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The Effects of Training on Teachers Functional Attitudes Towards School, Family, & Community Partnerships

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Abstract

School, family, and community engagement has the potential to significantly improve urban education and make urban schools more competitive with their suburban counterparts. This quantitative research study probed the viability of engaging teachers around strategies to increase their functional behavior levels towards school, family, and community partnerships by inviting them to participate in a training session on Epstein's Six Types of Involvement Framework at an urban district in upstate New York. Forty participants were invited through flyers and email notifications, to be part of a control and treatment groups. Fifteen participants signed up for the control group and 15 for the treatment group. The same survey questions on functional behaviors towards school, family, and community involvement were administered to both groups before and after a six-hour training. Results showed that the training was sufficient to enable teachers to improve their functional behavior towards volunteering and collaboration with the community. However, the training was less successful in improving functional behaviors towards parenting, decision making, learning at home, and communication. Notwithstanding, teachers level of interest in these areas was relatively higher post training. The study suggests that urban school districts should invest more resources and training of teachers, to enlist families and the community as effective partners in education.

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The Effects of Training on Teachers Functional Attitudes Towards School, Family, & Community Partnerships

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Dedication

I would like to dedicate this study to my mother Minnie Lee Wise who has always supported my dreams and encouraged my visions with everlasting love. She inspired and encouraged me to pursue this study. Although she did not survive to see its completion, I know that she is an angel in heaven watching over me and sharing her joy of my accomplishments with other angels.

I owe a great debt of gratitude to my committee members, DEXL instructors, and classmates of the Fierce 15 Cohort. Without all of you, my journey through this doctoral degree would not have been possible. Thank you for making a positive difference in my life.

To Dr. Jason Berman, in particularly, may God bless your soul for your role as my mentor and friend. Although he decided to bring you home prior to my final dissertation defense, I know you will always be there watching over my shoulders and cheering for me all the way, as all guardian angels do. You gave me timely advice that helped me make good decisions at my many turning points in this dissertation process. You responded to all my challenges with warmth, support, and excellent fatherly guidance. But what I will miss most of all is your joyful smile and big bear hug you always gave me whenever we met in person. When you see my mom in heaven, please give her a joyful smile and big bear hug for me and let her know that her son did well.

Biographical Sketch

Josh Mack is currently the Project Implementation Specialist at Benjamin Franklin High School. Mr. Mack attended SUNY Delhi Agricultural & Technical College from 1982 to 1984 and graduated with an Associates of Applied Sciences degree in 1984. He attended SUNY Brockport State College from 1984 to 1988 and graduated with a Bachelor of Sciences degree in Mathematics in 1988. He attended SUNY Brockport State College from 1995 to 1996 and graduated with a Master of Sciences degree in Education in 1996. He attended SUNY Brockport State College from 1996 to 1997 and graduated with a Master of Sciences degree in Educational Administration in 1997. He came to St. John Fisher University in the summer of 2020 and began doctoral studies in the Ed.D. Program in Executive Leadership. Mr. Mack pursued his research in the effects of training on teachers functional attitudes towards parental engagement under the direction of Dr. Jason Berman and Dr. Jeanette Silvers and received the Ed.D. degree in 2023.

Abstract

School, family, and community engagement has the potential to significantly improve urban education and make urban schools more competitive with their suburban counterparts. This quantitative research study probed the viability of engaging teachers around strategies to increase their functional behavior levels towards school, family, and community partnerships by inviting them to participate in a training session on Epstein's Six Types of Involvement Framework at an urban district in upstate New York. Forty participants were invited through flyers and email notifications, to be part of a control and treatment groups. Fifteen participants signed up for the control group and 15 for the treatment group. The same survey questions on functional behaviors towards school, family, and community involvement were administered to both groups before and after a six-hour training. Results showed that the training was sufficient to enable teachers to improve their functional behavior towards volunteering and collaboration with the community. However, the training was less successful in improving functional behaviors towards parenting, decision making, learning at home, and communication. Notwithstanding, teachers level of interest in these areas was relatively higher post-training. The study suggests that urban school districts should invest more resources and training of teachers, to enlist families and the community as effective partners in education.

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Chapter 1: Introduction

Parent involvement is essential to creating a positive school culture that supports the academic development of African American children in urban schools. Parental involvement has been related with higher paces of secondary school graduation, recognizable proof for skilled and gifted programs, honors, advanced placement, postsecondary enrollment, and induction into specific schools and colleges (Dettmer et al., 2012). Government and state agencies in the United States of America have raised parental involvement in schools to a national priority to some extent because of the enormous number of unsuccessful schools and expanded accomplishment gaps between White students and African American and other ethnic minority students (Hill-Jackson et al., 2008).

One of the most significant legislations, introduced in 2001, was No Child Left Behind (NCLB). Albeit the enactment got weighty analysis for insufficiencies in numerous areas, the enactment gave some encouraging segments that look to include verifiably underrepresented ethnic minorities in the educational process. Key to its main goal was the affirmation of scholarly accomplishment for all students through legitimate associations between schools, parents, and communities (Howard & Reynolds, 2008). Parent inclusion is explicitly tended to by the creators of NCLB and inexactly portrayed in the enactments as an association that imagines parents with governing power inside of a democratic process (Rogers, 2006).

According to Epstein (1995) teachers and researchers have agreed that children exert more effort and accomplish more in school when parents participate in education. The home environment is essential to student achievement (Flakes, 2007). Children are destined to work with and be encouraged to learn at home by parents who extend the educational experience into the home. Those parents assist their children with creating uplifting outlooks towards school, adding to the self-improvement and scholastic accomplishment of their children (Epstein, 1995).

According to Epstein (2019), schools that care about children reflect the same level of care for their children's families. Viewing children simply as students leads to seeing families as separate from the school. That is, the school should be left alone to educate children and the family is expected to do its job. On other hand, viewing students as children leads educators to seeing the family and community as partners with a shared interest in and responsibility for children. By working together, they create better programs and opportunities for students. Epstein rationalizes this relationship as "overlapping spheres of influence" which she later documents as a theory that explains this phenomenon.

Abdul-Adil and Farmer (2006) proffered a conclusion from their study to sum up the general findings of their research regarding parent involvement practices. They concluded that peculiar definitions and estimation of parental involvement by educators precluded full understanding of the total cumulative knowledge of parental involvement. In terms of program foci, Abdul-Adil and Farmer's (2006) study uncovered that school-imposed limits and boundaries to parental involvement baffled parents and diminished their rates of parental involvement in school. Additionally, the study found that: (a)

meeting content didn't reflect parent concerns; (b) school staff were seen as coldhearted and condescending by guardians; and (c) inner-city African American parents might be more disposed toward continuous interest in comprehensive school, family, and community partnership programs which accentuated logically applicable and synergistic methodologies toward supporting their children's school achievement.

Even though there is a lot of evidence that good partnerships between teachers, students, and families is an essential component of "best practices" for students' success, numerous instructors enter the profession lacking dispositions, skills, and knowledge needed to promote partnerships that supports student achievement (Ratcliff & Hunt, 2009). The stance taken is that it is the duty of all teachers to advance and sustain quality two-way partnerships with the families of their students. But, without proper support, guidance, and training, many teachers will struggle to develop the knowledge, skills, and dispositions necessary to develop effective school, family, and community partnerships.

Teachers are also being asked to consider the total context of children's lives (Coleman & Wallinga, 2000). Schools are expected to form collaborative school, family, and community partnerships to address the social, emotional, and educational needs of their students and families. Zygmunt-Fillwalk (2011) suggested that requiring teachers to implement teacher-parent partnership practices, with the benefits of ongoing professional development, may produce unintended negative outcomes. Teachers without a theoretical and practical understanding of family involvement experience the frustrations of lack of strategies, perceived inefficacy, and discouragement.

Numerous literature reviews have provided justification for why preparing teachers to establish effective parent engagement is vitally important to the education of

children. Other research has displayed how teacher practices have had a greater impact on parent engagement than originally determined, considering many other factors (Epstein, 1986). It has been well documented that teachers who make proactive efforts to establish partnerships with parents experience greater academic and behavioral success from their students than teachers who do not (Eccles & Harold, 1996).

Unfortunately, teacher preparation programs provide preservice teachers with very little preparation on how to establish effective parent partnerships. This has led to teachers relying on their own intuitions, learned personal experiences, and other colleagues' theories to guide them through encounters with parents instead of an establish comprehensive framework based on proven successful practices (Moles, 1993).

Other studies point to shortfalls in NCLB as a contributor to the ongoing struggle African American parents are experiencing with inconsistent pathways to school, family, and community partnerships. Howard and Reynolds (2008) argue that while the provision aims to mandate parent involvement in schools, the extent to which parents are involved in schools is still unclear under NCLB's parent involvement mandate. Their study focuses on the educational experiences of African American students and parents from middle-class families. The study asserts that, when it comes to underachievement and parent involvement, this group is largely ignored in professional literature. Although NCLB highlights parent involvement and school responsibility using test information, middle-class students who are not White or Asian are habitually disregarded in the detailing and examination of school accomplishment, especially as it identifies with school, family, and community partnerships (Reynolds & Howard, 2008). NCLB misses the mark concerning giving oversight and enforcement that guarantees that compliance is maintained at the

state and local levels. Educational systems cannot be certain that schools are complying with the government mandate (Reynolds & Howard, 2008).

The assumption that educators must "teach" parents how to be involved and "train" them in ways to care for children is one that is held by administrators and teachers and is frequently propagated in teacher education programs (Quiocho & Daoud, 2006; Ramirez, 2004). McKenna and Millen (2013) contend that this isn't simply harsh toward the truth of various parenting styles and family make-ups yet is eventually an inefficient way to deal with the development of effective models of school, family, and community partnerships. McKenna and Millen stated that in contrast to participating in an integrated partnership with the goal of assisting children in developing their full potential, research paradigms and partnership models assume that parents are actors whose role in schools, whenever one exists, is to support the teacher and/or the school.

The quality and quantity of parental involvement in the African American community is woefully inadequate. It mitigates against a student’s achievement and success as well as perpetuates a social injustice. Teachers who are not skilled on how to facilitate school-family-community partnerships, report low levels of functional behavior and are often afraid and reluctant to take initiative.

> All too often, new teachers possess negative attitudes and assumptions about families. Rather than entering the teaching force prepared to help low-income children succeed by partnering with and empowering families, many new teachers underestimate the importance of family engagement and contribute to the unequal distribution of supports outside the classroom (Caspe et al., 2011, p. 2).

There are also many school barriers to minority parental involvement that focus on the deficiencies of the parent as the major cause. More concerning barriers include (a) perception of teachers concerning the efficacy of minority parents, (b) perceptions of teachers concerning the capacity of minority parents, (c) teachers' belief in the effectiveness of parental involvement and development, (d) teachers' self-efficacy in teaching effectiveness, and (e) school friendliness and positive communication (Kim, 2009).

Minority parents often experience feelings of uncomfortableness when they visit schools due to the negative perceptions they receive from teachers and schools (Kim, 2009). In the traditional setting, middle-class parents are expected to take an active role in assisting in the education of their children. But when minority parents attempt to initiate involvement in the school system, a paradox occurs. Although aggressive behaviors are tolerated and expected, efforts taken to proactively advocate are often ignored or dismissed. This can lead to poor perceptions from minority parents that their input and participation are not welcomed and cause them to discontinue participation efforts. Unfortunately, the appearance of lack of care by minority parents is often because they believe that they don't have a voice in the school.

Beliefs about the limited efficacy of parents to provide positive contributions to their children's education, also contribute to teachers and administrators' intolerance to minority parents (Hoover-Dempsey et al., 2002). White middle-class teachers tend to believe that, if families are not White middle-class families, then they have different educational values that are viewed and deficient to their own.

Hoover-Dempsey et al. (2002) also revealed that minority parents with few resources and more stress are often not solicited to engage in parental involvement activities by teachers. Teachers believe that since minority parents lack the time, money, interest, or energy to get involved with school activities, they are doing them a favor by not bothering them. This sort of *implicit bias* regarding the efficacy of minority parents, and a lack of motivation to get them involved, reinforces the subsequent lack of involvement in the school system (Hoover-Dempsey et al., 2002). They assert that for black and brown parents in public schools that employ predominantly white educators, unchecked biases will manifest as discriminatory expectations of educators when seeking a more functional attitude towards parental engagement.

Problem Statement

Numerous urban schools continually struggle to develop school, family, and community partnerships that advance the academic achievement of urban students. Teachers' assumptions and understandings of parental involvement in our nation's schools are frequently disengaged from the truth of students' home lives (McKenna & Millen, 2013). Abdul-Adil and Farmer (2006) maintains that parental involvement endeavors with urban African Americans are currently hampered by issues related to research methodology (e.g., lack of consensus definition and operationalization) and program foci (e.g., conceptualization, communication, and collaboration). They noted that in spite of the overall agreement of its significance, research looking at parental engagement in schools has been troubled by clashing definitions, objectives, and techniques.

Theoretical Rationale

In the early 1990s, Joyce Epstein and collaborators developed the Six Types of Involvement framework, sometimes called the School-Family-Community Partnership Model. Although the model has gone through multiple revisions over the years, the foundational elements of the framework have remained steady. These six types of involvement are (a) parenting - understanding child and adolescent development in a home setting condition that supports children as learners; (b) communicating - a process by which data is traded between people through a typical arrangement of images, signs, or conduct; (c) volunteering - involving families as volunteers at school and other locations that promote and support student learning; (d) learning at home - engaging parents with their children at home, including homework assistance, other curriculum-related tasks, and making course and program decisions; (e) decision making - families are included as partners in school decisions including governance, PTA/PTO, school-based planning teams, committees, action teams, and other parent organizations; and (f) collaborating with the community - the way in which schools and parents connect with the local area to get assets to upgrade the educational program and guidance. Epstein and colleagues emphasized the importance of each type being a two-way partnership that is co-developed by parents and teachers (Epstein, 2019). Historically, schools have unilaterally utilized a one-way opportunity.

As Epstein (1995) documented through theory of overlapping spheres of influence (schools, family, and community), partnerships shift to meet and address their specific needs. This theoretical framework makes references to numerous specific internal and external circumstances that families and schools face daily. This theory proposes that

"families, schools, and communities are most effective if they have overlapping or shared goals, missions, and responsibilities for children" (Epstein & Hollifield, 1996, p. 270).

This research study was implemented to determine if training teachers on Epstein's Six Types of Involvement Framework will result in higher levels of teacher self-efficacy. The specific goal of the training was to assist teachers in (a) understanding the framework of Epstein's Six Types of Involvement, (b) solve challenges to engaging all families, (c) select practices that produce positive results for students, and (d) increasing teacher's self-efficacy in doing this work.

The likely results to the larger system (community, families, educators, and district) of successfully putting into action the training include a greater understanding of Epstein's Six Types of Involvement, greater consistency in methods of engaging parents, and maximum opportunities to increase student success.

Statement of Purpose

In spite of the fact that there is common understanding in the teacher education field regarding the kinds of abilities that educators need to show in establishing teacher-parent partnerships, research on the adequacy of preparing to develop such skills has been hampered by an absence of accessible tools for estimating teachers' impressions of their abilities to do this work (Garcia, 2004).

The purpose of this study was to determine whether training in Epstein's Six Types of Involvement Framework results in a significant improvement in the functional attitudes of teachers towards parental engagement. The goal was to increase teacher's functional behavior levels with establishing school, family, and community partnerships. The study involved outlining and putting into action a multimedia-based training

workshop to develop teachers' knowledge of the Epstein's family-school partnership framework. The intervention was planned by a core planning team which included the researcher, school-based planning team, and the principal. All teachers were invited to attend the in-person training workshop as part of their voluntary professional development training.

Research Questions

The research question for this study was:

> Does the implementation of a program to train teachers on Epstein's Six Types of Involvement Framework produce a more functional teacher attitude towards school, family, and community partnerships?

Potential Significance of the Study

This research study was conducted to improve teacher understanding of effective methods for involving parents in urban educational environments. Acquiring this knowledge will help teachers better understand school, family, and community involvement and how it is linked to education. It will also enable educators to develop effective school, family, and community partnerships that lead to improved outcomes for the students they serve.

There is a broad agreement among researchers, policy makers, teachers, and practitioners that parental engagement is crucial to the achievement of urban students of color (Ratcliff & Hunt, 2009). Notwithstanding, getting parents engaged with the school is by all accounts a significant issue. Regardless of whether it is understood, there are personal, institutional, and cultural barriers that adversely impact home, school, and community partnerships.

Over the past two decades the concept of family involvement has gone through tremendous changes with respect to people who challenge the present status of the urban family. Among the most widely recognized family structures for urban families of color are single-parent families. Typically, (a) the adult female heads these families, with children from the same or different fathers; (b) the mixed family, which includes children from a previous relationship and a natural parent who has a second life partner; and (c) paternal or maternal grandparents who have taken on the responsibility of raising their grandchildren, a more distant family member.

Similar as each child is unique, each family is unique. Each family evolves from different circumstances and has its own attributes as a family structure. Some of these attributes are more functional than others. This proposes that educators should reevaluate their relationship with parents of their students to ensure that families are incorporated as a component of the school system. New methodologies should be tried to assist parents with accessing resources to take part in schools which have a welcoming, parent-friendly environment.

If the training were not offered, teachers could continue to struggle to understand how to develop effective school, family, and community partnerships. The district's report card rating under parent and community involvement could decrease, and further decline in parental support could lead to an undesirable and unsuccessful district.

The ideal of the research implemented training was to view the desired changes. The goal was for teachers to become better equipped to establish effective school, family, and community partnerships that leads urban students to higher rates of high school

graduation, identification for gifted and talented programs, advanced placement, honors, postsecondary matriculation, and admittance into selective colleges and universities.

Assumption

This study assumed that the participant population would not be normally distributed.

Chapter Summary

The balance of this study is separated into four sections as follows: (a) Chapter 2 will represent a review of the literature on school-family-community partnerships; (b) Chapter 3 describes the research design methodology, research context, research participants, instrument used in data collection, procedures used for data collection, and procedures used for data analysis; (c) Chapter 4 will present the presentation of the data analysis and findings; and (d) Chapter 5 will present implementation of the findings, limitations, recommendations, and conclusions of the study.

Chapter 2: Review of the Literature

Introduction and Purpose

The literature review presented in this chapter examines the areas of: (a) No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB) of 2001, (b) key aspects of parental involvement in academic achievement, (c) teacher functional attitudes towards parental involvement practices, (d) parental beliefs of parent involvement, and (e) implicit bias towards low-income families.

Urban schools continue to struggle with developing school, family, and community partnerships that advance the academic achievement of urban students. Numerous researchers have published studies that highlight the significant impact that school-family-community partnerships have on the academic achievement of urban youth. Others provide strategies that have been proven effective in increasing school-family-community partnership efforts. Some evidence suggests that teachers are a major contributor to effective school-family-community partnerships.

No Child Left Behind

> The No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 (NCLB Act) reauthorized the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965 (ESEA) and is based on four principles that provide a framework through which families, educators, and communities can work together to improve teaching and learning. These principles are accountability for results, local control and flexibility, expanded parental choice, and effective and successful programs that reflect scientifically based research (U.S. Department of Education, 2004, p. 3).

A major component of the NCLB Act calls for schools to provide professional development to educators to assist them with organizing effective parent partnership programs. Assessing the impact of the NCLB Act leaves many educators questioning the extent of which the school's awareness of teacher professional development requirements under NCLB. It has only been utilized primarily for reporting accountability measures, provisions, and parent options (Robinson, 2004).

Parent Involvement in Academic Achievement

Several investigations sought to identify how parents in the African American community participated in the academic achievement of their children. Latunde and Clark-Louque (2016) cited two additional strategies employed by parents: (a) participation in educational programs outside of school, and (b) helping their children with learning at home. To reduce parents' feelings of alienation the researchers proposed that school leaders provide ongoing professional development for staff that supports home-school collaboration. It was further suggested that leaders need to model and make available different types of parental involvement activities in schools. In a previous study, Louque and Latunde (2014) conducted interviews with 130 parents of students enrolled in K-12 schools. The researchers reported that parents remained engaged with their children's education through membership in parent groups, visiting schools and communicating with school personnel, and participating in school- or district-based decision-making processes. In addition, the authors revealed a disturbing finding that Black families often feel unwelcome or are disillusioned about family engagement.

Murray et al. (2014) conducted a study of 44 predominantly African American parents whose children attended urban public middle schools. The study found that there

were a variety of barriers, such as perceptions of hostile parent-teacher interactions and disrespectful students, that undermined school-based parent involvement. These barriers resulted in low parent participation. It was further suggested that educators should develop tailored strategies for increasing school-based parent involvement with this population.

Froiland et al. (2012) conducted a study that involved a national representative sample of 7,600 students who were a part of the National Center for Education Statistics Early Child Longitudinal Study-Kindergarten Cohort (ECLS-K), which followed them from 1998-2006. The goal of the study was to examine to what extent did parental expectations in kindergarten effect children's expectations and achievement in eighth grade since parent expectations are considered an important component of parental involvement. The longitudinal study found that found that early home literacy involvement with parents has a positive impact on the academic achievement of their children throughout eigth grade. It also revealed that parents maintained a strong hope that children will succeed in college. Based on these results, the author recommended that parent involvement interventions be developed for young children in a manner that targets parental expectation as an important component of parental involvement.

Hayes (2012) surveyed 145 African American parents of high school students from two large cities in the South and Southwest. Home-based parental involvement was found to be a significant predictor of academic performance outcomes for African American children. Bachman et al (2010) study investigated the academic and social development of 1,364 children across first, third, and fifth grades from 10 U.S. data collection sites. The study found that improvements in parent involvement do not predict

changes in academic achievement but do predict declines in problem behaviors as well as improvements in social skills. Children with high levels of parental involvement had far less behavior problems and higher-level social functions. It was suggested that investigating possible factors that persuade parent involvement would be helpful to inform interventions and policies.

Anderson and Minke (2007) studied 203 parents of students attending a large urban school district in the Southwest region of the United States. “The authors examined the relationships among four parent variables (role construction, sense of efficacy, resources, and perceptions of teacher invitations) with PI activities at home and school” (Anderson & Minke, 2007, p. 311). The Hoover-Dempsey and Sandler (1995, 1997) model was used analyze parent involvement from the perspective of the parents. This model relates student performance to five levels of involvement decision-making by parents. The study found that parent involvement at home was much more prevalent than parent involvement at school. This also led to teachers overlooking the contributions of minority parents because they are primarily involved at home. The author suggested that schools may be underestimating parent involvement if they only consider activities such as volunteering and attending conferences as evidence of parent engagement.

Green et al. (2007) conducted a study of 853 parents of first through sixth graders at an ethnically diverse urban school district in the mid-southern region of the United States. The study analyzed the capacity of a theoretical model, that included a) motivational beliefs, b) impressions of request to involvement from others, and c) variables of perceived life circumstances, to envision the levels and types of parent involvement during k-8 school years. The study found that variations in parents’

motivational beliefs about school and home involvement were significantly predicted by different model constructs. The author's evidence further suggested that parental involvement is advantageous to children's academic success.

Waanders et al. (2007) conducted a study of 154 mostly African American parents enlisted from two Head Start programs. The study analyzed a) parent-teacher connections, b) school-based collaboration, and c) home-based collaboration using factors that related these dimensions with preschool parent engagement. A bivariate and canonical correlation analysis was conducted and provided results that supported a multi-dimensional, ecological perception of parent involvement. The results indicated that parent self-efficacy levels with the education at different levels, was significantly improved through parent involvement efforts. It was further suggested that teachers may be unaware of the significant impact that of family, school, and community involvement on the academic achievement of African American students.

McWayne et al. (2004) studied 307 low-income, ethnic minority children and their parents in a large, urban school district in the Northeast. The goal of the study was to gauge parent involvement at the kindergarten level to provide a multi-dimensional viewpoint of parent involvement. The Parent Involvement in Children's Education Scale (PICES) was used which resulted in a 40-item self-report instrument to gather data. The study found that the extent of parent involvement in kindergarten was consistent with those established in preschool. There was also a multivariate relationship between the level of parent involvement and children's social and academic proficiency. The author suggested that research is needed to develop more creative solutions to engaging parents

since mothers comprise a notable share of the work force and more children are living in single parent homes.

Hill and Craft (2003) interviewed 103 mothers and their kindergarten children in their homes, to gather comparative research data. Fifty-four were African American and 49 were European Americans. The study examined the academic and social capabilities of children in correlation to the positive impact of parent involvement in school achievement. Sampling was done to avoid confounding socioeconomic factors while examining ethnic differences and similarities. “The Sound-Letter Correspondence scale was used to assess reading, and the Quantitative Concepts scale was used to assess math” (p. 76). The study found that academic skills achievement in reading interceded the connection amid involvement and achievement for African Americans and European Americans. This process differed for math achievement. Although academic skills achievement also mediated the connection amid school involvement and math performance for African Americans, social competence mediated the impact for European Americans. It was further suggested that researchers and practitioners should value and expand on the unique qualities across ethnic groups.

The studies reported here attest to the importance of the school providing a welcoming environment for parents and families, as well as increasing ways for parents to actively participate in the education of their children. The fact that many Black families feel ostracized and isolated appears to be a persistent problem that needs to be addressed with a sense of urgency.

Teacher's Functional Attitude towards Parental Involvement

Numerous investigations sought to identify how teachers' functional attitude towards parental involvement practices plays a vital role in establishing parent-teacher partnerships that support academic achievement of their children. Many of these attitudes regarding parent involvement stems from teacher preparation programs that do not use a systemic approach to teach skills needed to engage families (Bartels & Eskow, 2010).

Alanko (2018) investigated 20 program managers from preservice teaching programs located in large universities in different regions of Finland. The investigation included primary, secondary, and early childhood programs. The investigation focused on how well the programs prepared preservice teachers for home-school cooperation. An online survey was used to collect data on how home-school cooperation is viewed by teachers. The investigation revealed that the majority (64%) of the programs focused specifically on home-school cooperation modules. According to Epstein (2006) only 59% of the teacher education programs in the U.S. reported having any existence of home-school preparation modules in their programs. It was suggested that teacher training programs should develop modules that allow preservice teachers to practice their skills in cooperative settings while they are enrolled in teaching training programs.

Hindin and Mueller (2016) studied 37 undergraduate students in a joint elementary/special education teacher preparation program at a university located in a diverse community outside of New York City. Although there was no separate course in parental involvement, topics regarding parental engagement were immersed in multiple courses throughout the program. Case study scenarios were used to unveil preservice teachers' functional attitudes and strategies used to work with diverse families. The study

found that preservice teachers' functional behaviors were largely influenced by their a) personal experiences, b) coursework, and c) field experiences provided in community settings. It was further recommended that teacher preparation programs expand their coursework to better prepare preservice teachers for working with diverse families. This would include improvements in field experiences through stronger partnerships with local schools as well as strengthening professional development programs with greater focus on parent, school, and community partnerships.

Brown et al. (2014) conducted a study of 1,658 undergraduate teacher candidates from four universities in rural and urban locations in Southwest, South-Urban, South-Rural, and North regions of the United States. The candidates participated in a web-based Parent Teacher Education Curriculum that taught best practices in family engagement as well as assessing the knowledge and attitudes preservice teachers held towards family engagement. The study found that attitudes of preservice teachers towards parent involvement increased significantly after the curriculum was taught. It was further suggested that preservice teacher education programs address parent involvement curriculum practices flexibly across the curriculum.

Miller et al. (2013) study surveyed directors and faculty from 43 accredited institutions of higher learning regarding current family-school partnering coursework, practice requirements, and resources. The critical aspects of preservice teacher preparation for engaging in home-school partnering were gathered using an educator preparation survey that was developed for the study. The study found that current course offerings and practice requirements did not reflect predominant views concerning the importance of and need for family involvement in helping students succeed. It was

further suggested that institutions provide refocusing classes, alternative field experiences, interdisciplinary projects and pathways for continued professional development to improve the preparedness of future educators to partner with parents.

Amatea et al. (2012) investigated 138 preservice teachers in a course on family-school relationships at a large research university in the Southeastern United States. The data was gathered over a 1-year period using the five sections of the course. A Demographic Questionnaire, Teacher Family Role Expectations Scale (TFRES), Teacher Efficacy in Engaging Families Scale (TEEFS), and Teacher Problem Cause (TPC) was utilized to collect the data. The study found that attitudes became less stereotypical and more confident with using family involvement practices, upon completion of the course. It was suggested that preservice teachers should engage in course activities and field experiences that expose them to collaborative models for structuring relationships with low-income ethnic minorities.

Pedro et al. (2012) conducted a study of 83 early childhood preservice teachers from 12 early childhood teacher preparation programs located in colleges/universities across the northeastern part of the United States. A survey that included a Likert scale was used to gather quantitative data about preservice teachers' functional attitudes towards working with parents and families. The study found that although most preservice teachers understood the importance of engaging with parents, most preservice teachers felt that they were not adequately prepared to a) work with diverse families, b) hold parent-teacher conferences, c) affect school policies, and d) determine parent knowledge of educational needs. It was suggested that teacher preparation programs must

find ways to develop knowledge and skills in preservice teachers that would enable them to gain self-efficacy with effective involvement of parents.

Symeou et al. (2012) conducted a voluntary study of 111 early childhood, elementary, and secondary school teachers from five training centers operated by a large pedagogical institute across the country. The study evaluated the impact of a training course for teachers on the perceived usefulness of communication skills in building relationships with parents. The study found a considerable modification of teachers' beliefs about the importance in multiple aspects of communicating with parents. The author suggested that teacher training programs must incorporate training on communications skills in effort to prepare preservice teachers to do this work.

Zygmunt-Fillwalk (2011) conducted a study of 60 undergraduate students from a mid-sized Midwestern university. The students were preservice teachers taking a course in family and community relations. A mixed-methods design was used to report the relationship between 1st, 2nd, and 3rd-year preservice teachers and their engagement in the course. The study found that teachers without a theoretical and practical understanding of family involvement experienced the frustrations of a lack of strategies, perceived inefficacy, and discouragement. It was also suggested that mandating teachers to implement parent-teacher engagement practices, without providing proper training and support, may have unintended negative consequences.

Bartels and Eskow (2010) investigated a pilot project that included 11 educators from a large diverse school district in Maryland. The project consisted of three courses (a) Applied Family Relationship, (b) Family Professional Collaboration, and (c) Project in Family-Focused Program Development. The purpose of the pilot was to enhance the

school-based professionals' functional skills and attitudes towards family engagement. The study revealed four primary themes: "improved attitude toward family-professional collaboration, acquisition of new knowledge or skills, intention to apply new knowledge or skills in the work settings, and actual application of skills in authentic settings" (p. 58). It was further suggested that leadership should take the lead role in implementing the changes that are needed at the school level to ensure that all teachers are applying the new knowledge or skills they have developed.

Auerbach (2007) investigated 30 site and local district administrators, who were well-known for their expertise and commitment to parent engagement, to assess how these leaders view parent involvement and take active roles in promoting parent engagement initiatives within a large urban district located in the Los Angeles Unified School District (LAUSD). The goal of the study was to advance underdeveloped aspects of parent involvement and leadership literature as well as provide advice on necessary policy and practices. The study found most participants reported that they had received very little formal training on establishing school-community relations. They believed that this type of training should be embedded in teacher and administrative curriculums to include theory, instructional strategies, field service, and related research. Although these leaders were able to establish the correct tone for positive family-school relations, they were unable to develop a broad pathway for parent involvement, as suggested in some common literature. It was further suggested that future leaders be provided opportunities to consult with experienced administrators who have proven successful philosophies and experiences of working with diverse parents.

Baldwin et al. (2007) examined 41 undergraduate teacher candidates from a mid-Atlantic university and a rural southeastern university. Baldwin used the interpretive process approach that focused on the lived experiences of the participants. This allowed for the exploration of different problematic events that went beyond rationality and cognition to evoking emotional meanings through shared experiences. The study found that service-learning for preservice teachers can have a positive impact on preservice teachers' attitudes towards teaching diverse students. The author suggested that emphasizing multiculturalism and social justice, through service-learning, empowers preservice teachers to construct socially just teaching practices.

Flanigan (2007) studied a group of 33 faculty members split from two different campuses at a large university located in Chicago, Illinois, to determine whether teacher education programs adequately prepare preservice teachers for school, parent, and community partnerships. To answer the question, the study utilized focus groups which consisted of faculty from five Illinois Professional Learner's Partnership universities. The study found that preservice teachers are not adequately prepared to partner with parents and communities because traditional teacher preparation programs do not provide preservice teachers with adequate parent and community involvement experiences. It was further suggested that focus groups that include school district personnel, principals, experienced teachers, and parents should be conducted to gather a rich source of data on the topic.

Zygmount-Fillwalk (2006) conducted a study that examined how a 16-week course in family and community involvement changed preservice teachers' perceptions of their ability to establish parent-teacher partnerships. A Peabody Family Involvement

Survey was used as the pre- and posttest methodology. The results indicated a significant overall growth in (a) students perceived self-efficacy to implement the learned involvement practices, (b) attitudes regarding parental involvement, and (c) students' perspective on their preparedness to implement effective parent involvement practices. It was further suggested that implementation of family involvement practices builds the skills and dispositions of preservice teachers when working to involve families in educating their children.

Hedges and Gibbs (2005) conducted a case study of five student teachers from a large university in Auckland, New Zealand. The student teachers were placed in the homes of their students in order to experience the realities of the daily lives of families for a 6-month period. The study found that providing student teachers with opportunities to reflect on these family experiences helped them to develop a deeper understanding and greater appreciation for the dynamics that exist within diverse family settings. The author suggested that this type of multiplicity of family experiences should be a part of teachers' ongoing professional development in future preparation to do this work.

Garcia (2004) investigated 110 teachers enrolled in a graduate course at a university in South Florida. The theoretical framework used to examine teacher's self-efficacy was derived from the Bandura's construct of self-efficacy. This construct allows for investigating the predictive values of self-efficacy beliefs and the functional behaviors with specific aspects of family involvement exhibited by teachers. Epstein's Six Types of Involvement Framework was found to be significantly correlated to teacher self-efficacy levels with school, family, and community engagement. It was further suggested

that programs that prepare teachers should endeavor to provide opportunities for teachers to experience success with parent-teacher engagement strategies.

Blasi (2002) investigated 26 third-year teachers enrolled in a family literacy course and participated in field site experiences at local family literacy programs. The purpose of the study was to examine the perceptions and abilities of preservice teachers to work with "at risk" students while taking a course entitled Principles of Interprofessional Collaboration. Pre-posttests, weekly journals, and focus groups were used to gather the data. The study found that a course that prepares preservice teachers to work with "at-risk" children and families would change the perceptions of teacher self-efficacy with parent involvement practices. Blasi suggested that teacher education programs must provide preservice teachers with opportunities to interact with families to build self-efficacy with school, family, and community involvement.

As they perceived, in any case, the findings of the studies highlighted the importance of teacher perceptions towards self-efficacy with parental involvement practices.

Parental Beliefs of Parental Involvement

Considerable investigations sought to identify the beliefs that parents share regarding parental involvement practices. Hannon and O'Donnell (2022) conducted a study of 97 participants to determine how parents and teachers perceived each other and what impact these beliefs have on their subsequent behavior toward parent involvement. The study relied on semi-structured interviews that probed into the lived experiences of the participants as they attempted parent involvement strategies. After triangulation of the data, the study revealed that parents with less education reacted defensively because they

were not on the teacher's educational level, came from bad neighborhoods, and were vulnerable to social stigmatization. This behavior was upsetting to teachers who lacked the emotional training to cope with this behavior. The author recommended that teacher preparation programs should provide social justice orientation and emotional coping strategies to better prepare teachers for family-school partnerships that have challenging experiences.

Houri et al. (2019) conducted an experimental study with 51 students and parents with low levels of involvement, from three different urban schools. The study utilized a double-blind randomized trial, with a Parent-Wise Feedback Intervention, to examine the effectiveness of parental behavior and relational involvement, and student behaviors. The study found that parental behavior and relational involvement increased significantly for the intervention group. Changes in student behaviors were positively correlated to changes in parent responses. The author proposed that parents are more likely to be involved in school and related programs and events if they have high levels of trust for their child's teachers. It was further suggested that other educators, that work with populations that demonstrate high levels of mistrust, could improve the relationships and behaviors of parents, by implementing this inexpensive parent-directed intervention.

Arce (2019) conducted a study with 41 parents/families of K-3 students from a charter school that serves a "majority-minority" population. The study utilized an action research approach that focused on improving the quality of practice for a specific problem at one particular site. The problem had been identified as limited family participation by the school leaders at the location. Observations, interviews, focus groups, and questionnaires were used to collect data over a 4-month period. This allowed the

researcher to gain understanding of the issues from the perspective of both teachers and families assigned to the school site. This study found that (a) there is no aggregate meaning of family involvement, yet practically totally concurred that families should be proactive in contacting teachers; (b) the lack of support for linguistic differences makes it hard for parents and teachers to develop relationships; and (c) the decisions and actions of parents and teachers are being influenced by implicit biases, assumptions, and presumptions by all stakeholders. Arce suggested that a collective vision of parent involvement should be developed by parents and teachers. Also, teachers should receive support and training to help them do this work.

McKenna and Millen's (2013) conducted a study of 16 parents involved with two local parent education programs. The study utilized a grounded theory model that included a small, theoretical sample of parents who provided a deeper understanding of parent involvement through detailed descriptions, conversations, and writings provided by the participants. The beliefs and insights shared by parent participants led to the development of clear definitions for parent voice, parent presence, and parent engagement. New models emerged that served as a precursor to redeveloping broader models of parent involvement. Likewise, it was suggested that further investigation into these terms is needed, within diverse ethnic communities, to reflect the realities and beliefs more accurately regarding these "culturally sensitive" circumstances.

Kim et al. (2013) conducted a study of 206 parents of students with behavioral issues from 21 elementary schools in the Midwest. The study investigated the impact of quality relationship between parent-teacher on parental beliefs and the adaptive functioning and externalized behaviors of their children. A pre-intervention questionnaire

was used to collect data from parents and teacher respondents. The study found that parents' inspirational beliefs, and adaptive student behaviors, were significantly connected with improved parent-teacher relationship quality. The research suggested that parent-teacher relationship quality might be one component by which the advantages of parents' inspirational beliefs are communicated to children.

Howard and Reynolds (2008) conducted focus groups with 30 middle-class African American parents who sent their children to a middle-class school in southern California. The goal of the study was to determine how African American parents, who sent their children to middle-class schools, conceptualized the concept of parent engagement. The study consisted of 30–45-minute individual interviews and 60–90-minute focus group sessions. The theoretical framework used for this study combined critical race theory with counterstorytelling to center the discussion within the context of race and racism. The prevailing beliefs found in the study was that parent involvement meant being involved at school, home, and in the community. The data highlighted the fact that most parents believed in the importance of being involved with their children's education. Additionally, participants believed that there should be a significantly more subtle connection between school personnel and parents. The author suggested that parents who stay involved are more informed and inquisitive about what takes place in their child's school life.

The Hoover-Dempsey et al. (2007) study examined 853 parents of first through sixth grade students attending an ethnically diverse urban school district in the mid-southern United States. A theoretical model was used to predict the types of parental involvement practices parents used with their children during their elementary and

middle school years. The model examined both home and school involvement. A six-point Likert-type response scale was used to measure parent engagement practices utilizing *never* to *daily.* The study revealed that personal self-efficacy for involvement was a major predictor to parents' self-reported involvement in education-related activities at home and at school. It was further suggested that further research to examine the psychological constructs that directly impact parental involvement practices is needed.

Drummond and Stipek (2004) conducted a longitudinal study of 234 low-income African America, Caucasian, and Latino parents with children in second and third grade to determine their beliefs about their role in their children's education. All participants were involved in a longitudinal study that followed their child from early childhood through elementary school. The participants lived in three different geographical areas as well consisting of a large urban west coast city, large urban northeastern city, and a rural northeast community. The study utilized phone interviews and questionnaires, with open-ended questions, that covered a large range of topics. The study revealed that most economically disadvantaged parents, regardless of their geographical location, believed that helping their children with academic work was of high importance. Also, it is important that teachers offer suggestions to assist them. I author suggested that teachers who want more parent involvement should use different strategies to assist parents with helping their children succeed.

Lawson's (2003) study interviewed 12 teachers and 13 parents who were employed by or associated with a low-income elementary school in a culturally diverse, urban neighborhood. The study investigated the meanings and functions of parent involvement from the standpoint of parents and teachers. An ethnographic study was

implemented over a 2-year period to gain the greatest level of insight into the personal and collective experiences of the participants. The study utilized semi-structured interviews and focus groups to gather data in a unique culturally diverse context. The study revealed that there were different perspectives of parent involvement held by each group. Even though each group believed that collaboration is essential to children's learning, these different perspectives were attributed to competing purposes, diverse life circumstances, and variations in power. The author suggested that teachers from middle-class backgrounds have significant barriers to understanding the community worldviews of low-income parents.

Implicit Bias Towards Low-Income Minority Families

Several investigations have sought to identify the wide difference of interests that often creates unhealthy dissonance between parents and teachers. Teacher beliefs about parent involvement with low-income individuals and families is heavily influenced by their own childhood experiences, misinformation/miseducation about poor urban families, as well as past and current cultural biases (Souto-Manning & Swick, 2006). The lack of teacher preparation regarding low-income students often leads to stereotyping by those teachers called upon to educate students with lower socioeconomic status (SES). These unfounded generalizations can have lasting negative impact on students. Teachers may believe that the lack of parent involvement is due to laziness, the parents lack of value in education, or assumptions that low-income parents are substance abusers (Cho et al., 2015).

Amatea et al. (2012) conducted a study that investigated a course designed to influence the attitudes of preservice teachers, at a large research university in the

Southeastern part of the United States. The study consisted of 138 preservice elementary education students who were in their first semester of their teacher preparation program. The course was organized around the principles of social justice and culturally responsive teaching. The study revealed a significant increase from pre-to-posttest in Teacher Family Roles Expectation Scale. Pretesting also revealed that preservice teachers believed that low-income parents were less concerned with involvement and did not prioritize education of their children. Notwithstanding, posttest scores revealed a significantly stronger disagreement with these systematized beliefs about culturally diverse parents. It was further suggested that preservice teachers need to become more aware of their own beliefs about interacting with parents and educating low-income and culturally diverse students, as well as the expectations they have regarding how these families should interact with them.

Kumar and Hamer (2012) conducted a study of 868 White preservice teachers enrolled in a teacher certification program in a Midwestern university of approximately 20,000 students in a mid-sized city in the northern part of the United States. The goal of the study was to examine the interrelated biases and beliefs of White preservice teachers toward teaching culturally diverse students drawing from insights from the achievement goal theory and aspects of multicultural education. The study found that 25% of the preservice teachers were significantly biased and endorsed stereotypic beliefs about poor and minority students during their 1st year in the program. Analysis of variance results provided evidence that significant gains were accrued by the time students were ready to graduate. White preservice teachers held less biases and prejudices and were more likely to support adaptive instructional practices for culturally diverse students.

Halvorsen et al. (2009) conducted a mixed-methods study that examined the attitudes of eight kindergarten teachers and four first-grade teachers, in an urban and low-income school, over a 2-year period. One facet of the study was to discuss policy implications that relate to improving teacher attitudes about low-income children. The participants were part of The Early Childhood Longitudinal Study-Kindergarten cohort. The study found that responsible teachers highlighted their students' "assets" rather than using a "deficit model" that focused on their background. These teachers proclaimed that showing belief in students and setting high expectations was crucial to student development. It was suggested that teachers should avoid treating low-income children differently from other children.

Bomer et al. (2008) conducted a research study that examined the content basis of Ruby Payne's in-service teacher education program called *A Framework for Understanding Poverty.* Participants in this qualitative study consisted of teachers who had been through the Ruby Payne workshops at their schools. The study found that Payne's work included negative generalizations that derived from a longstanding US practice of viewing poor people from a deficit perspective. Also, the "data" claims were not obtained from actual research conducted by Payne. As a result, it leaves many schools and teachers reinforcing ways of envisioning poor children and families that are distorted, biased, or restricted. It was further suggested that educator should have accurate, evidence-based pictures of "(a) what their students' lives are like, (b) what competencies and understandings they might bring to school if schools were ready to receive them, and (c) what social and cultural contexts have a bearing upon the interactions that occur in the classroom" (p. 2500).

Baldwin et al. (2007) conducted a study of 41 predominantly White, middle-class undergraduate education students from a mid-Atlantic university and a rural southeastern university. The participants were part of a service-learning program that focused on (a) biased beliefs about teaching in diverse environments, (b) how biased beliefs were overcome or reinforced, and (c) learning about themselves as teachers. Participants were able to provide service to schools in the community while simultaneously evaluating their learning from their experiences through analytical reflections. The study found that the service-learning program forced preservice teachers to evaluate their biased beliefs about working with minority children. Prior to the experience, preservice teachers held assumptions that underserved rural and urban communities were highly impoverished and overwhelmed with crime. They also believed that children from these communities were prone to discipline problems, lacked motivation to learn, and were often difficult to work with. The service-learning experience revealed that they were mistaken in their thinking and beliefs. Children were actually friendly and enthusiastic about learning. The author suggested that service-learning that emphasizes multiculturalism and social justice can empower preservice teachers to confront their own biased beliefs and began developing just social practices.

Bakari (2003) conducted a study of 415 students enrolled in teacher education programs at six different universities across the United States, using the Teaching African American Students Survey (TAASS). The TAASS has two subscales: (a) Willingness to Teach African American Students (WTAAS) and (b) Cultural Sensitivity Toward Teaching African American Students (CSTAAS). One group consisted of preservice teachers from a predominantly White university with no specific requirements for

teaching students from culturally diverse backgrounds. The second group consisted of preservice students from Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs). And the third group consisted of preservice teachers from predominantly White private universities. The study found that all the groups were lower on the CSTAAS subscale than the WTAAS subscale. Additionally, the second group average score on the WTAAS subscale was significantly higher than the other two groups. The author suggested that the research supported the need for teacher education programs to help White preservice educators in developing uplifting perspectives towards teaching African American students, since the White group scored the lowest on the WTAAS subscale.

Chapter Summary

Although there was repeated, albeit anecdotal, evidence of (a) the impact of parent involvement on the academic achievement of African American adolescents, and (b) the importance of ensuring a positive correlation between teacher self-efficacy and parent involvement practices, most of the studies were conducted by education professionals with a focus on describing these benefits. Nevertheless, the results were certainly in tune with a broader understanding of the complexities of establishing effective school-family-community partnerships. The participants across many of the studies tended to highlight (a) key aspects of parental involvement, (b) the need for training in effective parent involvement practices, and (c) their beliefs about what effective parent involvement should entail.

Interestingly, Epstein's (1995) Six Types of Involvement Framework overlapped all identified spheres of parent involvement and teacher self-efficacy levels recommended in the literature. These identified areas present a clear need for further study. Focusing

research on how parent involvement and teacher functional attitudes impacts the academic development of African American children in urban schools will contribute to the knowledge in the field. This, in turn, may result in findings that state and local policy makers could use to address practices that should be implemented in urban schools. Applying this knowledge would increase both teacher self-efficacy levels and parent involvement levels. Ultimately, contributing to higher levels of success experienced by African American students in urban schools.

Chapter 3 provides a review of the research design methodology used to test whether an intervention designed to promote more functional teacher attitudes towards parental engagement was effective. A pretest/posttest repeated measure design was used to test the research hypothesis.

Chapter 3: Research Design Methodology

Introduction

The research question that informs this study is:

Does the implementation of a program to train teachers on Epstein's Six Types of Involvement Framework produce a more functional teacher attitude towards school, family, and community partnerships?

The six hypotheses for this study were:

1. There was a significant difference in the functional attitudes towards parenting for participants who attended the Epstein's training versus participants who were in the control group that received classroom management training.
2. There was a significant difference in the functional attitudes towards volunteering for participants who attended the Epstein's training versus participants who were in the control group that received classroom management training.
3. There was a significant difference in the functional attitudes towards decision making for participants who attended the Epstein's training versus participants who were in the control group that received classroom management training.
4. There was a significant difference in the functional attitudes towards learning at home for participants who attended the Epstein's training versus participants who were in the control group that received classroom management training.
5. There was a significant difference in the functional attitudes towards communication for participants who attended the Epstein's training versus

participants who were in the control group that received classroom management training.

6. There was a significant difference in the functional attitudes towards collaborating with the community for participants who attended the Epstein's training versus participants who were in the control group that received classroom management training.

The purpose of the study is to engage the treatment group in learning about Epstein's Six Types of Involvement Framework.

> Joyce L. Epstein, PhD in sociology from Johns Hopkins University, is director of the Center on School, Family, and Community Partnerships and the National Network of Partnership Schools (NNPS), and professor of Education at Johns Hopkins University. In 1995, she established NNPS, which provides professional development that enables school, district, and state leaders to develop research-based programs of family and community involvement. Dr. Epstein has over 150 publications on the nature and effects of family and community involvement (Epstein, 2019, p. xiii).

The control group will engage in learning about Time To Teach: The Source for Classroom Management.

> Rick Dahlgren has a tremendous amount of successful experience working with at-risk students. He is a master educator with experience in elementary and secondary classrooms and at the university level. Rick is the President and Founder of Time to Teach! and the Center for Teacher Effectiveness. Rick has trained over 300,000 teachers! He is especially known for his engaging speaking

> style, practical ideas, and common-sense approach to effective classroom and school-wide management. His innovative ideas are helping teachers across America and Canada, and he regularly presents at national, regional, and local conferences and for schools and districts. Rick Dahlgren is continually validating his ideas for challenging students in diverse classrooms throughout the United States, Canada, and abroad (Dahlgren et al., 2008, p. xiii).

Research Design

A design that utilizes pretest/posttest, quasi-experimental design, with repeated measures, was implemented to properly determine the effects of the intervention, due to the lack of randomization. This method was chosen because (a) the research will seek to determine if a specific treatment influences an outcome, and (b) the assignment of subjects to treatment groups will not be randomized. "The researcher assesses this by providing a specific treatment to one group and withholding it from another and then determining how both groups scored on an outcome" (Creswell, 2018, p.12). The research study was conducted using questionnaires and group training sessions. As previously stated, the treatment group received training on Epstein's Six Types of Involvement framework. The control group received training on Time To Teach: The Source for Classroom Management.

The Epstein's Six Types of Involvement training consisted of a 6-hour workshop that focuses on the six keys to school, family, and community partnerships. This included (a) parenting – understanding child development; (b) communicating – two-way - on school programs and children's progress; (c) volunteering – at school, in class, and as audience; (d) learning at home – connections on homework, course choices, and other

talents; (e) decision making – all major groups represented on school committees; and (f) collaborating with community – resources and volunteers from groups and agencies. Additionally, participants learned how to develop action teams for partnerships (ATP) to (a) review school goals and develop two academic, one nonacademic, and one welcoming school climate goal; (b) write a one-year action plan for partnerships that will involve families and communities in contributing to selected goals for student learning; (c) implement and evaluate the quality of activities used for outreach to families, responses, and results; and (d) continuously improve partnership plans and practices. Participants also received an inventory, Measure of School, Family, and Community Partnerships to assess how well their school is implementing the framework. Additionally, an annual evaluation of activities template was provided to help teams evaluate the quality of each partnership task implemented throughout the school year.

The Time To Teach – The Source for Classroom Management training consisted of a 6-hour workshop that focuses on effective classroom discipline strategies that work. This included (a) implementing and maintaining a positive school climate, (b) philosophical assumptions and beliefs, (c) maintaining self-control, (d) effective classroom management – essential elements, (e) misbehavior outside of the classroom, (f) unconditional positive regard, (g) refocusing, (h) classroom arrangement and positioning of students, and (i) prompting procedures for capturing student attention.

Time to Teach! is an evidence-based classroom management model that uses research-based strategies that are practical, proven, and powerful. Although effective use of disciplinary techniques is an important component of classroom management, there is a wide variance of discipline techniques used by teachers. Stage and Quiroz (1997)

conducted a meta-analysis that included 5,000 students, 200 experimental comparisons, and 99 studies. The study provided clear evidence that significantly supports the efficacy of disciplinary techniques in classroom management. The techniques embedded into the entire Time to Teach program reflect the findings of the meta-analysis.

Research Context

The researcher is employed as a teacher in the Rochester City School District (RCSD). The researcher is trained in Epstein's Six Types of Involvement Framework and a certified trainer (2016) in Time To Teach – Effective Classroom Discipline Strategies. This research intervention was conducted at School #10 and School #34 in the RCSD. The RCSD consists of approximately 26,000 students from grades Pre-K through 12. This urban school district has a diverse population that is predominantly lower-income socioeconomic status. The student population is 53.1% Black/African American, 32.7% Hispanic, 9.6% White, 2.9% Asian, and 1.7% Other. Ninety percent are economically disadvantaged (receiving free of reduced lunch due to being at or near poverty levels). Students of color represent 86% of the student population with only 24% teachers of color.

The district has a total of 46 schools. Thirty-one are elementary and 15 are secondary. The district also has 55 Pre-K sites of which 28 are in schools and 27 are in community-based organizations (CBOs). Additionally (a) eight schools are grades 9-12, (b) four schools grades 7-8, (c) one school grades K-12, (d) two schools grade 7-12, (e) nine schools grades K-8, (f) one school grades 6-8, and (g) 10 alternative programs.

This research intervention was conducted to improve teacher understanding of effective methods for engaging parents. Acquiring this knowledge helped teachers better

understand school, family, and community involvement and how it is linked to education. It also enabled educators to develop effective school, family, and community partnerships that leads to improved outcomes for the students they serve.

If the training were not offered, teachers could continue to struggle to understand how to develop effective school, family, and community partnerships. The district's report card rating under parent and community involvement could decrease, and further decline in parental support could lead to an undesirable and unsuccessful district.

The ideal of the research implemented training was to view the desired changes. The goal was for teachers to become better equipped to establish effective school, family, and community partnerships that leads urban students to higher rates of high school graduation, identification for gifted and talented programs, advanced placement, honors, postsecondary matriculation, and admittance into selective colleges and universities.

Research Participants

The participants of the study consisted of a maximum of 30 certified, tenured, and non-tenured elementary and secondary school teachers in the RCSD, who responded to an invitation flyer placed in mailbox at their schools, sent via email, or delivered by hand. The flyer contained a link for participants to use to complete the electronic registration form. Applicants who were recruited in-person signed their consent forms and provided their email addresses at the time of recruitment. Some participants registered through TruNorth Logic, the district's professional development management system, to earn professional development credit. All electronic registrants received their consent form as a shared electronic document via DocuSign or direct email. This enabled them to sign the form electronically, or print and sign, and return it to the researcher. All teachers who

volunteered to complete a consent form and attend the training made up the study's population. Participants' racial backgrounds were 14 White (5 male, 9 female), 16 Black/African American (3 male, 13 female). Fifteen were randomly placed in the control group and 15 were randomly placed in the treatment group. Additional applicants were randomly placed into each group up until the deadline and/or maximum enrollment was reached. Participants were notified of the group they were randomly selected to participate in prior to training.

The district employs 5,940 staff of which 3,521 are teachers. The percent of all teachers by race is (a) 76.31% White, (b) 11.99% Black, (c) 6.02% Hispanic, (d) 3.98% non-Specified, and (e) 1.45% Asian. The percent of teachers by gender is (a) 74.72% White females, 25.28% White males, 19.89% males of color, and (d) 19.88% females of color. Teachers were informed that the study was open to a maximum of 40 teacher participants on a first-come, first-serve basis. Teacher participants, who chose not to participate, were assured that their lack of participation would not have a negative impact on their employment. Additionally, the researcher emphasized that participation in the intervention study was voluntary, and participants could have dropped out at any time during the implementation of the study.

Summary of the Training Process

The review of the literature verified the need for a study on how an intervention program to train teachers on parental involvement could produce a more functional teacher attitude towards parental involvement. There were two phases to the research intervention training process: (a) recruiting a core group of teacher volunteers to participate in the study, establishing a training location, creating the two training courses

in the district's Professional Learning Opportunity (PLO) staff management system to allow teachers online enrollment access, and (b) delivering the intervention training to teacher participants enrolled in both sessions.

Recruiting a core group of teacher volunteer participants, included meeting with multiple principals, online and in-person, and sharing information regarding both training topics to get a commitment to participate in the training, allow access to their teachers for recruitment, and use of buildings to deliver the trainings. Due to after-school commitments like picking up children and participating in extracurricular activities with family, it was difficult to schedule a training date and time during the week, or weekend. The best way to deliver the training was to schedule multiple dates for each training course to accommodate the needs of the participants.

Even though hundreds of fliers were distributed, email invitations were extended, and open enrollment access provided via district's PLO system, only 20 teachers volunteered to participate in the Time To Teach training and 15 teachers volunteered to participate in the Epstein's Six Dimensions training. In order to keep the group sizes, the same, the researcher closed both group enrollments at 15 participants and informed the last five teacher volunteers, who enrolled in the Time To Teach training, that they would be included in the next training session offered in the near future.

Training for teacher participants in the Time To Teach (control) group was conducted in three phases. The first was a 1-day/6-hour session held on December 17th that was attended by eight teacher participants. The second session was scheduled as a 3-day/2 hours per day session held on January 17th, 18th, and 19th that was attended by two teacher participants, The final session was another 3-day/2 hour per day session held on

January 23rd, 24th, and 26th that was attended by the remaining five teacher participants for a total of 15 participants.

Training for teacher participants in the Epstein's Six Dimensions (treatment) group was conducted in two phases. The first was a 3-day/2 hours per day session held on February 6th, 7th, and 8th that was attended by 12 teacher participants. The second and final session was a 1-day/6-hour session held on February 11th that was attended by three teacher participants for a total of 15 participants. Fifteen participants attended both sessions, making the total sample size of 30 participants. Elementary School A was used as the location where both training courses were conducted. It should be noted that a few additional teacher participants showed up on the day of both training courses but were turned away due to the closed enrollment. Their contact information was taken by the researcher, and they were informed that they will be included in the next training session offered soon.

Instruments Used for Data Collection

The source of data for the research intervention included a quantitative questionnaire. The pre- and post-training questionnaires asked respondents to answer using a Likert scale from 1 to 6. The 6-item scale was developed to measure teachers' level of self-efficacy with establishing school-family-community partnerships from (1) *strongly disagree* to (6) *strongly agree*. Participants completed questionnaires that consisted of 30 closed-end responses, before and after each training session. The questions contained in the questionnaire instrument were developed and field-tested by experts in the field of education at Johns Hopkins University and approved for use prior to the study. Although the questionnaire was developed entirely by Johns Hopkins

University, the researcher digitized the questionnaire into a Google Doc form to allow participants to complete and submit their responses electronically. This also allowed the researcher more accuracy in gathering and recording data. Copies of the questionnaire and approval letter are included in Appendix A.

The post-training questionnaire questions gauged changes by posing the same questions. Results were examined to determine changes in teachers' level of understanding of the framework and their functional attitude towards parental involvement practices. The questionnaires contained identifying information, such as name and email address, that allowed for accurately matching pre/post questionnaire responses back to same participant. After training was completed, data tabulated, and certificates of completions were returned to participants via email, all identifiable data and signed consents were stored at a secured location in the researcher's home office. As described above, the instruments were field tested. Participants' responses were viewed and compared before and after the training.

Procedures Used for Data Collection

After St. John Fisher University's Institutional Review Board (IRB), and the Rochester City School District's Research and Evaluation office approved the research intervention, questionnaires, and all measures that are required to conduct the study, including any revisions that were submitted, the implementation of the teacher training on Epstein's Six Types of Involvement Framework and Time To Teach Classroom Management was initiated. The district's Office of Professional Learning (OPL) assisted the researcher with developing the training courses in the TruNorh Logic professional learning management system used by the district.

The researcher collaborated with representatives from the RCSD's Office of Professional Learning to schedule a date and time for training. The training took place at an on-site location determined by the building principal and approved by the School-Based Planning Team, and Office of Professional Learning. The agenda for the training workshop was provided by the researcher. All training material was provided to participants by the researcher, on the day of the training. The training material was made available as hardcopies and digitally (where necessary).

The Google Doc pre-questionnaire was sent to each participant via their indicated email address. Participants completed and returned the pre-questionnaire by clicking the submit button after completing the 30-item questionnaire, prior to the in-person training. Participants for the treatment group received a 6-hour training on Epstein's Six Type of Involvement Typology. Participants for the Control group received a 6-hour training on Time To Teach – The Source for Classroom Management. After the training was delivered by the researcher, participants who completed the training were sent the post-questionnaire via email which required them to complete and submit electronically. Each participant received a certificate of completion via email after their post-questionnaire was completed and returned to the researcher via clicking the submit button in the Google Doc questionnaire. The researcher matched the pre and post questionnaire based on the participant's email address. The data from the pre/post questionnaire was stored electronically in the researcher's secured cloud drive.

Procedures Used for Data Analysis

The pre- and post-questionnaire responses were collected and numerically analyzed. All the data was coded, scored, and analyzed using SPSS, version 26.0 for

Windows. Participant's response to each question was recorded numerically such that a value of 1 was given to a response of strongly disagree, moderately disagree received a value of 2, disagree slightly more than agree a value of 3, agree slightly more than disagree a value of 4, moderately agree a value of 5, and strongly agree a value of 6. As a result, a higher rating was indicative of a stronger agreement. Each category was measured by five items totaling 30 questions on the questionnaire.

The Mann Whitney-U test was used to check whether there was a statistical difference between the two independent groups of non-normally distributed data. The objective was to determine if the two independent groups differ in a significant way. The significance of the difference between score averages was tested at the 0.05 significance level.

Key aspects of the Mann-Whitney U-test included (a) all of the participants data was sorted from smallest to largest, (b) the data did not need to be normally distributed, (c) nominal or ordinal variable with two expressions (independent variable), (d) a metric or ordinal variable (dependent variable), and (e) a null hypothesis was stated.

Chapter Summary

This research study examined teacher functional teacher attitudes towards parental involvement with regards to Epstein's' Six Types of Involvement Framework. The approach included quantitative tools, which were analyzed to determine if any significant differences occurred after the training. Chapter 4 examines the findings of the intervention, including an investigation of the gathered data.

Chapter 4: Results

Introduction

Due to the fact that research indicates (a) strong evidence supports quality partnerships between teachers and their students' families, is an essential component of "best practices" for students' success and (b) many teachers enter the profession lacking dispositions, skills, and knowledge needed to promote the partnerships that supports student achievement (Ratcliff & Hunt, 2009), there is a need to consider new ways of helping teachers to increase their self-efficacy with school, family, and community partnerships. This study sought to advance teacher self-efficacy in effort to solve this crucial barrier to student success in urban education.

The interventions used provided two training sessions for teachers. The quantitative data were collected from the pre-training questionnaire and post-training questionnaire. To perform the data analysis, a database was created in SPSS with the following categories a) ID - a digital code used for each participant to conceal their identity, b) group – used to identify the control and treatment group, c) pretest1 through pretest6 – used to input the pretest scores for the control and treatment group participants, d) posttest1 through posttest6 – used to input the posttest scores for the control and treatment group participants, and e) chg1 through chg6 – pre/post-test change scores. The final analysis considered all data sources analyzed, interpreted, and reported. Chapter 4 reveals the data analysis and results in the following sections: description of the sample, research question, data analysis and findings, and summary of results.

Research Question

This chapter presents the data analysis and findings that address the following research question:

> Does the implementation of a program to train teachers on Epstein's Six Types of Involvement Framework produce a more functional teacher attitude towards school, family, and community partnerships?

Data Analysis and Findings

Each participant's numerical response to each question was recorded so that a response of strongly disagree received a value of 1, moderately disagree received a value of 2, disagree slightly more than agree received a value of 3, agree slightly more than disagree received a value of 4, moderately agree received a value of 5, and strongly agree received a value of 6. Table 4.1 illustrates the Mann-Whitney U Test descriptive statistics summary data for the control and treatment groups pre-posttest means results.

Table 4.1

Descriptive Statistics Control and Treatment Groups Pre/Post Test Means

	Control			Treatment			Total		
Dependent Variables	N	M	SD	N	M	SD	N	M	SD
Pretest1	15	5.0000	1.20000	15	5.0667	.72768	30	5.0333	.97568
Pretest2	15	4.4133	1.42522	15	4.5067	1.07668	30	4.4600	1.24197
Pretest3	15	4.6800	1.33052	15	4.6133	1.11218	30	4.6467	1.20537
Pretest4	15	4.3867	1.15997	15	4.5600	1.03703	30	4.4733	1.08467
Pretest5	15	4.8533	1.29938	15	4.8000	.99714	30	4.8267	1.13834
Pretest6	15	5.0133	1.06762	15	4.7467	1.15750	30	4.8800	1.10247
Posttest1	15	5.0000	.75970	15	5.0400	.92025	30	5.0200	.82937
Posttest2	15	4.7333	1.06010	15	5.3467	.85010	30	5.0400	.99433
Posttest3	15	4.9733	.79594	15	5.1733	.72058	30	5.0733	.75289
Posttest4	15	4.7067	.85479	15	5.1333	.70373	30	4.9200	.79931
Posttest5	15	5.2067	.72355	15	5.4400	.47929	30	5.3233	.61458
Posttest6	15	4.9200	.94052	15	5.5200	.51158	30	5.2200	.80404

SPSS, version 27 for Windows, was used to code, score, and analyze all the data.

The average of all items mapping to a given dimension was used to calculate the participant scores for the six dimensions. The questionnaire contained 30 items, five for each dimension. To thoroughly analyze the data for best results, two different Mann Whitney U Tests were conducted. The first test analyzed the pre and posttest data as it occurred for each participant in both groups. The second test analyzed the change/difference in the pre and posttest data for each participant in both groups. The results are listed below. Table 4.2 provides a map of the items and their corresponding dimensions.

Table 4.2

Teacher Questionnaire Item Mappings

Categories	Items
Parenting	1, 4, 7, 9 & 29
Volunteering	3, 6, 10, 15 & 21
Decision Making	12, 17, 23, 27 & 30
Learning at Home	11, 16, 19, 22 & 28
Communication	2, 8, 14, 20 & 25
Collaborating with the Community	5, 13, 18, 24 & 26

Nonparametric tests, such as the Mann Whitney U Test, were computed to address the research question. The analysis compared two independent samples (pretest, posttest) against the dependent sample (group). The goal was to identify if there exists a significant difference between the functional attitudes towards each dimension (parenting, communication, volunteering, learning at home, decision making, and collaborating with community) between the control and treatment group after both groups

received two different trainings. The Mann Whitney U test also compared the two groups (control, treatment) to determine whether their scores were higher or lower between the groups by comparing their mean ranks.

Mann Whitney U Test 1 Results

Table 4.3 illustrates the Mann-Whitney U Test results for the control group and treatment group pretest and posttest scores for the parenting dimension of the questionnaire.

Table 4.3

Mann Whitney U Test Pre and Posttest Results for Parenting

Dimensions	Group	N	Mean Rank	Sum of ranks	U	P
Parenting (pretest)	Control	15	15.90	238.50	106.500	.806
	Treatment	15	15.10	226.50		
Parenting(posttest)	Control	15	14.93	224.00	104.000	.744
	Treatment	15	16.07	241.00		

*$p < .05$.

The test results indicated that the difference between the two groups was not significant, with a small effect size (U= 104.000, p=.744, r= -0.0649). Thus, the hypothesis that there was a significant difference in the functional attitudes towards parenting for participants who attended the Epstein's training versus participants who were in the control group that received classroom management training was not supported.

The mean rank for the control pretest for parenting (*MR*= 15.90) and treatment (*MR*= 15.10) indicates that the control groups pretest scores ranks were slightly higher than the treatment group, prior to training. However, the mean rank for the control posttest for parenting (*MR* =14.93) and treatment posttest (*MR*= 16.07) indicates that the

control groups posttest scores ranks were slightly lower, while the treatment groups posttest scores ranks were slightly higher after the training. Figure 4.1 and Figure 4.2 display the histogram that was constructed to illustrate the distributional characteristics of Epstein's parenting dimension for participants pre and posttest results.

Figure 4.1

Mann Whitney U Test Pretest Histogram for Parenting

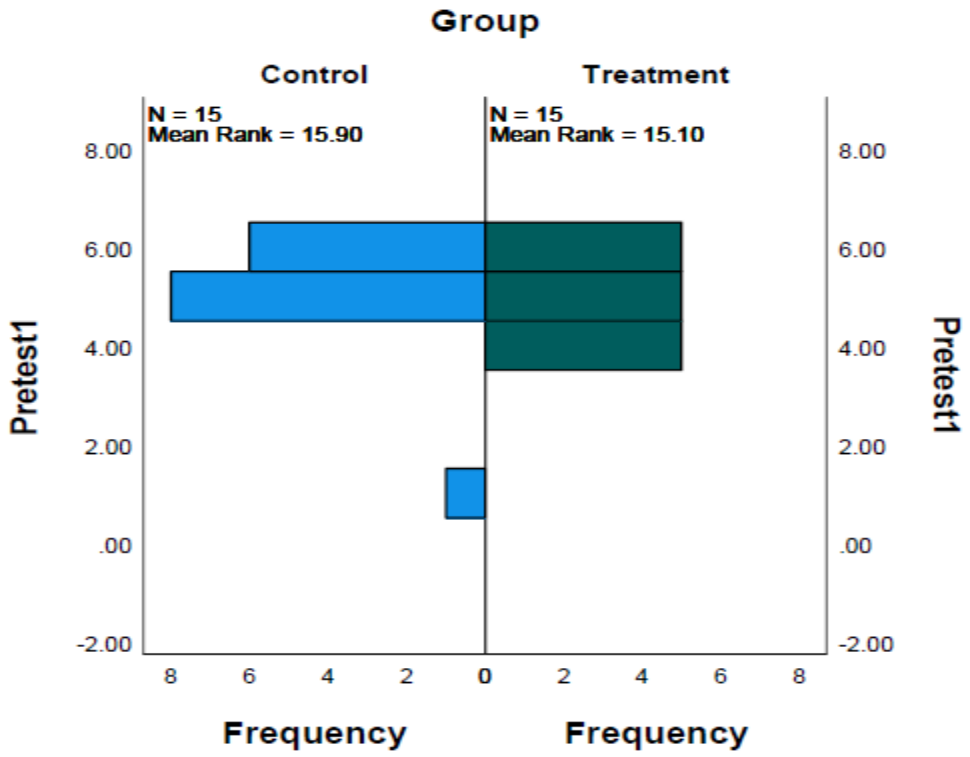


Figure 4.2

Mann Whitney U Test Posttest Histogram for Parenting

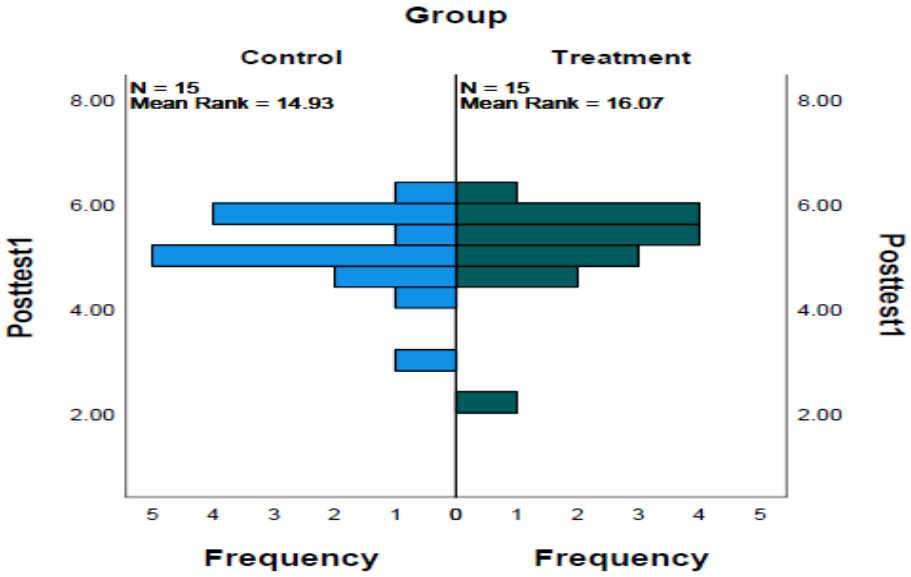


Table 4.4 illustrates the Mann-Whitney U Test results for the control group and treatment group pretest and posttest scores for the volunteering dimension of the questionnaire.

Table 4.4

Mann Whitney U Test Pre and Post-test Results for Volunteering

Dimensions	Group	N	Mean Rank	Sum of ranks	U	P
Volunteering (pretest)	Control	15	15.23	228.50	108.500	.870
	Treatment	15	15.77	236.50		
Volunteering (posttest)	Control	15	12.87	193.00	73.000	.106
	Treatment	15	18.13	272.00		

*$p < .05$.

The test results indicated that the difference between the two groups was not significant, with a small effect size (U= 73.000, p=.106, r = -0.3018). Thus, the hypothesis that there was a significant difference in the functional attitudes towards

volunteering for participants who attended the Epstein's training versus participants who were in the control group that received classroom management training was not supported.

The mean rank for volunteering for the control pretest (*MR*= 15.23) and treatment (*MR*= 15.77) indicates that the control groups pretest scores ranks were slightly lower than the treatment group, prior to training. Additionally, the mean rank for volunteering for the control posttest (*MR* =12.87) and treatment posttest (*MR*= 18.13) indicates that the control groups posttest scores ranks were slightly lower, while the treatment groups posttest scores ranks were slightly higher after the training. Figure 4.3 and Figure 4.4 display the histogram that was constructed to illustrate the distributional characteristics of Epstein's volunteering dimension for participants pre and posttest results.

Figure 4.3

Mann Whitney U Test Pretest Histogram for Volunteering

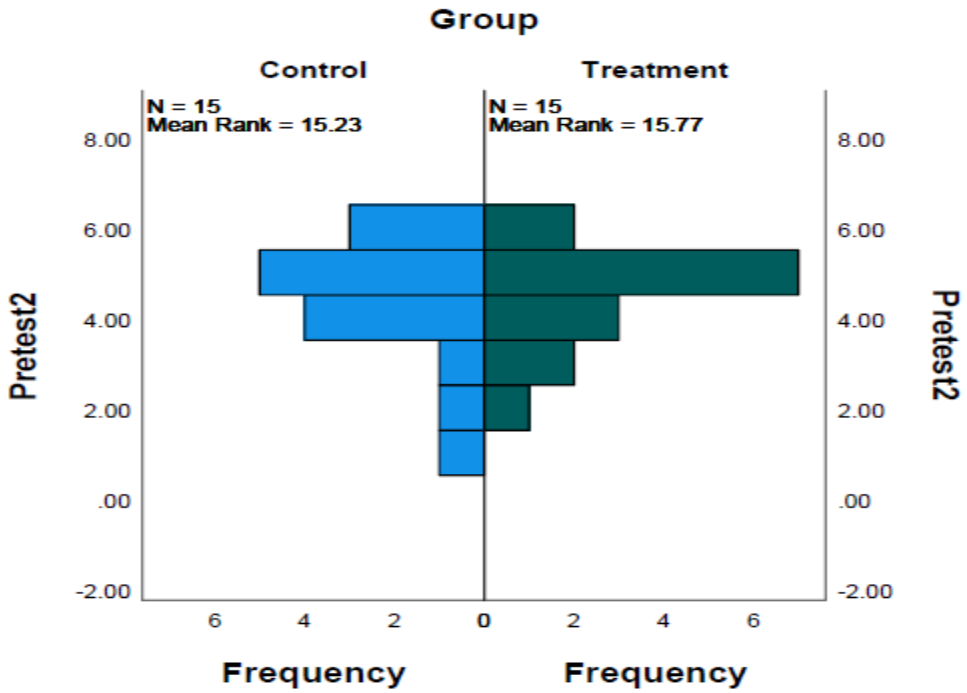


Figure 4.4

Mann Whitney U Test Posttest Histogram for Volunteering

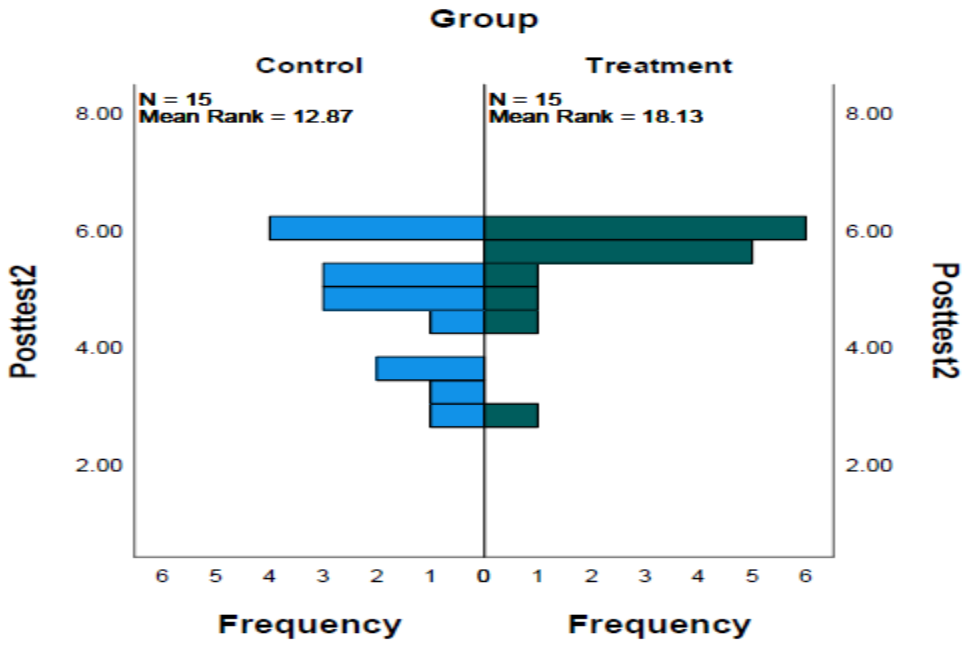


Table 4.5 illustrates the Mann-Whitney U Test results for the control group and treatment group pretest and posttest scores for the decision-making dimension of the questionnaire.

Table 4.5

Mann Whitney U Test Pre and Posttest Results for Decision-Making

Dimensions	Group	N	Mean Rank	Sum of ranks	U	P
Decision Making (pretest)	Control	15	16.23	243.50	101.500	.653
	Treatment	15	14.77	221.50		
Decision Making (posttest)	Control	15	14.20	213.00	93.000	.436
	Treatment	15	16.80	252.00		

*$p < .05$.

The test results indicated that the difference between the two groups was not significant, with a small effect size (U= 93.000, p=.436, r =-0.149). Thus, the hypothesis

that there was a significant difference in the functional attitudes towards decision-making for participants who attended the Epstein's training versus participants who were in the control group that received classroom management training was not supported.

The mean rank for decision-making the for the control pretest (*MR*= 16.23) and treatment pretest for (*MR*= 14.77) indicates that the control groups pretests scores ranks were slightly higher than the treatment group, prior to training. However, the mean rank for decision making for the control posttest (*MR* =14.20) and treatment posttest *(MR*= 16.80) indicates that the control groups posttest scores ranks were slightly lower while the treatment groups posttest scores ranks were slightly higher after the training. Figure 4.5 and Figure 4.6 display the histogram that was constructed to illustrate the distributional characteristics of Epstein's decision-making dimension for participants pre and posttest results.

Figure 4.5

Mann Whitney U Test Pretest Histogram for Decision-Making

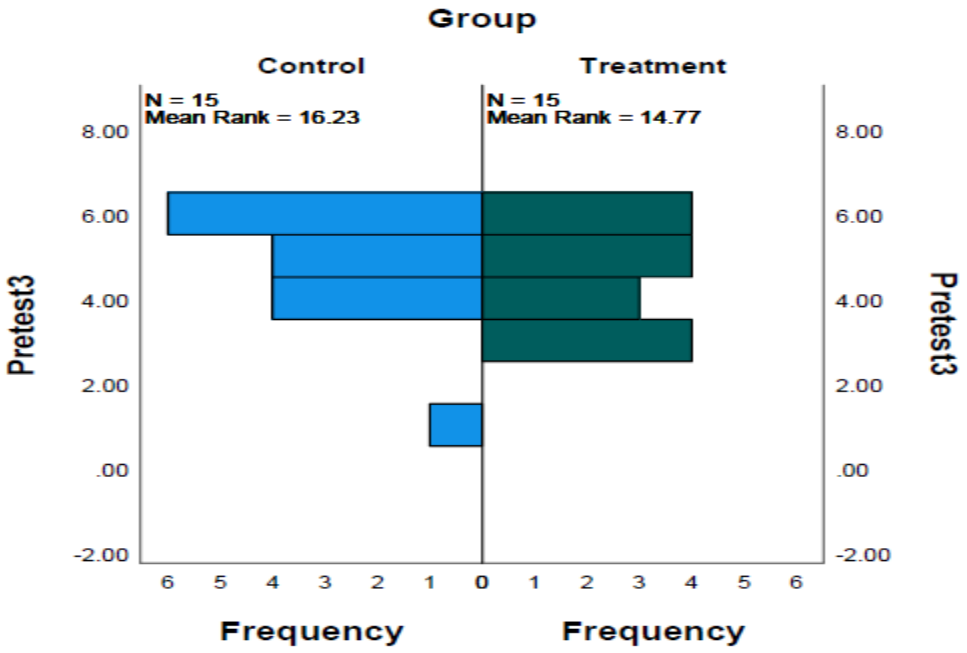


Figure 4.6

Mann Whitney U Test Posttest Histogram for Decision-Making

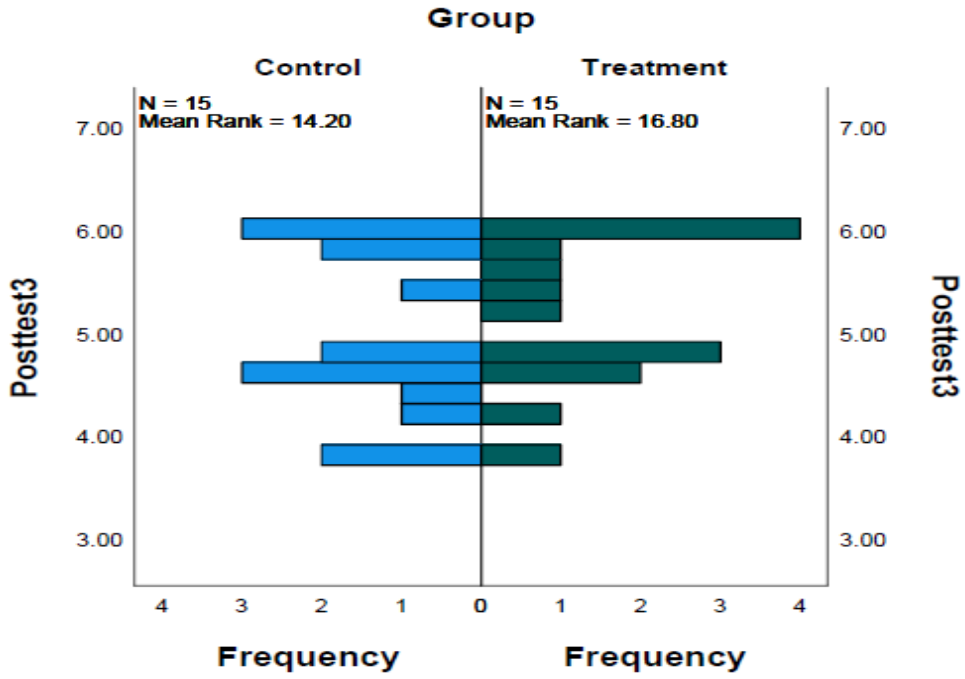


Table 4.6 illustrates the Mann-Whitney U Test results for the control group and treatment group pretest and posttest scores for the learning at home dimension of the questionnaire.

Table 4.6

Mann Whitney U Test Pre and Posttest Results for Learning at Home

Dimensions	Group	N	Mean Rank	Sum of ranks	U	P
Learning at Home (pretest)	Control	15	14.73	221.00	101.00	.653
	Treatment	15	16.27	244.00		
Learning at Home (posttest)	Control	15	13.13	197.00	77.000	.148
	Treatment	15	17.87	268.00		

*$p < .05$.

The test results indicated that the difference between the two groups was not significant, with a small effect size (U= 77.000, p=.148, r = -0.2702). Thus, the hypothesis that there was a significant difference in the functional attitudes towards learning at home for participants who attended the Epstein's training versus participants who were in the control group that received classroom management training was not supported.

The mean rank for learning at home for the control pretest (*MR*= 14.73) and treatment (*MR*= 16.27) indicates that the control groups pretests scores were slightly lower than the treatment group, prior to training. Additionally, the mean rank for learning at home for the control posttest (*MR* =13.13) and treatment posttest (*MR*= 17.87) indicates that the control groups posttest scores ranks were slightly lower while the treatment groups posttest scores ranks were slightly higher after the training. Figure 4.7 and Figure 4.8 display the histogram that was constructed to illustrate the distributional characteristics of Epstein's learning at home dimension for participants pre and posttest results.

Figure 4.7

Mann Whitney U Test Pretest Histogram for Learning at Home

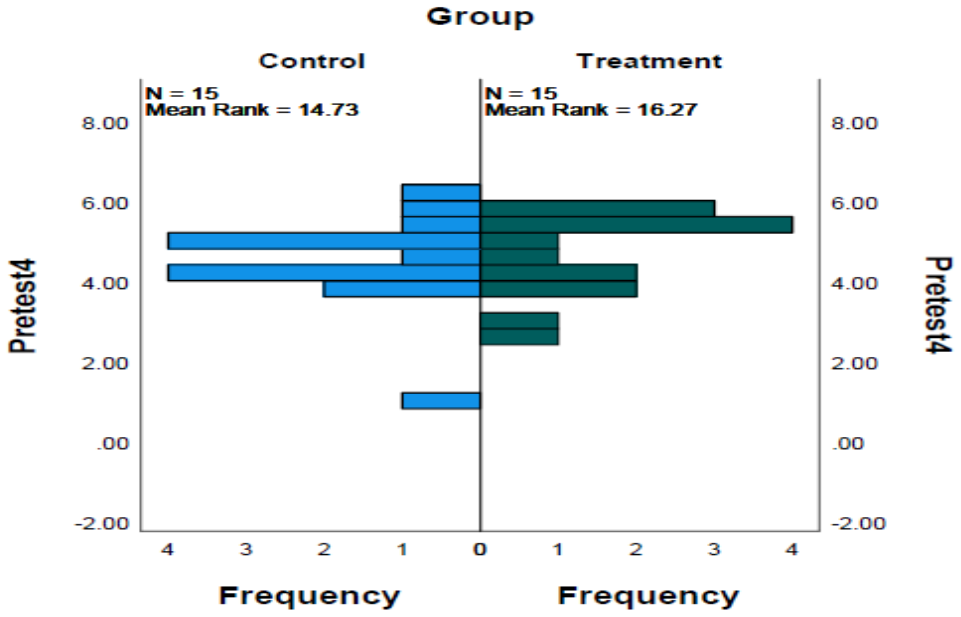


Figure 4.8

Mann Whitney U Test Posttest Histogram for Learning at Home

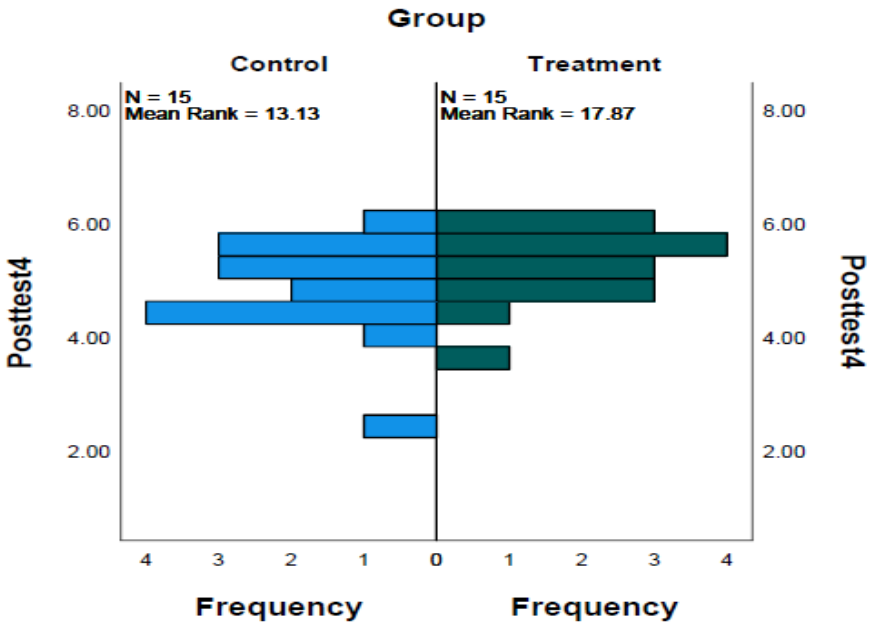


Table 4.7 illustrates the Mann-Whitney U Test results for the control group and treatment group pretest and posttest scores for the communication dimension of the questionnaire.

Table 4.7

Mann Whitney U Test Pre and Posttest Results for Communication

Dimensions	Group	N	Mean Rank	Sum of ranks	U	P
Communication (pretest)	Control	15	16.07	241.00	104.00	.744
	Treatment	15	14.93	224.00		
Communication (posttest)	Control	15	14.17	212.50	92.500	.412
	Treatment	15	16.83	252.50		

*$p < .05$.

The test results indicated that the difference between the two groups was not significant, with a small effect size (U= 92.500, p=.412, r = -0.1528). Thus, the hypothesis that there was a significant difference in the functional attitudes towards communication for participants who attended the Epstein's training versus participants who were in the control group that received classroom management training was not supported.

The mean rank for communication the for the control pretest (*MR*= 16.07) and treatment pretest for (*MR*= 14.93) indicates that the control groups pretest score rank slightly higher than the treatment group, prior to training. However, the mean rank for communication for the control posttest (MR =14.17) and treatment posttest (MR= 16.83) indicates that the control groups posttest scores ranks were slightly lower while the treatment groups posttest scores ranks were slightly higher after the training. Figure 4.9 and Figure 4.10 display the histogram that was constructed to illustrate the distributional

characteristics of Epstein's communication dimension for participants pre and posttest results.

Figure 4.9

Mann Whitney U Test Pretest Histogram for Communication

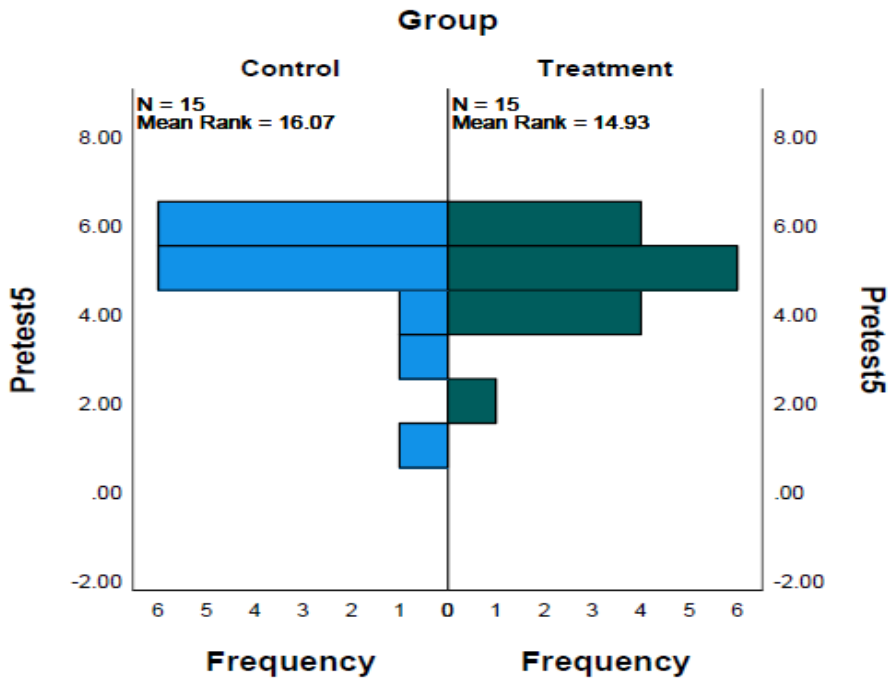


Figure 4.10

Mann Whitney U Test Posttest Histogram for Communication

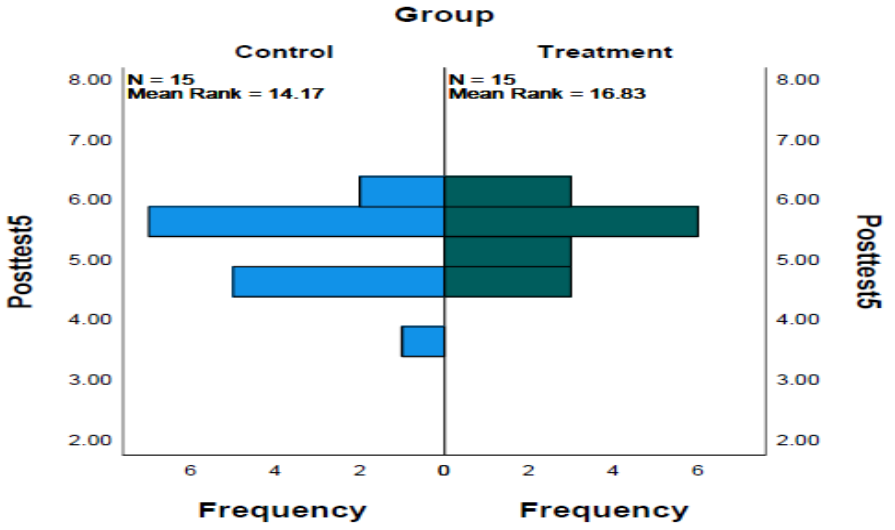


Table 4.8 illustrates the Mann-Whitney U Test results for the control group and treatment group pretest and posttest scores for the collaboration with community dimension of the questionnaire.

Table 4.8

Mann Whitney U Test Pre & Posttest Results for Collaboration with Community

Dimensions	Group	N	Mean Rank	Sum of ranks	U	P
Collaboration w/C (pretest)	Control	15	16.52	248.00	97.000	.539
	Treatment	15	14.47	217.00		
Collaboration w/C (posttest)	Control	15	12.70	190.50	70.500	.081
	Treatment	15	18.30	274.50		

*$p < .05$.

The test results indicated that the difference between the two groups was not significant, with a small effect size (U= 70.500, p=.081, r = -0.3226). Thus, the hypothesis that there was a significant difference in the functional attitudes towards collaboration with community for participants who attended the Epstein's training versus participants who were in the control group that received classroom management training was not supported.

The mean rank for collaboration with community for the control pretest (MR= 16.52) and treatment pretest for (MR= 14.47) indicates that the control groups pretests scores were slightly higher than the treatment group, prior to training. However, the mean rank for collaboration with community for the control posttest (MR =12.70) and treatment posttest (MR= 18.30) indicates that the control groups posttest scores ranks were slightly lower while the treatment groups posttest scores ranks were slightly higher after the training. Figure 4.11 and Figure 4.12 display the histogram that was constructed

to illustrate the distributional characteristics of Epstein's collaboration with community dimension for participants pre and posttest results.

Figure 4.11

Mann Whitney U Test Pretest Histogram for Collaboration with Community

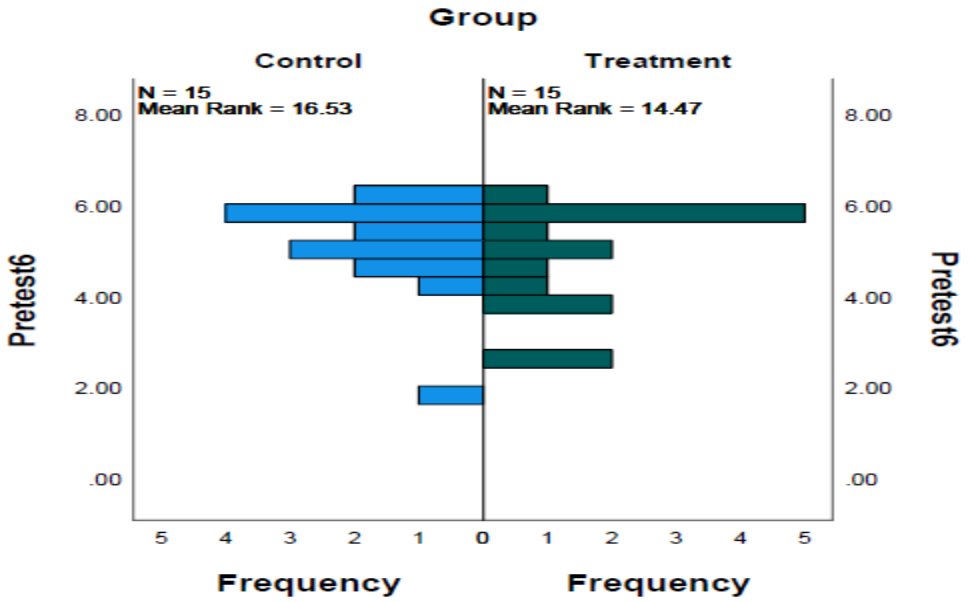


Figure 4.12

Mann Whitney U Test Posttest Histogram for Collaboration with Community

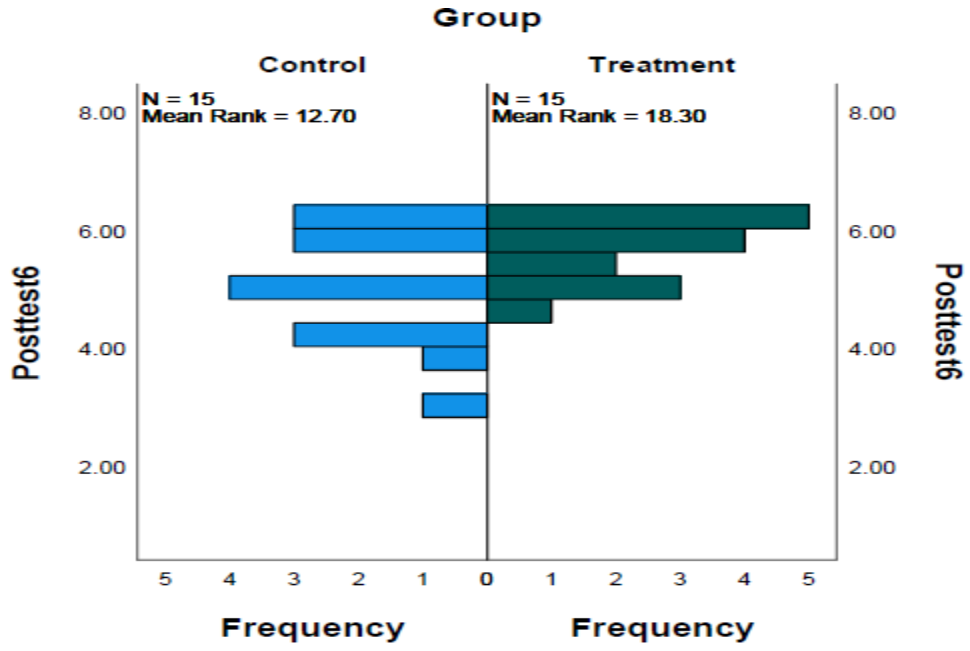


Table 4.9 illustrates the descriptive statistics analysis of the nonparametric test for the control group and treatment group pretest and posttest scores for the parenting dimension of the questionnaire.

Table 4.9

Descriptive Statistics for Parenting

	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Minimum	Maximum
Pretest	30	5.0333	.97568	1.00	6.00
Posttest	30	5.0200	.82937	2.20	6.00
Group	30	1.5	.509	1	2

An independent-samples Mann-Whitney Test revealed that the average pretest score for parenting for the control and treatment group was (M=5.03, SD=.98), p>.05, and the average posttest score for parenting for the control and treatment group was (M=5.02, SD=.83), p>.05, CI = 95. We can be 95% confident that the similarity between these means is true. Hence, we can conclude that participants from both groups moderately agree (Likert scale 5) that parenting is an important aspect of teacher job duties, before and after training.

Table 4.10 illustrates the descriptive statistics analysis of the nonparametric test for the control group and treatment group pretest and posttest scores for the volunteering dimension of the questionnaire.

Table 4.10

Descriptive Statistics for Volunteering

	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Minimum	Maximum
Pretest	30	4.4600	1.24197	1.00	6.00
Posttest	30	5.0400	.99433	2.80	6.00
Group	30	1.5	.509	1	2

An independent-samples Mann-Whitney Test revealed that the average pretest score for volunteering for the control and treatment group was (M=4.46, SD=1.24), p>.05, and the average posttest score for volunteering for the control and treatment group was (M=5.04, SD=.99), p>.05, CI = 95. We can be 95% confident that the similarity between these means is true. Hence, we can conclude that participants from both groups agree slightly more than disagree (Likert scale of 4) that volunteering is an important aspect of teacher job duties, prior to training. While participants from both groups moderately agree (Likert scale of 5) that volunteering is an important aspect of teacher job duties, after training.

Table 4.11 illustrates the descriptive statistics analysis of the nonparametric test for the control group and treatment group pretest and posttest scores for the decision-making dimension of the questionnaire.

Table 4.11

Descriptive Statistics for Decision-Making

	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Minimum	Maximum
Pretest	30	4.6467	1.20537	1.00	6.00
Posttest	30	5.0733	.75289	3.80	6.00
Group	30	1.5	.509	1	2

An independent-samples Mann-Whitney Test revealed that the average pretest score for decision-making for the control and treatment group was (M=4.64, SD=1.21), p>.05, and the average posttest score for decision-making for the control and treatment group was (M=5.07, SD=.75), p>.05, CI = 95. We can be 95% confident that the similarity between these means is true. Hence, we can conclude that participants from both groups agree slightly more than disagree (Likert scale of 4) that decision-making is

an important aspect of teacher job duties, prior to training. While participants from both groups moderately agree (Likert scale of 5) that decision-making is an important aspect of teacher job duties, after training.

Table 4.12 illustrates the descriptive statistics analysis of the nonparametric test for the control group and treatment group pretest and posttest scores for the learning at home dimension of the questionnaire.

Table 4.12

Descriptive Statistics for Learning at Home

	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Minimum	Maximum
Pretest	30	4.4733	1.08467	1.00	6.00
Posttest	30	4.9200	.79931	2.40	6.00
Group	30	1.5	.509	1	2

An independent-samples Mann-Whitney Test revealed that the average pretest score for learning at home for the control and treatment group was (M=4.47, SD=.1.08), p>.05, and the average posttest score for learning at home for the control and treatment group was (M=4.92, SD=.79), p>.05, CI = 95. We can be 95% confident that the similarity between these means is true. Hence, we can conclude that participants from both groups agree slightly more than disagree (Likert scale 4) that learning at home is an important aspect of teacher job duties, before and after training.

Table 4.13 illustrates the descriptive statistics analysis of the nonparametric test for the control group and treatment group pretest and posttest scores for the communication dimension of the questionnaire.

Table 4.13

Descriptive Statistics for Communication

	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Minimum	Maximum
Pretest	30	4.8267	1.13834	1.00	6.00
Posttest	30	5.3233	.61458	3.60	6.00
Group	30	1.5	.509	1	2

An independent-samples Mann-Whitney Test revealed that the average pretest score for communication for the control and treatment group was (M=4.82, SD=1.13), p>.05, and the average posttest score for communication for the control and treatment group was (M=5.32, SD=.61), p>.05, CI = 95. We can be 95% confident that the similarity between these means is true. Hence, we can conclude that participants from both groups agree slightly more than disagree (Likert scale of 4) that communication is an important aspect of teacher job duties, prior to training. While participants from both groups moderately agree (Likert scale of 5) that Communication is an important aspect of teacher job duties, after training.

Table 4.14 illustrates the descriptive statistics analysis of the nonparametric test for the control group and treatment group pretest and posttest scores for the collaboration with community dimension of the questionnaire.

Table 4.14

Descriptive Statistics for Collaboration with Community

	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Minimum	Maximum
Pretest	30	4.8800	1.10247	1.00	6.00
Posttest	30	5.2200	.80404	3.00	6.00
Group	30	1.5	.509	1	2

An independent-samples Mann-Whitney Test revealed that the average pretest score for collaboration with community for the control and treatment group was (M=4.88, SD=1.10), p>.05, and the average posttest score for collaboration with community for the control and treatment group was (M=5.22, SD=.80), p>.05, CI = 95. We can be 95% confident that the similarity between these means is true. Hence, we can conclude that participants from both groups agree slightly more than disagree (Likert scale of 4) that collaboration with community is an important aspect of teacher job duties, prior to training. While participants from both groups moderately agree (Likert scale of 5) that collaboration with community is an important aspect of teacher job duties, after training.

Mann Whitney U Test 2 Results

Table 4.15 illustrates the Mann-Whitney U Test results for the control group and treatment group pretest and posttest change scores for the parenting dimension of the questionnaire. The extent of decrease ranges used to determine the impact on the level of agreement are 1-3 (slightly), 4-6 (moderately), and > 6 (considerably).

Table 4.15

Mann Whitney U Test Pre and Posttest Change Results for Parenting

Dimensions	Group	N	Mean Rank	Sum of ranks	U	P
Change-Parenting	Control	15	15.93	239.00	106.000	.806
	Treatment	15	15.07	226.00		
	Total	30				

*p < .05

The test results indicated that the change results for this dimension was not significant, with a small effect size (U= 106.000, p=.806, r = -0.049). Thus, the

hypothesis that there was a significant difference in the functional attitudes towards parenting for participants who attended the Epstein's training versus participants who were in the control group that received classroom management training was not supported. Additionally, the extent of decrease in the level of agreement with parenting was slightly higher for the control group than the treatment group after 6 hours of training. Figure 4.13 displays the histogram that was constructed to illustrate the distributional characteristics of Epstein's parenting dimension for participants pre and posttest change results.

Figure 4.13

Pre-Posttest Change Score Histogram for Parenting

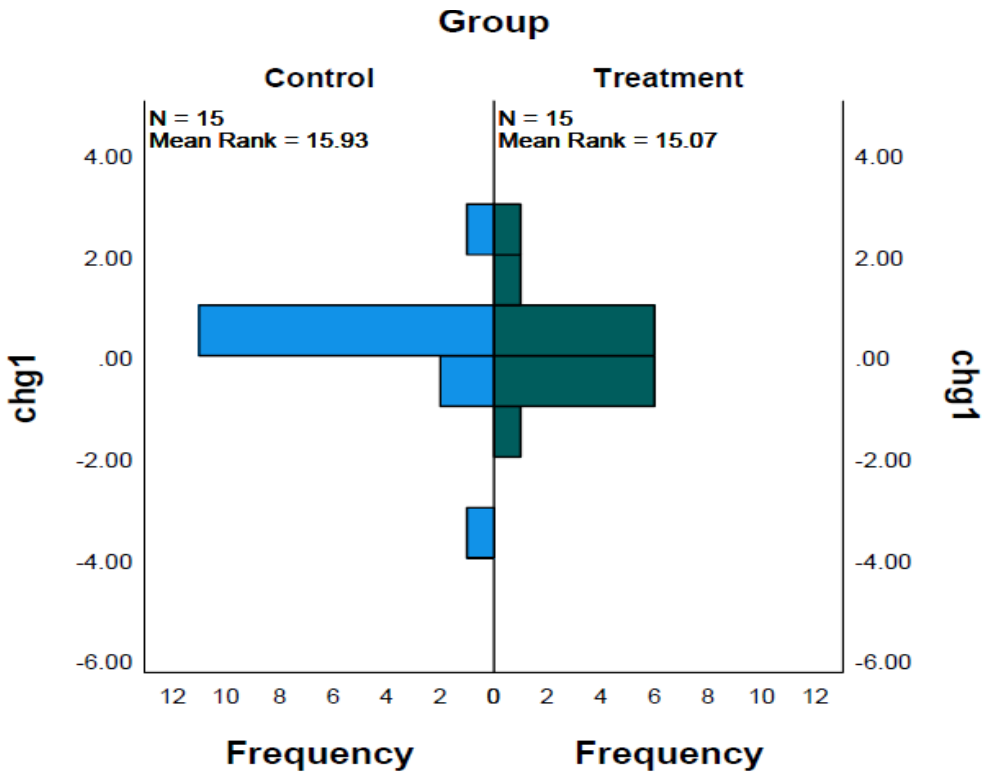


Table 4.16 illustrates the Mann-Whitney U Test results for the control group and treatment group pretest and posttest change scores for the volunteering dimension of the questionnaire.

Table 4.16

Mann Whitney U Pre/Post-test Change Results for Volunteering

Dimensions	Group	N	Mean Rank	Sum of ranks	U	P
Change-Volunteering	Control	15	18.97	284.50	60.500	.029*
	Treatment	15	12.03	180.50		
	Total	30				

*$p < .05$

The test results indicated that the change results for this dimension was significant, with a small effect size (U= 60.500, p=.029, r= -0.3966). Thus, the hypothesis that there was a significant difference in the functional attitudes towards volunteering for participants who attended the Epstein's training versus participants who were in the control group that received classroom management training was supported. Additionally, the extent of decrease in the level of agreement with volunteering was considerably higher for the control group than the treatment group after 6 hours of training. Figure 4.14 displays the histogram that was constructed to illustrate the distributional characteristics of Epstein's volunteering dimension for participants pre and posttest change results.

Figure 4.14

Pre-Posttest Change Score Histogram for Volunteering

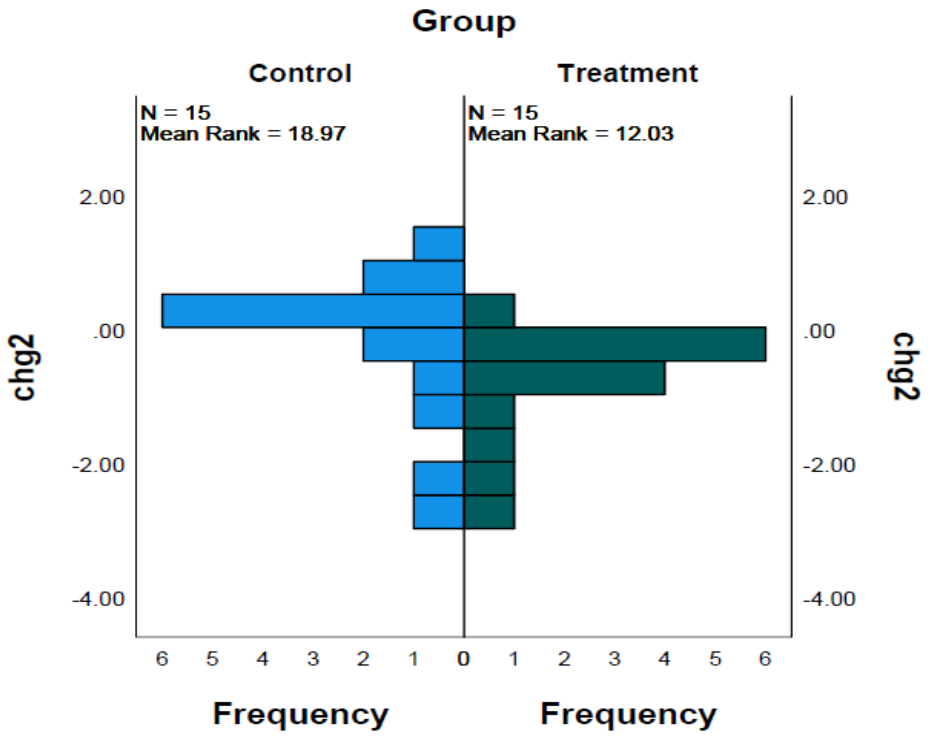


Table 4.17 illustrates the Mann-Whitney U Test results for the control group and treatment group pretest and posttest change scores for the *Decision-Making* dimension of the questionnaire.

Table 4.17

Mann Whitney U Pre/Posttest Change Results for Decision-Making

Dimensions	Group	N	Mean Rank	Sum of ranks	U	P
Change-Decision-Making	Control	15	17.90	268.50	76.500	.137
	Treatment	15	13.10	196.50		
	Total	30				

*$p < .05$

The test results indicated that the change results for this dimension was not significant, with a small effect size (U= 76.500, p=.137, r= -0.2753). Thus, the hypothesis that there was a significant difference in the functional attitudes towards decision-making for participants who attended the Epstein's training versus participants who were in the control group that received classroom management training was not supported. Additionally, the extent of decrease in the level of agreement with decision-making was moderately higher for the control group than the treatment group after 6 hours of training. Figure 4.15 displays the histogram that was constructed to illustrate the distributional characteristics of Epstein's decision-making dimension for participants pre and posttest change results.

Figure 4.15

Pre-Posttest Change Score Histogram for Decision-Making

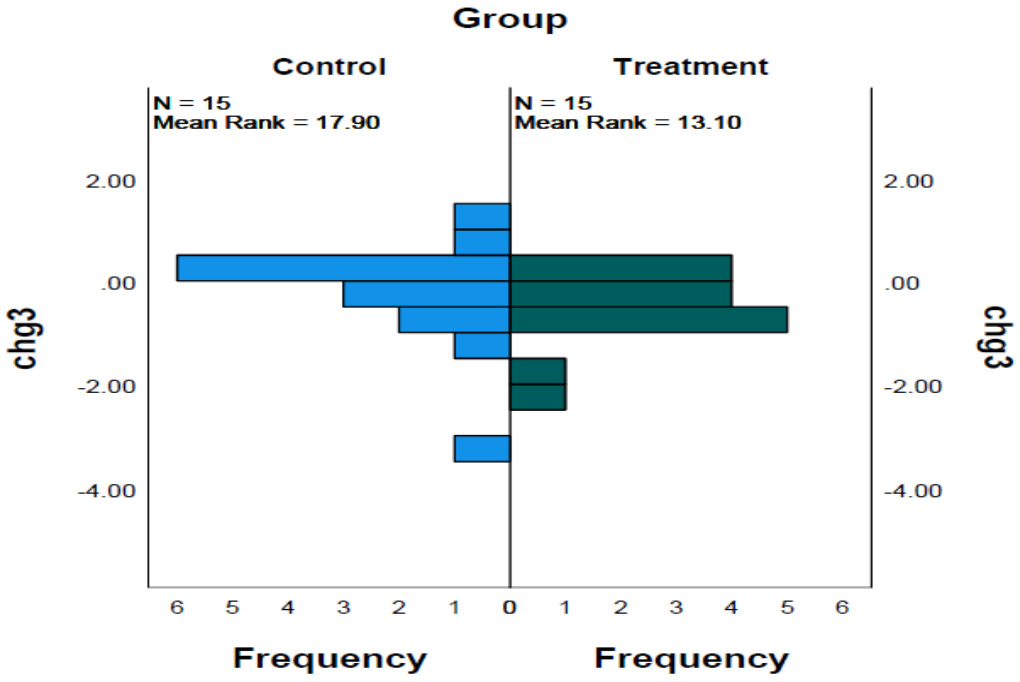


Table 4.18 illustrates the Mann-Whitney U Test results for the control group and treatment group pretest and posttest change scores for the learning at home dimension of the questionnaire.

Table 4.18

Mann Whitney U Pre/Posttest Change Results for Learning at Home

Dimensions	Group	N	Mean Rank	Sum of ranks	U	P
Change-Learning at Home	Control	15	17.63	264.50	80.500	.187
	Treatment	15	13.37	200.50		
	Total	30				

*$p < .05$

The test results indicated that the change results for this dimension was not significant, with a small effect size (U= 80.500, p=.187, r= -0.2446). Thus, the hypothesis that there was a significant difference in the functional attitudes towards learning at home for participants who attended the Epstein's training versus participants who were in the control group that received classroom management training was not supported. Additionally, the extent of decrease in the level of agreement with learning at home was moderately higher for the control group than the treatment group after 6 hours of training. Figure 4.16 displays the histogram that was constructed to illustrate the distributional characteristics of Epstein's learning at home dimension for participants pretest and posttest change results.

Figure 4.16

Pre-Posttest Change Score Histogram for Learning at Home

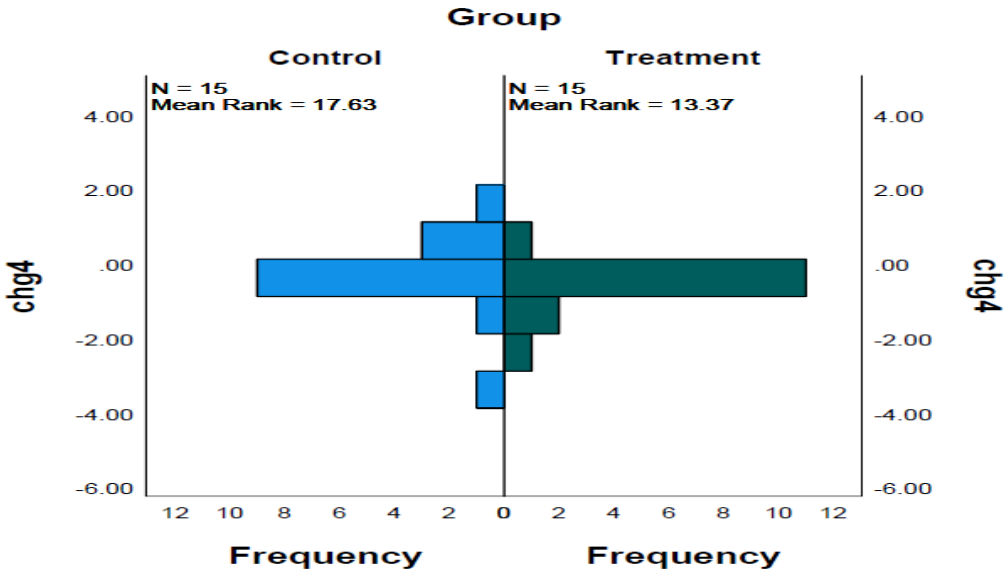


Table 4.19 illustrates the Mann-Whitney U Test results for the control group and treatment group pretest and posttest change scores for the communication dimension of the questionnaire.

Table 4.19

Mann Whitney U Pre/Posttest Change Results for Communication

Dimensions	Group	N	Mean Rank	Sum of ranks	U	P
Change-Communication	Control	15	18.17	272.50	72.500	.098
	Treatment	15	12.83	192.50		
	Total	30				

*$p < .05$

The test results indicated that the change results for this dimension was not significant, with a small effect size (U= 72.500, p=.098, r= -0.3065). Thus, the hypothesis that there was a significant difference in the functional attitudes towards communication for participants who attended the Epstein's training versus participants

who were in the control group that received classroom management training was not supported. Additionally, the extent of decrease in the level of agreement with communication was moderately higher for the control group than the treatment group after 6 hours of training. Figure 4.17 displays the histogram that was constructed to illustrate the distributional characteristics of Epstein's communication dimension for participants pretest and posttest change results.

Figure 4.17

Pre-Posttest Change Score Histogram for Communication

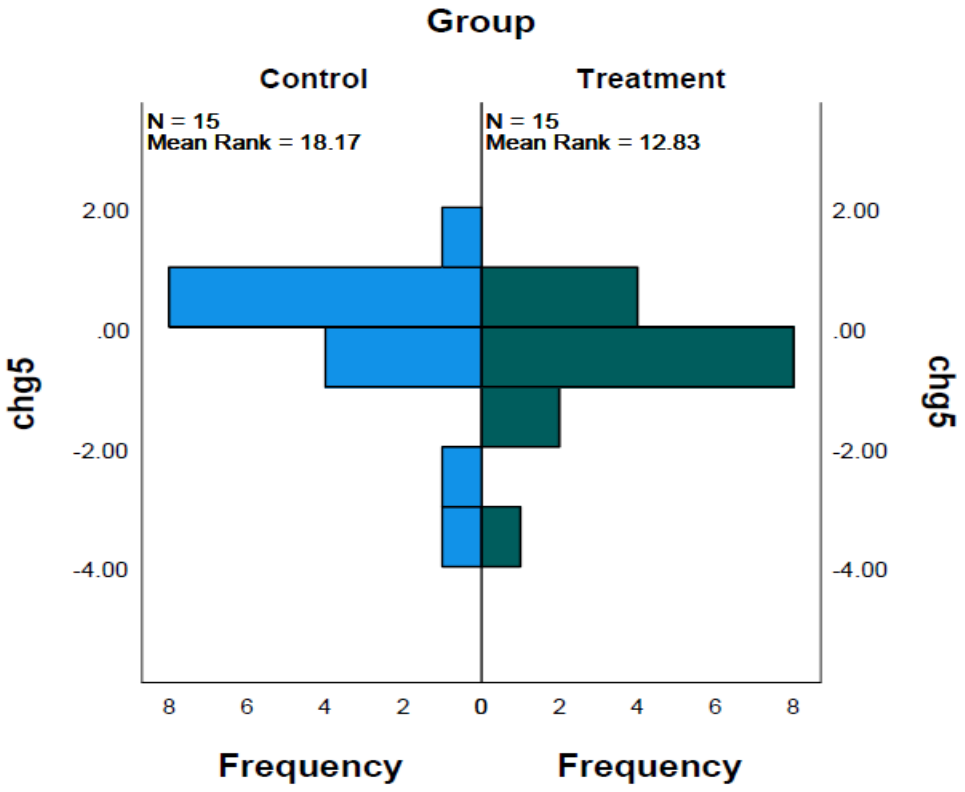


Table 4.20 illustrates the Mann-Whitney U Test results for the control group and treatment group pretest and posttest change scores for the collaboration with the community dimension of the questionnaire.

Table 4.20

Mann Whitney U Pre/Post-test Change Results for Collaboration with the Community

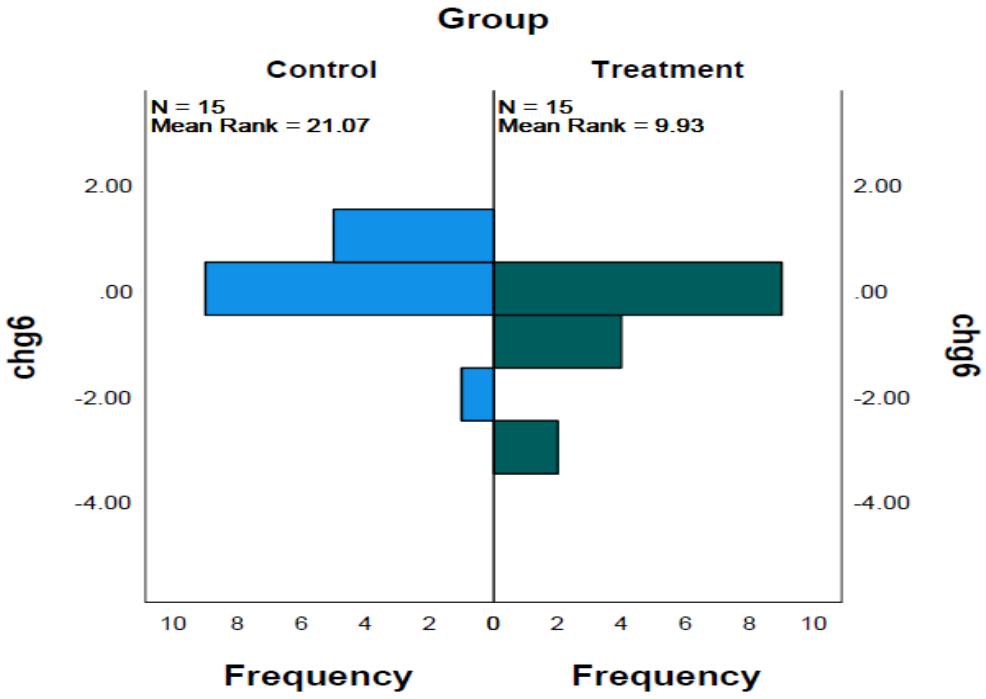
Dimensions	Group	N	Mean Rank	Sum of ranks	U	P
Change-Collaboration w/Community	Control	15	21.07	316.00	29.000	<.001*
	Treatment	15	9.93	149.00		
	Total	30				

*$p < .05$

The test results indicated that the change results for this dimension was significant, with a small effect size (U= 29.000, p=.000, r= -0.6385). Thus, the hypothesis that there was a significant difference in the functional attitudes towards collaboration with the community for participants who attended the Epstein's training versus participants who were in the control group that received classroom management training was supported. Additionally, the extent of decrease in the level of agreement with collaboration with the community was considerably higher for the control group than the treatment group after 6 hours of training. Figure 4.18 displays the histogram that was constructed to illustrate the distributional characteristics of Epstein's collaboration with the community dimension for participants pretest and posttest change results.

Figure 4.18

Pre-Posttest Change Score Histogram for Collaborating with the Community



Summary of Results

The results of the first test indicated that teachers in the control and treatment groups were not very different regarding their functional attitudes towards school, family, and community partnerships. In fact, there were no significant differences in any of the six dimensions within the first test. In all cases, teachers in the treatment group provided slightly higher mean ranks after receiving the Epstein's Six Dimensions training. While teachers in the control group provided slightly lower mean ranks after receiving the Time To Teach – The Source for Classroom Management training. In other words, teachers in the treatment group posttest scores were slightly higher within all six dimensions, after receiving their training. Teachers in the control group posttest scores were slightly

lowered after receiving their training. Despite these results, the researcher was unable to conclude that the training showed promise.

Performing a second Mann Whitney U Test on the pre/posttest change data provided an opportunity to dive deeper into the analysis. The results from this test revealed some promising results for Epstein's Six Dimension training. Dimensions 2 (volunteering) and 6 (collaboration with the community) test results indicated that the change results for each dimension was significant (p = .029, and p =.000, respectively). Therefore, Hypothesis 2 (there was a significant difference in the functional attitudes towards volunteering for participants who attended the Epstein's training versus participants who were in the control group that received classroom management training) was supported. Hypothesis 6 (there was a significant difference in the functional attitudes towards collaboration with the community for participants who attended the Epstein's training versus participants who were in the control group that received classroom management training) was also supported. Dimension 1 (parenting, p =.806) had no movement and dimension 3 (decision-making, p =.137), 4 (learning at home, p =.187), and 5 (communication, p =.098) all showed promise, but neither supported their related hypothesis. The next section provides a deeper look into what impact the training had on teachers' functional attitudes toward the pre/post-questionnaire statements within Dimension 2 (volunteering) and Dimension 6 (collaboration with the community).

Impact of Training on Dimensions 2 and 6

To tabulate the results of the pre- and post-training survey questions for Dimension 2 (volunteering), the researcher combined the group summary data for level of agreement between 5 (*moderately agree*) and 6 (*strongly agree*) for the percentage of

participants that answered each question related to the dimension. The tabulation of responses to each question was double-checked to ensure accuracy (Table 4.21).

Table 4.21

Pre/Post-Questionnaire Summary Percentages and Differences on Volunteering Survey Questions

Question	Pre-Survey Percentage	Post-Survey Percentage	Difference
3	53%	67%	14%
6	87%	80%	-7%
10	66%	60%	-6%
15	73%	73%	0%
21	74%	80%	6%

Question 3 asked participants to respond to the statement, "The school should use volunteer parents in the classroom to assist teachers and students." The percentage of agreement was 53% before training and 67% after training, for a change of 14% towards greater agreement with the statement. The results indicate that teachers' level of agreement with schools using parents as volunteers in the classroom increased after 6 hours of training. During the training, participants shared the belief that this would allow parents to develop a greater appreciation of teachers' work and skills, as well as an increased feeling of attachment to the school. The results also indicated that teachers saw value in using volunteers to meet reading and math goals such as (a) reading-partner volunteers, guest readers of favorite stories, and other ongoing read-with-me activities; and (b) volunteer math tutors to assist students who need one-on-one tutoring and extra

help with specific math skills. They believed that results would lead to students gaining academic skills that are tutored or taught by volunteers.

Question 6 asked participants to respond to the statement, "The school should use former students in school programs for students." The percentage of agreement was 87% before training and 80% after training, for a change of 7% towards greater disagreement with the statement. This response suggests that attending the training did not increase teachers' level of agreement with schools using former students in school programs for students. However, since the pre-training percentage of agreement of 87% suggests a relatively high level of agreement, it would have been challenging for the training to further increase teacher enthusiasm. The overwhelming opinion expressed was that schools lose contact with former students, and they are difficult to track after leaving the system.

Question 10 asked participants to respond to the statement, "Teachers should make flexible schedules for volunteers, assemblies, and events so that employed parents can participate." The percentage of agreement was 66% before training and 60% after training, for a change of 6% towards greater disagreement with the statement. While the change is modest, it suggests that teachers' level of agreement with teachers making flexible schedules for volunteers, assemblies, and events so that employed parents can participate decreased after six hours of training. Teachers expressed that it would be difficult to meet the challenge of recruiting widely, creating flexible schedules, and providing training for volunteers without having a committee focused on championing this effort.

Question 15 asked participants to respond to the statement, "The school should seek the volunteer collaboration of parents in school activities outside of the classroom." The percentage of agreement was 73% before training and 73% after training, which indicates no change in the level of agreement with this statement after 6 hours of training. During the training, participants agreed that volunteers should be able to assist school programs and student activities from any location at any time (attend assemblies, performances, sports events, award ceremonies, celebrations, and other activities).

Question 21 asked participants to respond to the statement, "The school should use volunteer parents to help students succeed in school." The percentage of agreement was 74% before training and 80% after training, for a change of 6% towards greater agreement with the statement. Although the change is modest, it suggests that experiencing the training increased teachers' level of agreement with this statement. The upward movement with this strategy can be attributed to the portion of the training where teachers were asked to develop two academic goals (reading, math), one behavioral goal (attendance), and one welcoming climate for partnerships goal. This had a positive impact on teachers regarding how parents can be used to (a) improve reading achievement, (b) improve math skills, (c) improve student behavior, (d) create a climate of partnership, (e) increase successful transitions, and (f) promote good attendance.

To tabulate the results of the pre- and post-training survey questions for Dimension 6 (collaboration with the community), the researcher combined the group summary data for level of agreement between 5 (*moderately agree*) and 6 (*strongly agree*) for the percentage of participants that answered each question related to the

dimension. The tabulation of responses to each question was double-checked to ensure accuracy (Table 4.22).

Table 4.22

Pre/Post-Questionnaire Summary Percentages and Differences on Collaborating w/Community Survey Questions

Question	Pre-Survey Percentage	Post-Survey Percentage	Difference
5.	73%	73%	0%
13	86%	93%	7%
18	80%	87%	7%
24	80%	67%	-13%
26	80%	73%	-7%

Question 5 asked participants to respond to the statement, "The school should offer training to enable parent leaders to serve as representatives of other families." The percentage of agreement was 73% before training and 73% after training, which indicates no change in the level of agreement with this statement after 6 hours of training. Participants saw value in the training activity that required them to share one successful activity that they have seen in their school. There was a strong agreement that the building-based parent representatives receive ongoing professional development, through the Office of Parent Engagement, that enables them to better perform their duties. Unfortunately, parent reps are often underutilized by parents, teachers, and building leaders.

Question 13 asked participants to respond to the statement, "The school should foster communication integration through partnerships involving the school with other

agencies, organizations, and businesses." The percentage of agreement was 86% before training and 93% after training, which indicates a 7% change towards a greater level of agreement with this statement after 6 hours of training. However, since the pre-training percentage of agreement of 86% suggests a relatively high level of agreement, it is encouraging that the training enhanced teachers' level of agreement further. The upward movement with this highly agreed upon function was revealed through the training activity that required teachers to share one successful community integration activity that they have seen in their schools. Although several successful agency integration activities were shared (such as the community school concept), teachers expressed that they very rarely meet agency representative and students, and never see the data that is generated by the agencies that service their children.

Question 18 asked participants to respond to the statement, "The school should disseminate community activities that link learning skills and talents." The percentage of agreement was 80% before training and 87% after training, which indicates a 7% change towards a greater level of agreement with this statement after 6 hours of training. However, since the pre-training percentage of agreement of 80% also suggests a relatively high level of agreement, it is also encouraging that the training enhanced teachers' level of agreement further. The upward movement with this function was attributed to the training activity that required teachers to redefine the word "community," and identify activities that exist within the new definition where children could link their learning skills and talents.

Question 24 asked participants to respond to the statement, "The school should integrate child and family services with education." The percentage of agreement was

80% before training and 67% after training, which indicates a 13% change towards a greater level of disagreement with this statement after 6 hours of training. Furthermore, since the pre-training percentage of agreement of 80% suggests a relatively high level of agreement, a decrease of 13% is relatively large after experiencing the training. It suggests that the activity may have caused teachers to feel less comfortable with the issues discussed. During the training, participants were asked to share their experiences with children and family services involvement with their students. Although more than half agreed that children and family services play a major role in assisting our youth that are in crisis, some agreed with the dissenting opinion shared that integrating child and family services with education could cause legal issues due to FERPA laws that often prohibit teachers from having access to student family services case information. Others argued that this is a point of confusion and/or uncertainty that needs clarification.

Question 26 asked participants to respond to the statement, "The school should provide information for all students and families on programs and services located in their communities." The percentage of agreement was 80% before training and 73% after training, which indicates a 7% change towards a greater level of disagreement with this statement after 6 hours of training. While the change is modest, it suggests that attending the training did not increase teachers' level of agreement with this statement. However, since the pre-training percentage of agreement of 80% suggests a relatively high level of agreement, a 7% decrease in teachers' level of agreement after the training is concerning. During the training, participants were required to complete a "pair-share" activity that required them to identify a challenge that arose in implementing this activity. The most held challenge shared was that Rochester has over 3,000 agencies that have programs and

services for the community. It would be a humongous and time-consuming task for a school to catalog and update all these programs and services.

Chapter Summary

This study recruited 30 teacher participants for two separate trainings (Time to Teach, Epstein's Six Dimensions) to determine if the Epstein's training would have a significant impact on teachers' functional attitudes towards school, family, and community partnerships. Fifteen teacher participants voluntarily selected the Time to Teach training and 15 voluntarily selected the Epstein's Six Dimensions training. Two distinct Mann Whitney U Tests were used to conduct a thorough analysis of the data for the best possible outcomes. The pretest and posttest data for each participant in both groups were analyzed during the first test. The second test analyzed how the pretest and posttest data had changed or changed differently for each participant in both groups. The first test revealed no significant change within each of the six dimensions. But the second test revealed a significant difference between Dimension 2 (volunteering) and Dimension 6 (collaborating with the community). This sample suggests that teachers are passionate about school, family, and community partnerships and want to be trained. However, additional research is required to further clarify what teachers lack.

Chapter 5 will discuss the summary of the training process, implications of the findings, limitations that may have impacted results, recommendations for future research or actions based on the findings, and a brief conclusion.

Chapter 5: Discussion

Introduction

To address the lack of school, family, and community involvement in urban schools, these research intervention training courses took place in December 2022 and February 2023. Teacher participants were invited to engage in either (a) Time to Teach - Source of Effective Classroom Management, or (b) Epstein's Six Types of Involvement Framework as a means of improving teachers' functional attitudes toward parental involvement. The research intervention collected quantitative data from pretest and post training questionnaires, that were derived from Epstein's Six Types of Involvement Typology, to answer the following research question:

Does the implementation of a program to train teachers on Epstein's Six Types of Involvement Framework produce a more functional teacher attitude towards school, family, and community partnerships?

The concluding discussions and suggestions for future research are presented in this chapter. The following topics are included in this chapter: summary of the training process, implications of findings, limitations, recommendations, and conclusion.

Implications of Findings

The study findings suggest that teachers are not very different in their opinions about the importance of parent engagement, regardless of whether they receive specific training regarding how to establish effective school, family, and community partnerships. Although Epstein's Six Dimensions training did have a positive impact on the treatment

group's functional attitudes towards school, family, and community partnerships based on the mean rank data.

The study also suggests that various stakeholders should find more ways to provide professional learning opportunities for teachers so that teachers are better skilled at establishing effective school, family, and community partnerships. Participants' responses indicate a desire for more teacher training and a passion for parent engagement. Nonetheless, additional research is required to better understand what teachers lack. School personnel should do whatever is necessary to improve the quality of education in urban areas, despite the frequent tendency to feel uneasy when interacting with urban parents. One of these necessary steps is to engage parents and the community.

Additionally, participants in both the control and treatment groups moderately agree that parenting, volunteering, decision making, communication, and collaboration w/community are important aspects of teacher job duties. This rating was the second highest rating on the Likert scale (1-6) that was used for this study. Participants in both groups agree slightly more than disagree that learning at home is an important aspect of teacher job duties. This rating was the third highest rating on the Likert scale (1-6).

Latunde and Clark-Louque (2016) cited two important strategies employed by parents to support their children's education: (a) participation in educational programs outside of school, and (b) helping their children with learning at home. To reduce parents' feelings of alienation the researchers proposed that school leaders provide ongoing professional development for staff that supports home-school collaboration. While research cited learning at home as an important strategy employed by parents to support their children's education, teachers rated learning at home as a less important part

of their job duties. This highlights the need to further educate teachers on this important part of their job duties so that they can enhance and support parents in this effort.

This research study indicated that involving parents may be extremely difficult because (a) teachers have implicit bias towards low-income minority families, (b) parents feel alienated from schools, and (c) schools lack professional development programs with greater focus on parental involvement (Baldwin et al., 2007). The literature review reflected, and this research reinforced, the importance of training teachers on how to establish effective parent partnerships to help teachers overcome their implicit biases and reduce parents' feeling of alienation (Pedro et al., 2012). It is also evident from the teacher responses that teachers know and understand the importance of establishing effective parent partnerships, and yet many teachers are not comfortable with this aspect of their job duties.

Limitations

Limitations to this study were implied by time constraints. Because Epstein's Six Types of Involvement Framework has been in existence since the 1980s, some teachers may have already been aware of it. It was necessary to prepare an intervention that represents Epstein et al.'s most recent fourth edition (2019) entitled *School, Family, and Community Partnerships: Your Handbook for Action.*

Additionally, most schools had already established their professional development calendars for the year in early August and were late learning about this study due to the IRB approval process timeline. Meetings and scheduling with various school administrators to obtain their consent to allow their staff to participate in the study took a lot of time. Once an agreement was established, it was necessary to organize and prepare

for the interventions quickly, to allow teachers the opportunity sign up to attend their selected training prior to the registration deadline.

Due to the time constraints of the Ed D program, it was necessary to organize, prepare, and present the intervention within a window of time that did not allow for follow-up and feedback from teachers, beyond the training phase, to be incorporated in the study. Therefore, the training was detailed and descriptive to assist teachers in understanding and participating in the opportunity to change their parent engagement practices.

The district's Office of Professional Learning (OPL) also required a 2-week notice of the impending professional learning opportunity to allow their staff adequate time to build the course into their professional development management system. Although this process allowed teacher participants to receive six professional learning credits for attending the training, it took several days for the district to develop the course. Some teachers complained about this delay and uncertainty and ultimately reversed their decision to participate in the training in leu of a course that was readily available in the system.

The School-based Planning Team (SBPT) approval process was another limitation. Although the IRB and the school district had already approved the researcher's request to provide the study to district staff, the SBPT at each school had to agree to allow access to the training in their building. Unfortunately for the study, the SBPT only meets once per month. The teams the researcher met with already had multiple professional learning opportunities scheduled for their staff. Therefore, the researcher delivered all training sessions at one location and allowed participants who

had signed up from other schools, via the PLO management system, to attend their training at the designated School A.

Professional development incentive hours were a limitation. The district allows all teachers to receive from 28-36 mandatory professional development hours during the school year, depending on their employment status (interim, tenured). Teachers utilize the menu of courses that are registered and approved in the district's professional learning management system to register for courses and receive credit. Since these courses are limited in enrollment, most teachers sign up for as many courses as they can at the beginning of the school year. Learning later about this study limited the number of teachers who could have participated in the training.

Another limitation was the sample size. The sample size was limited by the time constraints imposed by IRB, OPL, and SBPT. The teachers who registered within the short time period were a small sample of each school's population. Despite this, the researcher believes that a larger sample would have produced better outcomes. Once the professional learning opportunity was posted in the district's PLO management system, other teachers across the district were able to sign up to participate in either training session. This process did yield a few more willing participants on the day of the initial training sessions, but these individuals had to be turned away due to failing to register before the registration deadline.

The population was limited to two research sites, and as a result could have had different results in other schools in the district. The results could have been different if the study included more teachers from middle and high schools as well.

Although there is an abundant amount of literature regarding parent engagement, specific studies dealing with educating teachers on how to implement effective school, family, and community partnerships with low-income/urban minority families are rare. The research study was a quantitative study using data collected from a pre/post questionnaire that did not provide open-ended questions to probe and clarify respondents' answers.

Recommendations

First, it is recommended that future researchers studying the effects of training on the functional attitudes of teachers seek to avoid the obstacles that this study faced, such as introducing the study after the school year has begun, gaining support for the study from school administration and school-based planning team, obtaining permission to use school buildings for training sites, and getting participants recruited through email lists. Additionally, a more longitudinal study would also be helpful; for example, opportunities to follow up with teacher participants in the treatment group to determine whether their school, family, and community engagement practices have improved could be included in a longer study.

Research is recommended on successful teacher preparation programs, that focus on establishing effective school, family, and community partnerships, and expanding them to other teacher preparation programs. Research is recommended for districts and administration to show evidence of support for programs that educate teachers on the best methods for engaging parents as partners in their schools. It is recommended to research these successful programs and allow teachers to participate in them as a part of their professional development efforts. Parent engagement is unlikely to rise unless school

board commissioners and administrators provide funding and support to programs that teach teachers how to build successful partnerships between the school, family, and community.

The researcher recommends that various stakeholders pay more attention to ways to provide teachers with more training on how to establish effective partnerships between the school, family, and community. This is in line with the abundance of research literature that has been provided that acknowledges the low levels of parental involvement in urban schools. Modern technology has made it possible to provide various modes of training to teachers as professional learning opportunities. School personnel should do what is necessary to improve the quality of education, despite the frequent tendency to feel uneasy dealing with parents. Increasing teacher self-efficacy with establishing effective school, family, and community partnerships is one of these necessary steps.

One interesting recommendation arising from this research has to do with helping teachers overcome their implicit bias towards low-income minority families. Research is recommended on successful implicit bias training programs being implemented in schools and expanding them to other schools. Helping teachers over their implicit biases could play a major role in improving teachers' functional attitudes towards parental involvement with low-income minority families. This in fact, is a key lever to building healthy relationships with parents that lead to successful educational outcomes for their children.

The district in which this study took place has a districtwide professional development contractual agreement with their teacher's union as part of their collective

bargaining agreement. The professional development planning committee develops proposals for the delivery of jointly planned professional development opportunities on superintendent conference days. The training that is currently offered through this jointly planned professional development could be the subject of additional research, as could the levels of participation and outcomes, particularly regarding parent engagement.

Recommendations Related to Training

Participants voiced their thoughts throughout the training on similar concerns that schools should act upon to improve their effort towards effective school, family, and community partnerships. The following recommendations were captured by the researcher:

1. All schools should develop an action team for partnerships (ATP) team to (a) oversee the school's program of family and community engagement with a one-year action plan for partnerships; (b) meet monthly to discuss the schedule of family and community involvement activities; and (c) and develop periodic reports plans, activities, concerns, and progress monitoring.
2. Schools should (a) use volunteers for school patrols in the hallways, cafeteria, playground, or other locations to increase or maintain students' good behavior; (b) create a resource directory to identify the available time and talents of parents and other volunteers to assist teachers and school throughout the year; and (c)survey parents on how they could volunteer to share their time, specific talents, or resources at school or for the school.
3. Schools should make sure that each building has an active parent center and a website dedicated to recruiting volunteers from the community, including parents.

4. To properly represent parents and families, schools should make better use of the parent representatives assigned to each building.
5. Schools should make sure that local organizations that assist students work together with staff and try to include teachers in student meetings. Data from the agency should also be made available to school administrators and be kept with student records.

Conclusion

Over the past two decades, parental involvement has been a national policy priority. A call for parental involvement in schools was included in the Goals 2000 Educate America Act in 1994 (National Policy Board for Educational Administration, 2002). Numerous studies demonstrate the significance of involving parents in the success of students (Epstein, 2011). Parents, however, are still feeling alienated from schools and continue to have low levels of involvement in partnering with schools to educate their children Additionally, research studies have demonstrated that teachers often lack the knowledge, skills, and disposition for establishing effective school, family, and community partnerships that leads to improved outcomes for their students. In fact, numerous research studies revealed that teacher preparation programs spend little to know time focusing on teacher effective parent engagement strategies. The position taken is that it is the responsibility of all teachers to develop and maintain high-quality partnerships with their students' families. However, many teachers will struggle to acquire the knowledge, abilities, and dispositions required to establish productive partnerships between the school, family, and community if they do not receive the necessary support, guidance, and training.

This research study sought to improve teachers' functional attitude towards parental involvement through initiating a training involving Epstein's Six Types of Involvement Framework. Although the treatment group did not show a significant difference in their views towards parenting, decision-making, learning at home, and communication, there was a significant difference shown with volunteering and collaboration with the community. These results indicate that the training was promising.

The research shows and supports the need for more teacher training focused on school, family, and community involvement to address the major problem of a lack of parental involvement in urban education. However, very few programs or plans that have consistently proven to be effective in training teachers are documented in the researcher's literature. Instead, the positive outcomes attributed to parent involvement have been isolated instances that used Epstein's Six Dimensions as a primary source.

There has been a significant effort in the education reform movement to bring about needed change through holding teachers and students accountable for student success. Countless programs have been introduced and/or implemented on ways to improve student performance. Top-down legislation has been imposed, millions of dollars have been spent on educational consultants, academic intervention programs, school turnaround approaches, alternative pathways programs, and a seemingly endless array of testing vehicles have been implemented. But the one key factor that continues to be missing is: collaboration between home and school. The engagement of families who are advocates for their children's well-being and the involvement of additional families who wish to be better advocates may result from bridging this gap.

It is my hope that this study will encourage further research focused on educating teachers on the important impact that parent involvement has on student performance. Also, to continue researching effective programs that equip teachers with the knowledge, skills, and disposition needed to build relationships with families that will connect home and school.

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Appendix A: Principal Letter of Support

Principal Letter of Support

Dear Principal,

My name is Josh Mack. I am a Project Implementation Specialist in the Rochester City School District. I am also a doctoral candidate in the School of Education at St. John Fisher University. I am currently working on a dissertation that surveys various attitudes towards aspects of teacher job duties. I am seeking the input of your teachers to assist in the completion of this study. Your school's participation is strictly voluntary and your teachers participation is strictly voluntary. The study will be scheduled in a way that does not interfere with performance of their regularly assigned duties.

The purpose of this research intervention study is to examine areas of teacher responsibility and perfomance. The research will be conducted using a one-day workshop, survey, and questionnaires. I, the researcher, will collect completed surveys and questionnaires to gain insight needed to complete the study. Your teacher's participation in this study can be used as part of their professional development requirements. It is estimated to take about 6 hours to complete the workshop.

Confidentiality is mandatory in this research study. All information received and collected will be kept strictly confidential under the Family Education Right to Privacy Act 1974. Your name will not be used in any part of this study. No monetary benefits will be given as a result of your participation. Your teachers will receive a "Certificate of Completion" to verify their successful participation of the workshop. The benefits derived will be information learned and processed to improve school, family, and community partnerships in the RCSD.

In consultation with my dissertation committee, we have determined that there are no discernable risks to your teacher's involvement in this study. All involvement is based solely on voluntary participation. You may withdraw from participation in this study at any time, with no penalties. I can be reached for questions or concerns at (585)802-3855. I am conducting this research under Dr. Jason Berman who can be reached at (585)385-8086 if more information is needed.

Additionally, you may contact the organization authorizing this research: Ralph C. Wilson School of Education, St. John Fisher University, 3690 East Avenue, Rochester, New York 14618. Although the superintendent of the Rochester City School District has approved this study, the RCSD is neither sponsoring nor conducting this research. You are able to inspect all materials before consenting to participate in the study. You will also be given a copy of this form for your records.

Sincerely,
Josh J. Mack

Please submit your email to receive a copy of your response!

* Required

1. My school may participate in this study. The researcher is allowed to distribute flyers to teachers in the building (If "Yes," complete the remaining sections). *

Check all that apply.

- [ ] Yes
- [ ] No

2. Principal Name *

3. Address *

4. Approximate Date of Study? *

Example: January 7, 2019

5. Principal Initials *

6. Date *

Example: January 7, 2019

7. School Name *

Appendix B: Recruitment Flyer

Volunteers Needed for Research Study on Teachers Job Duties.

Do you have concerns about various aspects of your job duties (parent engagement)? You may be eligible for a six-hour study of a program that could improve your skills and disposition with establishing school, family, and community partnerships.

You May Qualify If You

- Are a tenured or non-tenured elementary school teacher
- Employed at a participating school
- Interested in creating better programs and opportunities for your students

Participation Involves

- Completing a Consent form
- Completing a Teacher Pre/Post-Questionnaire
- Attending a 6-hour Team-Training Workshop
- Completing a brief workshop evaluation

Potential Benefits

Participating in the study may improve your functional attitude towards school, family, and community engagement.

Participants will receive a Certificate of Completion as proof of participation in the workshop.

FOR MORE INFORMATION

Please contact Josh Mack at (585)802-3855, email josh.mack12@gmail.com. The request to participate in workshop must be completed by using the following link or scan:

https://forms.gle/qLXJS8YtYpR78pd8

Appendix C: Permission to Use

Center on School, Family, and Community Partnerships
Johns Hopkins University • 2800 North Charles Street, Suite 420 • Baltimore MD 21218
TEL: 410-516-2318 • FAX: 410-516-8890 • nnps@jhu.edu

June 17, 2021

To: Josh Mack

From: Joyce L. Epstein & Steven B. Sheldon

Re: Permission to use:

- Sheldon, S. B. & Epstein, J. L. (2007). Parent and Student Surveys of Family and Community Involvement in the Elementary and Middle Grades. Baltimore, MD: Center on School, Family, and Community Partnerships at Johns Hopkins University.
- Epstein, J. L. & Salinas, K. C. (1993). Surveys and Summaries: Questionnaires for Teachers and Parents in Elementary and Middle Grades. Baltimore, MD: Center on School, Family, and Community Partnerships at Johns Hopkins University.
- Epstein, J. L., Connors-Tadros, L., & Salinas, K. C. (1993). High School and Family Partnerships: Surveys for Teachers, Parents, and Students in High School. Baltimore, MD: Center on School, Family, and Community Partnerships at Johns Hopkins University.

This letter grants you permission to use, adapt, translate, and reprint the survey(s) or sections of the surveys noted above in your study.

We ask only that you include appropriate references to the original survey(s) and authors on the instruments that you administer and in the text and bibliography of your reports and publications.

Best of luck with your project.

Appendix D: Certificates of Completion

Certificate of Course Completion

Epstein's Six Dimensions of
School, Family, and Community Partnerships

Be it known that the below named individual successfully completed 6 training hours of instruction in the nationally acclaimed parent engagement program.

PARTICIPANT NAME

Josh J. Mack

MR. JOSH MACK, CERTIFIED TRAINER

DATE

Certificate of Course Completion

Time To Teach Strategies
Smart, Proven, Practical Strategies for
The Tough Classroom

Be it known that the below named individual successfully completed 6 training hours of instruction in the nationally acclaimed Time To Teach program.

PARTICIPANT NAME

Josh J. Mack

MR. JOSH MACK, CERTIFIED TRAINER

DATE