to participate in school activities.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15. My ethnicity and culture is recognized and respected by school staff.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16. School activities are planned at different times of the day and week to provide me a chance to participate.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>17. A school that demonstrates openness, enthusiasm, and understanding toward all students excites me to get more involved.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18. I am more likely to participate in schools if I receive information from teachers about classroom activities, the progress of my child(ren), and how to work with my child(ren) at home.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Parents’ Perceptions of Their Role in Students’ Learning

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Indicator</th>
<th>Always</th>
<th>Sometimes</th>
<th>Never</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>19. It’s my job to explain tough assignments to my child.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20. It’s my job to make sure my child understands his or her assignments.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21. I make it my business to stay on top of things at school.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>22. I keep an eye on my child’s progress</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>23. I make sure that my child’s homework got done.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>24. I help my child study for tests or quizzes.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25. I talk to my child about what he or she is learning.</td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Parents’ Perceptions of the Usefulness of the (APTT) Program

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Indicator</th>
<th>Always</th>
<th>Sometimes</th>
<th>Never</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>26. I can leave work to attend APTT meetings.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>27. I have the time to attend APTT meetings.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>28. The APTT meetings give the necessary skills to help at school.</td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>29. I am not interested in helping at my child's school.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30. I can afford the time to support my child's learning at home as APTT requires.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>31. I have too many other responsibilities to help me child at home.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>32. I want to help with homework but the instructions from the APTT meetings are not very clear.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## Parental Involvement

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Indicator</th>
<th>Always</th>
<th>Sometimes</th>
<th>Never</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>33. In the past year, I have attended APTT meetings.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>34. In the past year, I have attended conferences about my child.</td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>35. In the past year, I have volunteered in the classroom.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>36. In the past year, I have volunteered in the school for supervision duties.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>37. In the past year, I have helped in the afterschool program.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>38. In the past year, I have helped coach a girls or boys team.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>39. In the past year, I have participated in the decision-making process for developing the school's Parental Involvement Plan.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>40. In the past year, I have participated in the annual evaluation of the school's Parental Involvement Plan.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>41. In the past year, I have participated in making decisions related to the educational placement and progress of my child.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

## Parents’ Demographics

Mark the answer that best describes you and your family.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Parents’ Level of Education Reached</th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>42. I finished high school or have a GED.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>43. I finished a technical certification or have an Associate degree.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>44. I finished college.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>45. I finished graduate school.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parents’ Level of Education Reached (continued)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>---------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>46. I finished a post graduate degree (i.e. Doctorate, Law, Medical, etc.).</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>47. I have another form of education not listed. Please state.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Parents’ Occupations</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Please check all that apply to you.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>48. I am not employed.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>49. I am in a profession that requires technical skills and training.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>50. I am in a profession that requires a degree.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>51. I am in sales.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>52. I am in management.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>53. I am in the military.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>54. I am self employed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>55. I supervise 1-5 persons</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>56. I supervise more than 5 persons</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>57. I do not supervise anyone</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Parents’ Socioeconomic Level</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>67. My child(ren) is/are on free or reduced lunch.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>68. I pay the full price for my child(ren)’s lunch.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Marital Status</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>69. Single</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>70. Married</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>71. Divorce</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>72. Widow</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>73. Separated</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>74. Never married</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>75. Alternative living arrangements</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age Range</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>--------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>76. 20-29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>77. 30-39</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>78. 40-49</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>79. 50-69</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ethnicity (Race)</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>80. Asian/Pacific Islander</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>81. Black or African American (Non Hispanic)</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>82. Hispanic or Latino</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>83. Native American or American Indian</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>84. White (Non Hispanic)</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>85. Other</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Primary language</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>86. English</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>87. Spanish</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>88. Other: (Please state)</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grade of Child</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>89. Kindergarten</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>90. First Grade</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>91. Second Grade</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>92. Third Grade</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>93. Fourth Grade</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>94. Fifth Grade</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
APPENDIX C

CONSENT FORM - PARENTS

The purposes of this research and the survey entitled "Parental Involvement in 21st century Schools and The Implications of the Changing Family Structure: Recommendations for Leaders" have been explained and my participation is voluntary. I have the right to stop participation at any time without penalty. I understand that this research has no known risks or monetary value, and I will not be identified. The signed copy of this consent form will be kept by the primary researcher. A copy of the consent form has been provided to me. By signing this consent form, I am confirming that:

1. I agree with the above statements.
2. I agree to the terms of my voluntary participation.
3. I agree to participate in this research study.
4. I agree to complete the confidential entitled "Parental Involvement in Twenty-First Century Schools and The Implications of the Changing Family Structure: Recommendations for Leaders" survey.

CONFIDENTIALITY

The absolute best efforts will be made to keep your personal information and responses private. Your privacy will be upheld to the extent allowed by law. All information that can identify you will be removed from the data collection instrument; your name is not required for this research study. It may become necessary to share information that you provide in relation to this research study to third parties but only for official research/data analysis purposes and publishing of the research, which will be summarized and reported in a grouping format.

If you have any questions now, or later, related to the integrity of the research, (the rights of research subjects or research-related injuries, where applicable), you are encouraged to contact Dr. Barbara Hill (404 880-8505) at Clark Atlanta University, School of Education.

________________________________________________
Participant (Printed Name)

________________________________________________
Participant (Signature)

________________________________________________
Witness

________________________________________________
Date

________________________________________________
Researcher Date
APPENDIX D

CONSENT FORM - TEACHERS

The purposes of this research and the survey entitled "Parental Involvement in 21st century Schools and The Implications of the Changing Family Structure: Recommendations for Leaders" have been explained and my participation is voluntary. I have the right to stop participation at any time without penalty. I understand that this research has no known risks or monetary value, and I will not be identified. The signed copy of this consent form will be kept by the primary researcher. A copy of the consent form has been provided to me. By signing this consent form, I am confirming that:

1. I agree with the above statements.
2. I agree to the terms of my voluntary participation.
3. I agree to participate in this research study.
4. I agree to complete the confidential entitled “Parental Involvement in 21st century Schools and The Implications of the Changing Family Structure: Recommendations for Leaders” interview.

CONFIDENTIALITY

The absolute best efforts will be made to keep your personal information and responses private. Your privacy will be upheld to the extent allowed by law. All information that can identify you will be removed from the data collection instrument; your name is not required for this research study. It may become necessary to share information that you provide in relation to this research study to third parties but only for official research/data analysis purposes and publishing of the research, which will be summarized and reported in a grouping format.

If you have any questions now, or later, related to the integrity of the research, (the rights of research subjects or research-related injuries, where applicable), you are encouraged to contact Dr. Barbara Hill (404 880-8505) at Clark Atlanta University, School of Education.

________________________________________________
Participant - Printed Name

________________________________________________
Participant - Signature

________________________________________________
Witness

________________________________________________
Date

________________________________________________
Researcher Date
APPENDIX E

INTERVIEW PROTOCOL - TEACHERS


Introduction

The following questionnaire will be administered in an interview format. A series of questions will be administered to you, and your responses should be most reflective of your experiences and practices as a teacher participating in the Academic Parent Teacher Teams Program (APTT), utilizing technology in the classroom and parental involvement. Your honest response to each question in greatly appreciated. All responses will remain confidential. Thank you for taking the time to participate in this interview.

Description of the Study

This study will investigate the factors that influence parental involvement in the 21st century within the changing family structure in a small Title 1 school located outside of the metropolitan area of the city.

Date: ____/____/____
Time of Interview: Start: ___:___ a.m./p.m. Finish: _____:____ a.m./p.m.
Total: ____:____
Location: ____________________________
Interviewer: ___________________________
Interviewee: __________________________


Teacher Interview Questions: Please answer the following questions.

**Teachers' Perception of the Role of Technology**

1. What forms of communication do you use with your parents?
   a. Which forms of communication do you believe have the greatest impact on parental involvement?
   b. What do you perceive is parents preferred form of communication?

2. What platform or ways do you use to communicate with parents?
   a. If so, how?

3. Do you keep an active web page, blog, Edmoto, Google drop box, and others?
   a. If so, how often do you update it?

4. How has technology assisted you in communicating with parents?

5. What do you perceive the role of technology is in your classroom?

6. How do you think technology can help parents become more involved?
   a. Have you seen an increase in parent participation because of the implementation of technology in your class?

7. If you use multiple forms of electronic communication, does it appear to increase parental involvement in your class?
   a. If so, how?
Teachers' Perception of the Usefulness of the (APTT) Program

8. What do you perceived is the usefulness of APTT?

9. Do you believe APTT has an impact on parental involvement?
   a. If so, to what extent?

10. From your perspective, how effective is the APTT program in encouraging parental involvement in school activities?
    a. If so, please elaborate.

11. From your perspective, have you notice any increase in participation during APTT meetings?
    a. If so, please explain.

12. Have you noticed any improvement in students' homework completion as a result of parents attending the APTT meetings?
    a. If so, please elaborate.

Demographics: Please mark all that apply to you.

13. How do you identify yourself (race)?
    a. African American
    b. White American
    c. Asian/Pacific Islander/Native American
    d. Hispanic
    e. Biracial
    f. Other

14. What is your age range?
    a. 20-25
    b. 26-30
    c. 31-35
    d. 36-40
    e. 41-45
    f. 46-50
    g. 51-55
15. What is your marital status?

16. What is your highest educational level reached?

17. How many years have you been teaching?

18. What grade level do you teach?
REFERENCES


Borgatta, E. F. (2013, October). A commentary on small group research. In Decisions, Values and Groups: Reports from the First Interdisciplinary Conference in the Behavioral Science Division held at the University of New Mexico (p. 179).


