

**Comparative Case Study: An Examination of Parental Involvement of Black Parents in
Rural and Urban Communities in Alabama**

by

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A dissertation submitted to the Graduate Faculty of
Auburn University
in partial fulfillment of the
requirements for the Degree of
Doctor of Philosophy

Auburn, Alabama
May 10, 2025

Keywords: Parental Involvement, Alabama, Black Parents, Rural and Urban Communities

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Abstract

The effect of parental involvement on education has been and continues to be of great interest. Research studies have documented many benefits of parental involvement on the value of education and students' academic success. Throughout a child's education, parents play a critical role in the building of academic and social-emotional skills. Parental involvement has indicated many face barriers that hinder them from supporting their students. The obstacles to involvement can be compared between urban and rural schools. Guided by Epstein's and Hoover Dempsey Sandler's framework of involvement, this qualitative case study aims to better understand black parents' perspectives and experiences on parental involvement in rural and urban communities in Alabama through seventeen in-depth interviews. Results demonstrate that Black parents in both contexts typically view involvement as a continuous commitment to their children's academic success through forms of support rather than merely volunteering at school functions or attending meetings. Particularly, strategies between urban and rural parents differ by contextual settings. Results suggest the need for culturally responsive and inclusive strategies in educational settings and challenge conventional one-size-fits-all approaches to parental involvement.

Acknowledgments

I want to start by giving God all the praise and honor, whose grace, strength, and wisdom carried me through this academic journey. He was the one who made this achievement possible. I sincerely thank Dr. Andrew Pendola, Dr. Lisa Kensler, Dr. Any Serafini, and Dr. Jason Bryant, who served on my dissertation committee, for their invaluable assistance, knowledge, and encouragement during this process. Your advice and insights improved the caliber of my research and forced me to think critically. My family deserves a special thank you for being my pillar of support for their unwavering love and patience. Thank you for believing in me, providing unending support, and making sacrifices to help me achieve this goal. Kenneth, my husband, I am grateful for your patience. You have been by my side, encouraging, supporting, and loving me every step of the way. To my children, Seterra, Sierra, Sabian, Kennedy, Synai, and King, and my grandchildren, Callie, Cailer, and Jaxson, thank you for serving as my inspiration and a constant reminder of the value of tenacity and purpose. My friends and coworkers at Russell County Middle School have sincere gratitude for their encouragement and support. My heartfelt thanks go to parents, teachers, and community leaders for participating in this study. I sincerely appreciate what you have contributed. Finally, thank you to my church family and ministry partners for your prayers and for always encouraging me. Having your spiritual support has given me courage and inspiration. This dissertation is proof of the amazing support system that surrounds me. I sincerely thank each one of you for contributing to this accomplishment.

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Chapter 1: Introduction

Parental involvement in the education of children has been defined by Hornby (2011) as the involvement of parents in the educational processes and experiences of their children. This involvement is not just parents, but it also considers other individuals who play parental roles. The significance of parental involvement is not a new concern in education. The importance of embracing parents and other community stakeholders in partnership with education has been at the forefront since 1965. Currently, federal laws require school districts to include parents in assisting in educating America's youth. All local educational agencies (LEA) receiving federal funding and Title I funds are required under Section 1116 of the Every Child Succeed Act (ESSA) to develop a parent and family engagement policy that must be jointly written and developed between the LEA and the students' parents and family members (U. S. Department of Education).

Parental involvement in the educational learning experiences of a child promotes an environment that supports the child and helps them to feel supported and encouraged. Proper guidance and parental support are needed for children to establish realistic goals and develop a desire for learning. According to Epstein (2010), parental involvement is important to children and substantially affects a child's academic performance and success. Parental involvement is the first doorway to the intellectual workings of a child. Parents and homes are viewed as the first educational foundation of a child. Parental influence is so impactful because ninety percent of a child's time from infancy to childhood outside school is under the influence of their parents. Parents are the first and most important teachers (Peng & Wright, 1994). Parents and guardians, therefore, are responsible for cultivating a love for learning and supporting their children. Effective parental involvement results in a child's positive intellectual and psychosocial growth

and development. Being surrounded by supportive parents influences the child's self-concept and academic achievement. Parental involvement also includes parental investment, which contributes to the child's academic and educational development. Parental investment is one way parents contribute to their child's learning and development.

Statement of the Problem

Due to the importance of how parental involvement affects student outcomes, parents must be actively involved in the educational learning and development of their children and due to the achievement gap between Black students and their counterparts in the United States in both urban and rural communities (National Center for Education Statistic), this qualitative study focuses on examining and understanding the parental involvement of Black parents in both rural and urban communities in Alabama. This problem is being examined because of the numerous barriers for Black parents regarding matriculation and getting involved in the educational learning experiences of their children. Even though research results strongly reveal positive outcomes of parental involvement on student achievement and overall academic success, many parents find it difficult to be involved and participate in their children's education.

Parental involvement is known to foster various positive results for children. These positive results include academic achievement, participation in schoolwork, attending school functions and events, and collaborating with teachers and other school staff (Park & Holloway, 2013). Regrettably, positive child results do not seem to be the case for most Black students and parents, especially where barriers (e.g., language, work, and socioeconomic status) are more dominant, as in the case of many rural and urban communities. Examining the perspectives of Black parents in rural and urban settings in Alabama will allow for a better understanding of how they perceive parental involvement within the school and home settings and how their

perspectives might affect the overall student achievement and academic success of the students in each of these communities.

Background and Need

Education is an important facet of American society. Education can predict academic success as well as later career choices and opportunities. Education, or the lack thereof, influences economic stability, social experiences, exposure, and health (Ebuta & Ekpo-Eloma, 2014). Learning outcomes affect the future opportunities of all students, but Black students experience a substantial gap in educational achievement when compared with other ethnic or social groups. On average, Black students score lower on tests than their Asian, White, and Latino counterparts. Many Black adolescents fail courses and eventually drop out of school. Others progress through school but do not excel. They are less often enrolled in honors courses in high school or accepted into competitive four-year colleges (Stanford CEPA, 2017).

Cultural and racial variation in education has persisted throughout the history of the United States. In *Brown v. Board of Education* of 1954, the United States Supreme Court ruled that racial segregation of public schools was unconstitutional. This law progressed education in the right direction. Some progress has been made in improving cultural and racial educational disparities; however, significant progress has been slow. The racial achievement gap is a factor in measuring educational equality. The student achievement gap is a way of examining learning outcomes in educational settings.

In 2019, when the national average NAEP score in math for fourth graders was 240, the average math score for a white Alabama fourth grader was 239, while the average score for a Black Alabama fourth grader was 215. The gap for eighth graders showed white Alabama students scored thirty points higher in math than Black eighth graders in the state (279 versus

249), while the national average was 281 (McKay et al., 2003). In the United States, the high school graduation rate of Whites is 10% higher than that of Blacks and 8% higher than that of Hispanics (National Center of Statistics, 2021). Black high school graduation rates are studied for a variety of reasons. One reason is to explore racial disparities in high school graduation rates for Black students. This information is pertinent for school policymakers and educators so that they can work to improve those issues.

There are factors impacting graduation rates for Black students that are consistent across all states. Poverty is the leading factor impacting graduation rates among Black students at both the high school and college levels. It is estimated that approximately 32% of Black students live below the poverty line, and 10% of White students live below the poverty line. (Herman, 2002; Person et al., 2021). The average graduation rate for Black students in these states was 77.5% and 78.5% for Hispanic students, compared to 89.2% for White students and a 93.6% graduation rate for Asian students (Pottiger, 2022).

The conditions that some Black students live in are troubling. Many of these children are in communities where crime, unemployment, and other adverse conditions are common. responsibilities of getting a job to support their families or helping younger siblings with school (Pottiger, 2022). For these circumstances to improve, parents and schools must emphasize education (Moore, 2021).

Purpose of the Study

Parental involvement in schools has been a constant topic of concern for schools and school districts. Parental involvement can be impacted by economic instability, work schedules, and other family dynamics. Thus, the purpose of this comparative case study is to understand the involvement of Black parents in rural and urban communities in Alabama and how this

involvement can aid in the process of closing the achievement gap of Black students and their counterparts. This study is set within the context of rural and urban settings in Alabama and will allow for the examination of the experiences of the participants based on their rural or urban geographical sites.

In addition, this study aims to examine and understand how school leaders and school districts improve when it comes to involving parents in the educational contexts of their children. The data from the parent interviews will provide relevant information that could give beneficial insights to schools and school districts that could increase involvement from Black parents. Study findings will produce strategies and additional resources to aid parents in finding greater motivation. This is aimed at getting parents involved at school and offering ideas to parents on how they may contribute to their students' learning at home.

Research Questions

This study aims to address the following research questions:

1. How do Black parents define and demonstrate their involvement in their children's education?
2. What barriers prevent Black parents from being involved, and how are these barriers different between rural and urban areas?
3. What strategies do Black parents use to engage in their children's education despite the challenges?
4. In what ways do school staff facilitate or hinder future Black parental involvement?

Relevance

It is critical to understand the parental involvement experiences of Black parents in rural and urban educational settings. As research seeks to understand Black parents' experiences with

parental involvement, it will give insight into how teachers and school administrators can better provide support for effective and meaningful parental involvement.

Educational Significance

To give a clear understanding of the black subgroup and its position within the education setting, it is imperative to provide some background concerning the disproportions for Black students and the need for effective parental involvement. Despite the previous and long-standing research, the low academic achievement of Black students continues to be a sensitive need in public schools across the country (Herman, 2007; Pottiger, 2022) in concurrence with the growing demands for more effective parental involvement and partnership between home and school.

The present study is critical to a continued inquiry by others seeking to focus more responsively to the needs of Black students and parents in rural and urban communities. This qualitative study seeks to add to the extensive literature that focuses on Black parents and students in rural and urban communities. The study further seeks to fill in the literature gap that exists toward parental engagement in rural communities and urban communities, particularly in the Black subgroup of students/parents. The implications of such findings, current and future, might bring forth more information on the impact of parental involvement on the academic success of students in rural and urban communities by removing barriers and improving experiences in the school and home environment of this ethnic group and the communities in which they reside.

Definitions of Key Terms

Rural—An area that is located outside of towns and cities. Typical rural areas have a low population density and small settlements.

Urban—Any densely settled area consisting of 2,000 or more housing units or 5,000 or more people. All other areas are considered rural.

Barriers—Anything that restrains or obstructs progress or access.

Culture—the way of life of a group of people- the behaviors, beliefs, values, and symbols that they accept, generally without thinking about them, and that are passed along by communication and imitation from one generation to the next.

Cultural Barrier—an issue arising from a misunderstanding of meaning, caused by cultural differences between sender and receiver. It can cause outright conflict, but more often, it creates stress in the workplace.

Parental involvement—Epstein (2018) defines parental involvement as the parents' devotion to caring for their children's educational progress. Parental involvement is, therefore, parents' activeness and commitment to the academic achievement of their children.

Summary

The introductory chapter of this dissertation presents a problem related to the experiences and perspectives of parental involvement of Black parents in rural and urban communities in Alabama. This case study provides a brief background and context of the Black population to put this subgroup into perspective, and the effect the continued growth of this subgroup had in the larger context of parental involvement and students' academic success. The background and context sections are followed by Epstein's (1986) six types of parental involvement and Hoover-Dempsey and Sandler's (1995) model of theoretical frameworks. These approaches were used to frame this qualitative study. Additionally, the significance of this study is included to explain the importance of the potential contributions to the knowledge of the needs of Black students and parents in rural and urban community areas. The parental involvement of Black parents is situated and approached in schools and communities in rural and urban Alabama. The purpose of

the study is also included, emphasizing the specifics of how this study has a purpose in the broader scheme of research and the current reality of parental involvement of Black parents.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

Parental involvement is considered a critical component of student achievement and academic success in and out of the school environment (Sapungan & Sapungan, 2014). With the advantages it plays in the academic outcomes for students, having insight into how involvement is managed by Black parents in rural and urban communities in their attempts to promote their children's academic excellence is crucial. Parental involvement in education is vital for creating a cooperative environment for the student to thrive and succeed (Dotterer & Wehrspann, 2016; Herman, 2007).

Parental involvement is positively linked to students' academic success and student achievement. Schmid & Garrells (2021) contend that levels of involvement and participation vary depending on parents' social and economic resources. Understanding more about the kinds of involvement that matter to students themselves is important. This may help to determine how best to support those from less advantageous backgrounds (Moore, 2021; Robles, 2011).

This literature review presents occurring themes from the literature on parental involvement. There are three groups included in this literature that considered the influence and impact of parental involvement (Parsons & Shim, 2019; Pant, 2020), barriers to parental involvement (Brock & Edmunds, 2013), and the identification of parental involvement opportunities (Cummings et al., 2017). Some subcategories address the crucial considerations of parental involvement experiences, which include student success, parents' involvement, socioeconomic factors, and available resources. In these rural and urban communities, barriers that prevent or hinder parental involvement are often stakeholders' methods to involve parents within and outside the school setting (Wherry, 2009).

Therefore, the purpose of this study is to use a qualitative case study to examine and better understand the parental involvement of Black parents in rural and urban communities in Alabama. White middle-class parents are typically the most active in public schools. (Smith et al., 2011). Using the most significant literature, parental involvement will be investigated to see what has already been evaluated about this research topic and to identify gaps in the literature that have not yet been discussed in parent experiences from rural and urban viewpoints.

Theoretical Framework

The theoretical framework for this study is the Epstein Model of Parental Involvement (1986) developed by Dr. Joyce Epstein of Johns Hopkins University as the framework for defining parent involvement. This framework is also referred to as the School-Family-Community Partnership Model. This framework consists of six concrete descriptors.

The six types of involvement are:

Type 1: Parenting

Parenting style involvement occurs when family practices and home environments support “children as students” and when schools understand their children’s families. This involvement in this context includes assisting families in developing and utilizing skills that include family support, assisting schools in understanding family cultures and backgrounds, and fostering children’s goals in school (Epstein, 2010). When parents understood the significance of their involvement, they were more inclined to be more involved (Kirkhaug et al., 2013).

Type 2: Communicating

Communicating style involvement occurs when educators, students, and families “design effective forms of school-to-home and home-to-school communications.” This type of involvement incorporates effective two-way information between parents, students, and teachers.

According to Epstein (2018), communication is the capacity to design valuable forms of home-to-school and school-to-home communication about the programs in school and the student's progress. This level of effective two-way communication will keep parents informed concerning the student's progress and school programs.

This type of involvement includes creating effective communication between school-to-home and home-to-school information about the school's programs and the children's progress (Kirkhaug et al., 2013). According to Epstein (2010), when parents better understand school programs and policies it will encourage them to provide more support in their children's educational experience. Effective communication between school-to-home and home-to-home will bring about positive results in the children's academic education.

Type 3: Volunteering

Volunteering involvement occurs when educators, students, and families "recruit and organize parent help and support" and count parents as an audience for student activities. Volunteering incorporates utilizing and organizing parents to help and support their students and the school. Volunteering includes various opportunities, such as training, work, and schedules that will assist families in embarking on and supporting students and school programs (Epstein, 2018; Kirkhaug et al., 2013). Time may be a barrier to this type of involvement. Wherry (2009) stated when planning school conferences and other school-related programs the timing should be very flexible to allow parents who are working or have other responsibilities to establish a time for them to attend and participate (Wherry, 2009).

Type 4: Learning at Home

Learning at home involvement occurs when information, ideas, or training are provided to educate families about how they can "help students at home with homework and other

curriculum-related activities, decisions, and planning.” Learning at home involvement style includes providing insight to parents so they can help students with their homework, decisions, and planning other school-related activities (Epstein, 2018; Kirkhaug et al., 2013).

Epstein (2018) contends that learning at home is the first stage of how parents are involved with their students, which includes being involved in the student’s homework, curriculum-related activities, and decision-making. When programs on home teaching are designed effectively and implemented, learning at home can yield positive results. (Mccarthy et al., 2022) When parents are involved in their children’s academic education, the children may view their parents as advocates, which will result in an increased level of self-confidence in their ability and attitude toward school and learning (Epstein, 2018; Kirkhaug et al., 2013).

Type 5: Decision Making

Decision-making involvement occurs when schools “include parents in school decisions” and “develop parent leaders and representatives.” Decision-making involvement provides insight to parents about how to help students with their homework and other curriculum-related activities, decisions, and planning. Epstein (2005) suggests that families could help in various ways, such as assisting with planning, reviewing, and improving school policies as well as developing mission statements. Including families can have a positive impact on the students and their families (Anderson & Minke, 2007; Brown & Hunter, 1998; Love et al., 2023). Students’ academic achievement encompasses all stakeholder collaboration and working in unity to improve education.

Type 6: Collaborating with the Community

Collaborating with community involvement occurs when community services, resources, and partners are integrated into the educational process to “strengthen school programs, family

practices, and student learning and development” (Epstein et al., 2019). The school community collaboration will strengthen the schools’ programs, resources, services, family practices, student learning, and development (Epstein, 2018). Epstein (2005) defined the community as those concerned about the standard of education in schools. When parents and other community stakeholders are encouraged by teachers and administration to be involved in the child’s schoolwork, the rate of success increases significantly (Epstein, 2018).

Epstein’s research acknowledges differing degrees of involvement, which are inside and outside of the classroom. Epstein’s work is the basis for numerous learning institutions and communities of learning, building opportunities for involving parents in the education of their children. Epstein (1995) conducted studies and collaborated with elementary, middle, and high schools, districts, and state departments of education to help educators develop more successful programs for school, family, and community partnerships.

This frame engages the study from the parents’ perceptions of becoming instructional coaches at home by helping with assignments, providing support for course-related activities, planning, and decision-making (Epstein, 1995; Sheldon & Epstein, 2005). The Epstein Model for parental involvement from Epstein (1986) guides the importance of the study on the experiences and viewpoints Black parents may have about their parental involvement and experiences in the learning of their students. In addition, the framework also focused on the impact of parental involvement, some barriers that parents may be confronted with throughout the involvement process, and styles and techniques used to motivate parents to engage in the education of their students. Epstein’s model (2001, 2011) has guided the ways politicians and school officials develop and implement parent involvement programs (Whitaker, 2019). In some states, Title I

schools are asked to include the parent involvement portion of their Title I reports using Epstein's framework.

When parents get involved in their children's learning process and schooling, the results can be beneficial, and they experience more academic and social success. Epstein (2001) contends that parents who stay informed and involved in their children's school and learning will positively affect their children's attitude and academic performance. Parents' perception and interest in their children's school and learning activities model the importance of school for their children, which influences positive self-concept and positive behaviors. Epstein's research shows parental involvement positively impacts students' academic work at all grade levels.

Table 1

Epstein's Six Types of Parental Involvement

Type 1	Type 2	Type 3	Type 4	Type 5	Type 6
Parenting	Communicating	Volunteering	Learning at Home	Making Decisions	Collaborating with the Community

In addition to the Epstein Model, the Hoover-Dempsey and Sandler model used this theoretical framework. The Hoover-Dempsey and Sandler Model (1995, 1997) of the parental involvement process suggests that family involvement begins with families' decision-making and culminates with student outcomes (Whitaker, 2019).

The Hoover-Dempsey and Sadler model provides a rational perspective to examine and understand the motivation involved or uninvolved in their children's education. The model consists of five levels dealing with parents' belief systems, motivations, and cognitive behaviors as part of their mental reasoning in their decision-making regarding their level of participation in their children's education (Tekin, 2011, Bower & Griffin, 2011).

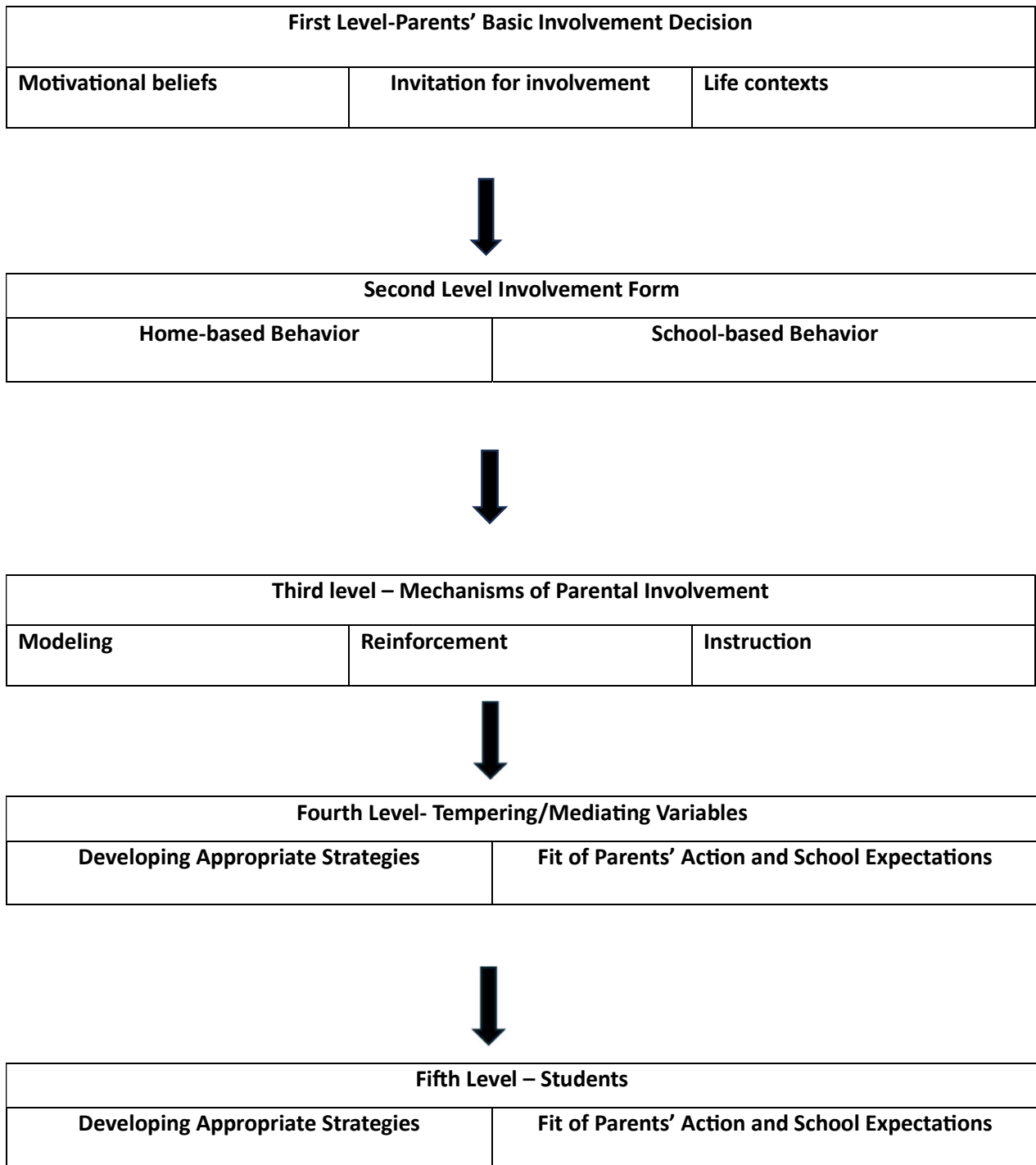
Level 1 of the original model defines the external and personal factors that impact a parent's choice to become involved in their child's education. These personal factors contain the parents' belief about their role in their child's learning (role construction) and that they can effectively support their child (self-efficacy). Level 2 of the model expresses the factors that influence a parent's involvement form. This includes their knowledge and skills, time and energy, and specific invitations (Hoover-Dempsey & Sandler, 1997). Level 3 of the model looks at the types of strategies parents use to support their child's learning (Walker et al., 2005). Level 4 describes variables of involvement which include (a) parents' use of developmentally appropriate strategies and (b) a match between their involvement and the school's expectations. Level 5 describes student outcomes because of their parents' involvement.

Hoover-Dempsey and Sandler suggest that schools create a friendly school environment, equip teachers to handle parental involvement, learn about parental goals for being involved, provide a range of opportunities, and administration, teachers, staff, and community stakeholders to student-centered functions and events will encourage parents and family to be involved in the school and their child's learning experiences. (Hoover-Dempsey & Sandler, 1997).

Hoover Dempsey and Sandler (1997) also suggest that parents' skills can be strengthened by the schools' emphasizing the positive effects on their child's success. Providing parents with explicit insight about how they can be involved, knowledge about how parent involvement influences the student's academic success, and providing parents with feedback and support on their involvement helps to increase their motivation and encourage them to take an active role

Table 2

Hoover Dempsey and Sandler Model



Importance of Parental Involvement

Parental involvement plays an important role in students' education, and the benefits for students are many (Jeynes, 2003, 2007). Parental involvement has a positive influence on students' learning and academic success. According to Desforges & Abouchaar (2003), students with high levels of parental involvement and support experience greater levels of academic success than students with minimal parental involvement and support.

Positive parental involvement contributes to students' academic achievement by affecting their academic self-concept. Research suggests parental involvement is a key factor in the improvement of children's academic success.(Ebuta & Ekpo-Eloma, 2014). There is considerable evidence that parent involvement leads to improved student achievement, better school attendance, and reduced dropout rates. For students to be successful (Jeynes, 2011; Sheldon & Epstein, 2005). School leaders and teachers need to develop ways to help students succeed in school, and the role parents can play in helping shape them in the context of student education.

For years, schools and school districts have been working to involve families, however, there still seems to be an absence of what parental involvement means.(Anastasiou & Papagianni, 2020). Various parental involvement efforts sought to join parents in the school by creating opportunities and experiences for parents to connect with school staff and facilities. Nonetheless, there seems to be a growing trend, both nationally and internationally, that effective parental involvement means more than just getting parents to school (Park & Holloway, 2013). Parents should be partners in teaching and learning, so they are recognized as genuine contributors to school policy and governance of the operation of the school (Brown & Hunter, 1998).

Parental involvement can encourage community unity and support the development of the student's learning outcomes and academic success. Parental involvement helps to form a home-school collaboration. Homeschool collaboration implies that there should be a partnership between the home (parents) and school (educators), and both should work towards a common goal.

Parental involvement is broader. This involvement focuses on the responsibility of parents in their children's education and how parents and educators can work together to promote the social, emotional, and academic development of the students (Tett, 2003). The term "parental involvement" can be defined as the 'active and significant involvement of the parent in all aspects; both curricular and non-curricular activities of the child's formal education describe parental involvement as the relationship which parents and teachers share, and these groups use their abilities to their fullest to give children the best possible education. Parental involvement influences the personal lives and educational success of students, specifically students in rural and low-income environments and communities (Ebuta & Ekpo-Eloma, 2014; Keith & Lichtman, 1992; Wang et al., 2020). Parental involvement has a substantial influence on student and educational success. Therefore, a clear definition of parental involvement is needed.

The federal government defines parental involvement as involvement The term "parental involvement" means the participation of parents in regular, two-way, and meaningful communication involving student academic learning and other school activities, including ensuring (A) that parents play an integral role in assisting their child's learning; (B) that parents are encouraged to be actively involved in their child's education at school; (C) that parents are full partners in their child's education and are included, as appropriate, in decision making and on advisory committees to assist in the education of their child; and (D) the carrying out of other

activities, such as those described in section 6318 of this title. When considering this definition, many factors make effective parental involvement difficult to obtain for students and families in rural and advantaged communities and environments.

Effective parental involvement is developed by the participation, devoting time, and intentional collaborative efforts of parents, teachers, school leaders, district-level leaders, and other community stakeholders for the students (Wright, 2009). The influence that parental support has on students is immeasurable. Research confirming the many potential benefits of parental involvement in education and the prolonged benefits for the student's success (Wang et al., 2020).

According to Moore (2021), the value of parental involvement in children's educational success is noted regarding grades, test scores, improved behavior, and other socioemotional factors. This impact addresses the importance of parental involvement it can have on students while in the school setting, and how it can impact students when they are not in a school setting. (McKay et al., 2003).

Parental involvement is crucial to student learning, growth, and development. However, parental involvement is an even more crucial element for Black parents in rural and urban communities due to the barriers that already exist (Sapungan & Sapungan, 2014; Wherry, 2009). Some existing barriers, such as language, academic, and social barriers, can prevent students in rural communities from accessing resources in the school environment (Moore, 2021; Pottiger, 2022). There have been considerable positive effects of parental involvement that have impacted the success of children. These positive outcomes have made parental involvement a major consideration in their development. As a result, Schmid & Garrel (2021) assert that parental

involvement can be a good indicator of student achievement and academic success because of the benefits it has on a child's learning.

Parental Involvement in Rural Communities

Black parental involvement in rural school settings and communities plays a crucial role in their children's academic achievement and success. The necessity for home and school-based collaborative partnerships for student success is critical (Tett, 2003). With limited resources available in most rural communities, family-school partnerships can be important to students in rural schools. Years of research have revealed the positive impacts of parent contribution on children's academic accomplishments for diverse populations (Sanders, 2018; Smith et al., 2011). Schools in rural communities can gain from family-school partnerships that focus on connecting the school and home. In many rural communities, schools connect with families in various capacities as part of a school day (Grove & and Fisher, 2006). For example, local church and community leaders volunteer in the schools to provide the support needed to the school. In many rural communities, the local school building is a monument of pride, a place for sporting events, community events, cultural events, and civic activities.

Because the educational and behavioral needs in rural communities are so great and the demand placed on rural schools to meet the educational, behavioral, and social needs of students is high, rural communities must tap all available resources (Whitaker, 2019). One natural and plentiful source is the family. Despite the centrality of rural schools and the small student populations, rural schools cannot connect effectively with families.

Rural schools have strengths but still face difficulties, which include high teacher turnover, teachers with non-traditional credentials, and insufficient resources (Kgaffe, 2001). In

addition, many rural communities experience school consolidation and school closures (Bard, 2016; DeYoung & Howley, 1990; Leisey, 1990).

These issues are also coupled with high demand and increased pressure on student achievement in core subject areas. This means that rural schools are expected to do more with less (Barley & Beesley, 2007). Families in rural communities struggle with similar challenges. Poverty rates in rural America are prevalent, and social and behavioral services for these families are very limited or nonexistent.

Parental Involvement in Urban Communities

Research has shown that family demographics are a significant factor in the level and type of involvement in their child's education (Jafarov, 2015; Moore, 2021). Studies on parental involvement in education have been organized into three primary areas: home-based involvement, school-based involvement, and academic socialization. According to Huguley et al. (2021), conventional empirical work in these domains typically centers involvement strategies around White, middle-class experiences rather than examining how optimal parenting approaches vary by race and context.

Title I of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) of 1965, reauthorized as the Every Child Succeeds Act (ESSA) in 2015, required parent involvement in deprived and disadvantaged communities through parent advisory councils. Despite the efforts and guidelines laid out by the federal government, barriers exist for urban, low-income, immigrant, minority, and working-class parents (Sapungan & Sapungan, 2014). A feeling of marginalization, work schedules, and language barriers generally resulted in a lack of parent involvement by working-class parents in ethnic and racial minority groups (Benson & Martin, 2003; Smith & Wohlstetter, 2009). Growing research continues to encourage the support for parent involvement in urban

schools as a key to increasing student performance, but parent involvement continues to be elusive (Sanders-Phillips et al., 2009).

Barriers to Parental Involvement

Education plays a significant part in the academic, social, and emotional development of an individual. Education helps to shape personality and lays the foundation for all life.

Education helps to enhance daily living and positively impact and support communities that powerfully impact society (Brock & Edmunds, 2010). Even though parental involvement has been extensively seen as a valuable dimension of education, there are still several barriers that impede the process (Cobb, 2014).

Education and learning are often hindered by various barriers that students and families' encounter. These barriers include structural, personal, or environmental barriers to your academic development. A structural barrier could be something that's happening in your community or your family. Environmental factors could also encompass family problems or any illnesses you face. (Bard, 2016; Hornby & Blackwell, 2018).

Children learn and grow best when their support systems and their daily environments positively interact with each other. Educators, parents, and other community stakeholders are encouraged to consider the connection between multiple settings of children, which may influence behavior (Sanders, 2009). A child's home and school are the two entities that should interact for continuous growth and development. When collaboration involving school and home is effective, it brings many advantages to the students. Schools and school leaders need to consider that parents are a child's first teachers (Tett, 2003). Thus, through an effective home and school partnership, educators can learn more about the children, which helps in their interactions with the students and the building of positive student-teacher relationships.

Cultural Barriers

In the educational system, Black families represent the most updated form of legitimized minority suppression (Sanchez, 2018). Smith & Wohlstetter, (2009), research emphasized how schools and educators unfairly used school-centered views and perspectives to identify parental involvement; however, parents used a community-centered lens to provide for the needs and protection of their children.

There is a lack of sufficient understanding between parents' and educators' views of PI practices (Robles, 2011; Wright, 2009). This lack creates noncongruence between home and school. Since there is no harmony in school and at home, the varying viewpoints can create tension when cultural differences are brought into the dynamic (Pomerantz et al., 2007). Culture determines what values and traditions individuals embrace, their mindsets, and their mannerisms. I assert that culture is a plausible challenge to teachers and administration in promoting a learning environment conducive to parental involvement. Culture as a challenge to parental involvement in 2000, racial and ethnic minorities made up approximately 28% of the United States population. A decade later, "according to the 2010 U.S. Census, approximately 36.3 % of the population belonged to a racial or ethnic minority group" (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, 2014, para. 1). Clearly, the populations of U.S. public schools have become greater.

Black families in schools experience seclusion and detachment when attempting to interact with school staff. Creswell's (2015) assumptions provide a model for investigation linked to the interpretation of how Black families identify or describe parental involvement. Success is enhanced when parental involvement is evident. Black families are dedicated to

their children's academic progress but are limited by cultural barriers (Denessen et al., 2007; Pena, 2000) such as work schedules, transportation, and childcare options.

When family and school staff come from different cultural backgrounds, some barriers prevent parent-school relationships. These barriers include circumstances supported by cultural factors that hinder the school and family from attempting to work together to improve learning. The barriers can be highly complicated. Culture is defined as a set of values, beliefs, and practices grounded in history and experiences shared by a group, which is viewed as distinct and different from that of other groups (Kim, 2009). These sensitive situations of cultural norms differences and barriers have been long overlooked by school and community leaders, especially in low-income communities ((Caffarella & Zinn, 1999)).

Joshi et al. (2005) maintain that the following additional barriers that hinder teachers and parents from collaborating openly and honestly are a "lack of understanding of the home school partnerships, lack of understanding of the school system; lack of confidence, work interference, negative past experiences with schools, and insensitivity or hostility on the part of the school personnel. This lack creates cultural incongruence between schools and minority families within these communities. The minority parents are that these communities and schools lack the required cultural resources to become involved (Brown & Hunter, 1998; Creswell, 2013). When parents and teachers come from different backgrounds, few barriers prevent parent-school relationships (Joshi et al., 2005).

Children live in the context of their families; therefore, families are the most important influence on children's development (Bronfenbrenner, 1986). Children's intellectual development depends on the interaction between the adult family and children within each culture. This progression, interaction, and engagement throughout the family and generations

develop connections and relationships. Lee and Bowen (2006) describe this impact, stating that "parents from different ethnic backgrounds possess different educational values and ways of educating their children. This indicates that different educational cultures are embedded in family shape how parents see their roles in children's academic learning."

Socioeconomic Barriers

One of the most significant factors concerning parental involvement in schools and communities is the parents' socioeconomic status. Families of students from a low socioeconomic demographic often view society and community differently than families in a higher socioeconomic demographic (Henderson & Mapp, 2002). In these low socioeconomic areas, school leaders realized that the school culture was not as inviting to parents. This tends to make parents feel unwelcome in many schools. Educators must acknowledge that they overlook the less obvious involvement of these parents in the schools.

Many minority families are often themselves members of low socioeconomic status (SES). Due to this low SES, parents have fewer resources for engaging and supporting their children (Crosnoe, 2004). These barriers interfere with minority parents wanting to be involved and participate in their children's academic success. It interferes with students who would like to get support from their parents, the lack of transportation, conflicting working schedules, and feelings of poor self-worth and acceptance.

Regrettably, priorities like providing food and shelter take precedence over parental attention. Work schedules and hours worked differed for parents who were of low socioeconomic status, and this took time away from their students' education. These priorities leave students to be self-motivated enough to complete homework assignments and activities and participate in sports and extracurricular activities.

Locations

The geographical locality of the family home can impede parental involvement and cohesiveness between school and families. The residential location has a "relative" effect on how often parents contribute to school and school-related events. A community, a neighborhood, or a specific geographic location can all be considered mini-cultures or sub-cultures, each having exclusive cultural values, norms, and practices (Pena, 2000).

The ways parents within each of these sub-cultures perceive parental involvement in their children's education and the actual action of involvement are "cultural practices" and/or "cultural rituals" (Pena, 2000).

The influences of location on cultural rituals work through factors towards parental involvement and the practices and frequency of the other parents' involvement actions. Because the cultural norms and rituals in urban areas, in general, indicate impersonal social relationships and are less connected to local communities, urban parents are assumed to be less likely to take part in school-related activities (Benson & Martin, 2003; Person et al., 2021). By contrast, cultural norms emphasizing intimate interpersonal relationships and close attachment to local communities are more likely to occur in smaller and less organizationally complex environments (Sun, 1994). Thus, to the extent that those norms affect parental involvement in school activities, it is hypothesized that such involvement should be in rural areas.

Levels of Trust

Chui (2007) contends that the role of trust in education is important. Perhaps most importantly, higher levels of trust align with higher levels of parental involvement, better parent-teacher communication, stronger relationships, more positive teacher beliefs, and more teacher outreach (Adams & Christenson, 1998). Trust has also been found to be fluid. Trust appears to

be higher when children are in primary and elementary grades. However, trust and parental involvement tend to decline as students reach middle school grades and continue to decline as students transition into high school (Strier & Katz, 2016).

Studies and research support the idea that parent involvement is linked to higher levels of motivation and academic achievement (Cheung & Pomerantz, 2012). Consequently, increasing parent involvement would only provide a greater chance of promoting academics and a school culture that would impact student achievement and academic success. Parents of schools and communities serving black students from the working class and students from low-income socioeconomic levels usually have shown lower levels of school involvement (Moles, 2000).

The schools serving students in these low-income and black communities could benefit from increased parent involvement because of the achievement gap between black students and their white counterparts, even when SES is considered (Yeung & Conley, 2008). When trust between members of the school exists, it positively impacts student learning and student outcomes (Goddard et al., 2001). Parents who trust their children's teachers tend to be more engaged. Effective parental involvement enhances the quality of teacher-parent relationships.

Parental involvement is better when teachers encourage and invite parents to be part of the learning process. (Nzinga-Johnson et al., 2009). The more specific the encouragement and the invitation, the more likely parents are to participate. When teachers and school staff explain how their involvement affects their child's success, parents find ways to contribute. The more precise communication is with parents, the more effective schools seem to be in building and maintaining trust with parents.

Communication Disconnect

The extent and value of teachers' communication with parents can be affected by racial stereotypes. A study by Hua-Yu Cherng (2016), noted that teachers were more likely to contact black parents about misbehavior but rarely made contact to inform parents about their children's accomplishments than they were to inform white parents about their children's accomplishments. (Henderson et al., 2020) Teachers were less likely to contact Asian families to share negative or positive feedback. This can make parents of color feel marginalized and think their involvement is unwanted (Carreón et al., 2005). Black parents have stated that they feel unwelcome in schools.

Though racial differences have played a role in lower and more negative teacher and parent communications, race is not the only issue that influences how teachers and parents interact with each other. Economic class is just as much a factor as race as it relates to communication and misunderstanding between school and home (Grove & and Fisher, 2006). More well-off parents communicated in ways like the communication styles of their children's teachers, and their parenting behaviors also tended to be closely aligned with teachers' expectations. They were linked to higher test scores and graduation rates (Adams & Foryth, 2013).

In contrast, miscommunication is common between teachers and working-class parents. For example, working-class parents often think they shouldn't interfere with teachers' work. However, teachers tended to think parents lacked interest in their children's learning and academic success. Equally, other researchers have found that parents of lower socioeconomic status or marginalized backgrounds (Smith, 2007) and parents who are immigrants (Mitchell &

Bryan, 2007) tend to report more challenges in communicating with their children's schools. These disconnects can certainly decrease parents' trust.

When schools and school staff express sincere interest in their students and their families, it reveals that the teachers care about both the students and their families. This fosters a connection and helps effective communication between parents and school staff. School districts have different methods to build relationships involving schools and families (Epstein, 1995). Brown (2013) suggests that the answer to miscommunication and lack of trust is not for teachers and school leaders to avoid contacting parents about concerns and issues with their children. Concerns should not be conveyed in a way that seems to minimize the concern. Doing so may lead to a phenomenon called the "Pollyanna Effect" (Brown, 2013). This "Pollyanna Effect" occurs when the school communicates a message in a "sugar-coated" fashion that makes parents feel there is no need to act or be concerned. Due to the school's cautiousness about the seriousness of the problem, the student may not get the help needed to address the problem. The Pollyanna Effect occurs when white educators communicate with black parents and families (Brown, 2013).

Single Parenting

Single Black mothers and fathers encounter barriers to parental involvement due to childcare, the lack of support from extended families, or living on their own. Black single parents living in rural communities are less likely to be involved. This lack of involvement from these single-family homes impacts educational success. Research studies from Park & Holloway (2013) noted that low-income and/or ethnic and racial minority parents are less likely than other parents to participate in their children's education and schooling. Most rural communities do not provide the resources and support to these single-parent families.

The number of children living with two parents has dropped since 1968, while the percentage living with their mother has only doubled. In 1968, 85% of children under 18 lived with two parents(Lerner et al., 2024). More children are living in single-parent families than ever before. Today, more than half (51.2%) of black children live in single-parent families in 2022, compared with one in five (21.3%) white children (Williams, 2023).

Children from the dynamics of single-parent homes often encounter many academic challenges.(Tan et al., 2020) Limited finances can restrict or hinder access to educational resources, which impacts children's academic performance and grades. The emotional stress of the family's absent parent can deter concentration and overall educational performance. Building and maintaining a community developed on parent-teacher relationships is vital to a student's outcome and educational experience.

Other Barriers

Absenteeism and truancy are the primary causes of Black students struggling in schools and communities (Epstein & Sheldon, 2016). Effective parental involvement decreases truancy issues. Findings from a longitudinal study revealed the following: Family-school-community partnership methods expect an increase in daily attendance and a decrease in chronic absenteeism. (Epstein, 2012). Absenteeism and truancy are major predictors of student dropout rates; however, Epstein and Sheldon (2002) did not present any specific instances of family-school community partnership practices that improve absenteeism. Epstein and Sheldon (2002) discussed ways to improve student attendance through family and community involvement, thereby decreasing absenteeism.

Environmental factors often impact parental involvement and create a lack of interest. These factors include assistance and support with homework, which negatively

influence black families' efforts for academic achievement for their children. Other factors are a lack of regular meetings between parents and schools and homework participation between families and students (Spinelli et al., 2021; Tan et al., 2020).

Removing Barriers

Due to the complex needs of schools and communities, school officials and families must work together in partnership to focus on and resolve the sensitive needs of the students. For better outcomes, communication must be clear and well-developed. Creating opportunities for schools and teachers to collaborate and value perspectives from both families and teachers, the perspectives of parents and teachers must be valued (Epstein et al., 2002). Families face barriers that are emotional, physical, and racial. Long work, transportation, and the need for childcare can conflict with school schedules and negatively impact parental involvement. These inferences can prevent parents from becoming involved.

The improvement of successful parental involvement is contingent on educators and school officials identifying these barriers and establishing methods to avoid them. Thoroughly devised parental involvement plans and programs have been developed to break down barriers specific to school communities (Epstein et al., 2002). Providing parents with clear directions about what is expected of them can help remove parents' hesitancy to become involved. When teachers find ways to utilize input from parents about a child's learning styles, interests, and talents, it can also break down barriers to parental involvement (Baker, 1997). Leithwood (1993), noted that the role of the family had a substantial impact on student learning and achievement. His report proposed various ways family-school partnerships can be established to break down barriers over time.

Perspectives

What are perspectives? What do perspectives have to do with how teachers teach, how school administration leads, and how students learn and engage in the lessons? Cambridge Dictionary describes perspective as a particular way of thinking about something, especially one influenced by a person's beliefs or experiences. Perspectives are a mindset that determines how individuals see others. Students' overall academic success is impacted by the perspectives of teachers, school administration, and parents.

Parents' Perspectives

Parental involvement has been a subject of importance among educators, researchers, and policymakers for years. Nonetheless, the current body of literature on parental involvement continues to be erroneous and does not acknowledge the voices of parents to be heard in their involvement with their children's education. Barge and Loges (2003) recognized that teachers, students, and parents have different views about parental involvement. They discovered that parental involvement implies making sure students complete their homework assignments. Parents believe it is essential for their children to do their homework and to help them when needed. (Mccarthy et al., 2022) Most parents feel it is important to develop individual relationships with teachers. Parents suppose that if they have a good rapport with teachers and teachers know that these parents pay attention to their children, the teachers will be more inclined to treat their children better.'

Parents tend to perceive parental involvement differently from what teachers and school administrators have traditionally viewed as parental involvement. Administrators, faculty, and staff identify parental involvement as how many parents attend school-sponsored events, and take advantage of extracurricular school programs. (Mccarthy et al., 2022; Menheere & Hooge,

2010) Particularly, parents who do not have enough ability to help their children with their homework or other curriculum-related tasks state the importance of this involvement. Parents believe it is important to develop collaboration within the community because it plays an important role in a student's educational achievement (Grove & and Fisher, 2006).

In many cases, marginalized, low-income parents with less education and whose ethnic and cultural values are different from those of school personnel feel uncomfortable in their efforts to engage school officials (Henderson et al., 2004). Because of the lack of these necessary skills, parents may be viewed by school officials as lacking the necessary skills and competencies to support their children's education and student achievement. (Epstein, 1995). School officials often view parents from a deficit perspective (Nieto, 2009).

When parents fail to attend school-sponsored events, parents are often perceived as uninvolved or disinterested. However, parents' perspective of parental involvement encompassed a broader description of "involvement in every part of their children's lives. The parents' perception of parental involvement differs from the characterization that school officials have of parental involvement (Barges & Loges, 2003).

Parents are encouraged to become equal partners in their children's education; however, even though parents influence their children's learning and academic growth, the misrepresentation of parents as equal partners in their children's education remains (Barge & Loges, 2003; Schmid & Garrell, 2021). Even though there is convincing proof of the advantages of parental involvement, there still exist barriers that separate parents from schools (Abrams & Gibbs, 2000).

Black Parents' Perspectives

The operational definition of parental involvement is attending school events, extracurricular activities, parent-teacher conferences, and volunteering (Jeynes, 2010). This definition is centered around general perceptions that do not consider culturally specific parenting practices (McKay et. al., 2003). Most Black parents intentionally use distinctive actions to foster their children's educational outcomes (Neblett et al., 2009).

Culturally distinctive actions of Black parents are not characterized in the existing parental involvement narrative. Consequently, the present literature may imply that Black parents are not as involved in their children's education and academic outcomes (Seaton et al., 2008; Aronson & Steele, 1998). To comprehend parental involvement in Black families, there must be an understanding of how encounters with racism can damage the student achievement of Black students (Odom & Vernon-Feagans, 2010).

Teacher's Perspective

Epstein (1991) suggested positive approaches to parental involvement put more value on parental involvement strategies than teachers who did not have a positive approach to parental involvement. Approaches to improve parent involvement include conducting parent-teacher conferences with all students, parenting, informing parents about school functions and events, and not only notifying parents about issues but also about their positive progress and good reports. These positive approaches will foster more successful teacher-parent partnerships.

It is beneficial that teachers understand their impact on getting parents involved in their children's education. There is a link between schools and parents' relationships and how it influences parental involvement (Reed et al., 2000)). Teachers' motivation and perspectives of parents' perspectives on school activities had the most significant impact on parents' roles and

involvement in their child's academic education. When teachers have a positive and productive relationship with parents, they help in the academic success of students' outcomes by involving parents (Epstein, 2018).

Principal Perspective

Children enter school with experiences that extend across diverse cultural and language constructs. These students bring their different ethnic and cultural belief systems and experiences. As a fundamental connection in the power construct between teachers, students, and parents, principals are critical to how any school functions (Curry & Holter, 2019). While power is restricted by many factors, principals possess substantial influence in creating and maintaining a school's culture and structural goals (Brock & Edmunds, 2010). Therefore, principals and other school leaders should create connections and opportunities for these students and their parents to feel welcome and safe in the school (Rapp & Duncan, 2012). The principal must follow best practices when implementing activities and strategies to engage parents (Rapp & Duncan, 2012).

Much research has shown that the school principal is a key factor in making a school successful and maintaining the school's success (Hord et al., 1984). The school principal should ensure that all school staff create an environment where parents are welcome. Baquedano-Lopez et al. (2013) cautioned that parental involvement may differ depending on the parents' cultural background. Researchers have noted that effective principals can solve problems by using strong communication skills, creating mutually respectful collaboration with school stakeholders, staying intent on solving problems, and providing personal and professional growth opportunities among students, faculty, and staff (Rapp & Duncan, 2012).

Chapter 3: Methodology

Parental involvement continues to be one of the major factors in positive student achievement and academic excellence (Smith, 2006). Student achievement is reflected in better grades, greater student self-motivation, higher academic scores, and perseverance to continue higher education (Keith & Scharzter, 1995; Rivera & Li, 2019). Due to the varying outcomes that represent parental involvement, a deeper understanding needs to be given of the experiences of parents, specifically based on where these parents reside. Using a qualitative approach, the purpose of this study was to better understand the parental involvement experiences of Black parents in both rural and urban communities in Alabama. The perspectives and experiences of Black parents from rural and urban experiences guide this study. The following research questions were investigated:

1. How do Black parents define and demonstrate their involvement in their children's education?
2. What barriers prevent Black parents from being involved, and how are these barriers different between rural and urban areas?
3. What strategies do Black parents use to engage their children's education despite the challenges?
4. In what ways do school staff facilitate or hinder future Black parental involvement?

This research seeks resolutions to barriers that impede or negatively impact parental involvement. Interviews, observations, and documents were utilized to capture the opinions, trends, and perspectives of parents involved in these qualitative case studies to support the study.

Research Design

This comparative case study is based on the educational beliefs and practices of parents in rural and urban communities. A comparative case study design was selected because it gives greater insight into the actions, trends, and perspectives of the participants. In qualitative research, comparative case studies offer a different approach to understanding complex experiences. Examining multiple cases within a single study allowed the researcher to discover similarities, differences, patterns, and unique complexities that may not be noticeable when analyzing a single case in isolation. (Bartlett & Vavrus, 2017; Gustafsson, 2017).

One benefit of comparative case studies is the ability to make theoretical generalizations. Through the examination of multiple cases, researchers can develop and enhance theoretical frameworks. In addition, comparative case studies enable researchers to identify relative factors that impact the outcomes noted in each case. The relative factors of each case study help to enhance the strength and reliability of their findings. However, to ensure the validity and reliability of the study, there needs to be careful consideration of the rigor of the study. (Abu-Lughod, 2007) This consideration includes case selection, data collection methods, and data analysis procedures.

Creswell & Poth, 2007) stated "A qualitative research method is considered when: (a) a problem or issue needs to be explored; (b) a complex, detailed understanding of an issue is desired; (c) the researcher's goal is to empower the study participants by their sharing their stories, presenting information in their voices, and minimizing any power that may exist in the relationship between the researcher and the study participants; (d) the researcher elects to write in a flexible, literary lead style that is not limited by restrictions of formal academic structures of writing; (e) the problem or issue is studied in the same context or setting in which it is addressed

by the study participants; (f) the researcher wishes to develop theories because existing theories are partial or do not adequately address the complexity of the issue being examined; and (g) quantitative measures and statistical analysis do not adequately capture the nature of the problem (Creswell, 2007, pp. 40-41).

I selected a comparative case study design for this research study. This study explored the research problem of individuals or groups ascribed to social or human problems (Creswell, 2013, 2014; Bartlett & Vavrus, 2017; Leisey, 1990). The case study presents in-depth, real-life examples over time. The design focused on the perspectives, views, and experiences of parental involvement for Black parents. A comparative case study was designed for this research to understand how Black parents experience parental involvement in different geographical settings. This allowed the researcher to explore perspectives based on geographic location. The researcher conducted an intensive investigation in natural settings whenever possible to collect data through various sources, including observations, interviews, and documents. The case study aimed to examine and reveal how Black parents experience and express parental involvement in rural and urban communities in Alabama.

This study approach reflected opinions, experiences, and perspectives of Black parents in two different school settings from two geographical regions in the state of Alabama. This case study approach explored and determined whether Black parental involvement is different in experiences and perspectives based on rural or urban communities. This examination started with research questions focused on a particular group of parents in both rural and urban communities. This study only focused on one subgroup (Black parents) from the various subgroups represented within the rural and urban settings. The parents' perspectives, views, and experiences were

important to this study to determine strategic planning, effective parental involvement, and impactful partnerships between home and school.

A visual representation of the research design for this study is included to demonstrate the progression of the design, starting with the research question, the framework used to frame that specific research question, the method of data collection, and finally, the instrument used to collect the data (see Table 3).

Table 3

Qualitative Study Research Design

	<i>Question 1. How do Black parents define and demonstrate their involvement in their children's education?</i>	<i>Question 2. What barriers prevent Black parents from being involved, and how are these barriers different between rural and urban areas?</i>	<i>Question 3 What strategies do Black parents use to engage their children's education despite the challenges?</i>	<i>Question 4 In what ways do school staff facilitate or hinder future Black parental involvement?</i>
Framework	Epstein's Six Types of Parental Involvement Hoover-Dempsey Sandler Model	Epstein's Six Types of Parental Involvement Hoover-Dempsey Sandler Model	Epstein's Six Types of Parental Involvement Hoover- Dempsey Sandler Model	Epstein's Six Types of Parental Involvement Hoover- Dempsey- Sandler Model
Method	Qualitative	Qualitative	Qualitative	Qualitative
Instrument	Interviews Observations Documents	Interviews Observations Documents	Interviews Observations Documents	Interviews Observations Documents

Research Setting

Rural Site

The rural school is a public elementary school located in the southeastern part of Alabama, in a distinctly rural setting. The student population of the school is 479 students, and the school serves pre-K through 5th grade. At school, 17% of the students scored at or above proficiency in math, and 37% scored at or above proficiency in reading. The school's minority student enrollment is 49%. This research study is primarily composed of white students. The student-teacher ratio is 22:1. The school enrolls 76% of economically disadvantaged students.

Urban Site

The urban site school is a public elementary school in southeast Alabama, in a distinct town setting. The enrollment is 653 students, and the school serves pre-K through 5th grade. At school, 12% of the students scored at or above proficiency in math, and 52% scored at or above proficiency in reading. The minority enrollment of the school is 43%. The teacher-student ratio is 20:1. The school enrolls 69% of economically disadvantaged students.

A visual representation of the two research sites is included in observing and analyzing the data collected (see Table 4). The data in the visual representation of student enrollment, percentage of ethnicity by race, percentage of free and reduced lunch participants, and the proficiency percentages of state test scores meeting and exceeding standards in both English Language Arts and Mathematics.

Table 4

School Demographic and Academic Profile

	Rural Site	Urban Site
Student Enrollment	479	653
% Free or Reduced Lunch	76%	69%

% Ethnicity by Race	Black	35%	Black	38.1%
	White	50%	White	57.5%
	Hispanic	6%	Hispanic	2.1%
	Asian	1%	Asian	0.6%
% Subject Proficiency	ELA-	37%	ELA-	47%
	Math-	17%	Math-	21%

Site Summary

Both school sites, urban and rural, were based on their geographical location to obtain a sample from distinct parts of the selected state. Both schools are in southeast Alabama. Each research setting serves a high number of Black students. Also, each school serves a high percentage of students who are economically challenged and receive federal funds to implement parental involvement activities.

All the research participants in this qualitative study were of Black descent based on demographic information provided to the school site during registration and reidentification. This research only focuses on the views, perspectives, and experiences of Black parents within the educational setting of their children. No other ethnic groups or subgroups were included in this study.

Population

According to (Banerjee & Chaudhury, 2010), the research population, also known as the target population, refers to the entire group or set of individuals, objects, or events that possess specific characteristics and are of interest to the researcher. The target population for this study includes Black parents of students in rural and urban school settings in Alabama. For this study, it was important for each participant to be in the Black subgroup. The participants from this study were from both a rural school setting and an urban school setting.

Sample

Sample selection is a vital aspect of research. Sampling determines the credibility of the data collected. All research participants in this study were Black parents of students in a rural or urban school in Alabama. The research was reserved for all Black parents within rural and urban settings. Purposive sampling, selective, or subjective sampling was used for this research study. This technique relies on the judgment of the researcher when choosing who to ask to participate. Researchers may implicitly choose a “representative” sample to suit their needs or specifically approach individuals with certain characteristics (Campbell et al., 2020). A research sample will be utilized as a typical guideline to study a few participants and research sites to gather information for this qualitative study.

Data Collection

I scheduled an appointment with each principal from the selected research site that took place after the Institutional Review Board (IRB) approved the data collection approach. The purpose of the appointment with the respective principals was to discuss any questions they had before the research and data collection started.

The method for collecting data during this study was interviews, follow-up interviews, observations, and documents. Gathering data through semi-structured interviews, whether one-on-one interviews, required the questions to allow for follow-up questions to collect meaningful data. The interview questions focused on ways to gain information that may not be seen during observations. Simon (2009) suggests that researchers establish a rapport with the research participants, listen attentively to the participants, and ask open-ended questions to gather useful information.

Data Source: Interviews

According to Elhami & Khoshnevisan (2022), an interview is generally a technique that involves asking open-ended questions to converse with respondents and collect elicited data about a subject. Interviewing is the most common format of data collection in qualitative research. The main purpose of the interview was to know the thoughts and opinions of the research participants. Interviews were conducted to gather information to develop patterns from the perspective of the participants regarding the research questions for this study. The interview questions included open-ended questions to allow participants to provide relevant information. The researcher designed the questions to elicit information from interview participants on their experiences and perspectives.

This line of questioning allowed the researcher to gain insight into the authentic perspectives, views, and experiences of the participants. All interview strategies were designed to gather data and explore the research questions (Kural, 2021). The goal of the interview was to understand parental involvement from the Black parents' experiences within the two ascribed research settings. Interviewing Black parents from both rural and urban school settings offered a wider range of experiences of Black parents and how these experiences supported or hindered parental involvement for this subgroup.

Data Source: Follow-up Interviews

Follow-up interview questions were used to clarify with the research participants based on the original set of interviews. The purpose of the follow-up interview is to provide greater insight regarding the research questions. The inductive approach was used, starting with 19 interview questions. This process entailed discovering patterns, categories, and themes to organize the data for the research study. (Bartlett & Vavrus, 2017; Bennett, 2004; Creswell, 2013; Leisey, 1990).

Data Source: Observations

Qualitative research can also include observations. Observation is a way of gathering data by watching behavior and events or noting the physical characteristics of research participants in their natural setting. Observation in qualitative research is one of the oldest and most fundamental research methods approaches (Smit & Onwuegbuzie, 2018). Observation is a type of qualitative research method that not only includes participant observation but also covers ethnography and research work in the field. In this observational research design, multiple study sites are involved.

Observations can provide researchers with a better understanding of how a program or activity operates. It allowed the researchers to witness things that program staff, participants, or residents might not routinely notice or mention in an interview. It also enabled researchers to gain insight that had been missed during the interview or that interview or focus group respondents might be unwilling to discuss (Kang & Hwang, 2021). Including observation offered the researcher the benefits of extensive capacity to collect data, uncover complex patterns, spot emerging trends, and foster and deepen comprehension through unmediated encounters. Observations of parental interactions were conducted at various school functions, such as Family Literacy Night, Fall Festival, and naturally occurring times like morning drop off and afternoon pickup, but did not include classroom observations as part of this comparative case study.

Data Source: Documents

Document is a term that refers to various materials in visual sources, such as photographs, video, and film (Morgan, 2022). Documents used for systematic evaluation as part of a study take various forms. According to Bowen (2009), they include advertisements, agendas, attendance registers, and minutes of meetings; manuals; background papers; books and brochures; diaries and journals; event programs (i.e., printed outlines); letters and memoranda;

maps and charts; and newspapers (clippings/art). Documents were used in combination with other qualitative research methods for triangulation. All obtainable documents were used for data. This process involves electronic and physical records to interpret them better, understand their meaning, and develop the information they provide.

Data Analysis

Data analysis in qualitative research is vital for collecting meaningful insights from rich, often complex datasets. As Denzin and Lincoln (2008) maintain, qualitative data analysis serves as the "soul of the research enterprise," allowing researchers to uncover patterns, themes, and relationships embedded within the data. Additionally, data analysis in qualitative research will enable researchers to carefully examine diverse perspectives, capturing the distinctions and instances of human experiences, behaviors, and social phenomena (Charmaz, 2014).

The data analysis for this study was followed by qualitative case study research, which stated that researchers in this type of study dig deeper and deeper into understanding. This process involved the interpretation of interviews, observations, and documents. As I worked through this data analysis, patterns and trends developed. The data analysis revealed insight into how Black parents experience parental involvement in rural and urban settings.

As mentioned, data was acquired by interviews, follow-ups, observations, and documents. The data collected during the interviews was used to discover themes. Once the interviews were completed, the recorded data was transcribed. After the transcription, the data were coded, and the codes helped label the data. In this qualitative study, I applied values coding. Through systematic coding and thematic analysis, researchers can distill large volumes of qualitative data into manageable units, facilitating the interpretation of findings and the generation of new knowledge (Saldana, 2016).

According to Saldana (2016), values coding is the application of codes to qualitative data that reflects the participants' values, attitudes, and beliefs, representing their perspectives and worldviews (p. 133). For this study, I applied the steps of value coding. First, I identified the most appropriate type of coding for the study. Next, I began coding the transcribed data. I created a list of codes, but the list changed throughout the data analysis. Then, I generated categories. Once the coding and identifying categories were completed, I identified themes. Coding was conducted by hand.

Assumptions

In qualitative studies, assumptions are vital, and this study is not without assumptions. One assumption of this study is the participants' truthfulness. It was assumed that all participants were truthful enough to share their opinions and experiences of parental involvement. The participants' recollection of situations and events may conflict with the actual events and occurrences, making their responses unreliable. However, with the help of triangulation, the accuracy of the participants' responses was ensured.

Secondly, this qualitative study assumed that all participants would give detailed information about the school and how the school supports parental involvement. While the research participants' views, ideas, and perspectives are different, these views or perspectives enabled the researcher to determine themes among the research participants' responses. A final assumption was that the school would assist parents in the study's success. It is essential that all participants freely share accurate information without any bias or preconceptions.

Reflexive Statement

Creswell (2003) contends that qualitative researchers should recognize their unique values, assumptions, and biases at the beginning of the study. This comparative case study urges

researchers to be transparent about their biases. Therefore, I need to understand my role as the researcher in this study. I must clarify my situation regarding this qualitative study. I am closely connected to the study topic as I have been in education for nineteen years. For the first sixteen years of my career, I was a teacher for students with special needs. For the past three years, I have been an assistant principal. My position in this research study is that of an insider. I am also a parent and grandparent in the Black subgroup. My children attended school in an urban community. As a teacher, I worked in an urban setting where my kids attended school. As an administrator, I work within a rural school setting.

I want to understand better how effective parental involvement may be implemented and practiced in schools for Black parents. My positive experiences as a parent inspired me to believe that effective parental involvement is worth the effort in closing achievement gaps for Black students. I also realized that school administration is the main contributor to parental involvement. The school administration and teachers must drive these efforts for effective and meaningful parental involvement. As such, my research study will examine the experiences of Black parents and how these experiences help or hinder parental involvement.

Chapter 4: Results

This chapter explores the study's findings, titled "An Examination of Black Parental Involvement in Rural and Urban Communities in Alabama." The research aimed to investigate Black parental involvement experiences, practices, and perspectives in the distinct contexts of southeastern Alabama, focusing on both rural and urban communities (Allen & White-Smith, 2018). Parental involvement shapes students' educational outcomes and success (Williams & Fields-Smith, 2022); however, the cultural, economic, and structural differences between rural and urban communities can significantly influence how Black parents engage with their children's education (Allen & White-Smith, 2018).

The findings are organized to address the key research questions guiding the study:

1. How do Black parents define and demonstrate their involvement in their children's education?
2. What barriers prevent Black parents from being involved, and how are these barriers different between rural and urban areas?
3. What strategies do Black parents use to engage in their children's education despite the challenges?
4. In what ways do school staff facilitate or hinder future Black parental involvement?

This study emphasizes understanding the nature of parental involvement, the barriers Black parents face, and the strategies they employ to overcome these challenges. The research addresses Black parental involvement in southeastern Alabama's rural and urban educational settings. The voices of these parents are central to the analysis, providing valuable context and illustrating the complexities surrounding this critical issue.

This chapter starts by giving an overview of the participants' demographics and then analyzing the collected data. It focuses on the experiences of Black parents living in both rural and urban areas of southeastern Alabama. Lastly, it synthesizes the findings. These findings focus on the similarities and differences between the two communities and what they mean for policies and practices. This study aimed to better understand how to support and engage Black parents in different educational settings.

Throughout the analysis, key topics emerge. These include the parents' crucial role in the school community, how systemic inequities affect Black parents' involvement and the creative ways parents support their children's education (Henderson et al., 2020). This study's findings display the resilience and resourcefulness of Black parents as they advocate for their children despite facing barriers. The themes align with existing literature and shed light on how cultural and environmental factors shape parental involvement in these contexts (Jafarov, 2015).

First, this chapter presents the participants' demographic profiles to set the context. Then, the results are organized by the main themes identified in the analysis. Each theme is backed up with direct quotes from the participants, keeping their voices paramount in the narrative about Black parental experiences in both settings (Sanders, 2018). Finally, the chapter summarizes the findings and sets the stage for discussing their implications in Chapter 5. The study's findings offer a deeper understanding of Black parental involvement in different communities in southeastern Alabama, contributing to ongoing efforts to promote equity and inclusion in education.

Overview of Organization and Content

After the approval of the IRB and approval from the superintendents and principals of the participating school districts and schools, parents were recruited to participate in the study.

Once participants were recruited, parents were interviewed to collect data based on their views, perceptions, and experiences of parental involvement and parent-school partnerships within their respective schools/districts. The interview questions were carefully thought out and structured for the interview. Some questions led to follow-up questions during the interview to gather more insight. All interviews were recorded with a smartphone not set up to iCloud and later transcribed. Additional information was collected through notetaking to be utilized, which may not have been from taking the audio recordings.

The data was recorded and then coded. Once data was collected from the interviews, the analysis process began. All transcripts and recordings were reviewed, and the researcher noted that I repeated the same process for each interview to check for accuracy. Data coding began by finding the central views and principles of the case study.

In vivo coding and values coding were used. The coding process identified common ideas and themes from participants' responses. The individual interviews were designed to include various questions about parental involvement. The coding created gave way to Epstein's (2018) framework for the six critical types of involvement (parenting, communicating, volunteering, learning at home, decision-making, and collaborating with the community) that strengthen parent-school partnerships (Epstein, 2010) Understanding the parents' needs for their children's school establishes a better understanding of the most vital types of parental involvement from Epstein's framework by which the school must concentrate and strengthen.

I underlined each fundamental keyword that demonstrated the message that the participant conveyed. The organization helped to establish a working analytical framework. Many underlined words matched synonymously to that of Epstein's six types of parental involvement. Words were color-coded with highlighters to indicate patterns and categories. Then,

the codes were grouped into categories for a framework from the interviews. The data was recorded and then coded. Before a new code was created and concepts developed, data from similar interviews were cross-referenced. After analyzing the interview transcripts, several themes emerged across all the interviews. I examined and interpreted the data. This approach resulted in my themes from the data.

While comparing the data, additional categories were found. Once data saturation was reached, comparisons were discontinued. Such themes include positive school culture, networking efforts, community stakeholder-school relationships, and improving parental involvement efforts.

The following section provides an overview of the themes established from the interviews. Theme 1: Conceptualization of parental involvement experiences at their child's school. An urban parent advocated this aspect of their definition of parental involvement, stating that I make sure my daughter is well prepared when she goes to school, such as getting plenty of rest the night before and having the school supplies needed. I always check her grades in PowerSchool and reach out to her teachers if I have any questions about her grades.

Participant Demographics

The participants in this study consist of two distinct groups: nine Black parents residing in a rural community and nine Black parents from an urban community. The rural participants are predominantly middle-aged, between thirty years of age and late forties, with the majority having completed high school education. A few of these parents have pursued vocational training or attended some college courses but have not earned a degree. Their occupations vary, with most working in local industries and small businesses, and some engaged in hourly wage

positions such as factory work or retail. On average, these parents have between two and four children, often living in multigenerational households with extended family members.

Table 5

<i>Participant Demographic Description</i>				
<i>Urban Parents</i>	<u>Gender</u>	<u>Age</u>	<u>Education</u>	<u>Occupation</u>
Marty	Male	35	Technical College	Industrial
Celeste	Female	24	High School	Manufacturing
Janika	Female	30	College	Health Care
Asia	Female	29	College	Business
Symone	Female	33	College	Education
Delava	Female	33	High School	Retail
Jessica	Female	27	High School	Telemarketing
Racquel	Female	32	Technical College	Cosmetologist
Renita	Female	34	High School	Retail
<i>Rural Parents</i>				
Cameron	Male	32	College	Retail
Mariamama	Female	41	College	Manufacturing
Deborah	Female	46	Technical College	Secretary
Christy	Female	39	High School	Waitress
Sebastain	Male	36	High School	Manufacturing
Natasha	Female	33	High School	Manufacturing
Tiffany	Female	43	High School	Custodian
Ericka	Female	44	High School	Unemployed

Note: All names are pseudonyms.

The rural community context shapes the lifestyle and experiences of these participants. With limited access to advanced educational institutions, employment opportunities, and other resources, parents often emphasize the importance of family, faith, and community networks.

Some participants are involved in local churches, community events, and informal support systems. They exhibit strong family values despite financial difficulties. Some put their children's education and moral upbringing first to give them better opportunities.

The nine Black parents in the urban community were typically younger, participants were in their late 20s to early 40s. Several participants hold associate's or bachelor's degrees, demonstrating a more varied educational background. These participants work in a variety of industries, including government, business, healthcare, and education. Others hold positions that are service-oriented or entrepreneurial. Family sizes are relatively similar, with most parents raising one to three children, though single-parent households are more prevalent in this group. The urban environment presents both opportunities and challenges for these participants. These parents have much better access to social services, career opportunities, and educational resources than in the rural community. However, the urban parents also face challenges of work schedules, family obligations, and community involvement. Like the rural participants, these parents value education and family support.

Participant Characteristics

The demographic composition of the participants in this study reflects the diversity of Black families in rural and urban communities in Alabama. The rural sample included parents residing in smaller towns and communities characterized by low population density and limited access to educational resources. Many of these participants reported occupations tied to local industries, or service sectors, with varying levels of educational attainment. Household sizes in the rural group were often more significant, and extended family networks provided support. Additionally, rural parents expressed transportation challenges and the importance of community-based resources, such as their churches and local organizations, in their involvement.

In contrast, the urban participants reside in densely populated community with a larger school system and a broader range of educational resources. These participants have more diverse occupations, professional services, and industrial roles. Educational attainment levels among the urban parents varied widely, with some reporting college degrees and others high school diplomas or equivalent certifications. Urban participants face challenges such as navigating safety concerns and socioeconomic disparities within their communities. However, they reported access to more extracurricular programs and support services than the rural participants.

This demographic distinction between rural and urban participants provides a critical context for understanding the study's findings. It underscores how community characteristics influence parental involvement practices and Black families' unique challenges in each setting.

Contextualization of the Sample

The sample for this study was purposefully chosen to offer a range of viewpoints on Black parental involvement in education in Alabama's rural and urban communities. By concentrating on these two different settings, the study investigated the parallels and discrepancies in the ways Black parents manage their responsibilities to support their children's academic achievement. Parents from various socioeconomic, educational, and professional backgrounds were included to guarantee a diverse representation of experiences emphasizing shared difficulties and distinctive approaches shaped by the local environment.

This approach supports the study objective of examining how Black parents define and engage with their children's education and determining the challenges they encounter in these settings. The rural participants shared their perspectives on transportation issues, limited access to resources, and the significance of tight-knit community networks. In contrast, urban

participants emphasized issues like dealing with the complexity of urban socioeconomic dynamics and navigating bigger educational systems. When taken as a whole, these participants' varied experiences offer a sophisticated perspective on how community settings influence parental involvement, which enhances and broadens the examination of the study questions.

Detailed Accounts

Account 1: Rural Parent

Christy is a single mother of three who lives in a rural community where the nearest school is over 18 miles away. Transportation is challenging. She balances her work schedule with ensuring her children can access extracurricular activities and academic support. Despite these barriers, she actively participates in their children's education. She communicates regularly with teachers via phone calls and emails, often asking for updates on her children's academic progress.

Without strong school programs, she has taken a common approach to involvement. She organizes study groups at her church, using the support of fellow parents and retired educators in her community. She collaborated with other parents to set up a rotating schedule where they volunteered to do afternoon pick-up from school. She views her involvement as a duty and a way to ensure that her children and others in the community have equitable access to education.

Her actions exemplify the challenges and strengths of Black parents in rural settings. While geographic isolation and limited resources pose significant obstacles, the parent demonstrates resilience and innovation in fostering her children's educational success. Her story highlights the importance of community support and initiatives in overcoming systemic barriers.

Account 2: Urban Parent

Marty, a father of two, and his family reside in a densely populated urban neighborhood where the local school is located. He is a warehouse worker on rotating shifts at an automotive supplier in a neighboring city. Due to shift constraints, he struggles to attend school events but is involved in his children's education. He uses the school's online portal (PowerSchool) to monitor grades and assignments and to send messages to his children's teachers. When his older daughter struggled in math, he arranged for support from a retired teacher to provide tutoring.

Urban challenges, such as safety concerns, have not deterred his involvement. He is an active member of the school community. He works with other parents and faith-based community leaders to organize community clean-up events to create a safer environment around the school. He views his role as supporting his children and working to improve the school system for all families involved in their education.

Urban parents' experience illustrates the adaptability and determination of Black parents in urban settings. While systemic inequities and logistical challenges may complicate involvement, he uses technology, community resources, and advocacy to remain engaged. His story underscores urban parents' critical role in their children's education and broader educational reform efforts.

Key Findings

The parents' different experiences in attempting to support their children's education are reflected in the study's themes. These themes include: the conceptualization of parental involvement, barriers to involvement, involvement strategies, and relationships with schools. As the parents deal with systemic injustices and community-specific difficulties, these themes highlight their tenacity and resourcefulness. For instance, parents frequently expressed

incorporating cultural pride and advocacy into their roles, defining involvement in broader terms beyond conventional school-centered activities.

Black parents' perceptions and interactions with the educational system influence their relationships with schools. While a lack of cultural responsiveness can alienate parents and impede involvement, effective communication with educators builds trust and opens doors for meaningful collaboration. These characteristics differ in rural and urban environments, each offering distinct difficulties and chances for collaboration. By uplifting these themes and broadening participant voices, the study offers insightful information about the relational and structural elements affecting Black parental involvement. These results are consistent with previous research that supports culturally sensitive methods to alleviate structural injustices and strengthen underprivileged groups.

Theme 1: Conceptualization of Parental Involvement

Black Parents' Definition of Parental Involvement. The parents described their involvement in their children's education as a complex process that involves teaching them values, helping them with their academics, and preparing them to deal with systemic issues. These parents prioritize building resilience, teaching cultural pride, and fighting for fair treatment within the educational system, going beyond more conventional ways of showing involvement, such as supporting and helping with homework or attending parent-teacher conferences. One urban parent stated, *"Being involved don't just mean going to school events. It's about teaching my two daughters who they are, where they come from, and how far they can go in the world."*

In order to ensure their children's holistic development, many parents viewed involvement as role modeling, establishing stable learning-friendly home environments, and

keeping an eye on their children's interactions with classmates and teachers. A parent in the rural community stated, *"Even though I try, I don't make it to every, but I make sure my children know education is important. We study together at home every night."* The parents' active efforts to combat the systemic injustices that define educational institutions are reflected in their involvement.

Variations and Commonalities in Definition. Although the parents in the rural and urban sites share fundamental beliefs about the value of advocacy, academic support, and cultural pride, and how involvement is defined. Urban participants emphasized navigating intricate bureaucratic school systems, fighting for resources, and lessening the effects of overcrowded classrooms. Because of a smaller school community, the rural participants concentrated on developing intimate personal relationships with teachers and schools; however, they also faced difficulties because of the lack of extracurricular or academic opportunities. Both rural and urban parents are dedicated to making sure their children succeed and develop a sense of racial identity and resilience despite these contextual differences. Both groups usually use local networks, like church organizations and extended families, to help fund involvement. Although the indicators of involvement are impacted by the difficulties of their environment, these parallels reveal the common values among Black parents in various contexts.

Theme 2: Barriers to Parental Involvement

Systemic Barriers. Participants from both sites encounter systemic barriers to involvement in their children's education, including inequitable school policies, racial bias, and underfunded schools. These challenges are often rooted in historical inequities and perpetuated by policies that inadequately address the unique needs of Black families. For example, parents shared their concern about standardized testing requirements and school schedules alienating

parents who lack flexibility in their work hours. Additionally, there was concern that racial bias among school staff could result in lower expectations for Black students or a lack of proactive communication with the parents. Participants from both settings addressed that these systemic barriers discourage meaningful partnerships between families and schools, limiting opportunities for them to influence their children's educational experiences.

Community Barriers. The geographical and socioeconomic contexts of families also played a critical role in enhancing their ability to be involved. In the rural setting, limited transportation options and sparse school resources hindered parents' physical presence at school events or meetings. As one rural parent noted: *"Transportation is a big issue out here for me and my family. Since I don't have a car, it's hard for me to get to school meetings and stuff."* The urban parents expressed facing barriers such as overcrowded schools and safety concerns, which divert their time and energy from school-based involvement. Despite these differences, socioeconomic challenges such as limited financial resources and lack of time due to demanding work schedules are pervasive issues in both the rural and urban communities, disproportionately affecting Black families.

Cultural and Relational Barriers. Involvement is made more difficult by cultural misinterpretations and the dynamics of relationships between Black parents and school personnel because of stereotypes or unconscious biases held by educators (O'Donoghue, 2014). Parents frequently reported feeling excluded or undervalued in the school setting. Due to these misconceptions, there is a communication gap where parents are unaware of opportunities for involvement or are reluctant to speak up for their children for fear of rejection. A few parents reported experiencing cultural mismatches in expectations. For instance, a parent reported, *"At home, my daughter is taught to be confident. During group activities, she freely shares her ideas*

or takes the lead. Her teacher sees her as being 'bossy' rather than seeing these leadership skills." These families place a greater emphasis on involvement at home or in the community.

Theme 3: Strategies for Involvement

Innovative Practices. When traditional approaches were unavailable, parents used creative ways to remain involved in their children's education. For example, to stay informed, parents use technology like messaging apps and school portals to keep tabs on their children's academic progress and interact with teachers. *"I use the Powerschool app and Remind to check grades and email the teachers. It helps me stay in the loop, even when I'm at work."* (Urban parent). They also generated informal learning opportunities by incorporating educational content into everyday activities, like talking about historical events with family members or incorporating math into grocery shopping. Some parents also took a proactive approach by advocating directly for their children, contesting unfair disciplinary measures, or requesting specialized academic support, such as an Individualized Education Program (IEP) or a 504 Plan.

Support Systems. Strong support networks are frequently used by Black parents to increase their involvement in their children's education. The participants stated that family members such as grandparents and older siblings often provide academic support and childcare. Also, neighborhood associations, after-school programs, and local mentoring programs are a few examples of community organizations that participants relied on to provide extra resources and enrichment opportunities. Particularly important are faith-based organizations that offer academic support to parents and students in the form of tutoring, scholarships, and spiritual and emotional support. *I work with some parents at my church to organize study groups for our children"* (Rural parent). While promoting the values of community and resilience, parents stated that these support systems help them with systemic issues.

Modifications in the Settings. Parents modified their involvement strategies to address the challenges in the rural and the urban setting. Parents in the rural setting reported developing strong bonds with school personnel and depended on small, close-knit communities for support. They used the support of home-based small group settings for academic enrichment or planned carpools. Parents in the urban community use institutional resources like the public library, extracurricular activities, and the citywide after-school program. To address injustices, urban parents fight for systemic change by joining community action organizations or school boards. Despite these distinctions, parents in both areas showed incredible ingenuity and tenacity in ensuring their kids succeed academically.

Theme 4: Relationships with Schools

Parents' Perceptions of School Staff. The way parents view school personnel has a significant impact on how they interact with schools. Participants reported worrying that they would be stereotyped or undervalued by teachers, which can impede the growth of their children. *"Sometimes it seems like the school and his teachers have already decided my son isn't going to succeed because of where we live and because I am a single mother"* (Urban parent). For example, when talking about their children's needs, some parents expressed that their opinions are ignored or disregarded. Parents expressed that they are more likely to see the school as a partner in their children's education when school personnel exhibit cultural sensitivity, respect, and inclusiveness. Parents shared that a more inclusive school climate can change their opinions and increase involvement. *"My granddaughter's teacher knows my name and always greets me when I come in. That makes a difference. It shows they care about my granddaughter"* (Rural parent).

Teacher-Parent Communication. Participants feel that effective communication between teachers and parents will foster opportunities for positive relationships. Parents feel more informed and equipped to support their children's education when there is regular, open, and culturally sensitive communication. The parents appreciated strategies like bilingual newsletters, virtual parent-teacher conferences, and customized phone calls that help them overcome language barriers or hectic schedules. By giving positive feedback about their children, teachers promote collaboration and strengthen the bond between parents and teachers rather than focus on problems. *" Sometimes I feel like the school only calls when there is a problem. Why don't they tell me when my child is doing well?"* (Urban parent). The participants contended that regular reciprocal communication builds trust with them, as well as pursuing shared objectives.

Differences in Parent-School Dynamics. The dynamics of parent-school relationships differ significantly between rural and urban settings. The rural school community had a more intimate and close relationship between parents and staff. Participants contend that this familiarity encouraged a sense of shared responsibility. However, familiarity discouraged them from challenging or criticizing school policies for fear of disturbing the neighborhood's tranquility.

The urban school community results in less personal and more dispersed communication. Due to the overburdened school and school district, some urban parents expressed difficulty establishing long-lasting relationships with school staff; however, urban parents have more reported opportunities to engage in systemic support, like serving on school boards or in community action groups to influence school policies. Despite these differences,

parents of both research sites benefit from schools that prioritize proactive, equitable, and culturally sensitive engagement strategies.

Comparison Across Settings

This study found several similarities in the ways Black parents managed their involvement in their children's education. In both situations, the parents consistently underlined the importance of being in their children's academic development. This parental involvement was centered on school functions or homework help. It also entailed defending their children, fostering an environment at home where education is valued, and maintaining open communication with teachers.

Participants from the rural and urban sites highlighted their commitment to their children's success, often going above and beyond to overcome challenges. Whether dealing with systemic injustices or resource limitations, parents demonstrated resilience and resourcefulness in both cases by devising creative ways to guarantee their children receive the assistance they need. Their determination showed they understood their children's academic and personal development. Faith and community became prevalent themes in both rural and urban settings. To overcome challenges with parental involvement, many parents pointed to the guidance, strength, and support their church and religious communities offered. This reliance on community and faith-based networks highlighted the cultural and shared values that support Black parental involvement initiatives. These parallels demonstrate how Black parents prioritize and support their children in different educational environments.

Challenges, Strategies, and Experiences

The study found significant differences in the obstacles Black parents in Alabama's rural and urban areas faced, as well as the methods they employed and the situations they ran into

when trying to support their children's education. According to parents, one of the biggest obstacles in rural areas is the lack of resources. These included fewer extracurricular activities, a lack of specialized educational programs, and challenges in school-related events. Geographic isolation often makes these issues worse by making it harder for parents in the rural community to communicate with school staff or participate in events.

Conversely, the urban parents encountered challenges negotiating an intricate and political educational system. Some parents said that the size and organization of the urban school overwhelmed them and made it harder to communicate with administrators and teachers. As parents attempted to provide their children with quality educational opportunities, harmful influences, socioeconomic inequalities, and safety concerns came to light. The strategies each parent used were representative of their challenges.

To compensate for the lack of institutional resources, the rural parents relied heavily on close-knit community networks such as neighbors, church groups, and extended families. Their likelihood of forming carpools, working with other families, and depending on neighborhood organizations for assistance was higher. On the other hand, the urban parents used a wider variety of services and programs offered in urban areas, like tutoring facilities, after-school programs, and community-based projects.

They underlined the significance of tenaciously advocating within the educational system to guarantee their children's needs were satisfied. This emphasizes how context-sensitive strategies are required to demonstrate how Black parents' experiences in Alabama's rural and urban areas vary based on the characteristics of their local communities. Despite their consistent desire to support their children's education, their environmental context greatly influenced how they employed it and the difficulties they encountered.

Participant Voice and Illustrative Quotes

Illustrative quotes and participants' voices are essential to qualitative research because they provide deep, complex insights beyond statistical data. The participants' ability to accurately portray their lived experiences, perceptions, and emotions enabled the researcher to give underrepresented or marginalized groups like Black parents a forum to tell their stories (Creswell & Poth, 2017). Direct quotes maintain the authenticity and integrity of participants' experiences while enabling the researcher to convey their opinions in their own words. As noted by Denzin and Lincoln (2008), a participant's voice fosters a deeper understanding of the research topic by bridging the gap between abstract theoretical concepts and the lived realities of those being studied.

Because illustrative quotes offer concrete support for interpretations and themes, they also increase the validity and openness of qualitative findings. Readers can relate to the data personally because they act as tangible examples that ground more general narratives. For instance, a parent's comment regarding feeling underappreciated by school personnel can effectively illustrate systemic obstacles to involvement in a manner that statistics alone cannot. Maxwell (2013) points out that participant quotes show how themes develop naturally from the data rather than being forced by the researcher, which adds to the rigor of qualitative research.

Participation is also required to advance equity and inclusion in research. It guarantees the respect and prioritization of the viewpoints of those most affected by the phenomenon under study. Quotations can challenge deficit-based narratives associated with marginalized communities by highlighting the resiliency, strategies, and difficulties specific to Black parents in studies involving parental involvement. By elevating these voices, researchers can promote

culturally sensitive procedures and laws that deal with structural injustices. In this sense, participant voice is a tool for social change and enhancing scholarly discourse (Patton, 2015).

Integration of Participant Narratives

Qualitative research requires the integration of participant narratives, especially when examining intricate and intensely personal subjects like Black parental involvement in education. Researchers ensure that the voices of people directly affected by systemic issues are captured: their stories must be at the center, with researchers refraining from imposing their interpretations. In this way, it provides an in-depth, contextually based understanding that reveals more significant themes, all while telling and attesting to the participants' lived experiences. As indicated by Patton (2015), using stories supports a collaborative model in which respondents help to co-construct the research outcomes, involving them in the research and ensuring that it reflects their actual realities, not presumed theoretical ones.

There is more to narrative integration, including direct quotes and in-depth descriptions in the research. It is about developing a strong emotional bond with the data. For example, a parent's account of their advocacy work in an urban school with limited funding provides a clear and relatable perspective on systemic injustices and resiliency. This narrative-driven method increases the research's impact and relatability by enabling readers to relate emotionally and intellectually to the data. Researchers can better understand the complex nature of parental involvement by highlighting the subtleties of participants' experiences by incorporating their voices throughout the study (Denzin & Lincoln, 2008). By doing so, the prominent role of participant narratives, especially for underrepresented groups, is an act of empowerment and equity. It disproves narratives emphasizing deficits by showing people's strategies and strengths in their agency, which generates hope and a feeling of possibility.

Despite structural obstacles, Black parents' stories of using local resources or instilling cultural pride at home reveal their involvement. By keeping these stories at the forefront, we can support social justice efforts by using the research to guide practices and policies that address injustices and recognize the contributions of those most impacted. This integrative method strengthens participants' roles as co-creators of knowledge and amplifies their voices, as Maxwell (2013) explained.

Summary of Findings

To thoroughly understand Black parents' experiences with their children's education, the study examines the main themes of the conceptualization of parental involvement, barriers to involvement, strategies for involvement, and relationships with schools. The theme of parental involvement is conceptualized to address how Black parents define their roles in their children's education, focusing on extracurricular activities like promoting cultural identity and fighting for equal opportunities.

According to Howard & Reynolds (2008), this finding demonstrates Black parents' dedication to holistic development despite systemic limitations. It is consistent with the research question examining how they view and practice involvement. Research questions concerning Black parents' difficulties and creative practices are addressed by the themes of engagement strategies and barriers to involvement. The various challenges these parents face are highlighted by systemic injustices like racial bias and resource scarcity, as well as community barriers (Cooper, 2009). Parents show resilience at the same time by using technology, faith-based organizations, and community networks to stay involved.

Lastly, the theme of relationships with school highlights relationships influenced by communication and cultural sensitivity. The research questions here are how schools can better

encourage Black parental involvement and how these relationships are impacted by contextual factors like urban and rural settings (Diamond & Gomez, 2004). These themes highlight the significance of systemic changes to promote equity and inclusion in educational practice to provide a deeper understanding of Black parental involvement.

Parental involvement has long been recognized as a critical component of student success, yet it remains unevenly experienced across racial, geographic, and socioeconomic lines. Going beyond conventional definitions and delving deeply into the lived experiences of families in various contexts is necessary to comprehend Black parental involvement. Black parents in Alabama's rural and urban communities in settings that offer opportunities and challenges for educational engagement are the specific focus of this study. This study aims to understand how Black parents define their roles, overcome challenges, use engagement strategies, and interact with school personnel.

It is based on qualitative research grounded in a theoretical framework of the Epstein framework of parental involvement and the Hoover-Dempsey & Sandler Model and influenced by the voices of the parents. The findings about each of the four main research questions provide information on how Black parents adjust and defy the factors that influence their involvement in their children's education.

Research Question 1: How do Black parents define and demonstrate their involvement in their children's education? Beyond conventional school-based activities, black parents in rural and urban Alabama define involvement in a variety of ways. While volunteering, attending school functions, and attending parent-teacher conferences are still vital, many parents stress the value of involvement at home. This includes helping with homework, instilling moral principles, preserving open lines of communication, and encouraging constructive behavioral patterns. The

tight-knit community in the rural area, where connections with teachers and other school personnel are more casual and personal, frequently influences parental involvement. In contrast, in the urban area, because of the size and complexity of the school system, parents interact through digital or structured channels. Parents constantly demonstrate a strong commitment to helping their children with their educational journeys, regardless of the context, and they frequently frame their involvement as a cultural and academic duty.

Research Question 2: What barriers prevent Black parents from being involved, and how are these barriers different between rural and urban areas? A variety of obstacles prevent Black parents from participating completely in their children's education. Inflexible work schedules, a lack of transportation options, bad prior school experiences, and real or perceived racial bias are common barriers in both contexts. These issues are made worse in rural areas by factors like staffing shortages, remote location, and restricted access to educational resources. Parents in this community also experience fewer organized opportunities for involvement. The urban parents encounter a unique set of barriers, including safety concerns, bureaucratic school structures, and communication breakdowns. These variations highlight how geographic setting greatly influences the types of barriers Black parents face in their efforts to assist with their children's education.

Research Question 3: What strategies do Black parents use to engage in their children's education despite the challenges? Black parents use a variety of creative strategies to stay active in their children's education despite ongoing obstacles. With the help of established routines, reinforcement of schoolwork, and cultural pride, the parents establish nurturing home environments that promote learning. Building direct relationships with teachers and other school personnel is another way the parents get involved. They frequently start conversations to stay

informed and speak up for their children's needs. In the rural areas, parental involvement is greatly aided by community networks like churches, extended families, and local mentors; however, the urban parents use digital tools like parent portals and messaging apps, community centers, and after-school programs to stay involved. Across both contexts, parents demonstrate determination and creativity in navigating systems that may not always be designed to accommodate their participation.

Research Question 4: In what ways do school staff facilitate or hinder future Black parental involvement? Black parental involvement can be facilitated or hindered by school personnel. When teachers used culturally sensitive communication, viewed parents as partners in the learning process, and provided flexible engagement opportunities, parents expressed feeling more empowered and accepted. Genuine attempts to foster trust and the visible representation of diversity among educators and administrators were also mentioned as beneficial factors. On the other hand, some parents related instances of feeling disregarded, misinterpreted, or subjected to unconscious stereotype-based criticism. Parents frequently found it challenging to stay involved in their children's education due to deficit thinking, one-size-fits-all approaches to involvement, and confusing school policies. Parents in both areas said that schools must actively remove obstacles and build more welcoming spaces that honor and represent diverse families' voices.

Chapter 5: Discussions, Implications, and Conclusions

This study investigates how Black parents in rural and urban communities in Alabama define, exhibit, and manage their involvement in their children's education. Given that parental involvement is a key component of student achievement, to identify the strategies Black parents implement to assist their children's academic development inside and outside of traditional school environments. The study shed light on how Black parents view their role in education and how they continue to be involved in their children's education by looking at their viewpoints and experiences.

Additionally, this research pinpoints the main challenges in their children's education and evaluates how these difficulties vary between rural and urban settings. The study examined whether urban parents deal with overcrowded classrooms and disciplinary inequalities, while rural parents face more practical obstacles like restricted school access and transportation. The study will highlight the challenges and opportunities for Black parental involvement in various educational settings by contrasting these experiences.

Lastly, this study will show how school personnel help or hinder Black parents' involvement. Parental involvement is greatly influenced by educators, administrators, and school policies, which can either create a friendly and inclusive atmosphere or reinforce barriers through prejudice and insufficient outreach. Comprehending these dynamics will assist educators and policymakers in formulating more effective strategies to encourage Black parental involvement, guaranteeing that educational institutions establish fair collaborations with families to foster student achievement.

Summary of Key Findings from Chapter 4

Black parental involvement in rural and urban communities is thoroughly examined in Chapter 4, revealing trends, obstacles, and variables that affect parents' involvement in their children's education. Although parental involvement is evident in both contexts, the study finds that parents participate depending on the structure of the community, the availability of resources, and systemic issues. In contrast to urban parents who participate more in organized school and advocacy programs, rural parents typically rely on unofficial community-based support networks. The existence of socioeconomic barriers that prevent Black parents from participating in their children's education is one of the key conclusions. No matter where they live, the parents struggle with their capacity to support advocacy initiatives, attend school functions, or offer extra educational materials.

In addition, parents find it challenging to participate fully in school events due to work schedules and non-traditional employment patterns. Parents in urban areas frequently deal with more extensive school systems and bureaucratic structures, which can make them feel disconnected. In contrast, parents in rural areas deal with issues like remoteness and a lack of resources at the school level. Community and faith-based organizations play a vital role in encouraging parental involvement. Churches and neighborhood organizations are important support networks in rural areas, giving parents access to social networks, tutoring, and mentorship that promote academic achievement.

Likewise, in the urban area, community organizations provide organized initiatives that enable parents to participate in advocacy and decision-making processes at their schools. Despite these resources, parents in both contexts worry that schools aren't always sensitive to their cultural needs. The study also emphasizes the types of parental involvement beyond

conventional school involvement. Many parents use informal mentoring, cultural education, and tutoring to help their children learn at home. While parents in the rural area showed a strong hands-on involvement in everyday learning activities, parents in the urban community were more likely to be involved in advocacy and school policy discussions. The idea that parents who are not physically present in schools are disengaged is refuted by this research, which shows that parents make significant contributions outside of the official school environments.

An additional important finding is how school-parent communication affects involvement levels. According to parents in this study and other research, schools that use communication strategies that are open, transparent, and culturally sensitive see higher levels of participation (Adams & Christenson, 1998; Chui, 2007). Black parents feel excluded because the schools fail to implement inclusive policies. More adaptable communication tools like online conferences and multilingual materials are recommended by many parents as ways to improve communication between families and schools. Black families also participate and trust schools more when parents are actively involved in decision-making.

Chapter 4 presents Black parents' involvement in the urban and the rural settings. It reveals the limited resources, institutional barriers, socioeconomic limitations, community networks, and efficient communication techniques. The results highlight the necessity for schools to establish trust, use culturally appropriate practices, and make it easier for parents to get involved in their children's education. Schools and families can collaborate to enhance Black students' educational outcomes by tackling these issues and utilizing community assets.

Overview of Chapter 5

Chapter 5 concludes the study, provides a summary of the research findings, explains their implications, and makes suggestions for further action. The chapter starts with an overview

of the study's main conclusions, emphasizing the main ideas of Black parents' involvement in both the urban and the rural areas. This section again presents the main research questions and assesses how the information gathered either confirms or refutes the body of knowledge already available on the subject.

This chapter also examines the parallels and discrepancies in parental involvement in various community contexts, highlighting the significance of socioeconomic variables, institutional impediments, and cultural influences. The summary of the findings' wider implications for educators, decision-makers, and community stakeholders is in Chapter 5. This section examines strategies for raising parental awareness, such as community collaborations, school-based programs, and culturally sensitive participation techniques. The chapter also suggests topics that need more investigation, including the long-term effects of parental involvement on student achievement and the efficacy of school-community cooperation initiatives. The study's shortcomings and the necessity of ongoing initiatives to close the gap between Black families and schools in both rural and urban areas close out the chapter.

Comparison with Existing Literature

Findings from the study complement and add to the body of knowledge on parental involvement, especially as it relates to Black families in urban and rural areas. Conventional research shows school-based involvement as the determinant of parental involvement, including volunteering, attending parent-teacher conferences, and attending school events (Hill & Tyson, 2009). Nonetheless, this study and other recent ones show that Black parents have a broader definition of involvement, which includes advocacy, community involvement, and home-based support (Jeynes, 2010). This is consistent with studies conducted by academics like Joyce

Epstein, who suggest that parental involvement encompasses home-centered and school-centered activities, indicating that educational support is not limited to the school setting (Epstein, 2010).

Previous research also shows that Black parents' involvement in traditional school activities is often restricted by institutional barriers, work schedules, and socioeconomic factors (Howard & Reynolds, 2008; Posey-Maddox, 2014). This study supports this idea while providing a more nuanced understanding of how urban and rural settings affect these experiences. Urban parents are more involved through organized advocacy and policy reform initiatives (Cooper, 2009). Parents in rural areas tend to rely on community and faith-based organizations because of the lack of other options (Ishimaru, 2019). Implement flexible and culturally sensitive involvement strategies that acknowledge and validate various forms of parental involvement and add to the larger conversation.

Connection of Findings to Broader Literature

The study's conclusions about Black parental involvement in Alabama's rural and urban areas are consistent with and add to the body of knowledge already available on the subject. Research highlights Black parents' adaptability and resilience in overcoming structural obstacles to support their children's education. Black parents in the rural and the urban settings practice advocacy, cultural pride, and community cooperation, which are critical in environments where educational disparities continue to exist.

These results support Cooper's (2009) claim that to fill gaps in educational systems, Black parents frequently engage in nontraditional ways, such as teaching cultural history and life skills at home. The research also highlights the different obstacles and approaches that rural and urban communities face. In Alabama, rural parents often deal with resource scarcity and geographic isolation, with larger research showing that Black families in rural areas usually rely

on close-knit community networks and close relationships with educators to get by (Robinson & Harris, 2014).

Despite obstacles like overcrowded schools and institutional biases, urban parents use institutional resources and advocacy campaigns to bring about change. These characteristics are consistent with the research of Howard & Reynolds (2008), which highlights the active role of Black parents in urban settings and calls for structural changes to eliminate inequalities. Furthermore, the study emphasizes the importance of faith-based groups and other community resources in urban and rural areas, highlighting their relevance in the larger body of research on Black parental involvement. Religious communities are important in Southern states like Alabama, where faith-based organizations are frequently essential centers for cultural affirmation and educational support (Morris, 2015). This study emphasizes the significance of context-specific culturally responsive strategies to support Black parental involvement in diverse educational settings by integrating these findings with the larger body of literature.

This research offers a layered look at how Black parents engage with schools in rural and urban settings. It brings to light the specific challenges they face, the methods they use to navigate, and the relationships that influence their participation in the education system. These discoveries don't just answer the questions the study set out to ask; they also add to the bigger conversation about fairness and how schools can be more sensitive to different cultures. By really listening to the people involved, the study shows the toughness and ingenuity of Black parents, underlining why it's crucial to make changes to the system to create meaningful collaboration between families and schools.

The next chapter, Chapter 5, will expand on these results, what this means for how schools operate, the policies that should be in place, and what future research should focus on. It

will address how schools and communities can better support Black parents to remove obstacles to their involvement. Also, how to make the most of their strengths and what they bring. It will suggest practical steps, like using teaching methods that are sensitive to different cultures, among other things.

Connection to the Framework

This study of Black parental involvement in Alabama's rural and urban areas aligns with Epstein's framework of parental involvement. The Hoover-Dempsey & Sandler model provides insights into the variables affecting Black parental involvement. The experiences of Black parents in both settings often reflect the six categories of involvement identified by Epstein's (1995) framework: parenting, communication, volunteering, learning at home, decision-making, and community collaboration. Due to resources and geographic constraints, parents in the rural area, for instance, often relied more on community support and involvement at home. The urban parents participated in school-based activities but confronted institutional challenges like overcrowded schools/classrooms and systemic biases. As stated in Epstein's model, this study emphasizes the need for schools to implement inclusive practices that consider the various forms of parental involvement.

Similarly, the Hoover-Dempsey & Sandler (1995, 1997) model incorporates psychological elements such as parental role construction, self-efficacy, and invitations to explain parental involvement. This framework is supported by the study's findings, which indicate that Black parents in urban and rural areas firmly believed they played a crucial role in their children's education. According to the Hoover-Dempsey & Sandler model (1995, 1997), which claims that school outreach is essential for parental involvement, the study indicates that participation and involvement increase when schools actively invite and support Black parents.

Conversely, external factors such as work schedules, transportation issues, and the school's welcoming environment significantly affect their interest level. Parents in the rural area were highly devoted but often lacked access to resources or direct involvement with schools. Urban parents experienced more opportunities to participate but admitted feeling disconnected from school practices. This research highlights the necessity of culturally responsive and flexible involvement strategies by linking these frameworks to the experiences of Black parents in Alabama.

According to the study, relationships between Black families and educational institutions and schools should acknowledge and encourage involvement in activities beyond traditional norms. Epstein's frameworks and Hoover-Dempsey & Sandler's model offer valuable theoretical foundations for understanding the barriers and facilitators of parental involvement, stressing the need for policies and practices that tackle the specific challenges Black parents encounter in urban and rural contexts.

Interpretation of Key Findings

Parental involvement is a complex process influenced by cultural values, socioeconomic circumstances, and community structures, as demonstrated by the discussion of how Black parents in rural and urban settings conceptualize involvement. Black parents in both contexts typically view involvement as a continuous commitment to their children's academic success through forms of support rather than merely volunteering at school functions or attending meetings. Mentoring, advocacy, home-based learning, and involvement in community-driven or faith-based educational programs are all included in this more inclusive definition.

Even though traditional school-based involvement is still significant, many parents say that when their involvement does not fall within the accepted institutional framework established

by schools, it is frequently disregarded. The close-knit relationships, faith-based engagement, and dependence on extended family support networks are common characteristics of parental involvement in rural communities. Parents believe their role is linked to cultural customs, promoting educational values within the community and at home. Even if they can't attend school meetings because of work or distance, they can still help students learn through informal tutoring, storytelling, and life skills instruction.

As they navigate larger, more bureaucratic educational institutions, Black parents in the urban setting, on the other hand, frequently conceptualize involvement in terms of advocacy and school reform. Urban parents are more likely to be in organized parent networks, school board meetings, and policy discussions. Notwithstanding these contextual variations, Black parents in the rural and the urban community place a high value on their children's education and actively support their academic growth in ways that go beyond regular attendance at school.

Barriers to Parental Involvement

A wide range of systemic, cultural, and practical obstacles affect Black parents' capacity to participate in their children's education in rural and urban areas. Parents face institutional obstacles like unfair policies and poor communication between school and home. Some parents reported they have experienced dismissal when interacting with school staff, which can cause disengagement and mistrust. Parents usually have to negotiate politics in school districts in urban areas where their opinions might be ignored. In contrast, parents in the rural area deal with the school's lack of resources, which may result in few opportunities for official parental involvement.

Black parents find it challenging to fully engage in traditional school activities because of these systemic barriers, which also contribute to a sense of exclusion (Taylor, 2017). Black

parents might have to deal with schools' lack of culturally sensitive policies (Brown & Williams, 2016). Black families may feel undervalued in settings created by schools that do not recognize and consider different cultural viewpoints. The selection of curricula, school activities, and communication styles that do not align with Black cultural experiences are all examples of this disconnect. Difficulties like childcare requirements, transportation problems, and work schedules further complicate participation. Numerous parents have multiple jobs or work irregular hours, and their availability for school events is scheduled during regular business hours.

The rural parents experienced geographic isolation where challenges included a lack of dependable transportation or a distance to schools. Regardless of these obstacles, the study shows that Black parents are still devoted to their children's education and frequently look for ways to encourage learning in their communities and at home. Schools must take more inclusive, adaptable, and culturally aware approaches to parental involvement to meet these challenges.

Differences and Similarities of Contexts

The study finds that Black parental involvement in rural and urban settings exhibited clear distinctions and noteworthy parallels. The involvement method is one of the main areas of difference. To support their children's education, Black parents in rural areas frequently turn to close-knit social networks such as faith-based organizations, extended family, and community-driven projects. These are official school programs and resources.

However, urban parents participated more through formal channels like parent-teacher associations and school board meetings. More formal involvement opportunities were available in the urban setting, but there were drawbacks, like navigating large educational systems. Black parents in both the urban and rural area experienced similar obstacles and motivations despite these contextual differences. Parents in both settings exhibited a strong dedication to their

children's academic achievement, frequently providing at-home educational support in tutoring, mentoring, and cultural education.

Parental involvement is impacted by systemic barriers within schools' work constraints and socioeconomic challenges in any setting (Kgaffe, 2001). This study reveals a need for inclusive and culturally sensitive involvement strategies since many parents expressed feelings of exclusion or undervaluation by schools. Finally, the study emphasizes that although various community contexts may require different approaches to encourage Black parental involvement, the overall objective of closing the gap between families and schools is always the same.

Strategies Employed by Black Parents

According to the study, Black parents in both settings exhibited incredible ingenuity and resourcefulness as they overcame obstacles to fund their children's education. To offer academic and emotional support at home and in their communities, parents create ways to overcome systemic and cultural obstacles. These methods go beyond conventional school-based involvement, proving that supporting their children's learning is just as important an indicator of parental involvement as attendance at school functions.

Rural parents use close-knit community networks by setting up unofficial study groups, sharing educational materials with neighbors, and using church programs to provide mentorship and tutoring. By incorporating cultural lessons and life skills into daily routines, they turn ordinary experiences into educational opportunities. In contrast, urban parents use social media and digital tools to connect with advocacy organizations and stay updated on school events. The parents use educational apps, community initiatives, and internet resources to enhance their education outside the classroom by creating rich learning environments at home. Parents in both

situations are resilient and adaptable, finding significant ways to close achievement gaps and reaffirm the value of education in their homes.

Community, Extended Family, and Faith-Based Organizations

The study emphasizes how important faith-based, extended family, and community organizations are in promoting Black parental involvement in Alabama's rural and urban areas. Parents and students can receive academic, emotional, and spiritual support from these networks, which are essential resources. Faith-based organizations like churches frequently bridge the gap in rural areas where schools may lack resources by offering mentorship opportunities, tutoring programs, and secure learning environments (Banack, 2015). In a collective effort, extended family members regularly volunteer to help with childcare, transportation, and homework assistance. Community groups also help by setting up forums such as Town Hall meetings for parents and other stakeholders to share strategies and experiences and hold educational workshops.

Community-based and faith-based organizations still exist in urban Alabama, though the type of support they provide is more programmatic and structured. Many urban churches provide youth ministries with after-school activities and workshops on college readiness to help close the gap between education and home life.

Organizations and civic groups work with schools to promote educational equity and help parents understand complicated school systems. In both contexts, these networks give Black parents a sense of empowerment and belonging in addition to resources. Community, extended family, and faith-based organizations provide support to improve educational outcomes and fortify the bond between families and schools by embracing cultural values and encouraging active participation (Banack, 2015; Tarpeh & Hustedde, 2021).

Implications for Practice

Schools implement inclusive and culturally sensitive practices to enhance communication and create lasting relationships with Black parents in rural and urban areas (Allen & White-Smith, 2018; O'Donoghue, 2014). The use of adaptable and varied communication techniques is one fundamental strategy. Due to work schedules, transportation issues, and other practical constraints, many Black parents may not be able to interact with schools during regular business hours. Schools can use social media, text messaging, phone calls, and multilingual newsletters, among other communication channels, to address this. Accessibility can be improved by providing virtual meeting options for school events and parent-teacher conferences. Schools can guarantee that parents are informed and involved by clear, consistent, and flexible communication.

Forming alliances with local and religious organizations is another successful strategy. In Black communities, these organizations are frequently regarded as reliable sources that offer families comfortable and familiar surroundings. (Barrett, 2010; Green-Powell et al., 2011) Schools can organize family involvement activities, resource fairs, and educational workshops in partnership with local nonprofits, community centers, and churches. Through these collaborations, schools can incorporate culturally relevant programming that appeals to Black families' parents who might otherwise feel alienated. These ties can be further strengthened by appointing community leaders as liaisons who can speak up for the needs of parents and encourage candid dialogue between families and school personnel. It is also critical to establish avenues for mutual communication and group decision-making (Anderson & Minke, 2007).

Parents should be invited to participate in school governance and planning rather than simply being informed (Brown & Hunter, 1998). Creating focus groups, open forums, and parent

advisory councils gives parents organized avenues to express their opinions, raise issues, and support school projects. Schools should show cooperative problem-solving by listening to and implementing parent input. Black parents can develop a sense of ownership and investment in the school's success by being in policy discussions, curriculum development, and school improvement strategies.

Finally, honoring cultural heritage and acknowledging the varied contributions of Black families' schools can strengthen their partnerships. Organizing activities like student showcases, cultural heritage nights, and recognition ceremonies helps parents feel appreciated and included while also boosting student confidence. Schools can showcase student accomplishments, distribute educational materials, and improve ties between teachers and families. A friendly environment that promotes greater involvement is created when parents see their culture and experiences positively reflected in the school setting. Schools can improve educational outcomes for all students and promote equity by bridging the gap between home and school and integrating culturally affirming practices with practical communication strategies.

Culturally Responsive Practices

Involving Black parents in Alabama's rural and urban communities calls for culturally sensitive methods that respect and acknowledge their distinct viewpoints, values, and experiences. (Allen & White-Smith, 2018). One successful strategy is to create relationships based on trust. Cultural competency, respecting people from different backgrounds, and paying attention to parents' worries build rapport. A welcoming environment can be produced by holding frequent meet-and-greets, events, and workshops as casual get-togethers in well-known community locations like local parks, community centers, and churches (Smith et al., 2011).

Parents should be encouraged to share their perspectives on their children's needs, learning preferences, and strengths.

Adding cultural representation and relevance to school activities and curricula is another important practice. Events that feature Black history, customs, and contributions to society are one way that schools can honor cultural heritage. Additionally, incorporating culturally diverse literature, instruction, and teaching resources into the classroom promotes pride among families and helps validate students' identities (Grove & and Fisher, 2006). Black parents who witness positive cultural representation in their children's education feel a sense of community and are inspired to be involved in school-related activities (Menheere & Hooze, 2010). Schools can also ask parents to share their stories, lead workshops, or contribute to cultural programming.

Additionally, schools ought to adopt adaptable communication techniques specific to the requirements of Black families (Chui, 2007). This includes providing information via printed materials, social media, text messages, and phone calls to guarantee that parents are informed of critical updates. Understanding that transportation and work schedules can be obstacles, schools can host events at different times, such as weekends and evenings, and offer virtual meeting options. By providing translation services and cultural awareness, schools and families can communicate more effectively and clearly by bridging linguistic and cultural divides.

Lastly, empowering Black parents as active partners in education is a critical component of culturally responsive practices. Parents can be included in decision-making processes through leadership positions, focus groups, and advisory councils that schools establish. To create an inclusive environment, it is also essential to provide educators with professional development on cultural competency and bias awareness. In order to improve Black parents' involvement and

ultimately help students' academic performance and well-being, schools can establish genuine partnerships with them by recognizing and removing systemic barriers and fighting for equity.

Recommendations for Policy

Equity-inclusive and culturally sensitive practices in educational systems must be the main goals of policy recommendations to increase Black parental involvement in Alabama's rural and urban communities(Cooper, 2009). A principal suggestion is to institute state and district-level policies that acknowledge various types of parental involvement. Conventional beliefs of involvement often prioritize school-based activities, which might not adequately represent how Black parents assist their children's education through community service mentorship, and at-home learning.

The definition of parental involvement should be broadened by policies to encompass these unconventional but significant forms of involvement, guaranteeing that schools appreciate and recognize all parental contributions. Mandating professional development on implicit bias and cultural competency for teachers and school personnel is another crucial suggestion. Raising awareness of systemic injustices, encouraging polite conversation, and putting plans into action to make spaces welcoming to Black families should be the main goals of training. Teachers should be trained to interact with families from different backgrounds and handle cultural differences and deficit-based viewpoints that could impede parental participation.

Additionally, schools should be required by state and local policies to create and carry out culturally responsive engagement plans that specify objectives and methods for evaluating parental involvement in communities. Increasing resources and removing obstacles to participation should also be top priorities for policies. One way to do this would be to finance childcare during school functions, transportation services, and technological resources to enable

participation virtually. Urban schools might profit from regulations and fewer administrative barriers. Rural schools might require assistance to overcome resource and location-based struggles. Regardless of where they live or their financial situation, policymakers can provide more equal opportunities for Black parents to interact with their children's schools by funding these resources (Brock & Edmunds, 2010).

In conclusion, legislators should support collaborative partnerships among educational institutions, civic associations, and religious establishments. These collaborations can provide more support services, broaden the scope of school initiatives, and produce more culturally appropriate programming for families. Supporting a comprehensive approach to education involves communities, families and schools' policy frameworks, and shared accountability for student achievement. School districts can bring change that improves Black parental involvement and helps students achieve better academic and social outcomes by integrating these ideas into policy.

Recommendations for Community Stakeholders

Black parental involvement can be increased through organizations and faith-based institutions. In communities, these stakeholders are frequently regarded as reliable pillars who offer families advocacy resources and support appropriate for their culture ((Williams, 2022)

To close communication and involvement gaps, it is highly recommended that these organizations collaborate with educational institutions. They can provide easily accessible opportunities for parents to learn about school policies, academic expectations, and ways to support their children's education by holding resource fairs, tutoring sessions, and parent workshops at community centers and churches (Grove & and Fisher, 2006). Parents can connect with educators to ask questions and voice concerns in safe spaces at these events.

Faith-based organizations can incorporate educational support into their current initiatives (Tarpeh & Hustedde, 2021). Numerous churches currently provide after-school activities, mentoring, and youth ministries. These can be modified to integrate academic support and parental involvement programs. By working with schools, these organizations can hold parent-teacher conferences, offer more tutoring, and exchange information about educational resources. Faith leaders can also act as advocates, highlighting the value of education from a spiritual and cultural standpoint and urging parents to get more involved in school-related activities (Duff et al., 2016).

Another suggestion is that community organizations create culturally sensitive programs that represent the experiences and values of Black families. This could include planning cultural heritage events, providing parents with advocacy and leadership training, and advancing literacy and STEM programs. Through the provision of translation services, transportation support, and guidance on school procedures, community organizations can serve as liaisons between families and schools, assisting in overcoming systemic barriers (Henderson et al., 2020).

Finally, community members ought to promote laws and procedures that promote educational fairness. They can advocate for Black families' interests and try to influence educational policy and practice. Community and faith-based organizations can amplify parents' voices by ensuring that schools understand and address the needs of every family. These groups can make Black parental involvement and foster students' academic success through strategic alliances, persistent advocacy, and culturally sensitive support. (Kea et al., 2025).

Culturally Responsive Framework

This framework offers educators, policymakers, and community leaders a strategic way to enhance Black parents' involvement in their children's education. By recognizing diverse

forms of participation, removing barriers, and building partnerships with local and faith-based organizations, schools can create more welcoming and supportive learning environments for Black families. The framework has applications across various sectors. Schools can expand their understanding of Black parental involvement beyond traditional views. Educators must recognize the significance of home-based, faith-based, and community-based participation. The framework can also assist schools in identifying and addressing challenges such as work schedules, transportation issues, and cultural differences.

For future research, this framework can be used to examine the long-term effects of Black parental involvement on student achievement. It can also evaluate the effectiveness of these strategies in improving retention rates, academic success, and overall student performance. Furthermore, this model can be utilized to explore how other marginalized groups are similarly impacted.

Table 5*Culturally Responsive Framework for Black Parental Involvement*

Components	Description	Action Strategies
Home centered involvement	➤ Acknowledge and appreciate how Black parents assist with their children's education at home.	➤ Encourage parents to share cultural knowledge ➤ Provide culturally relevant at-home learning resources ➤ Provide workshops on advocacy strategies
Effective Communication	➤ Establish parent-school communication that is courteous, open, and sensitive to cultural differences.	➤ Employees should receive culturally sensitive communication training. ➤ Utilize different platforms to ensure accessibility. ➤ Update students' progress regularly.
Community Partnerships	➤ Enhance educational opportunities and support parents by utilizing community resources.	➤ Collaborate with religious institutions and cultural institutions. ➤ Establish advisory boards for the community with Black parents. ➤ Create mentoring programs with local leaders
Address Systematic Barriers	➤ Recognize and resolve injustices that prevent Black parents from participating.	➤ Provide options for flexible meetings and online participation. ➤ Assist with childcare and transportation. ➤ Encourage policy modifications to alleviate disparities.
Decision Making	➤ Enable Black parents to take an active role in governing schools.	➤ Include parents in curriculum and policy committees ➤ Facilitate parent-led discussion forums ➤ Develop leadership programs for parental advocacy

Honor Cultural Identity	➤ Fostering a welcoming environment at school that respects Black history.	➤ Arrange cultural activities and events ➤ Include Black contributions in the curriculum ➤ Provide teachers training on cultural inclusivity
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Contributions to Literature

This study adds to the body of knowledge regarding Black parental involvement in education. Most recent research on parental involvement focuses on popular generic models of involvement. However, this study emphasizes ways Black parents support their children's academic success.(Dotterer & Wehrspann, 2016). It questions conventional notions of involvement that frequently place quality on school-based activities by highlighting various innovative strategies by Black parents, such as support at home, community-based projects, and involvement through religious institutions (Mccarthy et al., 2022).

This study provides a more inclusive perspective that affirms the experiences and contributions of Black families by expanding the lens through which parental involvement is perceived. Distinctions and parallels between rural and urban settings are one feature of the study. It offers insights into how environmental and geographic factors affect parental engagement. Despite a lack of official school resources, the study shows how close-knit social networks and resource-sharing practices increase involvement in rural communities.

In addition, the study focuses on how urban areas use organized opportunities for advocacy and involvement and negotiate intricate school systems. This study provides focused strategies for schools and policymakers to enhance involvement practices in two contexts. The study also adds to the body of literature by analyzing the logistical, cultural, and systemic

obstacles Black parents encounter (Hornby & Blackwell, 2018). Parental involvement is impacted by institutional barriers like biased school policies and communication gaps.

The study focuses on the significance of culturally sensitive practices and the vital role that community and religious organizations play in helping families (Mccarthy et al., 2022). These results provide a nuanced viewpoint beyond narratives centered on deficits and instead emphasize Black communities' resourcefulness, resilience, and adaptability. This study lays the foundation for further research and practice in existing literature. It allows educators and leaders to cultivate more inclusive, meaningful relationships with Black parents by offering specific recommendations for school legislators and community stakeholders. Along with new research directions, the study's insights into rural and urban dynamics encourage scholars to examine place-based factors that influence parental involvement strategies and educational experiences. (Sanders, 2009).

Limitations of the Study

Although the research design, sample size, and scope of this study are limited, it offers insights into Black parental involvement in Alabama's rural and urban communities. The sample size and representation are two drawbacks. Despite efforts to include a wide variety of participants from both urban and rural areas, the sample might not adequately represent the wide range of experiences that Black families have in Alabama. A larger, more diverse sample could offer a deeper understanding of the subtleties of factors like family structures, educational backgrounds, and socioeconomic status, which vary within Black communities.

Furthermore, because the study was only in one state, its conclusions might not be as applicable to other areas with distinct demographic and cultural backgrounds. There are other limitations to research design, especially the data collection techniques. Although qualitative

observations and interviews yield rich, in-depth insights, they might not give as much data as mixed-methods or quantitative approaches. Relying too much on self-reported experiences may lead to biases because participants might give incorrect information.

Additionally, the researcher's presence may add observational data and compromise the veracity of parent-school interactions. Incorporating surveys with longitudinal data and standardized measures of parental involvement could enhance the study's conclusions and offer a more thorough understanding of parental involvement over time. Biases of the researcher might affect the gathering and interpretation of data, which are also acknowledged in this study. Because race, education, and community dynamics are delicate topics, unintentional biases may influence how questions are phrased, how interactions are interpreted, or which themes are highlighted.

The study used techniques like peer debriefing, member checking with participants, and triangulation of data sources. Future research could be more objective if more is done to diversify the research team and include outside reviews. A more comprehensive understanding of Black parental involvement may be possible if the study's scope. Examining different settings like mixed-income or suburban areas and analyzing how intersecting identities are influenced by gender, immigration status, and disability.

The viewpoints of educators, community leaders, and students may provide a multifaceted understanding of the opportunities and difficulties associated with Black parental involvement. Future research on educational equity and family engagement can expand on this study and make even more significant contributions.

Future Research

Considering the findings of this study, future research should focus on Black parental involvement in diverse contexts and populations outside of Alabama's rural and urban areas. An avenue for research is suburban settings, where changing demographics may create opportunities and challenges for parental involvement. To understand how intersecting identities affect involvement strategies and experiences, research could also concentrate on specific subgroups within Black communities, such as immigrant families, single-parent households, and families with children with special needs.

Research should include areas outside Alabama, such as states with distinct educational policies, cultural landscapes, and support networks, and how place-based factors affect Black parental involvement. Future research could also examine the role of parental involvement across different educational levels, from early childhood education through higher education. This would make it easier to see how involvement strategies change as children advance in their education and how schools can modify their methods to maintain solid relationships with families.

Examining the viewpoints of teachers, community leaders, and students themselves may offer a more comprehensive understanding of the dynamics of parental involvement, revealing how various stakeholders view and support successful engagement strategies. The longitudinal impacts of Black parental involvement on student outcomes are topics for further research. Studies that follow students over several years could evaluate the effects of consistent parental involvement on academic performance, social-emotional growth, college preparedness, and professional success. Such studies may demonstrate whether forms of participation in home-based support and involvement in school have different effects over time.

In addition, it might assist in determining the long-term advantages of culturally responsive engagement strategies, providing evidence-based recommendations for educators and legislators on how to assist Black families and foster successful student outcomes. Innovative research methodologies, including community-based participatory research (CBPR), participatory action research, and mixed-methods approaches, should be the final consideration for future studies. These approaches would empower Black parents to actively participate in the research process while also improving the data's robustness. Future research can support more inclusive and equitable educational practices that benefit students' families and communities by examining Black parental involvement through lenses and methodological approaches.

Conclusion

Black parental involvement is complicated. This study shows how systemic cultural and logistical factors influence involvement practices. By examining the distinct experiences of Black parents, this study highlights the need for culturally responsive and inclusive strategies in educational settings and challenges conventional one-size-fits-all approaches to parental involvement. In addition to expanding our understanding of how Black parents support their children's academic success, the study highlights the crucial role that schools, community organizations, and faith-based institutions play in fostering strong family-school relationships.

The results reaffirm the importance of promoting Black parental involvement. Families feel appreciated and empowered to participate in their children's education when schools implement policies and procedures that welcome various forms of involvement. This study shows that children of Black parents are more likely to succeed academically and socially when they have access to resources, are valued as partners, and are part of supportive networks. It also emphasizes how removing structural obstacles like discriminatory communication styles and

restricted access to resources can result in more significant and long-lasting parental participation.

Recognizing that parental involvement is not a singular or standardized experience but rather a process influenced by contextual and cultural factors is critical for educators, legislators, and community stakeholders. Educational institutions can create more equitable involvement plans that celebrate diversity, close gaps, and encourage teamwork. It is impossible to overestimate the value of hearing from and learning from Black parents since their perspectives and life experiences are crucial in forming educational strategies that benefit all students.

To sum up, this study is a call to action and a foundation for future research. It calls for more research into how Black families support academic achievement and pushes educational establishments to implement policies to recognize and celebrate these contributions. By adopting inclusive and culturally sensitive practices, schools can strengthen their relationships with families and benefit Black students while enhancing the educational community. Ultimately, a key step in attaining excellence and equity for all children is creating an atmosphere parents can freely participate.

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APPENDIX A



AUBURN UNIVERSITY

Institutional Review Board

EXEMPT DETERMINATION

February 20, 2025

Andrew Pendola
Haley Center 4036
Auburn Univ, AL 36849
3348444460
amp0129@auburn.edu

Dear Andrew Pendola:

On 2/20/2025, the IRB reviewed the following submission:

Protocol Information	Submission Details
Type of Review:	Initial Study
Title:	An Examination of Black Parental Involvement in Rural and Urban Communities in Alabama
Investigator:	Andrew Pendola
IRB ID:	STUDY00000171
Funding:	None
Grant Title:	N/A
Grant ID:	None
IND, IDE or HDE:	None
Documents Reviewed:	• CCSD Letter of Permission, Category: Letter of Support; • Fairfax Elementary Letter of Permission, Category: Letter of Support; • HRP Protocol Revision , Category: IRB Protocol; • Interview Questions, Category: Other; • Observation Checklist, Category: Data Collection Form; • Observation Field Notes Form, Category: Data Collection Form; • Oliver Elementary Letter of Permission, Category: Letter of Support; • Protocol References, Category: Other; • RCSD Letter of Permission, Category: Letter of Support; • Recruitment Flyer, Category: Recruitment Materials; • Redline Revised Consent Template 502 a (2) (4).pdf, Category: Consent Form; • Supporting Document, Category: Other; • Training Certificate- Elnora Copeland, Category: Training Document; • Training Certificate-Elnora Copeland, Category: Training Document; • Training Certificates, Category: Training Document;



AUBURN UNIVERSITY

Institutional Review Board

The IRB determined that this protocol meets the criteria for exemption from IRB review.

Approved consent forms may be accessed in the Endeavor workspace under the "Documents" tab.

In conducting this protocol you are required to follow the requirements listed in HRP-103 - INVESTIGATOR MANUAL.

Ongoing IRB review and approval by this organization is not required. This determination applies only to the activities described in the IRB submission and does not apply should any changes be made. If changes are made and there are questions about whether these activities impact the exempt determination, please submit a new request to the IRB for a determination.

Sincerely,
IRB Administration
540 Devall Drive
Auburn, AL 36849
irbadmin@auburn.edu
(334) 844-5966



Date: Tuesday, April 1, 2025 11:31:07 AM

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Close

STUDY00000245

Basic Study Information

Basic Study Information

1. * Title of study:

The Effectiveness of Stay Interviews on Teacher Retention in Private K-12 Schools

2. * Short title:

Stay Interviews and Teacher Retention in Private Schools

3. * Brief description:

This study, titled "The Effectiveness of Stay Interviews on Teacher Retention in Private K-12 Schools: A Mixed Methods Study", aims to explore how stay interviews can be used as a strategy to improve teacher retention in private schools. Through a sequential explanatory mixed-methods design, the study begins with a quantitative phase that surveys private K-12 teachers to measure well-being, job satisfaction, and retention factors using tools like the PERMA Workplace Profiler and Stay Interview Questionnaire. The second phase follows up with qualitative semi-structured interviews to gain deeper insights into the survey findings.

The study focuses on three key areas: organizational well-being, the use of stay interviews as a proactive retention tool, and teacher attrition specific to private schools.

https://endeavorib.huronresearchsuite.com/IRB/app/portal/smartform/printProject/_IRBSubmission/F69D196C914211EF378F4B8B8F565000?packetIds=defaultPrintPacket

1/11

By integrating quantitative and qualitative data, this research will provide a comprehensive understanding of how stay interviews can influence retention decisions and overall teacher well-being in private school contexts.

The results will not only contribute to the academic literature on teacher retention but also provide practical, evidence-based strategies for private school administrators to improve working conditions and teacher satisfaction. Ultimately, the findings could have broader implications for addressing teacher shortages and enhancing the quality of education in private schools.

4. * What kind of study is this?

Single-site study

5. * Will an external IRB act as the IRB of record for this study?

☐ Yes ☒ No

6. * Local principal investigator:

Ellen Hahn

7. * Attach the protocol:

	Document	Category	Date Modified	Document History
View	Supporting Document V2.pdf(V2)	IRB Protocol	12/16/2024	History
View	Beth Leatherwood(V4)	IRB Protocol	12/16/2024	History

8. Please indicate the proposed review category:

Expedited

https://endeavorib.huronresearchsuite.com/IRB/app/portal/smartform/printProject/_IRBSubmission/F69D196C914211EF378F4B8B8F565000?packetIds=defaultPrintPacket

2/11

9. Does this research include a purchase, or purchases, that involve technology hardware, software, or online services?

☐ Yes ☒ No

10. * Does the study expose participants to radiation?

☐ Yes ☒ No

11. Is IBC (Institutional Biosafety Committee) approval required for this study?

☐ Yes ☒ No

12. Is IACUC (Institutional Animal Care and Use Committee) approval required for this study?

☐ Yes ☒ No

13. Does this study involve the Auburn University MRI Center?

☐ Yes ☒ No

14. * Does this study involve vulnerable populations, or persons with disabilities or disadvantages?

☐ Yes ☒ No

15. * Are you using Auburn University faculty, staff, or students in your research?

☐ Yes ☒ No

Study Funding Sources

1. Identify each organization supplying funding for the study:

Funding Source	Sponsor's Funding ID	Grants Office ID	Attachments
----------------	----------------------	------------------	-------------

There are no items to display

Local Study Team Members

1. Identify each additional person involved in the design, conduct, or reporting of the research:

Name	Roles	Involved in Consent	E-mail	Phone
Beth Leatherwood	Co-investigator Data Analyst	yes	bzl0078@auburn.edu	

2. External team member information:

Name	Description
------	-------------

There are no items to display

Study Scope

1. * Does the study specify the use of an approved drug or biologic, use an unapproved drug or biologic, or use a food or dietary supplement to diagnose, cure, treat, or mitigate a disease or condition?
☐ Yes ☒ No
2. * Does the study evaluate the safety or effectiveness of a device or use a humanitarian use device (HUD)?
☐ Yes ☒ No
3. * Will the study require a Certificate of Confidentiality (CoC) issued by the NIH?
☐ Yes ☒ No
4. * Is the study a clinical trial?
☐ Yes ☒ No

https://endeavorirb.huronresearchsuite.com/IRB/app/portal/smartform/printProject/_IRBSubmission/F69D196C914211EF378F4B8B8F565000?packetId=defaultPrintPacket

7/11

Local Research Locations

1. Identify research locations where research activities will be conducted or overseen by the local investigator:

	Location	Contact	Phone	Email
View	Presbyterian Christian School	Jimmy Messer	2514211687	jmesser@pcsk12.org

https://endeavorirb.huronresearchsuite.com/IRB/app/portal/smartform/printProject/_IRBSubmission/F69D196C914211EF378F4B8B8F565000?packetId=defaultPrintPacket

8/11

Local Site Documents

1. Consent forms: (include an HHS-approved sample consent document, if applicable)

	Document	Category	Date Modified	Document History
View	 HRP-581- Survey Information Letter UPDATED.docx(V2)	Consent Form	12/16/2024	History
View	 HRP-581 Information Letter- Interview UPDATED.docx(V2)	Consent Form	12/16/2024	History
View	 PCS Consent (1).pdf(V1)	Consent Form	11/5/2024	History
View	 Consent Letter V2.pdf(V2)	Consent Form	11/4/2024	History

2. Recruitment materials: (add all material to be seen or heard by subjects, including ads)

	Document	Category	Date Modified	Document History
View	 Follow Up Plan.docx(V2)	Recruitment Materials	11/5/2024	History
View	 Stay Interview Recruitment Plan.docx(V2)	Recruitment Materials	11/5/2024	History

3. Other attachments:

https://endeavorib.huronresearchsuite.com/IRB/app/portal/smartform/printProject/_IRBSubmission/F69D196C914211EF378F4B8B8F565000?packetId=defaultPrintPacket

9/11

	Document	Category	Date Modified	Document History
View	 Stay Survey Questions_ (1).pdf(V2)	Survey/Questionnaire	11/25/2024	History
View	 Follow Up Interview Questions_.pdf(V1)	Survey/Questionnaire	11/25/2024	History
View	 Requested Permission Modification for IRB_.pdf(V1)	Other	11/25/2024	History
View	 CITI Basic RCR Certificate.pdf(V1)	Training Document	10/23/2024	History
View	 citiCompletionCertificate_11677529_52171480.pdf(V1)	Training Document	10/23/2024	History

Suggested attachments:

- Completed checklist of meeting Department of Energy requirements, if applicable
- Other site-related documents not attached on previous forms

Final Page

You have reached the end of the IRB submission form. Read the next steps carefully:

1. Click **Finish** to exit the form.
2. **Important!** To send the submission for review, click **Submit** on the next page.

You must click Submit in the left menu bar on the following page to submit your protocol. Your protocol is not submitted until the workflow indicates that it is in Pre-Review.

Parental Involvement Interview Questions

Please give your name and share something about your child/children.

Do you feel welcome in your child's school?

If yes, what does the school staff do that shows you that you are welcome?

If not, what could the school staff do differently that would make you feel welcome?

How often do you meet in person with teachers/and or administration at your child/children's school?

Are you pleased with how and how often school staff communicate with you?

What do you do to prepare your child to do well in school?

What do you consider the role of parents or families in a child's education?

Are you encouraged by school staff to volunteer?

If so, give examples of how you are encouraged to volunteer.

What does the school do well in helping you support your child?

How does your child's school ask you to be involved?

How does this work for your family?

What could the school do to help you be more involved?

What kind of school activities do you like to attend or participate in?

What would you like to do to help your child in their schooling but do not know how?

What kind of things has the school done that helped you to help your child more at home?

What recommendation would you make to the school for improving communications and school-and-home partnerships?

Is there anything else you would like me to know about what is important to you as a family and about your involvement in your child's education?